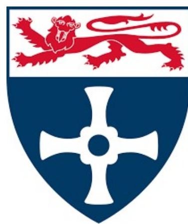
School support for asylum-seeking and refugee children: a systematic review of literature and exploration of child and family perspectives

Jade Wang



Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Newcastle University

May 2023

Declaration

This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. I declare that this work is my own and has not been submitted for any other purpose.

Overarching abstract

Rising incidents of conflict and violence have led to a great increase in the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide. Schools can have a significant impact on how successfully asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children settle and adapt to their new lives. This thesis explores how schools can support the ASR population in England.

Chapter 1

A systematic literature review was conducted, seeking to answer how schools can support ASR children in England. Considered through an ecological systems framework, six qualitative research papers were analysed using thematic analysis. Five analytical themes were identified and discussed: (1) staff as a valuable resource; (2) peer relationships; (3) flexibility and delivery of the curriculum; (4) school ethos; and (5) fostering the home–school relationship. Implications for educational psychologists were discussed. An opportunity for further research was also identified from this review, as there was a dearth of research that included younger child and family perspectives. This chapter has been prepared for submission to the British Educational Research Journal.

Chapter 2

This chapter is a bridge between the systematic literature review and empirical research, providing a methodological and ethical critique. It discusses the decision-making processes of the research, as informed by my conceptual framework.

Chapter 3

A qualitative empirical research project was conducted in North East England, seeking to answer how primary schools can support ASR children and families when they first begin school, explored through child and family perspectives. Four families took part in the research, which involved eight semi-structured interviews (four with children, four with adults). Using reflexive thematic analysis, two themes (comprised of five subthemes) were generated. The two themes are (1) impactful relationships and (2) refining school support. The results of this research offer novel findings about what is important to ASR children and families. It hopes to inform how educationalists can work with ASR families when they first begin school, with a specific emphasis on the educational psychologist’s role in working with

school staff and families. This chapter has been prepared for submission to the British Educational Research Journal.

Chapter 4

This chapter provides a reflective account of my research journey: I explore how this research has impacted me both personally and professionally, and how these experiences will influence my future practice.

Acknowledgements

For my family, your love and belief in me shapes who I am today.

For my supervisors, Richard and Heather, your endless patience, wisdom and encouragement made this work possible.

For those who selflessly gave me your time so I could listen to your stories, I remain humbled and awed by your strength.

Thank you, all of you, for your light and for helping me to shine a little bit brighter.

Table of Contents

1 Chapter One. Literature Review: How can schools support asylum-seeking and refugee children in England? 10

1.1 Abstract 10

1.2 Introduction 10

1.3 Methodology 12

1.3.1 Steps 1–2: Planning the review; performing scoping searches, identifying the review question, and writing the protocol 13

1.3.2 Steps 3–6: Literature searching; screening titles and abstracts; obtaining papers; and selecting full-text papers 14

1.3.3 Step 7: Data extraction 16

1.3.4 Step 8: Quality assessment 21

1.3.5 Step 9: Analysis and synthesis 24

1.4 Discussion 27

1.4.1 Analytical theme one: Staff as a valuable resource 27

1.4.2 Analytical theme two: Peer relationships 29

1.4.3 Analytical theme three: Flexibility and delivery of the curriculum 30

1.4.4 Analytical theme four: School ethos 32

1.4.5 Analytical theme five: Fostering the home–school relationship 33

1.5 Implications for educational psychologists 34

1.6 Limitations 36

1.7 Conclusion 37

2 Chapter Two. Methodological and ethical critique 38

2.1 Introduction 38

2.2 A bridge from the Systematic Literature Review to empirical research 38

2.3 Conceptual framework 39

2.3.1 Personal rationale 39

2.3.2 Philosophical paradigm 39

2.3.3 Critical Race Theory 40

2.3.4 Participant sampling.. 41

2.3.5 Interviews 41

2.3.6 Transcription as part of analysis... 42

2.3.7 Reflexive thematic analysis 42

2.4 Ethical considerations 45

2.5 Summary 47

3 Chapter Three: Empirical research.. 48

3.1 Abstract 48

3.2 Introduction 48

3.2.1 Background 48

3.2.2 Schools' role in supporting needs 49

3.2.3 Research aims 50

3.3 Methodology 50

3.3.1 Research context 50

3.3.2 Methodological approach 50

3.3.3 Participants 52

3.3.4 Interviews 55

3.3.5 Ethical considerations 56

3.3.6 Data analysis methods.. 56

3.4 Analysis and discussion 57

3.4.1 Theme one: Impactful relationships 59

3.4.2 Theme two: Refining school support 63

3.5 Implications for educationalists and educational psychologists 71

3.6 Research limitations... 76

3.7 Conclusion 76

4 Chapter Four: Reflections on my research journey 77

4.1 Introduction 77

4.2 An emotive topic for discussion.. 77

4.3 The importance of reflexivity 78
4.4 Implications for practice: learning about who I am and who I strive to be 80
5 References 83
6 Appendices 99
6.1 Appendix A. Forms used for child and adult participants (introduction, consent and debrief) 99
6.2 Appendix B. Interview guide and questions 108
6.3 Appendix C. Transcription protocol 110
6.4 Appendix D. Excerpt of an interview transcript 112
6.5 Appendix E: Examples of extracts that contribute to each subtheme 117

List of Tables

Table 1. Stages of Systematic Literature Review (Boland et al., 2017) 12
Table 2. Study inclusion criteria 13
Table 3. Literature search terms 14
Table 4. The final six papers from the literature search 16
Table 5. Data extraction 17
Table 6. Quality assessment using the CASP (2018) tool and WoE tool (Gough, 2007) 22
Table 7. Study contributions to descriptive themes 25
Table 8. How descriptive themes contribute to analytical themes 26
Table 9. Six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) 43
Table 10. How initial themes contributed to the final themes 45
Table 11. Key tenets of Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2009; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002) 51
Table 12. Participant overview 54
Table 13. Family members present during each interview 56
Table 14. Theme and subtheme characteristics 58
Table 15. Summary of implications for educationalists and how educational psychologists could support them 73

List of Figures

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram (Page et al., 2021) ... 15

Figure 2. A conceptualisation of how schools can support pupils through an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) ... 26

Figure 3. Implications for educational psychologists ... 36

Figure 4. Initial child thematic map ... 44

Figure 5. Initial adult thematic map ... 44

Figure 6. A conceptualisation of how space for research can be co-created (Wilson & Neville, 2009) ... 47

Figure 7. The consent process ... 52

Figure 8. Images used during child interviews as a stimulus for discussion ... 55

Figure 9. Final two themes and their subthemes ... 57

Figure 10. Ethnic groups in the teacher profession in 2020/21: National Foundation for Educational Research (Worth et al., 2022) ... 68

1 Chapter One. Literature Review: How can schools support asylum-seeking and refugee children in England?

1.1 Abstract

Rising incidents of conflict and violence have led to a great increase in the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide. Schools can have a significant impact on how successfully asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children settle and adapt to their new lives. This systematic literature review explores how schools can support ASR children in England. It is considered through an ecological systems framework, with six qualitative research papers being chosen and analysed using thematic analysis. Five analytical themes are discussed: (1) staff as a valuable resource; (2) peer relationships; (3) flexibility and delivery of the curriculum; (4) school ethos; and (5) fostering the home–school relationship. These findings provide guidance for schools and further implications for educational psychologists.

1.2 Introduction

An estimated 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced around the world at the end of 2020 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2020), which is the highest figure ever recorded (Refugee Council, 2021b). Approximately 42% (35 million) of these people were children (UNHCR, 2021).

A *refugee* is someone who, for fear of being persecuted, is 'outside the country of [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear…is unwilling to return to it' (UNHCR, 1951, p. 14). An *asylum seeker* is someone who has experienced the same fear and displacement, but is awaiting a decision for refugee status following an application for asylum (Sturge, 2023). In the year ending September 2021, the UK received 37,562 asylum applications (from main applicants), with 64% being granted asylum or another form of protection (Home Office, 2021). There is no accurate data on the number of asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children in the UK (NALDIC, 2017). However, annual school census data does include statistics on pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), which was over 1.6 million (19.3%) in England in 2021 (Department for Education [DfE], 2021a). We can logically infer that many ASR children who attend schools in England are likely included within this statistic, yet the lack of distinction within data may result in these children being treated uniformly with their non-ASR peers (McIntyre et al., 2020).

Every child has a right to an education (United Nations, 1989). Stated in the Education Act 1996, local authorities in the UK have an obligation to provide full-time education for children aged 5–16 years and teachers have a responsibility to dispel any barriers to pupils' achievement (DfE, 2014). Despite these obligations, policy guidance for education in England has not specifically considered provisions for ASR children since a DfE (2007) document. Little investment has been made to support ASR children's education, and the assumed normative pathways of education fail to recognise the ongoing impact of resettlement, with insufficient acknowledgement of children's prior experiences and proficiencies (Morrice et al., 2020).

This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) examines existing research to determine the enabling and disabling factors when supporting ASR children in schools. Specifically, it seeks to answer:

> **How can schools support asylum-seeking and refugee children in England?**

This SLR is considered through an ecological systems framework, which conceptualises individuals within a nested arrangement of environments, from immediate settings to larger social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). *Support* is conceptualised in its widest sense, focusing on early support (i.e. when ASR children begin school) while acknowledging that further support will be required over time.

1.3 Methodology

The review structure follows Boland et al.'s (2017) method, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Stages of Systematic Literature Review (Boland et al., 2017)

Step	Description
1	Planning the review
2	Performing scoping searches, identifying the review question and writing the protocol
3	Literature searching
4	Screening titles and abstracts
5	Obtaining papers
6	Selecting full-text papers
7	Data extraction
8	Quality assessment
9	Analysis and synthesis
10	Writing up, editing and disseminating

1.3.1 Steps 1–2: Planning the review; performing scoping searches, identifying the review question, and writing the protocol

Scoping searches were carried out, confirming that (a) there was a suitable amount of relevant literature and (b) the review question had not yet been specifically answered. Inclusion criteria were refined then finalised through the literature search, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Study inclusion criteria

Criteria	**Justification**
Study type: empirical only	To access primary data and relevance to the topic. To specifically research practice.
Publication language: English only	To aid accessibility for the researcher.
Country: UK only	To ensure the similarity of settings and future applicability of findings to UK schools and policies.
Population: centred on ASR pupils	To answer the research question.
Publication quality: peer-reviewed	To ensure a degree of quality.
Publication year: 2010–present	May 11, 2010, a new coalition government came into power in the UK, resulting in policy changes, such as: • The 2014 Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme was launched; • The 2016 Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme was launched; • The Immigration Act 2014 and 2016 received Royal Assent; and • Following the departure of the UK from the European Union, a new immigration system was enacted in 2021. These examples each affect people seeking to enter and entering the UK as asylum-seeking or refugee people. Outside of the UK context, there are ongoing, worldwide conflicts (e.g. in Sudan and Myanmar) and natural disasters (e.g. drought in Somalia) (UNHCR, 2022b).
Setting: primary and secondary schools only	To narrow the focus for themes and generalisability.

1.3.2 *Steps 3–6: Literature searching; screening titles and abstracts; obtaining papers; and selecting full-text papers*

Using the search terms shown in Table 3, searches were conducted between July and October 2021 in the British Education Index (BEI), Child Development & Adolescent Studies (CDAS), Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC), PsycINFO, Scopus and Web of Science. These searches were concluded once saturation appeared to be reached. The database thesaurus function was used where possible to ensure that related terms were also included in the searches.

Table 3. Literature search terms

Boolean operator	**Search terms**
	refugee* OR "asylum seek*" OR "asylum-seek*" OR “sanctuary seek*” OR “sanctuary-seek*”
AND	child* OR pupil* OR student OR "young person" OR "young people" OR youth* OR minor OR teen* OR adolescen* OR family
AND	school* OR educat* OR teach*
AND	"United Kingdom" OR UK OR Brit* OR England OR Scotland OR Wales OR "Northern Ireland"
NOT	health

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) screening process (Page et al., 2021) was followed, as shown in Figure 1. Relevant studies were initially screened by title and abstract, with thirty papers then being assessed in full for eligibility. Six were finally included, as shown in Table 4. Citation chaining through forwards and backwards searching was conducted for best practice (Boland et al., 2017).

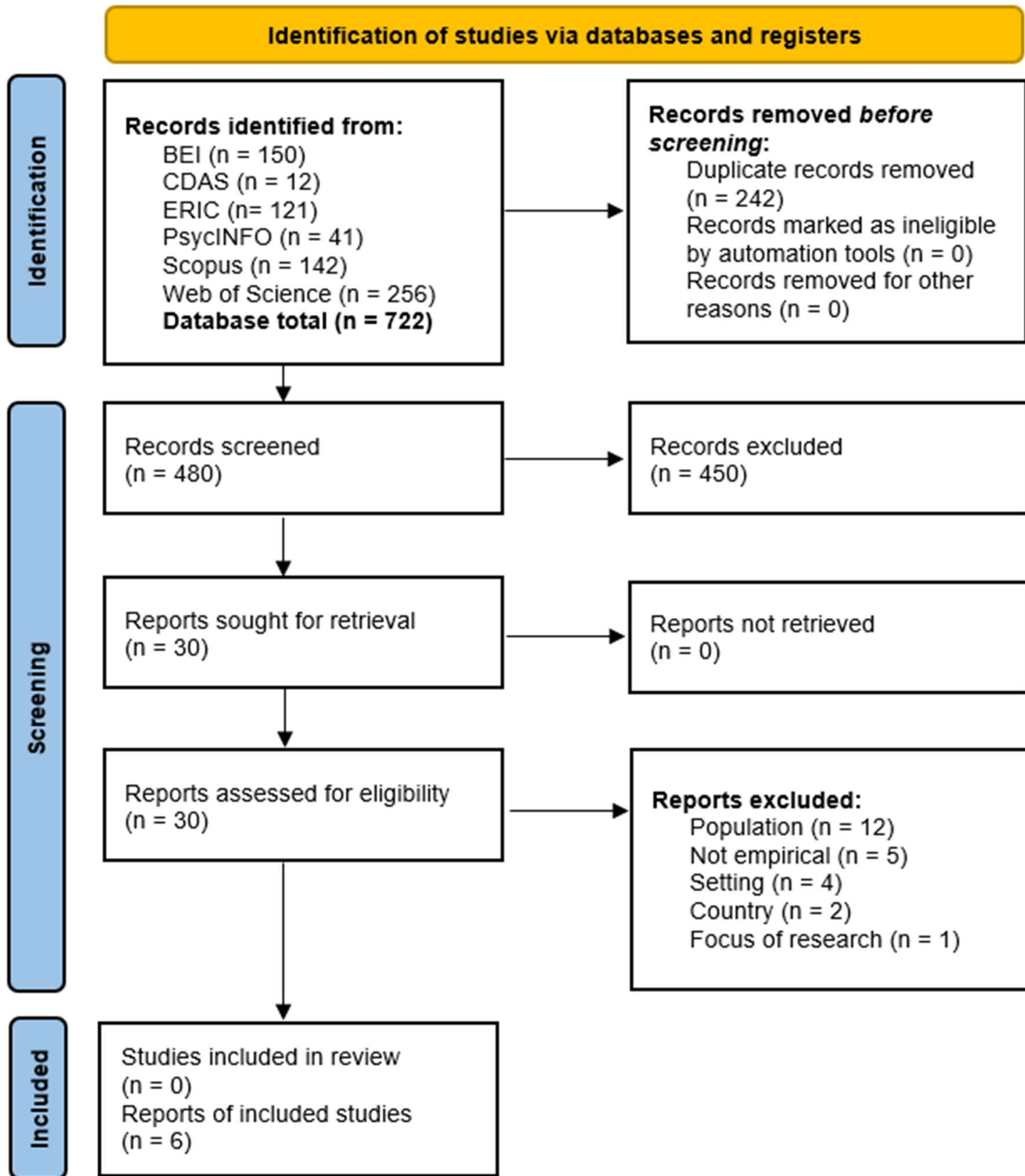


Figure 1. PRISMA diagram (Page et al., 2021)

Table 4. The final six papers from the literature search

Author	Year	Title
Fuller and Hayes	2020	What are the experiences of education for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in the UK?
Hastings	2012	The experience of male adolescent refugees during their transfer and adaptation to a UK secondary school
Madziva and Thondhlana	2017	Provision of quality education in the context of Syrian refugee children in the UK: opportunities and challenges
McIntyre and Hall	2020	Barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools in England
Ott and O'Higgins	2019	Conceptualising educational provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in England
Thommessen and Todd	2018	How do refugee children experience their new situation in England and Denmark? Implications for educational policy and practice

1.3.3 Step 7: Data extraction

During this process, a data extraction table was created and refined, as shown in Table 5. Descriptive (i.e. study characteristics) and analytical (i.e. study outcomes) data were extracted to facilitate an understanding of the studies in relation to the review question (Fleeman & Dundar, 2017). For Thommessen and Todd's (2018) paper, only data related to England was extracted. Data extraction was carried out independently, which is a limitation of this research. To minimise inconsistencies and errors, the process was repeated one week later (Fleeman & Dundar, 2017).

Table 5. Data extraction

Paper	Research aims or questions	Where and when data was collected	Participants	Study design, methodology and data collection methods	Theoretical framework used	Outcomes
Fuller and Hayes (2020) What are the experiences of education for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors [UASMs] in the UK?	'…to ascertain the experiences of education for UASMs.' (p. 415.)	Not stated.	6 UASMs. 5 male, 1 female. 18–19 years old at interview; entered UK when 13–17 years old.	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Semi-structured interview. No interpreters used.	Not stated.	5 key themes: • education facilitating socializing; • education and English proficiency leading to a better life in the UK; • the impact of transitions; • the impact of external stressors; and • wanting additional resources to learn at their own pace.
Hastings (2012) The experience of male adolescent refugees during their transfer and adaptation to a UK secondary school	'…to gain an in-depth understanding of how male adolescent refugees experienced their transfer and adaptation to a secondary school in the UK.' (p. 337.)	A non-selective, non-denominational community school for boys in an inner-city locality. May–Nov. 2008.	6 adolescent male refugees.	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Semi-structured interview. No interpreters used.	Not stated.	3 superordinate themes: • needing and getting help; • feeling safe and secure; and • adaptation and belonging.

Paper	Research aims or questions	Where and when data was collected	Participants	Study design, methodology and data collection methods	Theoretical framework used	Outcomes
Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) Provision of quality education in the context of Syrian refugee children in the UK: opportunities and challenges	'(1) What does quality education mean for Syrian children given their pre- and trans-migration experiences? (2) How do the interrelated domains of the wider policy, the school and home/community environments as well as the role of language intersect in the development of quality education for Syrian refugee children?' (p. 950.)	Nottinghamshire; UK; 2 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. Faith-based and migrant support organisations. Local council. May–Nov. 2016.	8 Syrian families: 16 adults aged 30–55 years; 15 children and young people aged 7–21 years. 5 Syrian children of secondary school age for a focus group. 26 other participants: school teachers, council authorities[1], and representatives of faith-based and migrant support organisations.	Ethnographic research. Thematic analysis is described if not explicitly stated. Interviews and a focus group. An interpreter was used.	Tikly's quality education framework (Tikly, 2011).	5 key themes: • pre- and trans-migration education experiences; • the school environment; • the role of language; • partnership between home/community and the school; and • understanding of quality learning.

[1] The specific roles of the 'council authorities' were not described.

Paper	Research aims or questions	Where and when data was collected	Participants	Study design, methodology and data collection methods	Theoretical framework used	Outcomes
McIntyre and Hall (2020) Barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools in England	'Our research question in this study was about barriers to the inclusion of ASR children in English schools. We were particularly interested in the enactment and impact of national policies at city level.' (p. 587.)	2 secondary schools. Not stated when or where.	4 headteachers.	Thematic analysis is described though not explicitly named. Interviews. No interpreters were used.	Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).	3 key themes: • official processes and procedures (knowing the pupils' backgrounds, allocations and admissions); • resources (funding, recruiting skilled staff, time); and • city-level challenges (economically disadvantaged communities, housing).
Ott and O'Higgins (2019) Conceptualising educational provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children [UASC] in England	'1) What educational provisions are UASC in England currently accessing? and 2) How does provision interact with the needs of UASC in England?' (p. 559.)	Not stated.	Across 8 LAs in England: virtual school headteachers, teachers, social workers and third-sector providers.	Thematic analysis is described though not explicitly named. Semi-structured interview. No interpreters were used.	Not stated.	3 higher order topics: • educational provision (mainstream provision, English language provision, bespoke provision); • assessment of educational needs (initial assessment); and • additional support needed to access and remain in education.

Paper	Research aims or questions	Where and when data was collected	Participants	Study design, methodology and data collection methods	Theoretical framework used	Outcomes
Thommessen and Todd (2018) How do refugee children experience their new situation in England and Denmark? Implications for educational policy and practice	'…to gain an understanding of the needs and experiences of refugee children as they adjust and integrate into the asylum-country.' (p. 229.)	Not stated.	7 adult refugees who had arrived as children. 3 of these were related to the study in England, of which, 2 are male and 1 is female. 22–23 years old at interview; 4–13 years old at arrival.	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Interviews. No interpreters were used.	Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).	3 key themes: • language-based challenges extending to further difficulties; • choosing to succeed; and • gaining strength through social support and encouragement.

1.3.4 Step 8: Quality assessment

Differentiating the quality of research allows it to be assessed for rigour and relevance (Greenhalgh & Brown, 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), which is a crucial aspect of synthesis (Bilotta et al., 2014). A comparison of quality assessment tools was carried out, with the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) tool (CASP, 2018) and the Weight of Evidence (WoE) tool (Gough, 2007) then being chosen for use. The CASP tool was specifically developed for systematic reviews. It is a popular appraisal instrument – particularly for novice researchers (Hannes et al., 2010) – and it is endorsed by the Cochrane Qualitative and Implementation Methods Group (Long et al., 2020). However, though this tool was helpful in considering each study's rigour, it did not allow any judgement of relevance to the review question. In contrast, the WoE tool allowed for the evaluation of review-specific issues. Therefore, the CASP tool contributed to the WoE *A* judgement (about generic issues of quality), whereas the WoE *B* (study design and its relevance to the review question), *C* (study focus) and *D* (overall assessment) judgements were review-specific.

As shown in Table 6, the six papers have clear research aims, with appropriate qualitative methodologies and clear statements of findings, and they all make valuable contributions to research. The papers were judged as being of *medium, medium/high* or *high* relevance to the research question. However, there was no explicit consideration for the relationship between the researcher and the participants, nor any exploration of the implications of this. Further, ethical issues were not discussed in three of the papers. Given the associated vulnerability of displaced people, ethical considerations should be a priority to any such research (Pittaway et al., 2010); research must go beyond 'do no harm' (Mackenzie et al., 2007, p. 299).

Table 6. Quality assessment using the CASP (2018) tool and WoE tool (Gough, 2007)

Quality appraisal tool	Judgement	Fuller and Hayes (2020)	Hastings (2012)	Madziva and Thondhlana (2017)	McIntyre and Hall (2020)	Ott and O'Higgins (2019)	Thommessen and Todd (2018)
CASP (assessed as *yes*, *no* or *can't tell*)	Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes
	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	No	Can't tell	Can't tell
	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes
	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	How valuable is the research? (Open-ended question)	Reasonably valuable	Valuable	Valuable	Reasonably valuable	Valuable	Valuable

Quality appraisal tool	Judgement	Fuller and Hayes (2020)	Hastings (2012)	Madziva and Thondhlana (2017)	McIntyre and Hall (2020)	Ott and O'Higgins (2019)	Thommessen and Todd (2018)
WoE (assessed as *low*, *medium* or *high*)	WoE A: generic issues about the quality of the execution of a study, such as being explicit and transparent.	Medium	Medium/High	High	Medium	Medium/High	High
	WoE B: study-specific issues about the employed study design and its relevance to the review question.	High	High	Medium	Medium/High	High	High
	WoE C: study-specific issues about the focus of the study.	High	High	Medium	Medium/High	Medium/High	High
	WoE D: An overall assessment of the extent that a study contributes evidence to answering a review question.	Medium/High	High	Medium	Medium/High	Medium/High	High

1.3.5 Step 9: Analysis and synthesis

This review has a critical realist philosophical underpinning, which posits an ontological realism and epistemological constructivism: there is a real world that exists independent of ourselves, and our understanding of this world is through subjective perception (Maxwell, 2012).

A thematic synthesis method (Thomas & Harden, 2008) was selected to analyse and synthesise the six studies. This method allies with critical realism as it assumes a shared reality while acknowledging the interpretation of data (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). It also takes an inductive approach, where themes are data-driven (Nicholson et al., 2016), which can produce outcomes that inform policy and practice by moving beyond the original data to create fresh interpretations of phenomena (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). Other methods were also considered, such as meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1988) and meta-study (Paterson et al., 2001). However, their greater emphasis on interpretation makes them less suitable to the critical realist perspective.

Thematic synthesis has three stages (Thomas & Harden, 2008):

1. line-by-line inductive coding of the original study findings according to meaning and content;
2. translation of concepts from one study to another through the creation of descriptive themes, with new codes created to capture these; and
3. use of descriptive themes to create new interpretations in the form of analytical themes that answer the review question.

All findings and discussion sections were coded and analysed using NVivo (QSR International, 2020), a qualitative data analysis program that reduces manual tasks and gives researchers more time to recognise themes and reach conclusions (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). Datasets unrelated to the review question were removed.

Initial codes were generated and aggregated into ten descriptive themes, as shown in Table 7. These descriptive themes were explored in relation to the research question, where they were further translated into five analytical themes, as shown in Table 8. The analytical themes were considered through Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems framework lens. The systems include microsystems (i.e. the individual's immediate settings), mesosystems (i.e. relationships between the immediate settings), exosystems (i.e. settings that indirectly affect the child) and macrosystems (i.e. societal structures, policies and

beliefs) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)[2]. The individual at the centre of these systems is considered agentic in 'shaping environments, evoking responses from them, and reacting to them' (Darling, 2007, p. 204). The SLR findings are conceptualised within these structures in Figure 2.

Table 7. Study contributions to descriptive themes

Descriptive themes	**Fuller and Hayes (2020)**	**Hastings (2012)**	**Madziva and Thondhlana (2017)**	**McIntyre and Hall (2020)**	**Ott and O'Higgins (2019)**	**Thommessen and Todd (2018)**
Child's own strengths, needs and wishes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community response and bridges	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Language	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pre- and trans-migrational experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Role of (and within) family	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Role of school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
School intake process	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-
Social integration/inclusion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Socio-political context	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[2] The chronosystem (i.e. changes across time) was added in later iterations of the ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Table 8. How descriptive themes contribute to analytical themes

Descriptive themes	**Analytical themes**				
	Staff as a valuable resource	Peer relationships	Flexibility and delivery of the curriculum	School ethos	Fostering the home–school relationship
Child's own strengths, needs and wishes	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Community response and bridges	-	-	-	✓	-
Language	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Pre- and trans-migrational experiences	✓	-	-	-	✓
Role of (and within) family	-	-	-	-	✓
Role of school	✓	-	✓	✓	-
School intake process	-	-	✓	✓	-
Social integration/inclusion	-	✓	-	✓	-
Socio-political context	✓	-	-	✓	-
Staff	✓	-	-	-	-

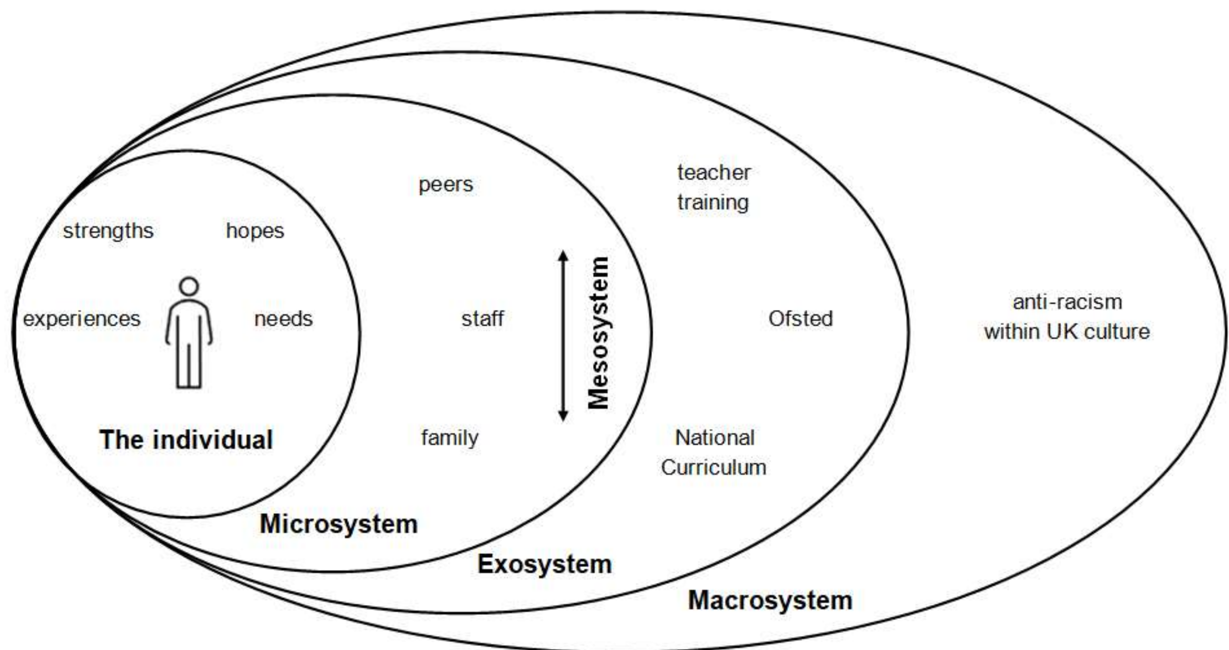


Figure 2. A conceptualisation of how schools can support pupils through an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

1.4 Discussion

1.4.1 Analytical theme one: Staff as a valuable resource

ASR pupils' achievements are enabled by their teachers' efforts to help them develop necessary capabilities (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). They perceive teachers as helpers who protect them from bullying (Hastings, 2012), motivate them to learn (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), develop their ambitions (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Thommessen & Todd, 2018) and offer pastoral support for their personal problems (Hastings, 2012). Such support can create deep and lasting impressions on children, giving them a stronger sense of belonging and self-belief, and a desire to aim high and achieve. This demonstrates the crucial role of staff (Thommessen & Todd, 2018) within the microsystem.

Relationship quality may be the most important contributor to a child making positive adjustments to their new school (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). When teachers give emotional and social support to a pupil, it increases the pupil's enjoyment of school, which, in turn, improves their academic and social outcomes (Hallinan, 2008). Newly arriving ASR children show an increased academic engagement and performance when they have supportive relationships with their teachers (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Hastings (2012) argues that this teacher–pupil relationship shares similar characteristics to the relationships children have with their secure attachment figures: showing consistency and reliability, demonstrating genuine interest and investing in the relationship. Bergin and Bergin (2009) suggest that a pupil's attachment to their teachers influences their success in school, with strong teacher–pupil relationships fundamental to their achievements.

However, when using an attachment model to consider these relationships, it is important to also consider cultural and socioeconomic perspectives, as attachment research is still limited outside North America and Europe (Mesman et al., 2016). A more helpful focus may be to consider the quality of the teacher–pupil relationship from the child's viewpoint. Schools that focus on relational approaches create caring connections between teachers and pupils, and they view school as a community (Baker et al., 1997). Relational approaches can be developed through intersubjectivity and attuned interactions, where intersubjectivity is the receptiveness to 'subjective states in other persons' (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001, p. 4) and attunement refers to 'a harmonious and responsive relationship where both partners…play an active role' (Kennedy et al., 2010, p. 63).

Staffs' own backgrounds can be an enabling factor for ASR pupils. For example, in Thommessen and Todd's (2018) study, one participant shared a memory of a teacher who is black, like them, and who they viewed as a maternal figure:

> …there was one good teacher, Miss F, I still remember her. She looked after us. She was black as well. Everyone else was white or Asian. So we sort of looked at her like mum number two – she would help us out... (p. 232).

The School Workforce Census shows that, in 2020, where ethnicity was known, 15% of teachers in state-funded schools in England identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group (DfE, 2021b). In contrast, in 2020, this figure was 23.3% for children aged 5–16 years in England (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Ethnic minority teachers can bring multilingual expertise and a lived understanding of racism (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993). They can be role models, raising aspirations for children from the same ethnic minority groups (Pole, 1999). Increased representation of ethnic minority staff within public services is needed, particularly in leadership positions, to reflect the populations they serve (Pickett & Taylor-Robinson, 2021). To recruit and retain ethnic minority teachers, society must value diversity and actively work towards anti-racism requirements (McNamara & Basit, 2004) within the macrosystem.

The importance of English language learning was identified and discussed in all six papers. However, some teachers feel they are not being sufficiently trained in how to support EAL learners (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). Many ASR children may be included within this broad category, which gives no indication of any individual's existing language proficiencies. Teacher training can influence pupils indirectly at the exosystemic level (Thommessen & Todd, 2018). Standard 5 in the Teacher's Standards (DfE, 2021c) outlines the requirement for teachers to understand the needs of all pupils, including those with EAL. Yet it can be challenging to understand these needs when the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (DfE, 2019) does not reference terms such as *EAL*, *bilingual* or *multilingual* in any context. Further, there is currently no specific EAL curriculum in England, despite the expectation that EAL is taught through the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014). Continued professional development for teachers could include how to adapt their teaching to be suitable for EAL (and ASR) pupils, such as by using appropriate language-supportive pedagogy to develop multilingual capabilities (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). Further, as ASR pupils have unique experiences related to experiences of displacement (Stevenson & Willott, 2007), teacher training would also benefit from a nuanced approach to this population – one where EAL status does not solely dominate.

1.4.2 Analytical theme two: Peer relationships

Receiving acceptance from teachers and peers has a positive impact on pupil achievement (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014). Establishing peer relationships can help ASR pupils settle into their new school environments (Hastings, 2012). Further, ongoing support from their peers can help ASR pupils learn the English language (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), facilitating their resettlement and affecting how they feel about school (Fuller & Hayes, 2020), protecting them from feelings of fear and loneliness (Hastings, 2012) and being an important catalyst for their 'positive integration and wellbeing' (Thommessen & Todd, 2018, p. 27) within the microsystem. However, peers can also have a negative impact. For example, ASR students often experience peer bullying (Hastings, 2012), discrimination (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017) and racism (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019; Thommessen & Todd, 2018).

Peer relationships strongly influence academic learning (Butler & Liu, 2019), and new language learning is faster for ASR pupils than for their parents[3] because the pupils have greater contact with 'native peers' (Thommessen & Todd, 2018, p. 13). Research highlights the importance of peers and peer scaffolding on additional language learning (Ohta, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998), which is rooted in sustained interpersonal interactions (Carhill-Poza, 2015). It can also be beneficial for peers to understand more helpful methods of communication. For example, speech rate and vocabulary choice can be initial barriers, and the use of nonverbal communication and simplified words can be more enabling (Fuller & Hayes, 2020).

Schools can positively affect pupils' opportunities to cultivate healthy friendships (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). Interventions at the mesosystemic level can help. For example, pupils can be taught about current global conflicts and displacements, preparing them for new arrivals in advance and encouraging befriending (Fazel, 2015). Taylor and Glen (2020) found that developing empathy in host-society children can facilitate more welcoming attitudes. Their study involved children aged 8–11 years hearing real-life stories of displacement and focusing on how newly arriving ASR children may be feeling. Further, vicarious contact interventions can create confidence and provide a solid base before actual contact occurs (Cameron & Turner, 2016). For example, this can be achieved through stories of positive intergroup contact, which allows pupils to experience vicarious contact while avoiding possible anxiety or negative feelings that might arise from actual contact (Cameron et al., 2006). Schools can carry out similar interventions – ones that are suitable

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[3] In this SLR, the term *parents* is used to refer to both parents and carers.

for their contexts – with the added benefit that such interventions allow widespread application.

Positive peer experiences help pupils 'return to a normative trajectory of social development' (Schwartz et al., 2021, p. 2), while negative peer experiences can be a source of stress (Parker et al., 2006). The impacts of negative peer experiences were discussed in all six papers, particularly related to racism. In literature, acts of racism tend to be described as discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping (Van Dijk, 1992). Some papers indicate racism through language such as *bullying* (Hastings, 2012), *discrimination* (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017) and the description of an environment that 'doesn't necessarily accommodate newcomers very well' (McIntyre & Hall, 2020, p. 593), and three of the papers directly mention racism. One educator identified 'underlying racism hostility' (Ott & O'Higgins, 2019, p. 567) by peers as a barrier to education, and one young person spoke of being subject to racist bullying (Fuller & Hayes, 2020). Thommessen and Todd (2018) discuss the issue in more depth, with participants providing examples of when they received racist or stereotyped comments. Here, the participants felt stigmatised by these comments but chose to use them as motivators for academic success. If schools are to support the needs of pupils, they must have an ongoing commitment to anti-racism within policy and practice, starting from the macrosystem and continuing in the microsystem.

1.4.3 Analytical theme three: Flexibility and delivery of the curriculum

A broad and balanced curriculum is important (McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019), and it should include provisions tailored to individual needs (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). In addition to mainstream and targeted support (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019), some papers discuss the implications of language learning, including how important language is to access learning and social opportunities (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), how it can be a barrier to early assessment (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019), and considerations of multilingualism to develop linguistic capabilities (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Hastings, 2012; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019). While curriculum design lies within the exosystem, curriculum delivery lies within the microsystem.

A broad and balanced curriculum involves more than English language teaching. Ott and O'Higgins (2019) highlight the importance of life skills, and knowledge of community and local facilities, and McIntyre and Hall (2020) discuss how education should be rich in content knowledge, skill development and experiential learning. Some ASR pupils desire further learning opportunities and resources that allow them to learn at their own pace, which

indicates a longing to be autonomous in their learning (Fuller & Hayes, 2020). Autonomy is described as a basic psychological need within self-determination theory; it is a sense of self-governance that increases motivation and improves wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Further, a desire for autonomy may be a coping strategy for the challenges of living in a new country, and a way of self-empowerment (Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Teachers who are supportive in building pupils' autonomy bring about 'greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and desire for challenge' in their pupils (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71).

ASR pupils arrive in the UK with a range of prior educational experiences (Association of Directors of Children's Services, 2016), and schools should appropriately analyse these experiences and critically consider the provision they are offering (McIntyre & Hall, 2020). Schools benefit from having an accurate initial assessment of pupils to understand what support is needed; assessment should then be ongoing (Ott & O'Higgins, 2019). Smaller class sizes with additional home-language support allow ASR pupils to understand a new education system in their own language first (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). However, a prompt integration into a mainstream class may be appropriate for some ASR pupils, and this may lead to better outcomes (Ott & O'Higgins, 2019). A flexible approach suited to individuals is required. Rutter (2006) describes a school with a helpful set of arrangements, with well-developed support for new arrivals, including thorough assessment of educational needs before starting, allocation of classes based on peer support for home language, a part-time induction programme and strong links with local authority staff.

Language is required to communicate with others, access the curriculum and engage in interactive learning (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). Language learning contributes to a sense of belonging at school and in the UK (Hastings, 2012), while language challenges can create barriers for pupils (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019; Thommessen & Todd, 2018). ASR pupils can be torn between a desire to communicate with peers in their home language and using English with others to assist their learning (Fuller & Hayes, 2020). Some ASR pupils consider their first language to be a barrier to learning English, and they try to avoid using it (Thommessen & Todd, 2018). However, García and Wei (2014) argue that a bilingual approach has greater cognitive and pedagogic benefits; learning English is vitally important, but so is maintaining the home language (Pinson et al., 2010). Schools should ensure that the whole school community is aware of the benefits of first language development in school (Hastings, 2012). For example, schools that are responsive to the linguistic needs of multilingual pupils often engage in translanguaging (Bajaj & Bartlett, 2017), which focuses on using an individual's full 'language resources to achieve their purposes' (Conteh, 2018, p. 446), in an effort to respect and cultivate all the linguistic skills

multilingual pupils bring (García & Kleyn, 2016). Though translanguaging can occur naturally, 'teachers may benefit from learning how to cultivate and best leverage it' (Bajaj & Bartlett, 2017, p. 30), and training is particularly successful when introduced gradually and adapted to existing curricula (Gorter & Arocena, 2020).

1.4.4 Analytical theme four: School ethos

Within the microsystem, the research identifies the importance of schools having a welcoming environment (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019) and being a safe space (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Hastings, 2012; McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019). Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) argue that schools need to promote equal opportunities and define their approach to inclusion. Exploring ASR pupils' views of inclusion can help schools to develop their practice (Hastings, 2012). A good induction period is helpful when ASR pupils first begin a new school (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Hastings, 2012), and this should include opportunities to understand cultural norms (Ott & O'Higgins, 2019).

Bryant et al. (2013) suggest that schools can create a welcoming ethos by listening to pupils' voices and trying to engage with them, their parents and their community. Further, they argue that welcoming schools are also safe schools who protect pupils from bullying while helping them develop resilience. Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) found that teachers demonstrated an awareness of the need to create a welcoming environment. However, McIntyre and Hall (2020) found that some headteachers perceived that ASR students were 'dumped' (p. 595) on them, and some schools appear to deliberately limit their admission numbers to prevent them accepting more ASR pupils.

People who seek asylum have often left their home country due to safety fears (Liebling et al., 2014; UNHCR, 1951). When arriving in their host country, they may obtain physical safety but not immediate psychological safety (Goldsmith, 2008). The Human Givens theory recognises safety and security as a key psychological need (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), and safety needs are also recognised within the Maslow (1943) needs theory. Feeling unsafe at school is a significant barrier to learning (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014). Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan (2021) suggest that building a welcoming and inclusive school includes leadership engagement and the empowerment of pupils, utilising their strengths and unique perspectives.

Inclusion is considered a step beyond integration (Rodriguez & Garro-Gil, 2015); it refers to the quality of education within an integrated setting, which is linked to a school's pursuit for equity for all pupils (Farrell, 2000). Developing an inclusive ethos can remove barriers to participation and promote wellbeing for all pupils (Block et al., 2014). Schools need to define

their approaches to inclusion (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), and engaging with pupils' views can facilitate this (Ainscow & Messiou, 2017). Ainscow et al. (2006) suggest inclusion should involve: a continuous process to respond to diversity; a focus on how barriers can be identified and removed; a concern with the participation, achievement and presence of pupils; and a moral responsibility to ensure learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion, marginalisation and underachievement are carefully monitored. In secondary schools, McIntyre and Hall (2020) identify class sizes and mid-year admissions as barriers to inclusion: sometimes, classes are already full, and even if the ASR pupil has a skill or interest in the area, there is no option for them to join the class. Therefore, despite a commitment to inclusion, the realities of school life can preclude it.

A good induction period at school can help welcome ASR pupils when they first arrive (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Hastings, 2012). They should be given a tour of the school and be introduced to key members of the school community (Fuller & Hayes, 2020). Further, they should be informed about school rules, basic procedures and the geography of the local area (Hastings, 2012). ASR pupils will likely experience cultural differences between schooling, with a new education system that is different to what they are used to (Fuller & Hayes, 2020; Hastings, 2012; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Thommessen & Todd, 2018). They often need to learn how UK schools operate, including expected classroom behaviours and teacher pedagogy (Pinson et al., 2010). Ofsted (2003) highlights the importance of good induction processes for pupils, which, in addition to supporting their psychosocial needs (Block et al., 2014), are particularly valuable for ASR pupils who join midway through a school year (Hek, 2005b).

1.4.5 Analytical theme five: Fostering the home–school relationship

At the mesosystem level, schools should work to engage with parents of ASR pupils (Hastings, 2012), as the home–school relationship has an indirect influence on children (Thommessen & Todd, 2018). One barrier to success in this relationship can be when parents and teachers have different perspectives on educational priorities for pupils (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). For ASR families, language plays a critical role in fostering the relationship (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017).

Fostering links with parents is important within a whole-school approach, and strengthening their involvement is key to inclusive education (Block et al., 2014). Their involvement is most successful when it is embedded into the school ethos, whereas differing parent–teacher agendas and attitudes can be a barrier (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Parents from refugee backgrounds have high ambitions, expectations and aspirations for their children (Madziva &

Thondhlana, 2017). These can be a driving force for successful educational achievement (Schnell et al., 2015). Further, while schools prioritise prerequisite capabilities, parents may expect their children to be placed in provisions that reflect their pre-migration levels, and they may believe that desired outcomes should be achieved within an expected amount of time (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). This difference in perspective can create a barrier to the home–school relationship. Additionally, a limited understanding of the UK education system may reduce the support a parent can offer their child (Christie & Szorenyi, 2015; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Schnell et al., 2015). As such, parents require support to understand how a school operates, the language needed, who is in charge and communication protocols, and schools must develop ‘culturally responsive, systematic approaches to working with parents’ (Gaitan, 2006, p. 69). However, teachers can lack confidence and knowledge in this area, and they can benefit from training in how to engage effectively with parents, especially when working with parents whose backgrounds are different to their own (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011).

Language plays a critical role in facilitating strong teacher–parent relationships and home–school partnerships, and capabilities need to be developed by teachers and parents (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). To support communication between home and school, some ASR pupils will interpret for parents and teachers. When ASR children become interpreters, it brings additional responsibilities and changes their role within the family (Shakya et al., 2014; Thommessen & Todd, 2018). This can become either an opportunity for empowerment or a burden (Shakya et al., 2014) – a source of pride or anxiety, or both (Crafter & Iqbal, 2020). The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017b) suggests ‘the use of children as interpreters is rarely appropriate, as it places them in a difficult and prematurely adult role towards their parent’ (p. 10). However, parents often prefer to use their own children rather than professional interpreters; they believe it will give them greater confidentiality, and it allows their children to act as an advocate for their family (Crafter & Iqbal, 2020). Before a school chooses to use ASR children to support home–school communication, they should first critically consider the best interests of the child.

1.5 Implications for educational psychologists

Educational psychologists (EPs) work within schools and communities across the 0–25 year age range (DfE and Department of Health, 2015). They can have significant influence within decision-making processes about educational provision (Fallon et al., 2010). Further, the BPS (2022) suggest that EPs can support schools through:

- the promotion of education and development;

- consultation;
- assessment and formulation;
- intervention and evaluation;
- service delivery and organisational change;
- training and development; and
- research and enquiry.

As Figure 3 shows, the findings from this SLR are relevant to EPs across each of these functions. Figure 3 acknowledges EP practice as being bound by the Health and Care Professions Council's (2016) standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and the BPS standards of accreditation, practice guidelines and code of ethics (BPS, 2017a, 2021b, 2022).

To support families and schools effectively, EPs must reflect on their own knowledge and practices. Over thirty years ago, Booker et al. (1989) identified the need for the profession to combat anti-racist practices. Further, the BPS (2006) outlined the history of racism within the early development of psychology; this included how racism continues to permeate education, of which educational psychology is a part. EPs must critically question the relevance of research that has emerged from white Western communities when working with a range of diverse cultural backgrounds (Williams et al., 2015). The BPS (2006) advocates for the continued professional development of EPs to promote race equality. EPs are encouraged to acknowledge 'their own ethnocentricity and possible underlying socially conditioned prejudice to people who are "different"' (BPS, 2017a, p. 33). The BPS' Division of Educational and Child Psychology is in the process of forming an implementation group whose core function will be to promote anti-racism and inclusion within the profession (BPS, 2020). EPs must acknowledge and respond to an increasingly multicultural UK.

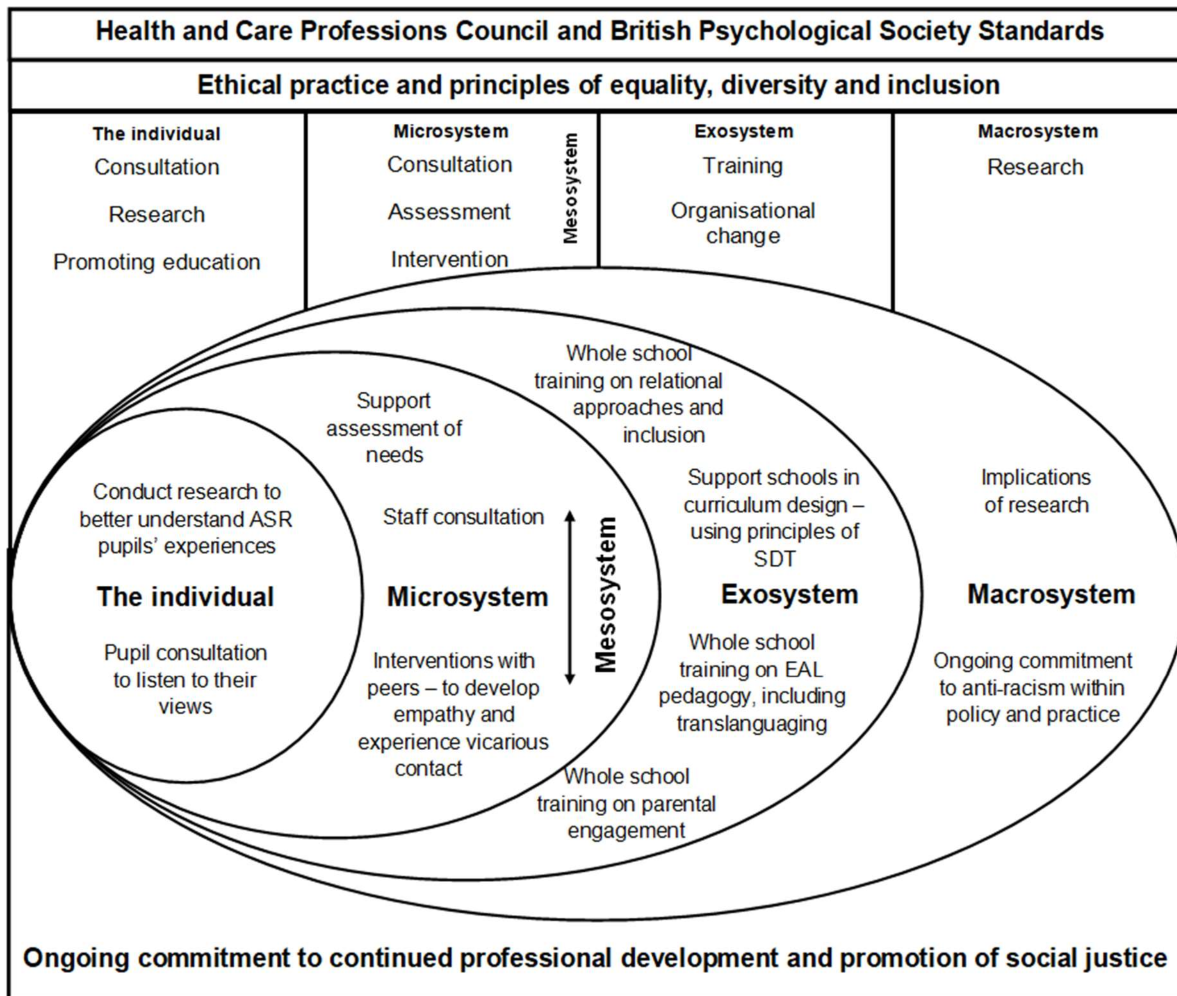

Figure 3. Implications for educational psychologists

1.6 Limitations

This SLR contributes an understanding of this area through a sole researcher's perspective, as filtered through an ecological systems framework and critical realist lens. My own judgements were used in determining what to include and omit, and these judgements were not compared with another's. As such, an inherent bias has likely been introduced into the research process; ideas that resonated with me were taken forward and ideas that could have been equally important were likely abandoned. Woolgar (1988) discusses inconcludability as a 'methodological horror', irresolvable within research, stating that 'the task of exhaustively and precisely defining the underlying pattern (meaning) of any one representation is in principle endless' (p. 32). There is always more to be described, discussed and reflected upon (Parker, 1999). Therefore, the findings of this review do not seek to promote a single approach but should instead be used as a guide for further discussion. Changes to practice and policy must be tailored to each local context and suited to the heterogenous needs of ASR pupils.

1.7 Conclusion

This SLR explored how schools can support ASR children in England. Insight and guidance for schools and EPs were discussed based on five analytical themes: (1) positive teacher–pupil relationships; (2) supportive peer relationships; (3) the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum, including language learning and the necessity of a flexible approach; (4) a welcoming, inclusive and safe school environment; and (5) strong home–school relationships. EPs can support schools to develop and implement policies and practices at each ecosystemic level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) through the core functions of their work (BPS, 2022). They should also recognise their ongoing responsibility to acknowledge and respond to the UK becoming increasingly multicultural, and to reflect on their own knowledge and practices. Future research could further explore the lived experiences of ASR children, particularly those from a younger age group, and their families.

2 Chapter Two. Methodological and ethical critique

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the decision-making processes of the research, as informed through my conceptual framework. A conceptual framework justifies why a study is important by describing (a) what is currently known, (b) any potential gaps in understanding and (c) the methodological underpinnings. I discuss personal reflexivity (i.e. how my own values, experiences and beliefs shape my research) and epistemological reflexivity (i.e. the implications of my assumptions about the world and knowledge) (Willig, 2013). Further, as a bridging document, this chapter clarifies how the findings from my systematic literature review (SLR) informed my empirical research. It also highlights key ethical considerations.

2.2 A bridge from the Systematic Literature Review to empirical research

The SLR was carried out to explore the enabling and disabling factors when supporting asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children in schools, seeking to better understand how schools in England can support this population. Six qualitative, empirical research papers were synthesised and discussed (see Table 4).

Of these six papers, only Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) included younger participants (i.e. from the age of 7 years compared to 12+ years) and families. As these younger voices were indistinctly represented, a research gap was noted in terms of the voices of primary-school-aged ASR children and their families. Such research could shape school support to be based on what was important to this population, rather than professionals. The empirical research aims to diminish this research gap by listening to ASR children and families' experiences and perspectives. The empirical research focus is:

> **An exploration of what child and family perspectives can tell us about how primary schools can support asylum-seeking and refugee children and families when they enter the English education system.**

The research aims are to understand children's and families' perspectives of available support and their respective views on how this might be developed.

2.3 Conceptual framework

2.3.1 Personal rationale

This research began with my interest in the experiences of families who newly arrive to England, particularly regarding their children starting school here. Prior to becoming a trainee educational psychologist, I was a primary school teacher in a village school. Historically, this school had little ethnic diversity and, as such, when they welcomed asylum-seeking families, the staff had little knowledge of trauma-informed or English-as-an-additional-language pedagogies. Staff drew on their existing knowledge and did their best for the children and families, but with uncertainty that what they did was best practice.

Starting school in England as a migrant was something I experienced as a child, and it had a profound effect on me. I am Chinese. I migrated to England at a young age, and my parents and I lived in an area with little ethnic diversity. It was a difficult period of my life – one in which I felt isolated and powerless. No one spoke Chinese at school, and I did not speak English. I knew no one. I missed home. I was lost.

I view this research as an opportunity to help ease the challenge of starting school in England for other migrant children. As I began reading widely about migration, I noted two distinct pathways: voluntary migration and forced displacement. I was initially interested in exploring both areas. However, on August 15, 2021, when the Taliban captured Kabul following the withdrawal of foreign forces (BBC, 2021b), I was deeply moved by what I saw and heard on the news, and the direction of my research became clear: I wanted to focus on ASR populations, particularly as more ASR families would be arriving to England as a direct result of the conflict in Afghanistan (Home Office, 2022). Even after starting the research, forced displacement again came into prominence when the Russian Federation launched a military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022 (BBC, 2022).

2.3.2 Philosophical paradigm

Methodology is the underlying approach to research, reflecting the paradigm or theoretical framework used (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This research reflects my axiological belief in social justice and human rights; it aligns my developing world view with a transformative paradigm, with a focus on increasing social justice for members of diverse groups (Mertens, 2010). It specifically addresses ‘power issues, social justice, and cultural complexity throughout the research process’ (Mertens, 2007, p. 213). Within this axiology, I take a critical realist approach: ontologically, reality is objective and exists independently of perception; and epistemologically, the definition of this reality is subject to individual interpretation (Taylor, 2018). It acknowledges a ‘real’ world but asserts that information

about this world needs to be interpreted to be further understood (Willig, 2013). Bhaskar (2008) describes a stratified reality composed of the *real* (i.e. enduring and existing mechanisms that are independent of people), the *actual* (i.e. events generated by the *real*) and the *empirical* (i.e. experiences or observations of events). This research is focused on exploring the empirical.

This is a qualitative study seeking to explore the perspectives of ASR children and their families in starting primary school in England. Qualitative research explicitly acknowledges the role of the researcher and how they influence the research process (Willig, 2013). Given that research is not a value-free activity, reflexivity is important, involving the 'practice of critical reflection on [my] role as researcher, and [my] research practice and process' (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 5) and interrogating what, how and why one does things and the impacts and influences these elements can have on research (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This acknowledges that researchers play an inherently subjective role within the process, shaping recruitment, the researcher–researched relationship and how information is generated and interpreted (Berger, 2015). It explicitly acknowledges the subjective role of the researcher, and this subjectivity can be considered a resource for analysis (Gough & Madill, 2012).

2.3.3 Critical Race Theory

I approached this research through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens. Originating in the United States, CRT understands racism as being ingrained in everyday life (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and 'neither aberrant nor rare' (Taylor, 2009, p. 4). In alignment with a transformative paradigm and a critical realist approach, CRT explores and challenges how racial inequality is perpetuated and maintained in society (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Further, it foregrounds race and racism throughout the research process, and it empowers minoritised groups, privileging experiential knowledge of how the education system is experienced and responded to by pupils of colour (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In addition, CRT is seen as is a lens through which the understanding of educational barriers can first be deepened, then resisted and overcome (Taylor, 2009).

I completed my SLR in early 2022 believing that my understanding of CRT had influenced my analysis and discussion. However, after continuing to engage more deeply with CRT and its central tenets (which are shown in Table 11 in Section 3.3.2), I have since realised that I had not used CRT as a lens in the SLR. Not all anti-racist perspectives equate with CRT, which is a highly specific analytical frame with transformative aims (Taylor, 2009). I am a different researcher than I was a year ago; I consider my empirical research analysis to be anti-racist, founded on CRT understandings. Further, if I were to do my SLR again – with the analytical skills and understandings I have since gained – I know it would look wholly

different. This is an exciting aspect of research: it can be akin to an adventure that 'inevitably brings surprises, changes of direction and some uncertainty to the research process' (Willig, 2013, p. 177).

2.3.4 Participant sampling

Purposive sampling was used, where families who fitted the criteria of the study (detailed in Section 3.3.3) were approached (Campbell et al., 2020). This was supported by gatekeepers. Trustful relationships between gatekeepers and participants are necessary for the researcher–participant relationship (Emmel et al., 2007). Similarly, researchers must take time to build such relationships with gatekeepers (Abrams, 2010), who may have concerns over issues of confidentiality and potential negative effects of participation (Mirick, 2016). Additional participants were recruited through an initial respondent's social networks, a method known as 'snowballing' (Sadler et al., 2010). See Appendix A for information, consent and debrief forms.

2.3.5 Interviews

Qualitative interviews can serve to communicate the viewpoints of those who may not ordinarily be heard (Kvale, 2006). Semi-structured interviews were used, with an emphasis 'on meaning rather than lexical comparability' (Willig, 2013, p. 29) as some participants were supported by an interpreter. These semi-structured interviews were conducted with the child and family members either together or separately. The interview guide (see Appendix B) consisted of a small number of general, open-ended questions, succeeded by follow-up questions that were relevant to individual participants' experiences and responses (Willig, 2013). Interviews were conducted between July and August 2022 and lasted between 26 and 72 minutes. They took place in the families' homes, as preferred by the families. Starkweather (2012) argues that the family home is likely conducive for family interviews as it is a site of intimacy and sociability.

It is an ethical responsibility to facilitate an environment where participants feel comfortable to tell their stories (Maclean & Harden, 2014). The adults were present in the room for all child interviews, and some adults contributed to certain parts of the child interviews, offering factual corrections or encouraging and reassuring the child. In daily life, children seek parental support, so it is reasonable to expect similar behaviour within a research context (Hillier & Aurini, 2018). Further, in research where children and their parents were interviewed together, it was found that parental presence can be comforting for children, and it also gives the opportunity for parents to contribute follow-up questions to prompt further detail (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007; Harden et al., 2010; Maclean & Harden, 2014).

When using family interviews, it is 'important to critically reflect on the implications of this approach at all stages of research' (Starkweather, 2012, p. 294). For example, Punch (2005) highlights the unequal power relations between adults and children. However, Maclean and Harden (2014) argue that such methodological assumptions may lead to missed opportunities to further explore and understand family life. Reflexive engagement is required so that researchers remain responsive to context, location and individual needs (Harden et al., 2010).

2.3.6 Transcription as part of analysis

The transcribing of oral interviews is a complex process (Tolgensbakk, 2020) that is part of the method and analysis of qualitative research (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). An added complexity of this research is that, during the interviews, participants either spoke English as an additional language or their home language, mediated through an interpreter. I transcribed all interviews for this research. Where languages other than English were used, this was noted but not transcribed, using the English interpretation instead. There is an ethical responsibility to ensure that 'transcripts are accurate reflections of the interview and that interpolation does not occur' (Wellard & McKenna, 2001, p. 185). During the transcription process, I listened to audio recordings multiple times to avoid interpolation – that is, the conscious or unconscious insertion of missing words or grammar to make sense of what was said (Mishler, 1984). However, there is an unavoidable element of interpretation when analysing interview transcripts. For example, silences within speech may have multiple meanings, and what is omitted may be as profound as what is shared (Poland & Pederson, 1998).

When transcribing, Wellard and McKenna (2001) suggest that 'a format that will support analysis while still creating a complete picture is optimal' (p. 184), possibly through creating one's own system. Seibert (2022) argues that transcription is a subjective endeavour, influenced by a researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, and transparency of the transcription process is 'a mark of quality in qualitative research' (p. 503). Further, transparency demonstrates ethical sensitivity (Markle et al., 2011). For consistency of transcription and transparency, I created a transcription protocol (shown in Appendix C) that details the decision-making process and notations used for the transcriptions. An excerpt of an interview is given as an example in Appendix D.

2.3.7 Reflexive thematic analysis

I chose reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as the transcript analysis method. This approach emphasises the reflexive researcher as a fundamental characteristic of the analysis (Braun

& Clarke, 2022). Braun and Clarke (2022) offer guidelines for the recursive process of RTA, as summarised in Table 9.

Table 9. Six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

Phase	Descriptor
1	Familiarising yourself with the dataset
2	Coding
3	Generating initial themes
4	Developing and reviewing themes
5	Refining, defining and naming themes
6	Writing up

After producing handwritten analytical notes and codes during the data familiarisation process, I carried out a second round of coding using Nvivo (QSR International, 2020). Systematically refining coding through multiple rounds ensures rigour, and each coding run proceeded through the dataset in a different order. This was, as Braun and Clarke (2022) recommend, to avoid an unevenly coded data set. Meaning was coded primarily at the inductive, semantic level and to some extent at the latent level. This may reflect my position on my research journey; Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest that coding by novice researchers is often semantic as this is more easily accomplished. Elements of deduction, as influenced by CRT and my prior experiences and knowledge, led to an abductive approach to data analysis (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). A recursive process was taken with the interpretation of data: a back and forth between the data and creation of initial themes. Themes are actively created and shaped by a researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2022), produced at ‘the intersection of data, analytic process and subjectivity’ (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594). They are underpinned by a central organising concept, with patterns of shared meaning identified across the dataset (Terry et al., 2017).

I created 165 codes for the child interview transcripts and 232 codes for the adult transcripts. Five initial themes were generated for these codes, as illustrated by the respective thematic maps in Figures 4 and 5. Thematic maps are visual representations of thematic analysis, displaying themes and connections, and they are used to aid the development and refinement of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). These are akin to thematic networks, presented as a ‘web-like network’ (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388).

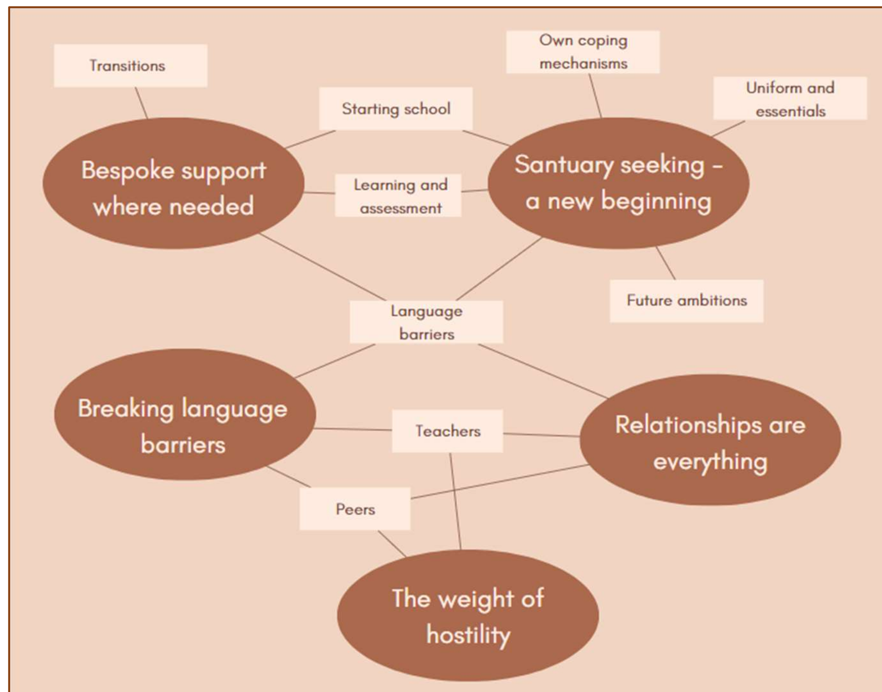

Figure 4. Initial child thematic map

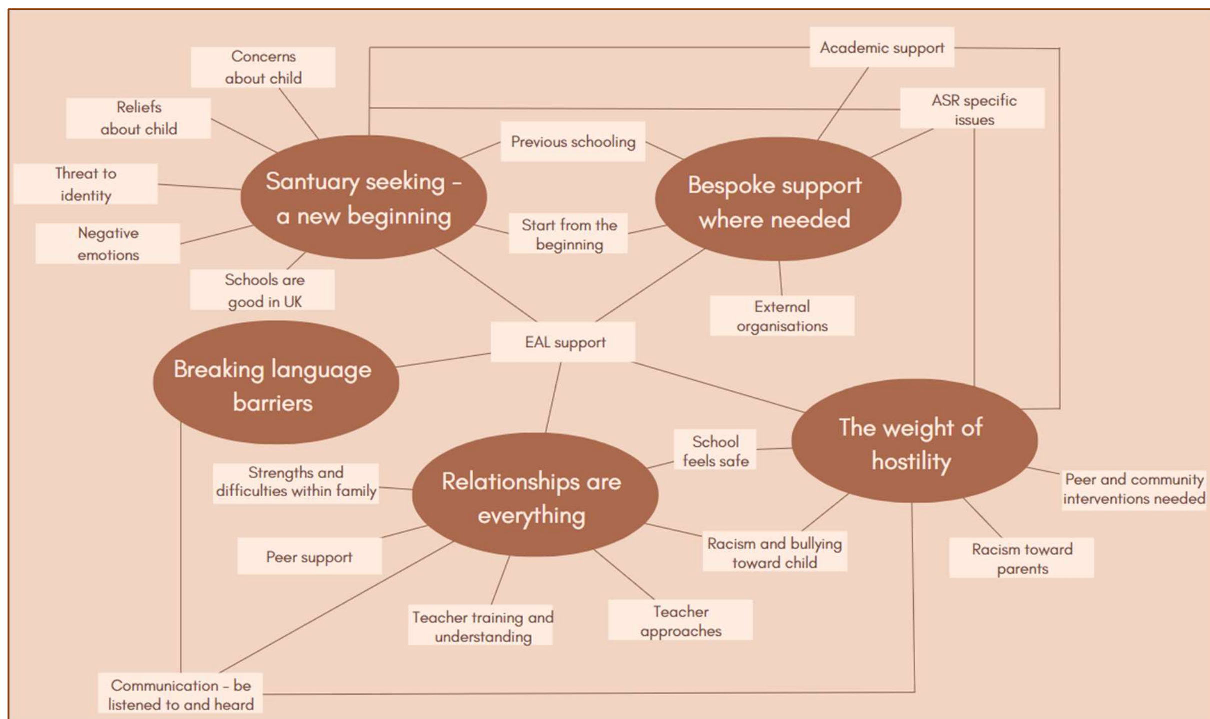

Figure 5. Initial adult thematic map

Interviewing children can yield a depth of illuminating information (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2016). I intended to keep child and adult views separate, to prevent child voices from being lost or subsumed within the adult voices. However, through reflection and discussion with my research supervisors, and given the similar initial themes between both sets of voices, I decided that merging the child and adult views would result in a greater depth of analysis

and cohesion to my discussion. In a continuation of the recursive process of RTA, the initial themes were further developed and aggregated into two final themes and five subthemes, shown in Figure 9 in Section 3.4. Table 10 outlines how the separate child and adult themes contributed to the subsequent merged child and adult themes.

Table 10. How initial themes contributed to the final themes

Initial themes		**Final themes**				
		Impactful relationships		Refining school support		
		Connecting with peers	Teachers care and teachers' care	Helping overcome initial English language barriers	Understanding wellbeing through a trauma-sensitive perspective	Supporting academic engagement and progress
Bespoke support where needed	Adult	-	-	✓	✓	✓
	Child	-	-	✓	-	✓
Breaking language barriers	Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
	Child	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Relationships are everything	Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
	Child	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Sanctuary seeking – a new beginning	Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Child	-	-	✓	-	✓
The weight of hostility	Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Child	✓	✓	-	-	-

2.4 Ethical considerations

This research received enhanced ethical approval from Newcastle University. Additionally, I am guided by the Code of Ethics and Conduct (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2021b), the Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2021a) and the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (Health and Care Professions Council, 2016). However, even during the practice of rigorous research, unpredictability and ethically challenging moments can still arise (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Ethical codes and committees can be less helpful in such contexts, where the process of research requires immediate action (Guillemin &

Heggen, 2009). Reflexivity is a helpful resource that allows researchers to remain ethical in practice and navigate such challenging moments (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Interviews indicated that some schools were engaging in unethical practices related to ASR families, such as the unwarranted exclusion of a child. This left me feeling uncertain how to proceed. I questioned where my ethical responsibility lay, particularly in consideration of participants' rights to anonymity. This remains an ethical consideration, as after the interview, the parent sought direct support from me regarding the school giving her son a fixed-term exclusion. She explained that she did not know where else to turn. My immediate instinct was to offer direct support, sliding into the 'rescuer' mode described by Karpman (1968). This was accompanied by feelings of guilt (i.e. that I could do more to help this family). In taking the dilemma to supervision, a plan was created and implemented, where I asked the parent for permission to contact appropriate local authority support services on their behalf and share their contact details. I have yet to hear back from the participant, and I now worry about a perceived break in our trust. I am also anxious about what has subsequently happened to their son. A further ethical decision made in practice was when a parent asked for their real name to be reported rather than a pseudonym. This was an unexpected request, and I discussed the potential difficulties that could arise from this in a way that I hope was sensitive and respectful. The parent agreed and chose a pseudonym instead.

Qualitative research is often dependent on the relationship between the researcher and participant, with good rapport necessary to generate a depth of data while maintaining respectful interactions (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). This dilemma centres on the power relations between researcher and participant, and these differentials will typically exist, even when consciously minimised (BPS, 2021a). For example, Kvale (2006) argues that research interviews are defined by the researcher and are not generally reciprocal interactions between equal partners. Due to the nature of in-depth interviews such as those that explore participant experiences, there is a greater depth of relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Morecroft et al., 2004). As these relationships are not sustained post-research, it can feel like a rapport was created only for the gain of the researcher. However, Morecroft et al. (2004) and Lowes and Paul (2006) found that participating in interviews can also lead to therapeutic benefits, such as seeing the interview as an opportunity to talk and be heard. In interviews where researchers seek to understand an experience, participants may feel more empowered in their position (Miller & Glassner, 1997). It is important to be transparent with participants regarding the aims of research, from the start and thereafter, with a debrief and signposting for further support.

This research sought to create a culturally safe space where, as much as possible, participants were equal contributors to the research agenda and the terms under which it was conducted. Wilson and Neville (2009) conceptualised this co-creation, as shown in Figure 6, emphasising the creation of a ‘power with’ rather than a ‘power over’ approach. Based on this conceptualisation, I held a sense of cultural humility within my interactions with participants (including during the interviews). This involves a practice that avoids being self-focused and is characterised by respect (Hook et al., 2013). Although I enter all interactions with my existing beliefs, values and worldviews, I do not believe these are superior to others’; instead, I approach interactions with openness and genuine curiosity.

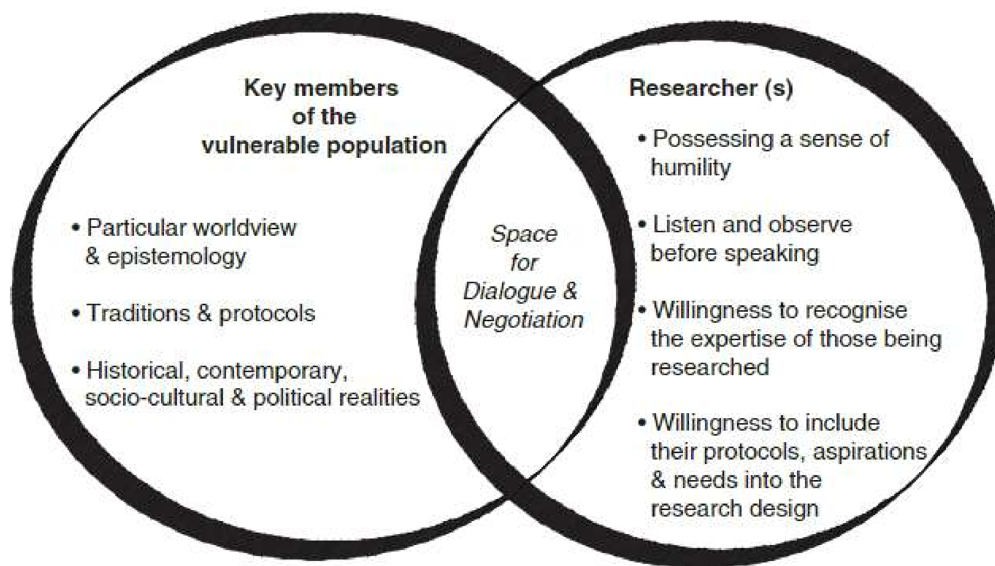

Figure 6. A conceptualisation of how space for research can be co-created (Wilson & Neville, 2009)

2.5 Summary

This chapter provided an opportunity for me to critique my methodological approaches, when moving from my SLR to empirical research. My personal rationale acted as a motivator, and engaging with this is important to being a reflexive researcher. I reflected on my philosophical paradigm and developing understanding of CRT, particularly regarding how this has shifted between chapters one and three. Further methodological considerations of participant sampling, interviews, transcriptions and analysis were also discussed. Finally, I considered my ongoing ethical practices and how to carry out my research in a culturally safe space. Chapter three will detail the empirical research.

3 Chapter Three: Empirical research

3.1 Abstract

A qualitative empirical research project was conducted in North East England, seeking to answer how primary schools can support asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children and their families when they enter the English education system, as explored through child and family perspectives. Four families took part in the research, resulting in eight semi-structured interview transcripts (four with children, four with adults). Using reflexive thematic analysis, two themes (comprised of five subthemes) were generated: (1) impactful relationships and (2) refining school support. The results of this research offer novel findings about what is important to ASR children and families. It can inform how educationalists should work with ASR families when they first begin school, with specific emphasis on the educational psychologist's role in working with school staff and families.

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 Background

Rising incidents of conflict and violence have led to a great increase in the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide (Castles, 2017), reported as approximately 82.4 million at the end of 2020 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2020). This is the highest figure ever recorded (Refugee Council, 2021b).

A *refugee* is someone who is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or unwilling to return to it, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution (UNHCR, 1951). This fear of persecution distinguishes refugees from other migrant groups (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016). An *asylum seeker* is someone who has experienced the same fear and displacement, but is awaiting a decision for refugee status following an application for asylum (Sturge, 2023).

As of November 2022, there were 231,597 refugees, 127,421 pending asylum cases and 5,483 stateless people[4] in the UK (UNHCR, 2022a). The number of children represented in these population data remains unknown, as adults and children are not differentiated. The closest data comparison is with the number of asylum applications by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, which was 2,291 in 2020 (Refugee Council, 2021a). This invisibility

[4] Stateless people include refused asylum seekers and those who have been offered no protection by their country of origin (Blitz & Otero-Iglesias, 2011).

of children within data could mean asylum-seeking and refugee (ASR) children are more easily grouped with adults and positioned as 'problems' (McIntyre et al., 2020).

Resettlement leads to multiple challenges for children and their families, such as language learning, unfamiliar education systems, family network disruptions, housing insecurities and hostile communities – all faced while recovering from displacement and trauma (Block et al., 2014). Few studies pay specific attention to refugee young people, with the assumed normative pathways of education failing to recognise the ongoing impacts of resettlement (Morrice et al., 2020). Historically, educational support for ASR pupils has been subsumed within general support for underachieving groups (Stevenson & Willott, 2007).

3.2.2 Schools' role in supporting needs

Primary education is a basic human right (UNHCR, 1951; United Nations, 1948, 1989). Refugee children's early experiences of school can have a significant impact on how successfully they settle and adapt to their new life (Hek, 2005a). Schools are one of the 'first and most influential service systems' that ASR children encounter (Bešić et al., 2020, p. 730), and they play a critical role in supporting social inclusion and providing appropriate interventions and targeted support (Block et al., 2014).

Without any complete data on ASR children, we cannot know how many ASR children are in English schools (McIntyre et al., 2020). Even if this data was known, Pinson and Arnot (2010) suggest that an argument could be made to not publish it because it could lead to more explicit policy, which appears to increase racial tensions. However, this invisibility and subsequent lack of policy leads to little support, advice and funding for schools.

The Department for Education (DfE, 2021) shows that 1.6 million pupils (19.3%) in England speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). Many ASR children are likely subsumed within this figure, with the data offering no indication of the pupils' language proficiencies or whether they are recent arrivals. In addition to being less likely to speak English and more likely to be living in poverty, ASR children have a unique set of experiences related to displacement (Stevenson & Willott, 2007). Yet once they start school, their EAL status appears to dominate how they are perceived; subsequently, targeted EAL support becomes a focus, often at the expense of other curricular access (McIntyre et al., 2020). This approach presents ASR children as a homogenous group, and it fails to recognise their prior experiences and proficiencies.

3.2.3 Research aims

A systematic literature review helped provide context for this empirical research, demonstrating a need to explore school support from the perspectives of ASR children and their families. The research focus is:

> **An exploration of what child and family perspectives can tell us about how primary schools can support asylum-seeking and refugee children and families when they enter the English education system.**

The study has two research aims:

1. to understand what schools are currently doing to support ASR children and families, as experienced by the children and families themselves; and
2. to explore what ASR children and families feel schools can do to support future ASR children and families.

Support is considered in the broadest sense, without limitations to the type of support given (e.g. academic, social or emotional).

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Research context

This research was conducted in North East England, which hosts more asylum seekers and resettled refugees per 10,000 of its resident population than any other region in the UK (Walsh, 2022).

The North East is the least ethnically diverse region in England (Office for National Statistics, 2022). Such areas with little history of migration are most vulnerable to social tensions (Griffith & Halej, 2015). Further, the North East has the highest unemployment rate in the UK (Clark, 2022). In areas of high unemployment, migration can generate increased hostility because of concerns over how this might impact existing residents (Murray & Smart, 2017), such as perceived threats to jobs, housing and education (Malloch & Stanley, 2005). This is perhaps reflected in the historic Brexit vote, where the North East had the third highest percentage of Leave voters, at 58%, compared to the overall UK Leave voters at 51.9% (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2021a).

3.3.2 Methodological approach

This qualitative research takes a critical realist approach and uses an anti-racist analysis, founded on Critical Race Theory (CRT) understandings. CRT understands racism as ingrained in everyday life (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and is a commitment to social justice (Solórzano et al., 1998). Specific to education, it is a lens through which educational

barriers can be more deeply understood, resisted and overcome (Taylor, 2009). A summary of the key tenets of CRT is outlined in Table 11.

Table 11. Key tenets of Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2016; Taylor, 2009; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002)

Key tenet	**Description**
Racism as normal	Racism is not an anomaly that is isolated to the acts of individuals; it is endemic. It permeates the wider society, and it is a common experience for most people of colour. The very ordinariness of racism means it is frequently unacknowledged and maintained.
Interest convergence	Those who hold power within society seek to retain it, and social and racial justice is sought by those in power only when interests align (i.e. when benefits are gained by the dominant group).
Race as a social construction	Human beings are biologically similar; race is a social construction that has no scientific basis at the genetic level. Yet phenotypic differences are used and rationalised within society to create hierarchies. These hierarchies can shift according to the interests of the dominant group.
Intersectionality and anti-essentialism	An individual represents multiple identities, such as race, class, gender, sexuality and religion. CRT explores how the intersection of these can collectively exert a greater form of oppression. Anti-essentialism opposes the belief that people perceived to be of a single group will think and act in the same way.
Voice or counter-narrative	The voices of people of colour are often marginalised or silenced, yet their lived experiences and knowledge are vital, offering counter-narratives to challenge and expose the master narratives of those in power. Experiential knowledge is a strength, as it challenges 'unexamined assumptions made by the dominant culture' (Bernal & Villalpando, 2016, p. 82).
Myth of meritocracy	CRT challenges dominant claims of meritocracy, a belief that as opportunities are provided for all, individuals can prove their merits and achieve their goals (James, 2016).

Reflexivity is integral to qualitative research (Trainor & Bundon, 2021). I am Chinese, and I migrated to England at a young age. From a personal reflexive stance, despite not being a refugee, I share some similar experiences with the child participants: starting school in an unfamiliar education system, learning a new language, and adjusting to a new home and culture. This familiarity may allow me to engage with participants' perceptions in greater depth. However, I understand that researchers must also avoid projecting their own experiences as a lens to interpretation (Berger, 2015). Navigating the space between being an insider and outsider is complex (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), and remaining reflexive throughout is critical to this research.

3.3.3 Participants

Purposive sampling was used (Campbell et al., 2020), with families who fitted the criteria of the study being approached through gatekeepers from local authority teams and charity organisations who support ASR families in the North East. Additional participants were recruited through snowballing, which can be a helpful method when working in a culturally competent way (Sadler et al., 2010).

The following criteria were used when selecting participants:

- families from ASR backgrounds who have children currently attending Key Stage 2 (aged 7–11 years) and who began school in Key Stage 1 (aged 5–7 years) or Key Stage 2; and
- children who have been in the UK education system for less than 3 years.

Specific safeguards are required when research involves vulnerable populations. Participant autonomy should be respected, and there should be further opportunity for participants to understand the purpose and possible outcomes of research participation (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2021a). Consent was gained using the process outlined in Figure 7.

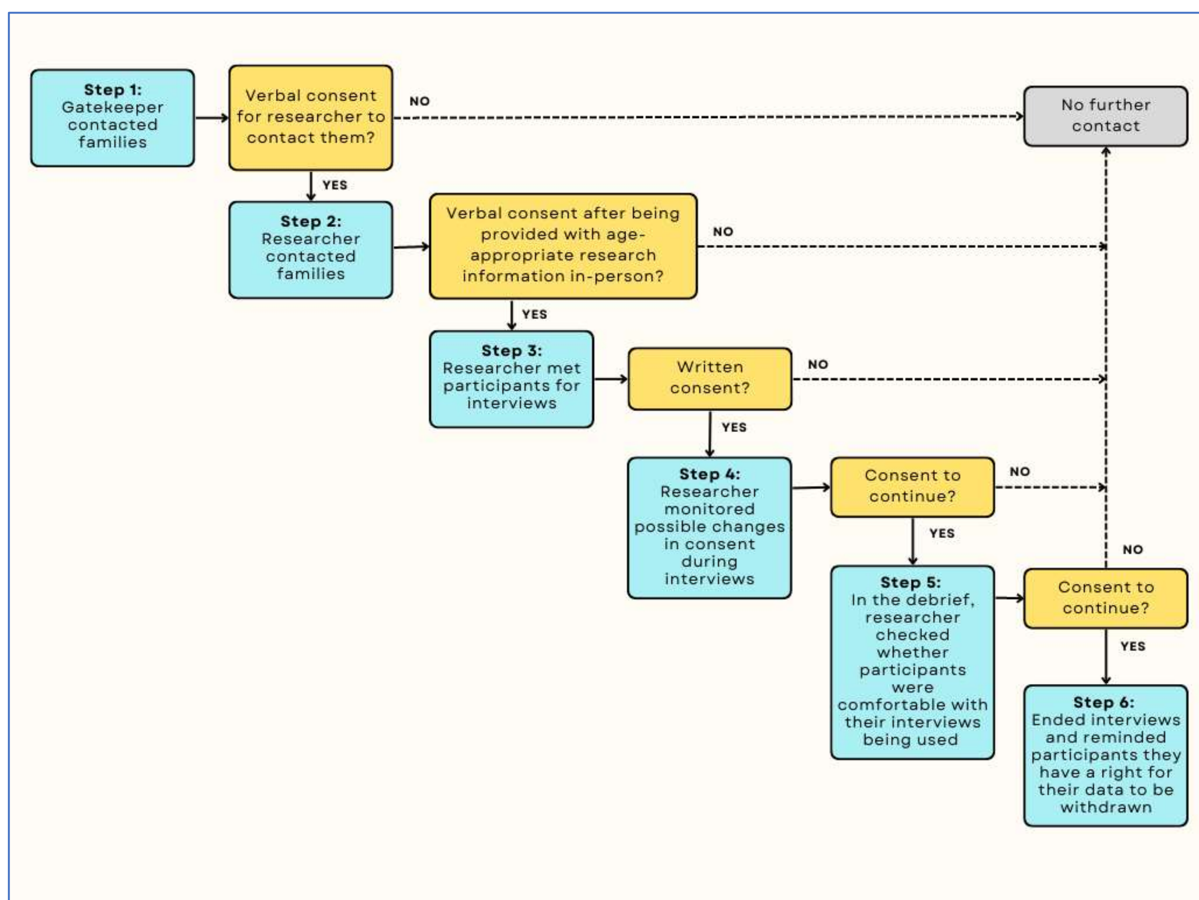

Figure 7. The consent process

Five families were initially interested in taking part in the research, with four deciding to continue after introductory meetings. Informed written consent was gained from these four families, comprising of eleven participants (five children and six adults). Eight interviews were conducted (four child-centred and four adult-centred), and professional interpreters were recruited to aid communication where requested. To support the interpreters' potential professional and emotional needs, they were each given a research brief prior to work being undertaken and they had the option of a debrief at the end. They were asked to accurately interpret everything shared, without summarisation or embellishment. However, as Temple (2002) suggests, interpreters have perspectives of their own, which are woven into their social interactions. Accordingly, they are active producers in research. One family requested to use an adult family member as the interpreter. Searight and Armock (2013) suggest that non-professional interpreters may change meanings when interpreting, or they may hold power over what the participant wishes to communicate. However, after thoroughly discussing this choice with the family, their request was respected.

Participant characteristics are outlined in Table 12. As an ethical decision, pseudonyms were chosen by the participants.

Table 12. Participant overview

Family	Pseudonym and role within the family	Gender of child	Age and year group of child	Year of starting school	Number of schools attended	Interpreter present?	Country of origin	Current status
1	Jasmin (child)	Female	11 years old, Year 6	2019	2	No	Chile	Refugee status granted
	Carmen (Mother)					No		
2	Tayba (child)	Female	11 years old, Year 6	2019	2	No	Sudan	Refugee status granted
	Esam (adult brother)					Esam took part in the interview and also acted as interpreter		
	Fatima (Mother)					Yes (Esam)		
	Malik* (Father)					Yes (Esam)		
3	Hasan (child)	Female	9 years old, Year 4	2020	2	No	Sudan	Refugee status granted
	Mazz (child)	Female	10 years old, Year 5			No		
	Adam** (Father)					Yes (virtual)		
4	Peter (child)	Male	8 years old, Year 3	2020	1	No	Nicaragua	Asylum-seeking status
	Susana (Mother)					Yes (virtual)		

* Malik was not initially due to take part in this research. However, as he was in the same room during the interview, he chose to join in with a section of the discussions. A consent form was signed post-interview, giving permission to include his views.

** Compared to other adult participants, Adam was more taciturn in response, affecting the ratio of participant data included in the analysis and discussion section of this research.

3.3.4 Interviews

Telling the stories of 'people whose experiences are not often told' (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32) is known as counter-storytelling. Listening to these stories is the first step to a deeper understanding of racism in the educational system (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Participants were encouraged to speak freely during their interviews, with an emphasis 'on meaning rather than lexical comparability' (Willig, 2013, p. 29). Semi-structured interviews were used (outline shown in Appendix B), allowing participants to guide the interview direction (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2016), with follow-up questions being asked to extend the relevance of the original questions to individual participants (Willig, 2013).

External cues can prompt a child's recollection of events more readily than questions (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). As such, images were used during the child interviews (shown in Figure 8) to stimulate and focus discussion. As a methodological and ethical decision, these images were designed to be free from interpretations of age, gender and ethnicity.

Figure 8. Images used during child interviews as a stimulus for discussion

Qualitative researchers have an ethical responsibility to facilitate an environment that enables participants to tell their stories (Maclean & Harden, 2014). Interviews took place in the families' homes, at their request. This is usually a conducive interview setting as it is the site of family intimacy and sociability in welcoming guests (Starkweather, 2012). Additionally, because parental presence can support children's comfort and willingness to express their

views (Eggenberger & Nelms, 2007), the respective adults were present in the room during all child interviews, as outlined in Table 13.

Table 13. Family members present during each interview

Family	Pseudonym and role within the family	Present during child interview	Present during adult interview
1	Jasmin (child)	Jasmin and Carmen	Carmen and Jasmin
	Carmen (Mother)		
2	Tayba (child)	Tayba, Fatima and Malik	Esam (who participated and interpreted), Fatima and Malik
	Esam (adult brother)		
	Fatima (Mother)		
	Malik (Father)		
3	Hasan (child)	Hasan, Mazz and Adam	Adam (and an interpreter)
	Mazz (child)		
	Adam (Father)		
4	Peter (child)	Peter and Susana	Susana (and an interpreter)
	Susana (Mother)		

3.3.5 Ethical considerations

Enhanced ethical approval for this research was provided by the Newcastle University Ethics Committee. The participants are part of a vulnerable population, and there is an ethical responsibility to protect them from harm (Hugman et al., 2011). Previous concerns raised by refugees who have participated in research include being exploited with their names and photos publicised, lack of feedback from researchers and the potential for traumatisation without any follow-up support (Pittaway et al., 2010). To pre-empt such concerns, (a) the right to withdraw consent and the right to anonymity were repeatedly revisited, (b) the debrief included signposting for further support, and (c) each participant was contacted after the research has been completed so that the findings can be shared directly with them.

3.3.6 Data analysis methods

3.3.6.1 Transcription

Transcribing oral interviews is a complex (Tolgensbakk, 2020) yet fundamental part of the method and analysis of qualitative research (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). I manually transcribed all interviews, which encouraged a greater depth of data immersion (Byrne, 2021).These transcriptions were anonymised and imported into NVivo, where they were read and reread for data familiarisation.

3.3.6.2 Reflexive thematic analysis

The interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), which is a ‘method for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset’ (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 4). The reflexive approach explicitly acknowledges the active role

of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019), and RTA offers an inductive and deductive approach that focuses on patterned meaning. The theoretical flexibility of RTA allows it to be informed by the philosophical paradigm and theoretical frameworks that resonate with me as a researcher. Further, it allows for the analysis of both semantic and latent meanings, offering description and interpretation of the participants' interviews (Byrne, 2021).

3.4 Analysis and discussion

Coding was primarily inductive. However, as pure induction is arguably impossible given individual researchers' unique perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2022), elements of deduction were also present, which were influenced by my CRT understandings (see Table 11), prior experiences and knowledge. This resulted in an abductive approach to analysis: a back and forth between data and theory, patterns and explanations (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). Given RTA's recursive nature, (Braun & Clarke, 2022), data and initial codes were revisited repeatedly to review and refine coding, subthemes and themes. The final two themes and their related subthemes are shown in Figure 9, and summarised in Table 14 along with example extracts. See Appendix E for further examples of extracts that contributed to the themes.

Grammatical and syntactic errors and discrepancies, as spoken in English by the participants, have not been corrected in the transcripts. For clarity, data extracts that contain irrelevant details have been removed (indicated by an ellipsis). Where clarifying information is needed, this is included in square brackets. The term *parents* used within the discussion refers to both parents and carers.

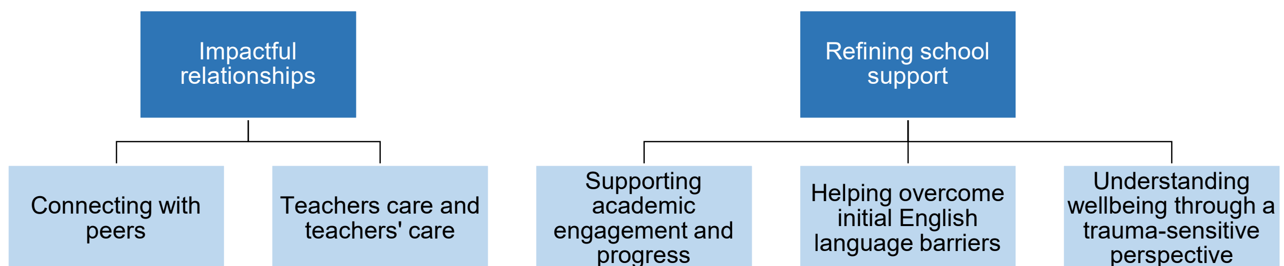

Figure 9. Final two themes and their subthemes

Table 14. Theme and subtheme characteristics

Theme	Subtheme	Characteristics	Example extracts from transcripts
Impactful relationships	Connecting with peers	The positive and negative impacts of peer relationships, and how schools could facilitate connections and respond effectively to bullying.	'Well, I hadn't really much friends when I came to school (R: Yeah) but then when I was getting used to it, that school. I had two friends and then three and then four then five and six and after that I got all of them.' (Peter)
	Teachers care and teachers' care	The caring approaches that teachers take in their relationships with children and parents, and practical suggestions of how these approaches can be further developed.	'…about the school meeting when he can, like, attend the…parent meeting, and he can see the…paperwork of [his] children…He's like get surprise of seeing these, er, paperwork of his kids.' (Adam, interpreted in third-person point of view)
Refining school support	Supporting academic engagement and progress	Parents can be supported to better understand the English education system. A sense of competence and achievement is important for children's motivation. Teachers need to have high expectations of children.	'…when Tayba was studying in [school name] (R: Yes), we didn't even know what Tayba used to study or what Tayba used to do (R: Mm). You are actually absolutely clueless.' (Esam)
	Helping overcome initial English language barriers	The need for planned and ongoing English language assessments, benefits of a bilingual approach, and valuing all language capabilities. Peers can support English language learning.	'The [teacher] speak Spanish so I could be confident.' (Jasmin) 'Someone's in the class with him speak Arabic and English… And tell them what they said. Tell the teacher what them said.' (Mazz)
	Understanding wellbeing through a trauma-sensitive perspective	Trauma can impact the lives of children and families in different ways and can be ongoing through racial hostilities in the community. Support requires schools to listen to families and engage with anti-racism practices to work towards social justice.	'So they have to take and value the childrens are coming from a difficult way. Children are leaving something behind. Children that they are here cause asylum seekers mean something went wrong, that's why they are here. School supposed to take and value all of the situation and be prepared. Any other school. Be prepared to, to take the children on board.' (Susana, interpreted)

3.4.1 Theme one: Impactful relationships

The social support of others is an important aspect of offering refuge (Johnson, 2022), and a welcoming attitude from schools is essential to the resettlement process (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Relationship quality may be the most important catalyst for children making positive adjustments to their new school (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004), with teacher and peer acceptance having a positive impact on pupil achievement (Gietz & McIntosh, 2014) and anxiety diffusion (Turunen & Perry, 2013).

3.4.1.1 <u>Subtheme: Connecting with peers</u>

Friendship was seen as important to all the children, making school more enjoyable and supporting their wellbeing, as exemplified by Peter:

> *When I was only by myself, I feel sad, but now, I'm with all of these people.*

Adam felt positive about his children's peer relationships: '*Everything was perfect*' (interpreted). Such relationships create important support networks for ASR children, preventing negative feelings such as loneliness (Bešić et al., 2020; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017) and protecting self-esteem (Birkeland et al., 2014). Jasmin suggested having a buddy system for newly arrived students, where members of the class could:

> *Take turns to be with him in each day…and start a friendship.*

Dixon and Hayden (2008) propose well-organised buddy systems as part of a child's induction, where buddies have training and support and are matched by interests or cultural backgrounds.

Schools can be places of friendship, but they can also be places of discrimination and bullying (Bešić et al., 2020; Hastings, 2012; Sobitan, 2022). This perhaps exemplifies the endemic nature of racism. Tayba and Jasmin experienced bullying. Tayba said:

> *The school was unsafe…sometimes kids do dangerous things like…tripping you over, kicking a ball at you, jumping over you.*

Fatima shared her frustrations regarding the school's response to this:

> *[I] speak with teacher. [The teacher] said, 'Okay, okay. No problem. Don't worry. Don't worry,' like this. But not anything is change.*

Carmen recounted how a teacher's response greatly concerned her after she had highlighted multiple examples of bullying to them:

> *…it was a lot of things and we complained, but we weren't heard...the teacher said that [Jasmin] was lying…that she was going to have a talk with all of the children. And when…she said that to me, I thought in my head, 'Okay, she's gonna do this with the attitude that she had when she said that, maybe she's gonna ask the whole class where they're all together and that's going to be really hard for Jasmin.'*

Carmen viewed this bullying as racially motivated. Additionally, having voiced her family's lived experiences to staff, Carmen had experienced teacher disbelief. Teachers can have negative implicit attitudes towards non-white students, which could influence their judgement of students' behaviours (Glock & Böhmer, 2018). The voices of class peers were privileged ahead of Jasmin's, legitimising their views while silencing hers. This denial of Jasmin's lived experiences helps uphold and perpetuate the practices influenced by racism, for both the teacher and the class. Further, by contriving it as Jasmin's voice versus the collective (i.e. the class), it may be the teacher was 'othering' Jasmin – a process that stigmatises those considered different (Grove et al., 2007). Carmen advised Jasmin:

> *You just raise your hand up and you speak your truth, no matter what happens, you should say everything you feel.*

Without the teacher's support, responsibility was placed on Jasmin to try to stop the racial bullying she was experiencing. Jasmin spoke up in front of a class who all initially denied any involvement, until one child eventually admitted their role in the bullying and confirmed Jasmin's story. It took this perpetrator to agree with Jasmin before the teacher believed her. This highlights an 'unwillingness to name the contours of racism' (Leonardo, 2002, p. 32), which leads to the inequitable privileging of some voices.

Hastings (2012) suggests that a clear anti-bullying policy and recording procedure should be employed by schools, so children have a full understanding of bullying and what to do if they experience it. However, this does not suffice: Jasmin and Carmen, and Tayba and her family recognised bullying and reported it to staff, yet the results were insignificant at best and traumatic at worst. Racially motivated bullying, in particular, requires unique consideration. Teachers must be equipped to recognise the endemic nature and harm of racism and bullying and avoid upholding structures that support it (Moffitt et al., 2019). For example, Joseph-Salisbury (2020) argues the need for *racial literacy*, referring to teachers' capacity 'to understand the ways in which race and racisms work in society' (p. 7). However, the absence of reference to race and racism in the initial teacher training curriculum suggests that it is peripheral knowledge to the profession (Smith, 2021), which helps uphold the dominant narrative of the rarity of racism.

Carmen suggested a more empathetic approach to tackling bullying:

> *The punishment itself, it would have been, like, making the other girls dislike Jasmin more because they were getting in trouble. So, if they actually tried to work together for something. Maybe, by trying to put in each other's shoes…Do a workshop around that stuff with the other kids and just make everyone feel safe.*

Carmen advocates for a preventative, inclusive approach for all children, focused on empathy and relationality. Crooks et al. (2021) suggest the need for peer-focused interventions that promote relationships and reduce discrimination. Maines and Robinson (1994) suggest that punishment does not work and can often make things worse (e.g. when the bully takes revenge on the victim). They instead advocate for the 'no blame approach', where those involved in bullying behaviour are given ownership of how the situation might be restored, with regular individual discussions with everyone involved. This approach is seen within restorative practices, placing the reparation of harm within relationships above the need to assign blame and deliver punishment (Barnett, 2020). When peers positively value one another – by being interested in one another, recognising others' achievements and offering support – it nurtures a sense of relatedness, leading to increased wellbeing and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Shin & Johnson, 2021).

3.4.1.2 Subtheme: Teachers care and teachers' care

Teacher relationships were discussed with the interviewees in terms of teacher–student and teacher–parent relationships.

Regarding teacher–student relationships, Malik said:

> *The most important first thing that the teacher must do is…promote the relationship between the teacher and the student.* (interpreted)

A positive teacher–student relationship greatly improves student wellbeing (McDiarmid et al., 2022), with students valuing teacher characteristics such as consistency, reliability, personal investment and genuine care (Hastings, 2012). All children in this current study shared positive views of their relationships with their current teachers. This was often related to relatively small acts of kindness:

> *She's hold my hand when I, I said that's my dad and she's telling this is, 'Okay, here you go, Mazz.'* (Mazz)
>
> *When we forget my coat is, can give it for me.* (Hasan)

Dryden et al. (1998) found that pupils made positive relationships with teachers who helped them learn, listened to them and treated them respectfully. It was noted how relatively simple these things were, yet they made a difference in how well the children were able to cope with adversity. Such supportive relationships with teachers may increase pupils' motivation to learn, positively influencing their sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem (Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). Attunement is 'a harmonious and responsive relationship where both partners…play an active role' (Kennedy et al., 2010, p. 63), where relationships can be developed through everyday interactions. The principles of attunement could contribute to a whole-school relational approach, further developing caring teacher–student connections (Baker et al., 1997). Hinsdale (2016) describes relational pedagogy as placing 'the human relationship between teacher and student at the [centre] of educational exchanges' (p. 2).

Regarding the teacher–parent relationship, Fatima said:

> *I think a good relationship between the parents and the school's actually the key for the child to be a success.* (interpreted)

The schools' invitations for parental involvement were highlighted by three families: Carmen was invited to volunteer on school trips, Fatima and Malik were invited for their daughter's musical concerts and Adam attended parents' evenings. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2004) recognise that schools with strong parental links are most successful in supporting ASR pupils; strengthening these links is key to promoting inclusion and positive outcomes (Block et al., 2014). Arnot and Pinson (2005) recommend a holistic model of education that highlights the importance of fostering close links with parents. However, this model can be challenging when parents experience communication difficulties or have perceptions of marginalisation (Christie & Szorenyi, 2015). As a refugee family, Fatima felt they were treated differently:

> *I don't see quite, like, UK resident families…facing the same problems.* (interpreted)

There is a discourse of some parents, including ASR parents, as being 'hard to reach' (Feiler, 2010; Whitmarsh, 2011), attributed primarily to parental factors (e.g. low self-esteem and previous school experiences) rather than school factors (Campbell, 2011). Crozier and Davies (2007) argue that this discourse pathologises parents, offering an excuse for schools to be less proactive. Further, schools can homogenise the roles and expectations of parents by imposing normative values of the 'good' parent, which are usually equated with being white and middle class (Crozier, 2001). This places responsibility on the parent and absolves issues (e.g. structural disadvantage) within societal systems (Goodall, 2021). As an act of

social justice, the question of how to engage ‘hard-to-reach’ parents could be reframed as how to make schools more accessible for them (Crozier & Davies, 2007).

To challenge deficit thinking and racialised assumptions in education, CRT asserts the ‘empowering potential of the cultures of Communities of Colour’ (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Yosso (2005) created an anti-deficit framework that focuses on *community cultural wealth* (i.e. the dynamic forms of capital possessed by communities of colour, such as aspirational, linguistic and resistant). These often go unacknowledged but, if utilised as assets, would transform schooling and serve as a protective response against racism (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2021). Drawing upon Yosso’s (2005) work, Smith et al. (2017b) suggest that teacher–parent relationships should be built on mutual trust, respect and understanding: a symbiotic relationship considered in terms of dignity, which positively benefits children, parents, teachers and the overall school community.

3.4.2 Theme two: Refining school support

This section is written with the understanding that though there are likely common experiences that ASR families share – such as being forced to leave their homes due to threats to their safety (Hastings, 2012) – to implement appropriate support for ASR pupils, schools need to respond to the heterogeneity of ASR communities (Bešić et al., 2020). They have a range of prior experiences, cultures, languages and needs (Kalchos et al., 2022), and effective support cannot be built without an understanding of these complex backgrounds (Block et al., 2014). There are three subthemes: academic engagement, language learning and emotional wellbeing.

3.4.2.1 Subtheme: Supporting academic engagement and progress

Education systems vary greatly across countries, with different pedagogies, resource allocation and professional development (Dolton et al., 2018). When Tayba started school, her mother felt mixed emotions:

> *My mum was actually… happy for [Tayba], but at the same time she was worried because it's a different environment…Because I think it's two different systems, two different countries.* (Esam)

Parents in newly arrived ASR families may have a limited understanding of the UK education system (Christie & Szorenyi, 2015; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). For example, Fatima, Malik and Susana felt their children were initially placed in the wrong year groups. They had expected them to be placed based on their previous schooling experiences rather than on the year group that matches their age. As Susana said:

> *Peter never went to Year One in Nicaragua…They put them straight in Year Two [in England; …] I asked for my child to start from level one…they said to me, 'No…because he's too old for that.'* (interpreted)

Susana hoped for Peter to begin at Year One because she felt like he would otherwise miss the foundation teaching, while also experiencing a language barrier. In the countries the participants are from, formal schooling begins when children are six years old (Batterjee & Ashria, 2015; Jornitz & do Amaral, 2020). However, in England, most children start full-time education in the September after their fourth birthday (UK Government, n.d.). Although parents hoped for a lower year group, international studies suggest year group retention is not advised because it is associated with lower academic achievement, motivation and behavioural regulation skills compared to learning alongside same-aged peers (Jimerson & Ferguson, 2007; Kim et al., 2020; Martin, 2009). To help alleviate parental concerns, schools could explain the English education system and the reasons behind choosing a child's particular year group. The Bell Foundation (2022) has created guidance for parents of students with EAL (translated into 22 of the most used first languages in UK schools), informing them about the English education system and how they can support their child's learning at home.

Parents expressed varied experiences of academic support for their children. For example, due to the year group discrepancy described above, Susana had instead hoped for additional support for Peter:

> *On the beginning, I think school should have a teacher and least fifteen minutes a day…one-on-one… to catch up what he is missing, will benefit them a lot.* (interpreted)

Susana recounted how school said they could not feasibly provide this. She eventually paid for a private tutor for Peter. Without additional support, the intersectionality of having (a) an uncertain immigration status, (b) an ethnically minoritised community background, and (c) prior experiences and disruptions in education compounds to exert a greater form of oppression and inequity for ASR families.

Carmen had a similar experience in her daughter's first school and was relieved to discover the second school had a clearer support system:

> *[School said], 'She's going to have some special time to catch up on English, maths and everything so she gets to the, kind of the same…level as her peers now,' and for me, that was…the most important thing.*

A broad and balanced curriculum is important for students (McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Ott & O'Higgins, 2019). With improved academic support and outcomes, parents in this current study noticed their children were more motivated about school and engaged with their learning. A sense of competence and achievement is proposed as an innate emotional need that is key to wellbeing, as recognised within the Human Givens approach (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). All children had their favourite lessons and were generally positive about their learning. Sisters Mazz and Hasan had been excited to start school; they said how much they still enjoy school, specifically linking this to their learning. Hasan reported feeling, '*Happy with [my] reading, happy with [my] writing.'*

Tayba said how it is important to do well academically, and how teachers can support this and follow children's interests:

> *Make their kids to learn and be more educational and experienced, just if, like, they have a passion in mind so that they can follow.*

Immigrant and ASR families often have high academic aspirations for their children (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Morrice et al., 2020; Schnell et al., 2015). Spicer (2008) suggests that inclusive schools foster the academic and career aspirations of ASR children. However, Stevenson and Willott (2007) found that schools often underestimate their potential because of language barriers. Particularly for teenagers, aspirations are often not recognised or met within normative education pathways (Morrice et al., 2020). Racial prejudices can contribute to these unjust assumptions. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, teacher expectations can directly affect pupil characteristics and outcomes, including academic achievement, self-perceptions and school engagement (Rubie-Davies, 2006, 2010). For example, Demie (2022) argues that low teacher expectations and institutional racism contribute to the underachievement of Black Caribbean students in English schools. Teachers can respond to these inequities by raising awareness of their inherent assumptions and how their actions are perceived so they can build trusting relationships and counter racialised structures (Malone et al., 2023).

3.4.2.2 <u>Subtheme: Helping overcome initial English language barriers</u>

In schools, English language teaching for speakers of other languages is commonly referred to as EAL support (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017). Describing someone as an EAL learner gives no indication of their levels of proficiency in their home languages or English (Cline & Shamsi, 2000). Teachers may feel that an initial assessment of English language is helpful, but careful consideration must be given to how and when this is done. Jasmin was given an English test on her first day of school. This was a stressful experience as she knew little English language at that time. She recommends: '*Don't take a test of English when they are just starting!*'

Kaplan et al. (2016) suggest that EAL assessment is a continuous process. Initially, an understanding of a child's literacy abilities in their home language is important, as teaching 'pre-literate children to read is quite different from teaching English reading skills to children who are fluent readers in their mother tongue' (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010, p. 160). The Bell Foundation (n.d.-a) have created continuous EAL assessment frameworks for the early years foundation stage, primary and secondary schools.

Adam shared that, as a family:

> *[We] were looking forward to…my children for both year to learn English.* (interpreted)

There is no specific EAL curriculum in England (The Bell Foundation, n.d.-b); instead, effective teaching is expected through the National Curriculum guidance (DfE, 2014). Two common strategies include the total immersion approach (i.e. the exclusive use of English) and the bilingual approach (i.e. the additional use of the home language) (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), with the latter argued as a being cognitively beneficial (García & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging is proposed as a suitable pedagogy (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Translanguaging 'considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems…but as one linguistic repertoire' (García & Wei, 2014, p. 2). In the classroom, this approach normalises bilingualism[5] and allows the child to draw upon all their linguistic resources (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). The encouragement of bilingualism can also increase a child's self-esteem and engagement (Moffitt et al., 2019) and can support second language acquisition (Cummins, 2000). School staff can show such encouragement by asking children about their language backgrounds and celebrating their writing in both their home language and English (DfES, 2004). The Roma Translanguaging Enquiry Learning Space research project created guidance for educators working collaboratively with parents and communities who are bilingual (Smith et al., 2017b). Practical applications could include allowing, encouraging and enabling translanguaging, such as by providing scaffolds to support subject specific language and through peer group activities (Smith et al., 2017a).

When Jasmin started at her first primary school, Carmen was shocked to see what school encouraged for Jasmin's communication while not providing EAL support:

> *When I came to a classroom and I notice that Jasmin was like growling or barking, and doing animal sounds and [the teacher] kind of encouraged*

---

[5] In this paper, *bilingualism* also refers to *plurilingualism*

that…English second language support, very important, main thing there. Don't let children communicate as animals…They're dehumanising the child.

Jasmin's home language was not valued in the classroom, and the teacher rationalised the dehumanisation by explaining that they felt it was a positive that Jasmin was exploring communication. This othering of Jasmin, consciously or unconsciously, was perhaps rooted in a lack of knowledge and awareness of language pedagogy and may be racially motivated. Raciolinguistics focuses on how use of language shapes ideas about race (Chávez-Moreno, 2022). Racialised ideologies of English as a standardised language meant that Jasmin's proficiency in Spanish was not valued, leading to a perceived 'languagelessness' that calls 'into question linguistic competence – and, by extension, legitimate personhood – altogether' (Rosa, 2016, p. 163). The denial of Jasmin's voice likely affected how her peers viewed her (i.e. as someone unequal to their norm) and diminished her self-esteem. When Jasmin started at her second primary school, Carmen was relieved to find that the school demonstrated a proactive approach that included specific language support.

Peers are a helpful support for language learning (Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017; Smith et al., 2017a). For example, Susana's son, Peter, had peer support:

[Teachers] catch another children also speak a little bit of Spanish…so the children can explain to Peter what was going on in class. (interpreted)

Carmen also reflected on how peers could support EAL learning:

Maybe do a partner thing with other children. So, for example, they could teach their classmates to read, do a reading buddy or some [EAL] practices with a friend and then the other child will feel like, 'Oh, I'm tutoring someone,' so it'll be a confidence boost for both. And just, it will also help them make little friendships.

Related to sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), peers can learn from one another in an often fluid dynamic (Angelova et al., 2006). Teachers can facilitate this by structuring opportunities for peer scaffolding and by being contingent supports in response to peer contributions (Daniel et al., 2019). Peer scaffolding can help develop social awareness (Angelova et al., 2006) and can be mutually beneficial between language learners, where children complement each other's strengths and learning needs (Prentice, 2022).

Linguistic capital is an example of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). It highlights the value that bilingual children can bring to a school when sharing their language expertise. All

children were proud that, having learned English, they could now speak more than one language. Some of them taught their home language to teachers and peers:

> *Even my teacher can speak a little bit because I showed her.* (Peter)

Mazz suggested it would be helpful for other newly arriving ASR children if *'someone's in the class with him speak Arabic and English'*. With an increasing linguistic diversity in schools, the employment of bilingual staff will greatly enhance students' experiences (Bešić et al., 2020; Madziva & Thondhlana, 2017), making them feel safer and more welcome (Hek, 2005b). In England, 14.9% of teachers and 16% of teaching assistants identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group (DfE, 2022), compared to 23.3% of children aged 5–16 years (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Keddie (2012) argues that culturally diverse recruitment efforts support the creation of inclusive environments. Currently, there is an under-representation of people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds within the teaching profession (see Figure 10), despite an over-representation of applicants to initial teacher training (Worth et al., 2022). Applicants from these communities are less likely to be accepted and retained within the profession compared to white people (Worth et al., 2022). This is perhaps an indictment of the credibility of meritocracy, where 'hard work and following the rules may not be enough to engender success if the pathway to success is deliberately disadvantageous for some' (Sulé, 2020, p. 6). These pathways must be interrogated and reformed so that they no longer only benefit white people (Taylor, 1998).

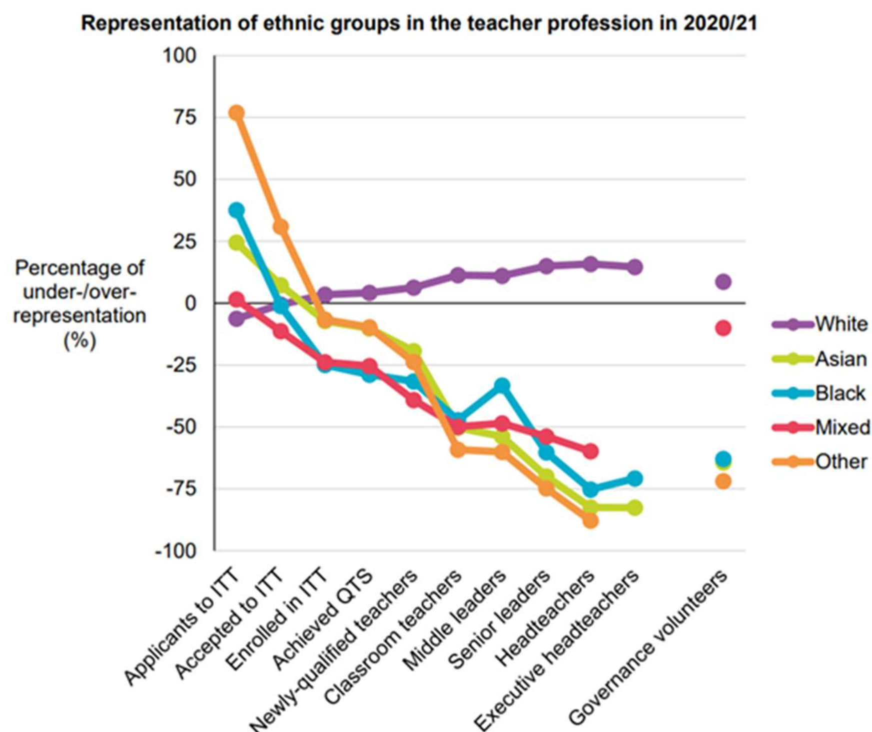

Figure 10. Ethnic groups in the teacher profession in 2020/21: National Foundation for Educational Research (Worth et al., 2022)

3.4.2.3 Subtheme: Understanding wellbeing through a trauma-sensitive perspective

Traumatic events are not confined to pre-migrational experiences (Fazel et al., 2015). A trauma-sensitive perspective requires school staff to challenge their assumptions of behaviour, affecting their subsequent understanding and response (Paiva, 2019). When ASR children leave their countries, they have to ‘let go of much of who and what they were’ (Morrice, 2013, p. 266). Susana expressed frustration that school were not understanding of her son’s needs, which she felt were a result of his past experiences. Related to Peter’s behaviour, school have warned of his permanent exclusion, but Susana shared a counter-narrative:

> *We had start from zero…All of his favourite things, his family, and he's been put in England, me and him alone, with nobody but us, with nothing on, just the clothes on our hands and backs…school never took that knowledge…It’s the misbehaviour of not having, feeling himself lost in the class.* (interpreted)

Many ASR children have experienced difficult circumstances, though they also appear resilient to adversity (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). However, Carmen suggests that the appearance of resilience can mask underlying difficulties:

> *I hear, ‘No, they're very resilient,’ but they don't know what happened at the end of the day, how they come home, or their crying…or even like children falling asleep in the class…it could be that the child has nightmares still, because of the things that happened to them.*

Berthold (2000) suggests that some school staff may not be aware of the levels of emotional distress that children experience, as children may have ‘suffered in silence’ (p. 36) as an adaptive response to desired classroom behaviour. This is part of the *hidden curriculum*: things learned through the everyday acts of attending school, delivered through implicit messages about what is valued as knowledge, understanding and behaviour (Jay, 2003). These messages usually align with the white middle class while marginalising others, so schools need to challenge such dominant ideologies by drawing upon the experiential knowledge of communities in a conscious commitment to social justice (Yosso, 2002). Susana advises schools to be prepared:

> *I want to tell the teacher to have more compassion, and patience, and understanding where is my son coming from. Each childrens, as my child, they lost their homes. They lost…the basic life that they always knew.* (interpreted)

Susana's experience demonstrates the importance of listening to others' lived experiences and not forming assumptions based on personal worldviews. Without this precept, inequalities are maintained as everyday practices.

Enabling ASR children to speak about their culture, traditions and the positive aspects of their home country can alleviate their feelings of loss, and they can maintain a positive connection to their cultural heritage, teaching their peers and teachers while doing so (Thommessen & Todd, 2018). Planning for such activities requires sensitivity, as children may not be ready to talk about their home countries (DfES, 2004). Further, such 'celebratory activities' may 'exoticise difference and "lock" pupils into stereotypes' (Andreouli et al., 2014, p. 18). Thus, it is important for staff to reflect on who stands to gain the greatest benefit: the child or their white peers (Moffitt et al., 2019). Practices that centre on the perceptions, thoughts and interests of white individuals maintain racial inequalities and are a barrier to social justice (Garay & Remedios, 2021).

Luthar and Mendes (2020) argue that implicit attention is placed on experiences within students' home lives despite traumatic experiences also occurring within schools. For example, some parents experienced discrimination on the school yard by other families; a label of asylum-seeking or refugee can be a barrier in itself (McIntyre et al., 2020). When Carmen's daughter began school, it quickly became community public knowledge that Carmen's family were seeking asylum:

> *We thought the country would be more welcoming. We didn't expect people just to label you in that way as soon as…they knew about your immigration status.* (Carmen)

Carmen's advice for future ASR families who are arriving and starting school is to keep their status private. Further, Susana recounts:

> *In the beginning, I didn't know what was the names they was calling me. And now I found out it was very offensive and racist names. One of the parents even, even all the time used to push me…I feel like a racist discrimination against me and still today…I spoke to school. I think schools told her something 'cause the activity went a little bit down…I think, since then, school didn't do nothing more.* (interpreted)

These instances of racial hostility occurred on the school yard, in front of Peter, when Susana took him to and from school. Like the children's experiences of bullying (see Section 3.4.1.1), Susana sought school support but felt their response was inadequate and ineffective.

After placing their hopes in England as a place of refuge, some families are still not safe. As Carmen describes:

> *That makes you feel again, like you're not very safe, but at least that way, I was always seeing it was, well, at least it's not us having a gun in your head…Just, these [racist aggressions in England] are the kinds of violence that I can tolerate that. But it's not good anyway…it gives you like a lot of psychological damage…When you come…you feel, 'I'm going to be safe. Everything's going to go well from here now I can start a new life.' You are very, very hopeful. You feel very grateful to people, to the system, and then you start seeing things that are not right. You can start questioning your choices in life…Because my family's still suffering.*

Carmen speaks of 'tolerable' racist harm, reflecting how asylum-seeking people may be afraid to speak up against it to the authorities for fear of it affecting their asylum application. Having lived (and still living) through racist hostilities, Carmen recommends that others advocate for themselves and speak up against injustices, as they have a right to live their lives fully. Schools can support families by working as allies, actively disrupting oppressive structures as reflective people 'who work for social justice from positions of dominance' (Patton & Bondi, 2015, p. 489). For example, for schools to engage with anti-racism, Schools of Sanctuary advocate for a school's learning to be shared with the wider community (Schools of Sanctuary, n.d.). This is illustrated by a headteacher in McIntyre and Hall (2020):

> We will know we've really cracked it when the kids are changed…they're actually going back into their communities and challenging some of the views of their parents and their friends…where inclusion goes way beyond the school gates. (p. 594.)

3.5 Implications for educationalists and educational psychologists

ASR pupils have a right to equitable education and all its benefits. Primarily, the findings of this research will be made accessible to the schools, Educational Psychology Service and local authority in which it took place, with further plans for wider dissemination. The key anticipated implication of this research is to inform and improve policy and practice for schools and educational psychologists (EPs), concerning the needs of newly arrived ASR families. EPs often have 'significant influence within decision-making processes surrounding educational, care or mental health provision or placement' (Fallon et al., 2010, p. 3), within their core functions of promoting education and development, consultation, assessment,

intervention, organisational change, training and research (BPS, 2022). Overarching these functions is the demonstration of professional and ethical practice and appreciation and self-awareness of diversity (BPS, 2022). Recommendations arising from this research are outlined in Table 15.

To effectively implement these recommendations, educationalists and EPs must engage with discussions of race and racism as a ‘requisite for the development of critical consciousness’ (López, 2022, p. 121). Critical consciousness is a transformational process where individuals interrogate and understand ‘the sociopolitical landscape that grants power for some at the expense of others, and affords those with power to live a vastly different reality’ (Lee & Lee, 2020, p. 42). This awareness is fundamental, and educationalists and EPs need to reflect on their own knowledge, assumptions and practices. The BPS (2006) highlights how racism permeates education, and the educational psychology profession arguably has been a part of racialised systems that marginalise communities (López, 2022). The BPS (2006) state that the promotion of racial equality requires EPs to commit to ongoing professional development. In the context of anti-racism practices, professional reflexivity is required, to ask oneself challenging questions about race and culture; Patel and Keval (2018) argue this requires determination, courage and humility.

Table 15. Summary of implications for educationalists and how educational psychologists could support them

<table>
<tr><th>Key area of findings</th><th>Implications for educationalists</th><th>Implications for how EPs could work with educationalists</th><th>Overarching implications for EP practice</th></tr>
<tr><td>Relationships with peers and staff</td><td>
• Create well-organised buddy systems and opportunities for structured interactions with peers, focusing on empathy and relationship-building;
• Have clear anti-bullying policies, where the responsibility to challenge bullying is not placed on ASR children and families;
• Engage reflexively with continued professional development of racial literacy;
• Carry out everyday acts of kindness and care;
• Foster strong links with parents, built on mutual trust, respect and understanding;
• Consider how schools are accessible for ASR families; and
• Recognise and value community cultural wealth.</td>
<td rowspan="2">Note: Implications are suggested as being applicable to all key areas of findings.

Promote education and development
Use of psychological theories such as sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002), Human Givens (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) to understand and promote learning and development.

Consultation
Facilitate and evaluate staff, parent or child consultations, working collaboratively and using psychologically-informed problem-solving frameworks such as the Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2017) or the Integrated Framework (Woolfson, 2017). These could be at the individual, group or whole-school level.

Assessment
Support schools in the implementation of suitable assessment frameworks, such as the EAL assessment framework (The Bell Foundation, n.d.-a). Carefully consider the impact of language and culture when</td>
<td rowspan="2">Professional ethical practice
Work in accordance with the BPS (2021b) Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Health and Care Professions Council (2016) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.
Where there are unethical views and practices, challenge these appropriately.

Appreciation and self-awareness of diversity
Understand and apply the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout EP practice.
Develop knowledge and understanding of how to work with individuals whose backgrounds are different to one’s own.
Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to anti-racist practice.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic support</td><td>
• Have high expectations of students and support them in their interests in a wide range of curriculum subjects;
• Help families understand the English education system;
• Provide additional support for students to regain lost educational capital where necessary; and
• Engage reflexively with continued professional development on how to teach students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</td></tr>
</table>

Key area of findings	Implications for educationalists	Implications for how EPs could work with educationalists	Overarching implications for EP practice
English language support	• Employ bilingual staff through culturally diverse recruitment efforts and value them within the staff team; • View assessment of EAL as a continuous process, including assessing home language abilities; • Value bilingualism and adopt a bilingual pedagogy such as translanguaging; and • Implement specific language support, including peer support structures.	choosing appropriate assessment tools. Dynamic assessment of skills and responses to mediation may be appropriate, such as the Children's Analogical Thinking Modifiability test (Tzuriel & Klein, 1987). **Intervention** Plan, implement (or share for others to implement) and evaluate suitable interventions that have cross-cultural applicability. For example, the Tree of Life intervention (Ncube, 2006) may support children to consider their history, relationships, hopes and strengths.	

Key area of findings	Implications for educationalists	Implications for how EPs could work with educationalists	Overarching implications for EP practice
Emotional wellbeing support	• Develop understanding of what it means to be trauma-sensitive; • Alleviate feelings of loss by sensitively encouraging children to maintain a positive connection to their cultural heritage; • Understand that while children can appear to be resilient, they may still have underlying and ongoing emotional needs; • Challenge dominant ideologies within education, including challenging personal worldviews; • Prepare to welcome ASR children and families and create safe, welcoming, non-discriminatory school environments; • Recognise that traumatic experiences can continue post-migration, including within schools and in the community; and • Extend this ethos and environment beyond the school gates and into the community.	**Organisational change** Contribute to learning environments, including practice and policy, providing a distinct psychological perspective. For example, promoting relational, restorative and attachment aware practices as replacing behaviourist models of reward and consequence (McCluskey, 2018; Parker et al., 2016). **Training** Create and deliver training for school settings to support staff's professional development, such as trauma-sensitive (also referred to as trauma-informed) approaches. Use of an Implementation Framework (Chidley & Stringer, 2020) can support work with schools, developing beyond initial training to effective implementation. **Research** Maintain the ongoing use of research-based evidence to support EP work, while also critically reflecting on the cross-cultural applicability of existing research. EPs could contribute by conducting research and disseminating findings. Specifically, EPs can further engage with race-focused research to decolonise the field (López, 2022).	

3.6 Research limitations

This research contributes an understanding of this area through a sole researcher's perspective, as filtered through an anti-racist lens (influenced by CRT) and a critical realist perspective. The themes were created through my interpretations of the interview data; another researcher may have created different themes. However, this subjectivity is key within RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022), seen as a strength when aligned with reflexivity. I carefully chose the data and ideas that resonated with me and my research question, yet there will always remain more to be described, discussed and reflected on (Parker, 1999), owing to the irresolvable inconcludability of research (Woolgar, 1988). As such, the study's findings should be considered alongside the continuum of past and future research and tailored for each local context and the heterogenous needs of ASR children and families.

All participants either communicated in a second language (i.e. English) or had an interpreter. This may have affected how participants understood and answered the interview questions and subsequent discussions, with nuanced meanings potentially lost (Sobitan, 2022). Those who used their home language had an interpreter. The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) Code of Professional Conduct states that 'Practitioners shall interpret truly and faithfully what is uttered, without adding, omitting or changing anything' (NRPSI, 2016, Section 5.4). I do not know whether the interpreters used in this research successfully followed this precept, though it was requested during pre-interview briefs. Given the research time constraints, this could not be further explored. Further, one interpreter (Esam) was a family member rather than a professional interpreter, and this may have led to a difference in the outcomes of interpretations.

3.7 Conclusion

The aim of this research project was to explore ASR child and family perspectives on how primary schools can support them when they first begin their education in England. Two key themes were generated from the participants' stories: (1) impactful relationships and (2) refining school support. The findings suggest the need to develop inclusive approaches (ones that value ASR children and families) and challenge racialised assumptions and practices. Subsequent implications and recommendations for educationalists and EPs were detailed. Future research in this area might use these findings (perhaps through an action research format) to collaboratively explore and develop practices and policies in a primary school.

4 Chapter Four: Reflections on my research journey

4.1 Introduction

Reflexivity involves 'finding strategies to question our own attitudes, theories-in-use, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions; to understand our complex roles in relation to others' (Bolton, 2014, p. 7). It can be prospective or retrospective (Edge, 2011), that is, relating to how the researcher shaped and was shaped by the research, respectively (Attia & Edge, 2017; Palaganas et al., 2017). In this chapter, I explore how this research has impacted me both personally and professionally, and how these experiences will influence my future practices: learning about who I am and who I strive to be, with emphasis on the journey, not the destination.

4.2 An emotive topic for discussion

Through listening to the participants' stories, reflecting on my own experiences, reading more widely and attending to media discourses around migration, this proved to be an emotionally laden topic to engage with.

Migration is 'one of the most pressing and divisive issues in global politics today' (Cooper et al., 2021, p. 196). In the UK, the topic of migration came to prominence in 2015 after reports of people drowning when crossing the Mediterranean sea, coined as a 'crisis' (Goodman et al., 2017, p. 106). *Crisis* suggests a disruption of the norm, with a need for management to restore a status quo rather than change it, and without addressing what the status quo looks like (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016). Jeandesboz and Pallister-Wilkins (2016) argue that the term has become connoted with boat migration, with this lens magnifying the method of travel while ignoring the issues of conflict, poverty and suffering that are often root causes of people choosing such a method in the first place. *Crisis* has also become a narrative device used to invoke meaning and structure knowledge that shapes public and political discourse (Dines et al., 2018). For example, within the European 'migration crisis' are the narratives of disaster and terrorism, which are powerful and emotive forces that alter public perceptions (Dempsey & McDowell, 2019). Analysis of the language used in media reports on migration shows the regular use of terms such as *flood*, *tidal wave* and *swarm*, which compare individuals to natural disasters rather than considering them as humans (Dempsey & McDowell, 2019). Recently, the Prime Minister pledged to 'stop the boats' through the Illegal Migration Bill, introduced in March 2023 (Home Office, 2023). This bill presents the actions of those seeking asylum by irregular or unauthorised entry as illegal.

The Illegal Migration Bill is a breach of the Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 1951; UNHCR, 2023).

In contrast, when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 (BBC, 2022), Ukrainian asylum-seeking families received very different treatment than other asylum-seeking families. Ukrainian nationals were granted free movement and immediate rights to protection, work, and education (Morrice, 2022). In the UK, the Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched, where people could open their homes as a sponsor to Ukrainian guests (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2022). This was previously unseen in both the Syrian resettlement programme (Home Office, 2017) and Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (Home Office, 2022). Morrice (2022) argues that such distinctions are because geographical, cultural and racial proximity made it easier for European countries to empathise with Ukraine. This demonstrates what can be achieved when the response is genuinely empathetic and human, yet it also highlights the socially unjust humanitarian responses to refugees and asylum seekers; that is, privileging white European people over others. This is an example of the endemic racism present within society and the systems we live in.

As stated in the British Psychological Society's (BPS) standards for accreditation in educational psychology (BPS, 2022), Educational Psychologists (EPs) and trainee EPs must demonstrate 'awareness of personal health and wellbeing' (2.k) and 'strategies to deal with the emotional…impact of practice' (9.d), seeking appropriate support as necessary. My supports are the people around me, who are unwavering in their help and boundless in their belief. I also engage daily with the five elements of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011): positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. These elements were a protective factor against the emotional impacts of this research. When working as a qualified EP, I will continue to draw upon these resources to support my wellbeing.

4.3 The importance of reflexivity

Reflexivity relates to acknowledging how the researcher and process may shape the data (Mays & Pope, 2000). I have neither been a refugee nor an asylum seeker; however, as a child, I was a Chinese migrant to England. During the research interviews, I related to several of the participants' experiences of starting school, as well as their experiences of racism within the wider community. There were also times when I could not directly relate to the participants. As a researcher, I navigated the space between insider and outsider, while appreciating the fluid nature of this experience (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Through my prior experiences, I held firm values about education and migration from the beginning of this research. I wonder how the research participants viewed me, and if my

identity as a Chinese migrant was of significance to them. Chinese and Indian students in the UK are often positioned as unique 'model minorities' (Gillborn, 2008). These stereotypes strengthen the structures of discrimination and espouse discourses of colourblindness and meritocracy, attributing 'failures' of other minoritised groups as being individualised rather than confronting racism within society (Ngo & Lee, 2007). Meritocracy 'functions as an ideological myth to obscure and extend economic and social inequalities' (Littler, 2017, p. 7). Being positioned as a 'model minority' is discomforting to me, and it has led to my greater motivation to work in allyship with other minoritised groups when I am a qualified EP.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is interested in 'studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3), where racism is not limited to individual acts but is understood through the wider systems of society (Taylor, 2009). I have experienced racism throughout my life, but using CRT as a lens has helped me more deeply analyse what participants shared during the research. It has also influenced (and continues to influence) my practices as a trainee EP. As described in the BPS (2019) standards for accreditation, trainees and EPs must 'demonstrate understanding and application of equality and diversity principles and actively promote inclusion and equity in their professional practice' (3.b), and 'take appropriate professional action to redress power imbalances and to embed principles of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in all professional actions' (3.d). Learning about CRT has been a transformative experience, helping me understand oppressive structures and giving me the language to describe and resist these; it is a lens that feels impossible to put down once it has been picked up and used, and I expect to maintain this use as a qualified EP.

Initially, I was plagued with uncertainty over whether I was carrying out this research correctly, whether I was good enough to do it justice and whether I could carry the responsibility of listening to and sharing others' stories. I asked myself whether I had the right to carry out this research. However, as the research developed, so too did my reflections and outlook. I instead began to ask myself whether I had the right *not* to carry out this research. The importance of the topic is beyond me as an individual, and it eclipses my feelings of imposter syndrome; championing others' stories and seeking a deeper understanding of lived experiences are aspects of EP and educationalists' work that I consider a human and professional responsibility. Additionally, I have come to understand that this research is unique – that if other researchers worked with the interview transcripts, their analyses and discussions may be wholly different. Further, Woolgar (1988) considers indexicality as a 'methodological horror', referring to how 'the underlying reality of a representation is never fixed and always able to change with occasion of use' (p. 32). My research is based on analyses that I completed at a certain moment in time. As time passes,

and I move through the world and gain new experiences, I may see the data from a different perspective. Yet I still recognise that this would not discount my original analysis. I also reflected on this in Chapter 2, in my experiences of developing as a researcher from my SLR to empirical research.

4.4 Implications for practice: learning about who I am and who I strive to be

Psychologists can help to improve outcomes for asylum-seeking and refugee children and families, working at the individual, school and local authority levels (BPS, 2018). In particular, EPs are 'likely to be key professionals in providing this support to schools and other educational settings' (BPS, 2018, p. 36).

In addition to reflecting back on my research journey, I also look forward, considering how the skills and knowledge I have gained during this research might be applied as a qualified EP. Willig (2013) argues that, in addition to the formal aspects of research, practice-based forms of knowledge generation and systematic reflection could also be considered as research; as such, there need not be a separation of *research* and *practice*. Parker (2013) reflects on Cyril Burt's suggestion that day-to-day EP work is a form of research practice: working systematically, and gathering and synthesising information to increase understanding. EPs need to engage with their world views, working reflectively to help decide the *what*, *who* and *why* of their work (Parker, 2013). Through the doctorate research experience, I have developed my skills in asking clarifying questions (to both myself and others), synthesising information and generating key themes. The ethical practices, from planning and seeking ethical approval to the continuous attunement to possible changes or dilemmas, will continue to be present in my day-to-day role as a qualified EP; I need to be constantly watchful and responsive. Further, I have demonstrated my ability to cope with uncertainty and my resilience and determination to continue when things do not work as planned. This has given me the confidence to move forwards and know that I will still flourish.

A key aspect of my learning is to emphasise and exemplify the humanity in my work:

> In order to become human it is necessary to both welcome and include others and allow ourselves to change. … We only become human through interactions that have respect for the other as part of humanity. (Gibbs, 2018, p. 2.)

We do not live and work in isolation, and it is in being with others that we can draw strength. This contrasts with neoliberalist agendas of individual success through self-reliance, choice and autonomy, where failures are conceived as individual failures for which one should blame oneself (Sugarman, 2015). Yet individuals do not begin their lives as equals: there are

socio-political structures that remain unjust. People seeking asylum in the UK hope that their arrival will be an end to their previous difficulties, but this is frequently not the case, with ongoing stressors such as poverty, homelessness, racist discrimination and social exclusion (BPS, 2018).

As reflected on in Section 4.2, conducting this research has been emotionally challenging, and there were times when I felt despondent about society. However, I also maintain hope. As Tatum (2016) writes in relation to learning about racism: '…the restoration of hope is an essential part of the learning process. Otherwise, students, both white and of colour, become immobilized by their own despair.' (p. 286.) In the end, it was not despair that I was overcome with, but hope and motivation to do better. Something that Carmen (a mother who took part in the interviews) said deeply resonated with me:

> *Because you feel like in a way, when you come, and you're actually (pause) well, not to the point where you have status, but even just by being here for a long period of time, you feel, 'I'm going to be safe. Everything's going to go well from here now I can start a new life.' You are very, very hopeful. You feel very grateful to people, to the system.*
>
> *And then you start seeing things that are not right. And then you start questioning your ideas. You can start questioning your choices in life and then you start thinking about other choices. What alternatives did I have? Was this the right path to take on? Because my family's still suffering.*
>
> *So, I think that if you just don't look at it that way and I know it's hard. It's very hard, but also equally important, you have a new opportunity and opportunities, things won't come easy. And if you want to change that and bring happiness to your family, from being, and just for being yourself and free, you have to force that path, you have to create those opportunities and just ignore those other voices. Just like, keep them out, because if you let all of that negativity into you, then you're not going to be able to keep on living. Now you're just, you're just putting yourself in a cage. And it's just not right because you have the right to live your life.*

I keep this quote close, stuck on the wall above my computer. It reminds me beautifully why I am doing this research, speaking of hope amid challenge, and strength amid a world that can feel so harsh. It touches my heart and pulls me forwards, through both this research and my life as a whole – a flame of inspiration to keep going. If I am able do anything of meaning,

it will be to hold and share this flame with others, to promote a world where people feel brave enough to speak up and make a difference.

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6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A. Forms used for child and adult participants (introduction, consent and debrief)

Research information sheet for participants (adult)

You are invited to take part in a research study. This information sheet is to give you information about the aims of the study and details of participation. Please read this carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part.

What is this research for?

This research study aims to explore how primary schools can support the needs of children and families, who are or were refugees and asylum-seeking, when they first arrived in Newcastle and started school. This will be based on what schools are currently doing and also what could be improved in the future for newly arrived families. These will be explored from the children and families' perspectives.

With the findings of this research, we hope to work with schools and other professional agencies and organisations to help make these first experiences even better for future children and families.

You have been invited to participate in this research because of your experiences of first arriving to Newcastle with your family, and you have at least one child who was primary-aged (between 5 to 11 years old) when they first started school and your child is still primary-aged.

Who are the researchers?

My name is Jade Wang, a Trainee Educational Psychologist on the Newcastle University Educational Psychology training programme and I shall carry out the research. This research is supervised by Richard Parker, an Educational Psychologist and Programme Director of the Newcastle University Educational Psychology training programme.

What will you be asked to do?

- You will have received the interview questions beforehand. I will also ask for any relevant background information to the research (including the date when you arrived in the country, your original home country, and the age of your children when they first started school) but this information will be anonymised.
- As an adult participant, I shall interview you in a quiet room in your child's school.

- On the day of the interview, I will introduce myself and explain the research to you in person.
- You will have the opportunity to ask any questions and you will be asked again if you are happy to continue.
- The interview will be voice recorded, and it will take between 45 to 60 minutes to complete. You will have the opportunity to share any information you think is relevant to the interview or the research during the process and at the end.

To support our communication, an interpreter will be present. This is something I can arrange on your behalf, or you may have a specific preference for the use or avoidance of certain interpreters. We can discuss this before the research process begins.

After the interview, I will spend time with you on a debrief and I may be able to signpost you to additional support if needed.

As the research seeks adult and child views, this study is interested in:

- Adult only participation within a family (if you have a child or children who meet the requirements).
- Child only participation within a family (if they were primary aged – between 5–9 years old – when first arriving and are now aged between 7–11 years old).
    - I am looking for child participants of this age group who arrived in the country more than one but less than three years ago.
    - There is a child-friendly version of this information sheet and consent form for child consent. Your consent will also be needed for your child's participation.
- Adults and children participating within a family (if the children meet the same requirements as above).
    - Each individual member will need to complete a consent form.

Will my taking part be confidential?

All participants will be provided with a pseudonym, which they can choose, to ensure their data is anonymous. A voice recorder will be used to make audio recordings of the interviews, and these recordings will be immediately moved onto a password-protected hard drive and deleted from the recording device.

Throughout the process, all important information, including audio recordings and transcripts will be kept on a password-protected hard drive at Newcastle University. All data will be

permanently deleted upon successful completion of the research. Only the researcher and their supervisor will have access to the data.

What will happen to the findings of this research?

The results of this research will be shared with all participants after the researcher completes their programme of study. The results may also be presented at school training sessions, professional conferences or in academic journals that are relevant to Educational Psychology. However, the results and any associated data will remain anonymous, and no participant will be identifiable.

Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part, and if you do take part, you will be able to withdraw at any point during the research. If you request for your data to be withdrawn, it will be destroyed. Please see the consent form if you wish to take part.

If you would like to take part in this research, please sign and return the Consent Form and return it to your child's school. I will then be in touch.

Who can I contact for further information?

Lead researcher: Jade Wang, y.wang315@newcastle.ac.uk

Research supervisor: Dr Richard Parker, richard.parker@newcastle.ac.uk

Research Information Sheet (for children)

What is this research for?

I want to find out how primary schools can support children and families, who are or were refugees and asylum-seeking, when they first arrive to Newcastle. I want to hear from you, the children, and grown-ups about what your experiences were like. Also, I am interested to know what you think primary schools can do to support future children and families coming to Newcastle.

With what I find out, I hope to work with schools and other professionals in Newcastle to help make these first experiences even better for other children and families.

You have been invited to take part in this research because of your experiences of first coming to Newcastle and because you are in the age group I want to work with.

Who are the researchers?

My name is Jade Wang and I am training at Newcastle University to be an Educational Psychologist. This job is to support pupils, families and schools to help make school experiences better. Before I did this, I was a primary school teacher. I am the main researcher of this project. As part of my course, I need to do research and then write about it.

My research supervisor is Richard Parker. He is an Educational Psychologist and University Programme Director (this job is a little like your head teacher – Richard is one of the people in charge of my course).

What will you be asked to do?

When we meet in a quiet room at your school, I will introduce myself and explain what we will be doing. I will check if you have any questions and if you are happy to continue working with me. You will have had information about our activities before this. While we talk, we will be voice recorded (this is because it helps me remember all the helpful things you said and so I can listen to it again). We will be working together for about 1 hour.

The activities we do will involve me asking questions about your first school experience in England. While we talk, we may look at some pictures.

If you think it would help, I can bring along an interpreter who can speak the language you may use at home, and English to help us understand each other. You can decide this before we meet.

What will happen afterwards?

After we have worked together, we will spend some time talking about how this working with me felt for you. If you want to have a look or listen to your interview recordings, I am happy to share them with you. No one apart from me will know it was you I spoke to.

I will keep the recording until I have finished my course. Once I have completed my research, I would like to share what I found with you. In future, what I found out may be used for training, and it may be published so other people can learn from the findings.

Do I have to take part? What if I change my mind once I've started?

This is okay! You might know already that you don't want to take part. You might want to take part now but then change your mind later. If this happens, we will get rid of any of the interview recordings. When we are working together, if I notice you look uncomfortable about the activity or questions, I will ask you how you are feeling and I may decide to end the task if I feel this would be best for you.

What now?

If you would like to take part and your parent/carer is also happy for you to do this, then please read the statements on the consent form (you may want to have them read aloud or explained to you more). If you are happy with all of them, please write your name and date on bottom.

If you want some more information before you decide, you can ask an adult to get in touch with me or Richard. Our contact details are:

Jade: y.wang315@newcastle.ac.uk
Richard: richard.parker@newcastle.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this.
Jade

Consent Form (for adults)

Please read the following points and check you are happy with them all. If so, then please write your name, and sign and date the form.

- I have read and understood the Research Information Sheet.
- I have had the study explained to me in writing.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and had them answered.
- I understand I can contact the researcher and their supervisor to seek further information.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially (except as might be required by law).
- I understand that information gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research, my identity will remain anonymous.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, even if I have given previous consent.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that anonymised extracts from my interview may be quoted in a written thesis, a published paper and in presentations for training purposes.
- I understand I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage.

- I agree to take part in this study.

Participant name: …………………………………………

Participant signature: ……………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………………

Consent Form (for children)

- I understand the information on the Research Information Sheet.
- The study has been explained to me.
- I have had the chance to ask questions and had them answered.
- I know I can ask an adult to contact Jade and her supervisor to have any of my questions answered.
- I understand that the information I give for this study will not be shared (unless it has to be to keep you safe). It will be kept private from everyone apart from Jade and Richard.
- I understand that information collected in this study will be kept anonymously and safely. I understand 'anonymous' means my name, address or school won't be shared.
- I understand that it is my choice if I want to take part and that I can change my mind and leave the research at any time.
- I agree that what we talk about can be recorded by sound.
- I understand that some of my words may be quoted and shared in writing or in presentations for training. Quotes may look like this: *"…I think my school …"*
- I understand I can ask for my information at any time during the research.

- I agree to take part in this study.

Your name: ……………………………………………………………………………….

Date: ……………………………………………………………………………………….

Parent/carer name: …………………………………………………………………...

Parent/carer signature: ………………………………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………………………………………….

Debriefing Form (for adults)

Thank you for taking part in this research study, which explores what schools can do to support the needs of children and families of refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds when they first arrive to the country. This was done by listening to the views of children and parents/carers who have experienced this personally.

The study title is:

How can schools support refugee and asylum-seeking children and families when they first arrive to England? An exploration of child and family perspectives.

It has two research aims:

1. To understand what schools are currently doing to support children and families.
2. To explore what children and families feel schools can do to support future children and families.

I want the research to contribute to improved practice for school staff and Educational Psychologists when working with newly arrived children and families of refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

All participant information and recordings will be stored securely and personal details will be anonymised. This information and recordings will be destroyed once I successfully complete my training at Newcastle University. If you wish to withdraw your information or recordings, please inform the researcher and your data will be destroyed.

When the research study has been successfully completed, you will be provided with information on the findings of the study. This is likely to be towards the end of 2023.

If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or their supervisor. For further information or support regarding the topics discussed during this research, you can also contact the following:

- Your child's class teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) lead.
- The KaleidRAScope project. They work with children and young people who are international new arrivals. Contact: andrew.scott@newcastle.gov.uk
- Action Foundation. A charity based in Newcastle who support people are who refugees, asylum-seeking or migrants. Contact: info@actionfoundation.org.uk or 0191 231 3113
- West End Refugee Service (WERS). A charity based in Newcastle who support people are who refugees or asylum-seeking. Contact: info@wers.org.uk or 0191 273 7482

Thank you again for your participation.

Lead researcher: Jade Wang

Email: y.wang315@newcastle.ac.uk

Research supervisor: Dr Richard Parker

Email: richard.parker@newcastle.ac.uk

Debriefing Form (for children)

Thank you for taking part in this research study.

This study aims to explore what schools can do to support the needs of children and families of refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds when they first arrive to the country. This was done by listening to the views of children and parents/carers who have experienced this personally.

My study is called:
How can schools support refugee and asylum-seeking children and families when they first arrive to England? An exploration of child and family perspectives.
I want to do two things:

1. Understand what schools are currently doing to support children and families.
2. Find out what children and families feel schools can do to support future children and families.

All your personal information and interview recordings will be kept safely and anonymised (this means no one will be able to know that your ideas came from you). This information and recordings be deleted after I have finished my training at Newcastle University. If you don't want your information or recordings kept anymore, please ask an adult to get in touch with us and we will delete all your information.

When the research has been successfully completed, you will be given information about what the study found. This will probably be in the later part of the year 2023.

If you have any more questions or comments, please ask an adult to get in touch with us for you.

Thank you again for joining in!

Jade

Lead researcher: Jade Wang
Email: y.wang315@newcastle.ac.uk
Research supervisor: Richard Parker
Email: richard.parker@newcastle.ac.uk
Make sure your grownups read this:

If you have any further questions or comments about your child's participation, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or their supervisor. For further information or support regarding the topics discussed during this research, you can also contact the following:

- Your child's class teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) lead.
- The KaleidRAScope project. They work with children and young people who are international new arrivals. Contact: andrew.scott@newcastle.gov.uk
- Action Foundation. A charity based in Newcastle who support people are who refugees, asylum-seeking or migrants. Contact: info@actionfoundation.org.uk or 0191 231 3113
- West End Refugee Service (WERS). A charity based in Newcastle who support people are who refugees or asylum-seeking. Contact: info@wers.org.uk or 0191 273 7482

6.2 Appendix B. Interview guide and questions

Interview guide for children

- Thank the participant for attending
- Introduce the interpreter and check that the participant and interpreter can understand one another
- Explain consent and the participant's right to withdraw
- Explain how the session will be audio-recorded and that all information will be stored securely and anonymously
- Explain the interview will take between 30–60 minutes

Main questions:

1. What was it like starting primary school? Prompts:
    a. Feelings
    b. Surprises
    c. Teachers, children, other staff
    d. Lessons
    e. Travel
    f. Routine
    g. Lunch/break time
2. What helped you when you first started? Prompts:
    a. Teachers, children, other staff
    b. Lessons
    c. Language
    d. Preparation
    e. Any initial meetings
    f. Routine
3. What would you change about it / have more of to make the experience better?
4. How are you finding school now?
5. What has been the biggest change from then to now?
6. What has helped you during this?
7. What do you think schools can do to support other children like you when they first come to the country?
8. What would you say to a new child starting school in this country?

Interview guide for adults

- Thank the participant for attending
- Introduce the interpreter and check that the participant and interpreter can understand one another
- Explain consent and the participant's right to withdraw
- Explain how the session will be audio-recorded and that all information will be stored securely and anonymously
- Explain the interview will take about 60 minutes

Main questions:

1. What was it like for you when your child started primary school? Prompts:
    a. Feelings
    b. Surprises
    c. Teachers, children, other staff
    d. Lessons
    e. Travel
    f. Routine
2. What helped you when your child first started? Prompts:
    a. Teachers, children, other staff
    b. Lessons
    c. Language
    d. Preparation
    e. Any initial meetings
    f. Routine
3. What do you think about your child's early experiences of school in England?
4. What would you change about it / have more of to make the experience even better?
5. Were there ways in which school supported you as a family?
6. What does your child think of school now?
7. Over time, what has helped them get to this stage?
8. What do you think schools can do to support other children and families when they first come to the country?
9. What would you say to a new child or family starting school in this country?

6.3 Appendix C. Transcription protocol

Format:

- Arial, size 11
- Left justified
- Line space after each speaker
- Participant pseudonym and date of interview in the header
- Page number in the footer
- R: is the researcher speaking
- I: is the interpreter speaking
- C: is the child speaking
- M: is the mother speaking
- D: is the father speaking
- When recording ends, transcript is marked with --End of interview--

Content:

- If there is unintelligible speech, make an educated guess and add (??) directly after, with no space. If a guess cannot be made, type (unintelligible speech) and then continue.
- If unsure of the accuracy of a phrase or sentence, this section is placed in parentheses with a question mark before and after: ?(I didn't know)?
- Where there is uncertainty of homophones, both words are included with a / between
- Slang words are transcribed as spoken (e.g. 'gonna', 'coz')
- Pauses of longer than 3 seconds are marked with (pause 3 seconds), adapted for how long the pause was
- Laughter is typed in parentheses: (Laughs)
- Where a non-English language is spoken, the language is typed in parentheses, for example, (Arabic)
- Accents and dialects are written as standard English, to reduce stigmatisation of pronunciation (Duff & Roberts, 1997) and for ease of reading
- Grammatical errors in spoken language are transcribed as the individual said them.
- Repetition of words or phrases are included, as the individual said them[6]
- Filler words (e.g. mm, mhm, ah) are transcribed

[6] This was amended for one transcript, as extensive repetitions by an interpreter were problematic for the reader and for data analysis. For this transcript, single word repetitions of four or more utterances were represented as three.

- To support the flow of the transcript when reading, filler words from the other speaker(s) are inserted directly into the transcript of the person speaking at the time.
    - Example: C: I really enjoyed my first day (R: Mm) even though I was new.
- Overlapping speech is indicated as (cross talk)
- Interruptions are indicated as (interruption)
- Where a name is used during the interview, a pseudonym replaces it.
- Where a school name is used during the interview, [School] replaces it. Where a family refer to more than one school that the child attended, a number is added to demonstrate which was the first or second school attended (e.g. [School 1])
- When analysing interpreted language, a verbatim account is used but accepted as not necessarily reflecting the non-verbal elements of speech of the original speaker. Therefore, attention to the minutia of the interpreter's spoken language such as elisions and stresses of interpreted speech is not appropriate for analysis.

6.4 Appendix D. Excerpt of an interview transcript

Example family interview transcript, taken from the adult interview with family 2. Within this family, an adult sibling of the child acted as an interpreter. The child was not present during this interview.

R: Tell me about what it was like for you as a family when Tayba started school at [School 1].

I: (Arabic)

M: (Arabic)

I: (Arabic)

M: (Arabic)

I: (Arabic)

M: (Arabic)

I: So she said that just like any normal person, so when we first came to the UK so because we coming from a different background, different environment, it’s hard to develop, it’s hard to get used to the surrounding environment especially. When you guys have to, like, live in the environment daily for quite a long time (R: Mm). Specifically for Tayba, when she started attending school, my Mum was actually like happy for her, but at the same time she was worried because it's a different environment, as I previously said, and she doesn't know how does it go there? How are schools here? What's gonna happen there? Because I think it's two different systems, two different countries. (R: Yes) It's definitely different. So, and especially one of the main reasons that was my mum concerned about and she was actually even stressing for days and days I think. But even the first two years were actually so stressful, especially for her. So she was concerned that because Tayba, she’s actually younger, so although she's going next summer to Year 7, she supposed to be in Year 5. (R: Mm) Yeah. So (R: Okay) Tayba actually originally studied until Year 2 in Sudan, and when we came here, she's supposed to finish and continue from Year 3. But these are, due to her like, old age she must go to Year 4 straight (R: Okay) because in Sudan we got like, a different educational system. (R: Yes) I think, er, we got three years before kindergarten (R: okay) and then we got two years in kindergarten, and then we got Year 1, Year 2 till Year 8 (R: right, so) Yeah. So, Year 8, I think that's the primary (R: Mm). Yeah. So we don't have a middle, I believe. Yeah. From Year 1 to Year 8 primary, and from Year 9 to 11, that’s the high school (R: Okay) then obviously we don't have 6th Form, we go straight to the university. (R: Yes). Yeah, so I think. Yeah. So the, the three years different actually it was actually

concerning my mum and we even try to contact the school and trying to figure out a way that they gonna like put her in the, in the normal class that she’s supposed to be in but they said no due to the age. Even me personally, I face that because I'm supposed to be doing Year 11 in their high school (R: yes). But they said due to my age, after I got accepted, they said that due to my age I have to just like scrape(??) through it, like, go into college (R: yes) but yeah, yeah. So these are one of the problems and even because back home like our life was a bit simple so it was so functional, straight forward, that, wake up in the morning, have a shower and then go take the car, go to school (R: Mhm). So everything was actually safe and expected (R: Yes). Like it's like a daily routine. In the first two years we didn't have a car, so we wasn't familiar about how does it go, how was, how was the transportation, because I'm even used to like, just like a regular person. If you go somewhere new that you're not used to (R: Mhm), so you might actually be worried are other people gonna treat me nice or not? Am I going to face any problems, someone’s gonna attack me? (R: Yes). So yeah. So you're probably gonna be concerned.

R: Yeah, so it sounds like there was quite a lot of worry and stress in those first two years. (I: Mhm. Definitely. Yeah) And am I right in understanding then, in England, Tayba was put in the year group for her age but in Sudan, that really should have been, it should have matched (I: Yeah) her experience of school (I: Mhm). Okay, yeah, and you would have preferred her to match her experience and not her age of school. (I: Yeah, Mhm) Okay.

M: I will add something. Esam tell you about reason but I want to add, erm, Year 4 and Year 5, er, Corona it’s coming, (R: Mhm) Tayba stay at home. She (I: She barely studied) studied 1 month or 2 month. The school is stopped one year (R: Yes) and another one 3 months school close (R: Of course!) stay at home and, you know, erm, online, it’s not good in, erm, [School 1] (I: Yeah) (R: Aah) There was no contact with me and no invited me in any separate(??), just one day (R: Okay) and see Tayba, I’m so sad. If me go to school, took my daughter, I see all parents go inside meeting, meeting, meeting. Not anyone call me or speak with me because, er, the school

I: (interruption) Yeah so they was not really caring, actually

M: The school know I can’t speak English good (R: Yes), but, er, I can give, erm, Esam, he can translation for me or the school give anyone translation or the council help me, but not anyone care for me because that big reason. I’m so sad. I’m angry about that. This and, and Tayba in [School 1] all the time she crying and she tell me, ‘Mum, I want to go back my home (R: Ooh) and I don't like this place because not anyone care for me’ (R: Mhm) all this stuff. Okay, sorry.

R: Yes, no, no, please share and your English is great, by the way. That's fantastic. And it's, so it sounded like [School 1] knew your circumstances, but they didn't offer the support for you as a family. For you as her parents really (I: Yeah), to help and, all the other parents are talking to each other. Did any other parents come and reach out and speak to you?

M: Yeah, sometimes I met our/Arab(??)people, or African people (R: Yeah). Refugee like me and all people complaining and tell me about not anyone care for kids (R: Oh) or ignore anyone. Er, you know. Tayba, er, while Tayba make conversation with you (R: Mhm), I hear Tayba, she excited for [School 2] (I: new school) (R: Yes). Different, I'm surprised. Everyday letters. You know, the school sent letter for me. Sometimes I'm crying. I'm so happy. (R: Wow) I know what my daughter doing.

I: Yeah, her current school actually care.

M: Two years, I don't know Tayba, what Tayba study or what's happened (R: Yes). Sometimes Esam go to speak with teacher or, 'Okay, okay. Don't worry, I sent her report. Okay, don't worry'.

I: Yeah so it is actually like a massive difference. Especially in [School 2] (R: Yes) So one example, Tayba, I think the beginning of the past month. So I think since last September till maybe February (R: Mm). So she was facing problems with maths actually (R: Okay), and even try to like maybe pay for like, extra courses outside of the school to help (R: Yeah, like a tutor). Yeah, so she was still facing, not, like, major difficulties, but like, some slightly diff–, like slightly small problem (R: Mm) And these problems might actually affect her in the future because these are the basics. So when actually Tayba got, like, a personal Chromebook provided by the school, so I actually used her personal laptop gave for her by the schools to wrote a letter to the teacher (R: Yeah). So I think after like maybe 3, 4 days, I had a message back saying that you don't have to worry. And she didn't even enough like much details, and after a couple of weeks later, I started like seeing like noticeable like, improvements in mathematics with Tayba.

R: And was that in [School 2]?

I: Yes.

R: Okay.

M: You know, sorry, Tayba changing in, inside, because she stay happy, because that the academic good and she won't catch up any information or any lesson and she interested. OK (R: Yes), but in the back, Tayba, she don't like school and know, you know, Thursday(??) with Tayba, go to school. If me, if Tayba, she want to play with some kids (R: Mm) and one girl is speak with a teacher. This girl makes something, the teacher shouted in

my daughter and shouted and my daughter so scared. (R: Oh) And is stay at home. I can't go to school. I'm, I'm so scared about this woman. (R: Okay) If me want to speak with teacher, he don't speak with me. (R: Okay) (I: Yeah, so)

R: And was this at [School 1]?

M: Yeah, [School 1]

R: Yes

M: But now I think, Tayba, she (inaudible words). She can know anything and feel anything good.

R: Okay. So again, like Tayba was saying, that's a big difference between the two schools and how they worked with you as a family.

M: 2 years, Tayba stay in the ground outside. All kids play. Tayba just sit alone and crying. Not anyone care about that. I'm going to school and I speak with women in the reception. I want to meet someone. Call the teacher. Speak with teacher. She said, 'Okay, okay. No problem. Don't worry. Don't worry' like this. But not anything is change.

R: OK, so they will tell you not to worry. But then they didn't do anything (M: Yeah) about it.

M: Tayba tell me, Mum, I, I don't, er, if me want to sleep, I remember [School 1] and I can't sleep. Two years, and she, Esam, (Arabic).

I: Oh, she saying that Tayba always used this phrase that, 'Mum, you can't even imagine that things that I go through in the school' (R: Oh) Yeah.

M: (Arabic)

I: And by that, I honestly, because we actually like quite recent in the country (R: Yeah), because I was actually busy with going to college and like (R: Mhm) most of the time, I actually, I'm outside the house, so I'll, if we leave the house at maybe half 7, drop them at the school by, by the bus and then I have to go college (M: Arabic), then later go back home around 5 or 6 (R: Yes). So most of time I'm not keep, I didn't used to like keeping up with Tayba's like, what's going on the school (R: Mhm). So that so, yeah.

M: (Arabic)

I: Yeah and even they were actually like, so limited, they wouldn't actually even provided like, enough like, details. Even if you actually complain about something. And, yeah, maybe even if they take you under consideration, they're not gonna like, maybe like, like fully solve it.

R: Okay. So it sounds like they actually, they dismissed a lot of your concerns. Whereas [School 2], they write to you a lot and they speak to you as a family (I and M: Yeah).

I: Think almost in a daily basis.

R: Wow

M: If Tayba want to use inhaler, the school told me. Erm. You allowed Tayba do it? (R: Right, yes) About anything, call me (R: Mhm) and speak with me.

R: Okay. So communication is much better (M: Yeah, yeah). Mm, okay. That's really interesting and very worrying that the other families who you spoke to at [School 1] (M: Yeah) had the same experience as you had.

I: Er, yeah, almost. (Arabic)

M: (Arabic)

I: Yeah, yeah. I think most of the like, being the refugee families especially. But I don't see quite like UK resident families like facing the same problems (R: Yeah).

6.5 Appendix E: Examples of extracts that contribute to each subtheme

Theme	Subtheme	Child or adult participant	Examples of extracts
Impactful relationships	Connecting with peers	Child	Jasmin: C: (Interrupts) Introduce them to other people. R: Oh, introduce them! Okay. And when they introduced them, what might they say about them? C: This person is nice. This person is very helpful. (R: So that they're nice) They're very friendly. R: Helpful, friendly. So, say good things about them, it sounds like? C: Yeah. Peter: R: Well, tell me about the other people. What were the other children like when you started? C: Erm, when I came to the school? R: Yeah. When you came to the school. C: Well, I hadn't really much friends when I came to school (R: Yeah) but then when I was getting used to it, that school. I had two friends and then three and then four then five and six and after that I got all of them. R: Okay. And tell me about the children at your school. C: Erm. My friends. How they're called. One of them is [Name]. One of them is [Name](??). One of them is [Name](??). And one of them is [Name](??) R: Okay. And how do you know that they're your friends? C: I asked, I asked them when I came to this school if they want to be my friends and they said yes. Tayba: C: Erm, it was like pretty like unkind. Erm, really like, er, like, underrated. They always give you and like this thing called an orange card for sometimes being violent, even though I used to be like, bullied and the kids always used to blame it on me. R: Ah okay. So tell me your ideas about what did you want your teachers to do. C: I want them to do like, to like, call their parents or something like that. (R: Mm) Cos like I actually like, had enough of that. (R: Yeah). And I didn't like it. R: And do you think the school did? I mean, did they call the parents at all? C: No, (R: okay) they just gave him a red card instead. Mazz (C1) and Hasan (C2): R: Mm. And what are your friends like? Tell me about your friends. C1: Friend like, play with me (R: Yeah). Play football with me, and then, C2: (interrupts) And they do reading with you. R: Oh, they do reading with you? C2: All the time. R: Oh, do they? C2: And then like reading with me.
		Adult	Carmen: M: Yeah, well. It was, I think. We haven't had, much luck in that department. (R: Okay) Erm, with this new school, sometimes, erm, they would speak to her. Sometimes they would play with her, but because, because her English

			was a bit limited at the beginning, they got bored very quickly (R: Okay) and because the way she acted or reacted to things, they couldn't understand. Fatima: M: 2 years, Tayba stay in the ground outside. All kids play. Tayba just sit alone and crying. Not anyone care about that. I'm going to school and I speak with women in the reception. I want to meet someone. Call the teacher. Speak with teacher. She said, ‘Okay, okay. No problem. Don't worry. Don't worry,’ like this. But not anything is change. R: OK, so they will tell you not to worry. But then they didn't do anything (M: Yeah) about it? M: Tayba tell me, Mum, I, I don’t, er, if me want to sleep, I remember [School 1] and I can’t sleep. Two years, and she, Esam, (Arabic). I: Oh, she saying that Tayba always used this phrase that, ‘Mum, you can't even imagine that things that I go through in the school.’ (R: Oh) Yeah. Adam: R: That's good. Okay. And tell me about the other children in the school. How were they with your children? I: (Arabic) P: (Arabic) I: Yeah, everything was perfect. Great. Yeah.
	Teachers care and teachers’ care	Child	Jasmin: R: You do, don’t you! You’re going to be a great scientist. And what should the teacher do to help this new child make friends? M: Mm. That’s a very good question. C: I don't know. Maybe show her to speaks English. M: Teach them how to speak English? Do you think that there's anything else besides the language that the teacher could do to help the children welcome the other new child or? C: First, tell them not to bully him. (M and R: Mhm). Then take turns to be with him in each day. M: Or ‘her’ because remember it can be any child. R: Yeah. So take turns being with them. C: Yeah. So he, or her, could pick the one that wanted to be with and start a friendship (R: Okay) with the class! Peter: R: Okay, can you tell me about any memories you have when you started school? C: When I came to this school (R: Mhm) I just sit down and draw some pictures, do my colouring in, and do some work. Some, do some reading. But I was quite nervous so the teacher had to help me. R: Ah, and how did they help you? C: Oh, they came. So, but. They don't really help me a lot because they, they’ve gotta teach everyone in the class, not just me. (R: Mhm) So, but they do help me a little bit. R: They help you a little bit? Would they come and check on you? C: Yeah. Tayba: R: That's really wonderful. So it sounds like you're surrounded by quite a lot of caring children. Mm. Tell me about your teachers when you first started. C: Erm, my teacher was kind of nice. Er, he was like he was just showing me around same as the other kids. (R: Yeah, mhm) About like, how the system works and like that. Mazz and Hasan:

			C1: Yeah. She's hold my hand when I, I said that's my dad and she's telling this is, 'Okay here you go, Mazz.' R: Oh! So, was that at the end of the day when your dad picked you up? C1: Yeah. R: Oh, and how did you feel about her holding your hand? C1: Good. R: Yeah, and what else was good about your teachers? C2: From. Erm. Going(??) to allowed to play when we forget my coat is can give it for me. R: That's very kind! So when, when it's playtime and you forgot, your teacher will get your coat for you? C2: Mm. Yeah.
		Adult	Carmen: When Jasmin would try to talk to her to say, you know what, that my classmates are bullying me or they telling me nasty words or there was even a boy who, who would sing like an obscene song in Spanish to her because he had learned it from an uncle (R: Mm). So I heard it. I said no, like, this is not child language (R: Mm) and he was doing that all the time and there was a classmate, even who, who made her like wanted to, her to take her clothes off (R: Mhm). So it was a lot of things (R: A lot) and we complained, but we weren't heard. And the teacher said that she was lying, that she hadn't heard anything like that and, and that she was going to have a talk with all of the children (R: Okay). And when, when she said that to me, I thought in my head, 'Okay, she's gonna do this with the attitude that she had when she said that, maybe she's gonna ask the whole class where they're all together and that's going to be really hard for Jasmin.' Esam and Fatima: I: Yeah and even they were actually like, so limited, they wouldn't actually even provided like, enough like, details. Even if you actually complain about something. And, yeah, maybe even if they take you under consideration, they're not gonna like, maybe like, like fully solve it. R: Okay. So it sounds like they actually, they dismissed a lot of your concerns. Whereas [School 2] they write to you a lot and they speak to you as a family (I and M: Yeah). I: Think almost in a daily basis. R: Wow M: If Tayba want to use inhaler, the school told me. Erm. You allowed Tayba do it? (R: Right, yes) About anything, call me (R: Mhm) and speak with me. R: Okay. So communication is much better (M: Yeah, yeah). Mm, okay. That's really interesting and very worrying that the other families who you spoke to at [School 1] (M: Yeah) had the same experience as you had. I: Er, yeah, almost. (Arabic) M: (Arabic) I: Yeah, yeah. I think most of the like, being the refugee families especially. But I don't see quite like UK resident families like facing the same problems (R: Yeah). Adam: R: And can you tell me, what was it about the teachers that you really liked? I: (Arabic) P: (Arabic) I: (Arabic) P: (Arabic)

			I: Okay. Yeah. Yeah, he's talking about the school meeting when he can, like, attend the school meeting and, parents, sorry, parent meeting, and he can see the. Erm. The paperwork of her children that, yeah. He's like get surprise of seeing these, er, paperwork of his kids. R: Okay and what did you think about the paperwork of your children? I: (Arabic) P: (Arabic) I: Mhm. Yeah. Okay. Great. Yeah. Perfect.
Refining school support	Supporting academic engagement and progress	Child	Peter: R: Mhm. Tell me, when a teacher helps you, what happens, what does that look like? Can you describe that? C: Erm. Just a bit nervous. R: A bit nervous? C: Yeah R: When a teacher helps you? C: Mm. Sometimes, but not all of the times. R: Mm. Can you tell me what you mean when you say you feel a bit nervous about the teachers helping. C: Because. (pause) Because when I, I find it quite tricky. R: Ah, yeah? And if you find it tricky, what can you do to help that? Or what do your teachers do to help you? C: Yeah, she's come. Jasmin: C: No, it's just the 3 things that I like. I like science, art and maths R: Okay. Tell me why do you like science? C: I want to be a veterinarian and make my own medicine. (Said in a quick, straight voice) M: (Laughs) R: Oh my goodness. Did you say a veterinarian? M: That sounded very robotic. (Laughs) R: She's very serious about it. That's amazing. So you're going to be a veterinarian. Tell me, why do you like art? C: Erm. It's relaxing. R: Oh goodness. And why do you still like maths? C: I don't know. (Laughs) Maybe we need a lot of numbers to make the, like, the things to make medicine for the animals.
		Adult	Esam: I: Yeah, she was actually worried (M: Yeah) and I can actually like tell you that because when Tayba was studying in [School 1] (R: Yes), we didn't even know what Tayba used to study or what Tayba used to do (R: Mm). You are actually absolutely clueless (M: Arabic) Tayba was doing, was thinking about okay that simple and Tayba needs to learn, we don't know what she's learning, but we will take her to school and bring her back (R: Okay). Because even the school from them, from their side, they didn't use to provide us, we used to keep asking (R: Aah), even if we ask for, like, for example Tayba's work (R: Mhm), maybe class work, homework (R: Mhm), whatever, even. They didn't used to give her like homework (R: Mhm) she, as if she was just going school and playing, come back, but now I think everything is related under Tayba's personal computer (R: Aah) and now we know what Tayba is doing actually. Carmen:

			M: Exactly (laughs). So, so I felt that the approach at this school had was really, really good because she started learning more things and she was curious about things again and before, she didn't even want to study anything. But now she was catching up or coming in, asking me questions about history or telling me about a cool science class that she had, or about a story that the teachers had read with her. So, it was like she was going back to being just a child again. R: Okay. And was that in Year 4? When you moved? M: Year 5, we started at this school. R: Ah, the new school. So that's a really different approach (M: (laughs) Yeah!) between the two schools and how were the new school for the children in the class, because that seemed to be quite difficult in the old school. Susana: R: OK. The first question is, erm, can you tell me about what it was like for you as a family when Peter started school in England, either their first day or their first week or month of school? I: (Spanish) P: (Spanish) I: Okay. Er. And when was when we came here, we, I didn't know how, how to work the school system. I didn't, I didn't know precisely where, where to go to try, to find school. I found the foundation and somebody will help me with all of this technology, these technical issues. That was better because I didn't speak the language or nothing. She came in and help us. She help us to find, to find the school. We went and we put our name down. The accept Peter. Peter had a little bit of, of that transition to on, on the school because Peter was, was put on level on, on Year 2 directly on school and because Peter in Nicaragua, he was not in, he didn't done Level 1 yet in Nicaragua, in Nicaragua and then Peter was missing 1 year base then it was very difficult for Peter, also the language barrier to understand anybody in school. He didn't want to go to school because you did not, it says, 'Mom I don't know what they're saying to me. I do not understand them'. And it was, it was a little bit frustrated for him to get in the, because he was already two years, one year behind and then also by being in a school in a country where, where was the language, was different they used language. See all of these adaptation was a little bit difficult for the beginning for Peter, also for myself.
	Helping to overcome initial English language barriers	Child	Peter: C: Some children that do speak Spanish because I've learned, I say to them how to say it so, 'Hola' means 'hello' (R: Yes) So that's how R: So you've been teaching other children your language? C: Yeah R: Oh right! So now, because of you, they speak a little bit of Spanish. C: Yeah, even my teacher can speak a little bit because I showed her. R: Wow, that's so good that you were able to do that. You're like the teacher now. C: I know. Mazz: C1: Mm. Someone's in the class with him speak Arabic and English. R: Ah, to have someone in the class with them to speak Arabic and English. C1: Mhm. And tell them what they said. Tell the teacher what them said. Jasmin: R: Okay, so the first question, Jasmin, was, could you tell me about your first day at school? Was it like when you started?

			C: I'd say, we had a test of English. R: Oh! You had an English test C: Yeah, I didn't even know any English! R: My goodness, so that was on your very first day? C: Yeah. R: Okay. M: And how was that? Oh sorry! R: No, please! Speak, feel free! Yeah, I was going to ask how was that? How did you feel about that? C: I was kind of, 'What does this say?! What is this?! I don't even know what this is! What is this?!'
		Adult	Carmen: M: Mhm. I think that what we didn't like (laughs), the Mrs(??), while she was great, the thing that then I didn't like was when I came to a classroom and I notice that Jasmin was like growling or barking, and doing animal sounds and she kind of encouraged that because she said, 'well, this er, the way she explores her own language, she saying(??) how to communicate herself. I just let it do it, I don't think, I just think it's really good because she's just trying in her own way'. But like no. You should be helping her have English lessons (laughs). (R: Yes!) Er, that was like the main thing that surprised me the most all the time that there was no English as second language support (R: Okay) or for her to have, like extra reading help or anything like that. So, she was mostly going with the flow. Susana: R: So is he, do you mean at the moment he is getting extra support and extra teaching at school? M: No, never had extra support and (Spanish) I: (Cross talk, also tried to explain) No, (inaudible) I: And Mum says the only, my son can read a little bit of English now was because I make an effort to pay somebody privately to come home to teach my son how to read the bit he knows because the school never made no effort. And never put no effort to, to help Peter catching up. See/si. I just think in here, it is a language barrier of helping the Mum and the proper family because Peter supposed to have some support, see/si, in school because Peter just started school, comes from, from another country supposed to have more, much more support with this support of catching back, she just going back to maybe level one, catching back and, and learning because at the moment, it's difficult for him to be on this limbo in class with this, where he can speak but he does not understand the maths and the, OK, the, the class himself and, and that's why he's reacting and in the wrong way. Fatima: R: Mhm. Okay. Thank you. And if you could speak to their school, what would you tell their school? What do you think they should do for this family coming? I: (Arabic) M: (Arabic) I: Okay, that's a good point. Ah, she saying that, er, she's going tell the school, for example to maybe bring translators (R: Mhm) or like, provide like, some translation service there because not all kids come from their country learning good English (R: Mm). Or maybe there's a lot of kids from their own countries not understand any English, so in most cases, I think the kid, when he comes from his country to the UK and he actually goes to school, their first concern. So he's going to be scared and could stressed and concerned all the time that what if he misunderstands the teacher, is she gonna like, for example, abuse him. Is she gonna like scare him? So and yes, a lot of kids, especially not born in the UK (R: Mm) because we know the UK's a developed country. Maybe like back home or back in different like non-developed countries. I know that the educational system maybe like low, and maybe the teachers don't take the job seriously (R: Mhm). So the kid maybe expects that maybe he's going to get abused or

			like scared from the teacher (R: Okay). So she's going to say that maybe provide like translation to make a connection between the teacher and the student.
	Understanding wellbeing through a trauma-sensitive perspective	Adult	Susana: I: It my, my opinion, is my opinion, is every, every school suppose, supposed to have a support, a support team or even the government supposed, supposed to help us when we, when we come into to, to England and we don't know the language and we don't know where to go, to, to inscribe(??) the children's in school, to, to have some people who can teach us the directions of going to school, how to inscavate(??) children's online, everything, to the things you need to do. Because I had lucky, somebody else came and help me, see/si, I had lucky. A stranger found me and helped me because I didn't have no interpreter. I didn't have no other way of communication so that person help was the one. And also, I think schools needs to, needs to not, not only in this school but every other school needs to have an option when, when they take some children's on, from an like asylum seekers from another country. So they have to take and value the childrens are coming from a difficult way. Children are leaving something behind. Children that they are here cause asylum seekers mean something went wrong, that's why they are here. School supposed to take and value all of the situation and be prepared. Any other school. Be prepared to, to take the children on board. To let the children start from the beginning because I asked for my child to start from level 1, the reception because I told them you don't have the basics in English, you just, you just showing them to level 2 without no basics. He is never gonna catch up, see/si, and this, and they said to me, ‘No, you cannot go to one because he’s too old for that’. I told them, ‘Can you at least give him a support one hour and a half, or an hour, or an hour and a half a day for you, for you can catch up a little bit, on his reading and his math and all the technology that exercise of studying’. ‘No’, they said, ‘No, we cannot.’ See/si. You should have, you should be able to have all of this in place because when you taken on a child and the government is telling(??) us here, see/si, we they told(??) us without no help at all. Without nobody to direct us, where to go, to find the basic things like doctors, then find the basicest things and when, when a child is taken in school, they should know what, what the child needs. The child is coming from a difficult situation, difficult time in his life and not, and not the option is, ‘Oh, we're gonna expel your child out of school, see/si, not behaving’. That's why my child, my child is behaving on this kind of behaviour because he’s not have no support in school. He's feeling himself lost between the lessons because he don't know what the, what is learning because nobody teach him at the beginning. And that's why he's reacting this way in school. And what school is doing in place to find the option to help the child, they say they're gonna expel him out of school. I don't think it's fair. I don't think the system is really on the, you know, thinking about all of these childrens. They coming from another countries by being asylum seekers looking for help. They're not taking all of this, I think, and value. Carmen: R: So could you just tell me, what was it like for you as a family when Jasmin first started school in England. M: Erm, I think we were all. It was. It was a difficult, erm, feeling to describe because on one side we were really hoping that she could start school soon (R: Mm) because it had been a long gap since we left our country (R: Mm) to when she started studying again and we felt like she needed it. But then there was this other part of us that was really worried (R: Mm) and was also considering if she might find school difficult because the language barrier, or if she might get triggered because of other children, or the teachers. Erm, one thing is that, back home, when we had our issues that we had to move around within our own country, one of the main things that that made us want to leave was because Jasmin was attacked during school time (R: Aah). And the teachers didn't have (R: Gosh), they didn’t try to protect her or they actually kind of help to cover everything now (R: Aah). So when I, I withdraw her from school (R: Mm), then it was a difficult situation. Jasmin stopped talking for a very long time (R: Mm) in more than a

			Fatima:	year actually. So when we got here, it wasn't just that she didn't speak English, she did not connect or talk to other people either in Spanish. So it was very, very tricky time. (R: Yes). And she was always, like, wondering what was going to happen or how the teacher was gonna be like, if she was at school alone again if something bad was going to happen to her again. She had, she had, like nightmares and anxiety for a very long time (R: Mhm) before going in. M: (Arabic) I: My Mum is saying that yeah, so you can't even imagine that, like the mental stress that the family itself living (R: Mm) because as I told you, because we have said that in the first months of the first year, we were more concerned about what's happening with Tayba (R: Yes). We know that okay this is developed country. This is a good country (R: Yeah). Nothing might go wrong in most cases, but it's a new environment (R: Mhm), you don't know what's going on. So you are definitely concerned.