The Experiences of a Shared Placement for Pupils Identified as Having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties and Staff

Submitted by Timothy Paul Cockerill (600035767 PF) to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in Educational, Child and Community Psychology in May 2013

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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1.1 Research Overview

The following research project is split into two phases and concludes with a synthesis of both phases. The overarching aim of the research project is to explore how mainstream schools can best work with alternative providers to make collective provision for those identified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties. In the first phase, a realistic evaluation methodology (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) is adopted and semi-structured interviews are used to explore the experiences of staff in relation to pupils on a shared placement. A provisional theory is then developed to explain the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement.

The second phase of the research involves gathering the views and perceptions of the pupils and also utilises the realistic evaluation approach. The aim of this phase is to refine and update the provisional theory developed in Phase 1. This study adopts a mixed methods approach, utilising semi-structured interviews with the pupils. A quantitative element is introduced through a closer examination of the relationship between pupils’ sense of school belonging and the success, or otherwise of the shared placement. Throughout both phases of the research, there is a focus on discovering how a shared placement affects the pupil and what the outcomes of this arrangement are. The project is also heavily focused on identifying the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit positive outcomes occurring.

The findings of the research indicate that shared placements can lead to a variety of outcomes for pupils. When it works well, pupils become more engaged with their education and this has a positive impact on their behaviour and emotional development. However, it is also clear that shared placements can result in undesirable outcomes including further disengagement from the mainstream school. When outcomes were positive, the shared placement increased pupils’ self-efficacy, aspirations and facilitated achievement. These factors were supported by valuing pupil voice, excellent partnership working between
settings and the schools willingness to include children with complex needs. This research also highlights that a greater sense of belonging to the mainstream school is associated with an increased likelihood of positive outcomes occurring.

This project has explored an area which has been largely neglected in previous research. The theories developed have a variety of implications for Educational Psychologists as well as wider implications, and these are discussed in the final section. Figure 1 presents a visual overview of the research project.
**Phase 1:**

**Exploring Staff Perceptions in Relation to Their Experiences of Pupils on a Shared Placement**

**Research Questions:**
1) What are the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement?
2) What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?
3) What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?
4) In a shared placement, how are mechanisms activated within contexts to lead to certain outcomes?

**Development of initial Programme Theories**

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**Phase 2:**

**The Experiences of Pupils Receiving Education Through a Shared Placement**

**Research Questions:**
1) What are the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement?
2) What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?
   2a) What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the school and the success of the shared placement?
   2b) What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the AP and the success of the shared placement?
3) What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?
4) In a shared placement, how are mechanisms activated within contexts to lead to certain outcomes?

**Conclusions**

**Implications**
1.2: Terms of Definition

For the purposes of this study, it was vital that a clear definition of *Shared Placement* was conceptualised as this has not been done previously. During Phase 1, this definition was shared with staff so that there was clarity and a shared understanding of the topic. During Phase 2, it formed the basis of the selection criteria for the pupils. The definition is outlined in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: Definition of a Shared Placement*

*A shared placement is when a pupil receives their education at two or more placement locations on a weekly basis, and this continues for a minimum of six weeks. One of these placements must be a mainstream school, and the other an alternative provision. Alternative provisions can include PRUs and a wide range of practical, creative or vocational programmes. This excludes a college placement and any provision which is delivered ‘on-site’, even if this is a segregated unit. This also excludes outreach programmes.*

It was important to be clear with a definition as there is a distinction between dual registration and shared placements. Dual registration is when a student is registered at more than one provision. However, many of those on a shared placement will not be dual registered and many of those who are dual registered with only attend one setting (CSJ, 2011).

The requirement for one of the settings being a mainstream school was important as the main focus of this study is to analyse how mainstream schools work with alternative providers. It was necessary to exclude college placements as these are not considered alternative provisions.
1.3: Positioning Myself as a Researcher

It must be recognised that no researcher is completely value free when conducting real world research. It is acknowledged that the processes and findings of this project will be partially related to the personal constructs and values of the researcher. The researcher has an interest in emotional health and wellbeing, alternative provision and during the project, it has been important to remain mindful of potential biases. Although it is recognised that complete objectivity would be unrealistic, every effort has been made to gain a balanced and accurate portrayal of the shared placement arrangement. Appendix 1 outlines the steps taken throughout the research project to maintain high levels of validity and reliability.
Section 2

Phase 1: Exploring Staff Perceptions in Relation to Their Experiences of Pupils on a Shared Placement.

2.1 Abstract

Many pupils attend their alternative provision (AP) on a full time basis, however there are also many pupils who receive provision through a shared placement between the school and alternative provider. This paper explored the perceptions and experiences of staff in relation to shared placements. Data was collected across three Local Authorities (LAs) in the South and South-West of England. The participants consisted of 19 members of staff from both mainstream and alternative settings, covering both the primary and secondary age phases.

Adopting a realistic evaluation methodology (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), semi-structured interviews were used to identify the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement as well as the important mechanisms and contexts in leading to the outcomes. Data was analysed through thematic analysis, and a theory of how shared placements lead to the identified outcomes was generated. The analysis of data identified both desirable and undesirable consequences of a shared placement. For some pupils, it led to greater engagement with education and an improvement in behaviour. This paper suggests there is a variety of mechanisms that lead to positive outcomes, including increasing pupil confidence and the pupil achieving through access to a broader curriculum than offered by school alone. These mechanisms were facilitated by excellent partnership working, listening to the pupil’s voice, positive relationships and inclusive school attitudes. For other pupils, the findings indicated that a shared placement led to further disengagement from the mainstream education system, and a range of mechanisms and contextual factors were identified that led to this outcome. For example, the findings indicate that inconsistency between settings can cause the pupil confusion, leading to further disengagement from the school. This occurs when there is poor partnership working, school has inflexible systems
and there is limited planning for both placement transitions and the more frequent sessional transitions between the school and AP.
2.2 Phase 1 Tables and Figures

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2.3 Introduction

2.3.1 Context of the Research

In the United Kingdom, there is a wide range of alternative provisions set up for young people who have been assessed as requiring something additional or different to what their mainstream school can offer. Ofsted (2011) defines AP as something in which a young person participates as part of their regular timetable, away from the site of the school and not led by school staff. This is a very wide definition and so includes a variety of placement types. The most formal and widely used AP is the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). As well as the PRU, there are a wide range of other providers of AP. These Providers offer a wide range of options to suit various needs, including those that focus on personal development or offer a therapeutic approach. Other placements offer work experience such as mechanics or hairdressing, and sometimes involve accreditation (Ofsted, 2011). In 2011, the Department for Education census recorded that 36,060 pupils were registered as attending AP (DfE, 2011a). However, this does not include the many who are on more flexible arrangements, and although there can be no accurate data on the total number of pupils receiving AP, the Department for Children, Schools and Families estimated that 135,000 children received AP during the school year (DCSF, 2008). A range of reports in recent years has expressed concern about AP, suggesting many are not regulated, are poor quality and are used in illegal ways (Atkinson, 2013; Ogg & Kaill, 2010).

The findings of a recent literature review by the Centre for British Teachers Education Trust (CfBT, 2011) suggests that AP can positively affect student motivation, achievement, behaviour and measures of self-concept. A recent report by Ofsted (2011) also identified some positive outcomes including increased attendance, greater confidence and pupils achieving accreditations. However, it was also noted that AP could lead to feelings of isolation.

Although acknowledging that many pupils were on a shared placement between school and an AP, there was little analysis of this arrangement in the Ofsted (2011) report. For those pupils receiving shared provision, there is a wide range of unique circumstances and factors
to consider. This important aspect has been largely ignored in the research, although there are some relevant studies which will be discussed now.

Shared Placements

Although there has been little guidance from the current or previous government on shared placements, they have encouraged greater moving of pupils between schools, and would like professionals to ‘consider the scope for a dual placement’ (DfES, 2004, p.35). The concept however has been criticised by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ, 2011), as there is confusion about the extent it is used as well as the reasons for its use. A recent investigation by the CSJ (2011) found that shared placements are not as rare as would be expected, and a similar finding has come from Ofsted (2011), who found that out of the 39 settings visited, 37 of them had children accessing part-time placements. These findings justify shared placements as a research area. Although no direct research on shared placements for those with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) has been located, there are a number of peer-reviewed studies which are relevant, and these will be briefly discussed.

Flewitt and Nind (2007) examined the parental experiences of shared placements in the early years and found that perceptions were generally positive. A common theme was that shared placements allowed for specialist teaching and resources alongside participation in the mainstream peer group. Similarly, in a study of the education of those with Down Syndrome, Cuckle (1997) outlined that shared placements can offer specialist teaching alongside participation in mainstream activities, allowing experience of normal language and social interaction.

However, there are also indications that there are aspects to a shared placement which can cause difficulties. For example, it is an interesting and repeated finding that children’s behaviour is often better in their AP than at the school (Ofsted, 2011). Burton, Bartlett and De Cuevas (2009) looked into staff perceptions of PRUs. Some felt that the more flexible environment of the PRUs, combined with the socialisation of others experiencing BESD exacerbated the difficulties when the child returned to school. These are very interesting findings considering that the desired outcomes of AP usually include re-engagement with the school and exam achievements (Ofsted, 2011).
2.3.2 Research Problem and General Aims

The phenomenon of shared placements is under explored (Nind, Flewitt, & Payler, 2011). Because of the scarcity of research, Nind et al (2011) suggest that shared placement policy is based on philosophical and practical justifications, and this may neglect important considerations. A small number of articles has addressed the topic of shared placements, but many of the findings cannot be generalised beyond the context in which they were investigated. For example, the research on pre-school aged pupils illustrated some important considerations, but many of the issues for school aged children are significantly different. Similarly, the challenges of maintaining a good shared placement for those with Down Syndrome is likely to differ from the challenges facing pupils with BESD. The literature to date suggests that there are both positive and negative outcomes of a shared placement and a small number of factors have been identified that may lead to these outcomes. However, it is clear that children respond very differently to the arrangement. For some, it may present the best of both worlds (Flewitt & Nind, 2007), where pupils can participate in the mainstream environment, but still have access to specialist provision with additional resources. On the other hand, it can lead to feelings of isolation for pupils and behaviour may not improve in the school environment. This is a very mixed picture and the aim of this paper is to examine the complex issues that underlie why outcomes for pupils are heterogeneous. There is likely to be a wide range of variables that impact upon whether a shared placement is successful or not and no previous research has examined this in detail. As noted by Pawson and Tilley (2004), the question should not be ‘does it work?’, but should be ‘what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’ (p.2).
2.3.3 Research Questions

Phase 1 of the research sets out to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement?
2) What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?
3) What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?
4) In a shared placement, how are mechanisms activated within contexts to lead to certain outcomes?
2.4 Method

2.4.1 Methodology

Realistic Evaluation

Realistic evaluation provides a methodological framework for evaluating the impact of a social programme. The aim of realistic evaluation is to develop a theory of how a programme works by understanding the causal mechanisms and the contextual conditions under which they are activated that lead to specific outcomes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). As Pawson and Tilley (2004) note, the basic question is multi-faceted, and asks ‘what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’ (p.2). During a realistic evaluation, there is a focus on identifying the outcomes of the programme, the mechanisms that the programme creates and the contextual conditions that allow these mechanisms to lead to the outcome. These key principles will now be described in more detail and an example from a previous realistic evaluation is provided.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the consequences of programmes resulting from the activation of different mechanisms in different contexts. It is important for this analysis to highlight that the outcomes can be both intended and unintended consequences of the programme. For example, shared placements may have a variety of outcomes, some of which are undesirable. Realistic evaluation sees all outcomes as an important part of developing a coherent theory; irrespective of whether they are positive or negative.

Mechanisms

A mechanism describes what it is about a programme or intervention that brings about any effects (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). Mechanisms are often hidden, and taking these into consideration avoids the less helpful view of evaluating whether a programme works. For example, an alternative question could ask whether a shared placement is useful, and the focus of this research would look at the outcomes of those who are on the programme. However, this would be unhelpful as almost certainly the answer would be that it leads to different outcomes, both positive and negative. As Pawson and Tilley (2004) have stated, it
is never the programme itself that works. Instead, it is about how individuals relate to and act on the resources that the programme offers. Therefore, mechanism refers to the ways in which any one of the programme components or any set of them brings about change. Matthews (2010) suggests that the mechanisms that are most likely to be of interest to EPs are social and psychological in nature. For example, individuals’ emotions, attitudes and motivations are important, as well as considering what else the programme has offered such as qualifications or increased skills in an area.

**Context**

A consideration of the context is an essential aspect of the realistic evaluation framework. When developing a theory of what mechanisms lead to certain outcomes, it must be understood that mechanisms will only be activated under certain conditions. For example, the nature of the social environment, the attitudes and beliefs of individuals and institutional practices are all potentially important factors. Pawson and Tilley (2004) suggest that when considering contextual conditions, it needs to be realised that programmes are embedded in multiple layers of social reality. It has been proposed that the following four layers are considered during a realist analysis:

1. Individual capacities of key people involved
2. Interpersonal relationships
3. Institutional settings
4. Wider infra structural support systems

**CMO Configurations**

A key part of the approach is the development of context mechanism outcome (CMO) configurations. A CMO configuration is a model indicating how a programme activates mechanisms in certain conditions to lead to specific outcomes. Table 1 provides an example of a CMO configuration as described by Bozic and Crossland (2012).
Table 1: CMO Configuration From a Realistic Evaluation of a Pilot Local Authority Common Induction Programme (taken from Bozic & Crossland, 2012).

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<td>Participants develop a sense of group identity and realise that they share many of the same values and responsibilities.</td>
<td>Participants value the training. Supportive work environment. Open learning.</td>
<td>Increased sense of shared aims, roles and responsibilities. Shared processes such as the CAF have greater relevance.</td>
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This study will utilise the principles of realistic evaluation by identifying the outcomes, mechanisms and contexts of the shared placement arrangement. This will lead to the development of programme theories, displayed in terms of CMO configurations.

Realistic Evaluation in Education

The authors of this approach both have a background in sociology and Professor Ray Pawson has written extensively on social research methodology. As the authors draw primarily from forensic literature, its application to education may not be immediately apparent (Bozic & Crossland, 2012). Furthermore, the approach is not presented in a way that is wholly in line with psychological research. For example, the term ‘subject’ is used often instead of ‘participant’ which is likely to reflect the authors’ experiences in other fields. However, the authors are clear that their framework is suitable for the social sciences more widely including research in the field of psychology (Pawson & Tilley, 2004).

The application of realistic evaluation within the profession of educational psychology is becoming more frequent. For example, Thornbury (2012) drew on the realistic evaluation framework to evaluate a children’s centre intervention and Bozic and Crossland (2012) examined a Local Authority (LA) common induction programme. A number of trainee educational psychologists have also used the approach in recent years; for example, Davies...
(2011) evaluated a nurture group provision and Stevens (2013) used the realistic evaluation approach to examine the implementation of a behaviour policy. Some EPs have also promoted using the realist framework beyond research; Matthews (2010) suggests that the focus on outcomes and exploring the mechanisms and contextual conditions is a useful framework for EP casework, and argues that this is in line with a consultation model of service delivery.

**Justification for Methodological Approach**

Robson (2011) suggests that a realist approach is particularly suitable for practice based professions as it allows the researcher to approach open and uncontrolled situations in a scientific manner. A key reason for selecting realistic evaluation was that it provided a way of conceptualising a wide range of factors whilst allowing a consideration of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. For example, rather than just focusing on individuals’ general experiences of a shared placement, the researcher was interested in gaining an understanding of why outcomes for pupils on a shared placement were varied. This goes beyond the positivist approach which may ask the questions ‘does a shared placement work?’ or ‘what aspects of a shared placement work?’ Focusing on these questions can undermine the complexity of social programmes and would not have contributed to an understanding of why or how a shared placement leads to certain outcomes. Pawson and Tilley (1997) also discuss realistic evaluation as an alternative to purely subjectivist approaches which can result in descriptive rather than explanatory results. Relativist research often focuses on individuals’ subjective experiences and is concerned with identifying how participants interpret their social world. In a similar way to the positivist approach, a relativist position does not focus on the development of theories to explain why and how a social programme works. As a key aim of the project was to enhance understanding of how shared placements lead to certain outcomes, a realist approach was considered more suitable than either positivist or interpretive evaluation designs.

As a crucial aspect of this research was to explore the views and perceptions of individuals, and as it is a novel area, a primarily qualitative approach was most suitable. The more in-depth and subjectivist approach of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was initially considered as an alternative, but this would have been less helpful in the generation of
theory and reduced the focus on explaining outcomes. Another reason for not selecting a more in-depth methodology was that the researcher wanted to explore a wide range of different contextual conditions. This was considered a valuable approach as there was a high variation in practice in relation to shared placements, and for this complexity to be captured, there needed to be a relatively large sample and participants from various settings.

There are various limitations to the realistic evaluation approach. Timmins and Miller (2007) suggest that although realistic evaluation can be a useful framework for use in education research, the development of CMO theories is not a simple task and it is not always clear which category a factor may fall into. For example, an increase in self-esteem may be considered an outcome of a social programme, but also may be considered a mechanism that leads to a broader outcome. Another limitation of the framework is that, due to the complexity of social systems, theory development is likely to be incomplete and partial (Hansen, 2005). Although the realistic evaluation approach allows for a consideration of many contextual factors, it would be unrealistic to expect a piece of research to incorporate all relevant contextual information into a CMO theory. This highlights the need to view CMO configurations as theories which should be continually further refined, updated and modified.

In summary, realistic evaluation provides a way of not only exploring the range of outcomes that occur in a shared placement, but also can support the development of theories to explain why these outcomes occur and what conditions facilitate the outcomes. For example, Ofsted (2011) outlined that some pupils on a shared placement felt isolated, but without a consideration of the mechanisms, this study does not lead to a detailed analysis of why pupils felt isolated. Similarly, contextual conditions need to be considered to gain an understanding of what institutional practices are associated with isolated pupils, and arguably more importantly, what practices are associated with pupils who are not isolated. This framework allows the opportunity for a richer and more comprehensive analysis of the shared placement arrangement in comparison to previous research. Although contextual factors and mechanisms could have been explored with alternative methodologies, realistic evaluation was selected as it provided a very clear way of conceptualising these different
components as well as giving a structured way of presenting the findings. Furthermore, the creation of CMO programme theories is directly useful for the development of policy and practices (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

2.4.2 Methodological Position

It has often been stated that there are two contrasting approaches to researching social reality (Robson, 2011). The first is encapsulated by a positivist world view which holds that there exists a single reality independent of people’s experiences. This ontological assumption is aligned with an epistemological position that views knowledge as objective. The aim of scientific inquiry in this tradition is to discover facts and causal relations between programmes and outcomes. Pawson and Tilley (1997) are critical of what they argue has been an approach to evaluation that has struggled due to this positivist understanding of the nature of social causation. The contrasting pole of inquiry has been widely referred to as the interpretive approach, which sees reality and knowledge as only existing within individuals’ subjective experiences. The function of the interpretive approach is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Robson, 2011).

This study adopts a realist philosophy of science. Pawson and Tilley (1997) outline realism as a position between the two traditional poles of positivism and interpretivism. As has been seen with the realistic evaluation framework, realism is concerned with identifying the mechanisms that underlie patterns of events, and focuses on the importance of social context. The realist ontological assumption is that an external reality exists that is separate from the subjective experiences of individuals. Although reality is viewed as objective, human knowledge is seen as constructed and fallible and the epistemological position is one of interpretivism. As Sayer (2000) has outlined, a realist approach is suitable for those seeking causal explanations but is also aligned with seeking an interpretive understanding of meaning in social life. By integrating subjectivist and objectivist approaches (Robson, 2011), a realist approach allows the researcher to utilise qualitative or quantitative methods to explore the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions within complex social realities.
2.4.3 Procedures

Participants

Data was collected from a range of schools and settings in three LAs in the South and South West of England. Participants included classroom teachers, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCos), teachers who were part of the senior management team (SMT) and senior leaders of APs. Across each LA, data was collected in both schools and alternative providers. In total, 19 members of staff were interviewed (see table 2 for a breakdown of the sample).

Table 2: Breakdown of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCoSMT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCoSMT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Two of the AP participants are represented in both the primary and secondary rows as the provision covered both age groups.

Settings

From each LA, there were at least two schools and one alternative provider involved at a minimum, covering both the primary and secondary age phases. Overall, data was collected in 14 settings and Table 3 provides a breakdown of the settings by type of provision.
Table 3: Breakdown of the Participating Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Phase PRUs (Key Stages 1-4)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other AP Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other AP Secondary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Authority Context

To provide further contextual information regarding the schools and APs, each LA will now be described in further detail.

Local Authority One

Local authority one was a small LA in the south of England. Provision for secondary aged pupils identified as having BESD included a special school and three PRUs. Shared placements at secondary level were uncommon as the large majority of pupils at the PRUs were not attending school. A senior member of one of the secondary schools was interviewed as they had some experience of shared placements in the past. For primary school pupils, there was no available provision at the PRUs. The AP where research was undertaken was a LA managed provision set up for delivering small group intervention to enhance the emotional and social development of primary school pupils. This centre was funded from the budget of each primary school in the LA and referrals by school staff went via a LA panel. Each pupil at the setting would attend for two half days every week for six weeks; although this was often extended if that was considered to be beneficial for the pupil. The provision was defined by a specific approach to emotional development, rooted in attachment theory and catered specifically for pupils presenting with BESD in the school setting. Sessions involved a high degree of choice for pupils, a variety of creative options such as cooking or painting and also circle time games and discussions. The overarching aim
of this provision was to develop the pupils’ emotional wellbeing, partly as a way of improving their engagement and behaviour at school. However, the setting also stressed the importance of longer term outcomes in emotional health and general wellbeing. Each session would contain six to eight pupils and there would be two to three members of staff available. It is important to note that at the time of data collection, the LA’s policy statement on BESD had been refined, suggesting that the specific approach used at this centre would underpin the LA’s response to BESD across all settings. Participants included the manager of this primary AP and relevant staff from various primary schools in the area.

Local Authority Two

The second LA was a large LA that was split into four smaller localities. Data was collected in one of these areas, and the settings where data was collected centred around two neighbouring towns. In the LA, provision for those identified as having BESD included a special school and a range of PRUs. The roles of the PRUs were relatively distinct; for example, one setting was tailored more towards meeting the needs of pupils with anxiety or medical conditions. The PRU that was visited as part of the research was targeted at pupils identified as having BESD. The staff did not consider themselves to be equipped to support those with other needs including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and at the time of research, all pupils were described as having significant BESD. The overall aim of this PRU provision was stated as either preparing pupils for reintegration into school or for supporting achievement through a varied curriculum. Within the centre, a large room was dedicated to developing pupils’ skills in resistant materials and a variety of practical equipment was available. Nine pupils were on roll at the setting, some of whom had been permanently excluded from school and some who were on a shared placement. The large majority of pupils were of secondary age; however, the centre was in the process of building its capacity to provide for more primary aged pupils.

The second AP where data was collected in this LA was a private company, owned and run by two individuals. The provision always involved being off the school site and provided opportunities for secondary aged pupils to engage in various activities. For example, some pupils visited a motorbike garage frequently and learnt about mechanics and others were involved in a forest school programme. At other times, the aim was to develop social skills
and have a positive experience; for example, driving quad-bikes and archery were offered. These packages were purchased by the school, were available as half days or full days and were on-going for various lengths of time. Due to the provision in the area as described, shared placements were more common at secondary level than with primary aged pupils. Therefore, as well as the two APs, two secondary schools were involved in the research project.

Local Authority Three

The third LA was an average sized LA in the south-west of England. There was no special school for pupils identified as having BESD in the LA and the alternative provision mainly consisted of four PRUs. Data was collected in two of the PRUs, whose pupils consisted mainly of secondary aged pupils. However, both PRUs were set up for primary aged pupils, and at the time of research, a small number of primary pupils were on roll at both settings. Although some pupils had been permanently excluded from school, the vast majority of pupils at both PRUs remained on roll with their school whilst attending the AP. This is a result of a LA drive to reduce permanent exclusion and maintain the pupils’ connection to their mainstream school. The first PRU was a large setting with over 100 pupils on roll. The provision catered primarily for those pupils identified as having BESD, but the range of needs was more diverse and included pupils with medical difficulties or those with a diagnosis of ASD. Similarly, the second AP was also able to provide for a range of different needs. Some pupils had received an ASD diagnosis, a small number had physical or medical difficulties and there were a number of pupils who were described as having anxiety based school refusal. At both settings, the majority of pupils had been identified as having BESD and being at risk of exclusion from the mainstream school. Although the nature of pupils’ needs between the two settings was comparable, practices were variable between the settings. For example, the first PRU focused on enhancing pupil achievement by providing a varied and broad curriculum, which often included vocational and practical qualifications. This setting also delivered a significant amount of the curriculum off-site through other providers and the development of social and emotional skills were seen as very important. The emphasis with the second PRU was on increasing the attainment and achievement of all pupils, especially in relation to GCSEs. For this AP, the development of confidence and
emotional wellbeing was seen as being achieved through academic success and this was focused on over more practical or vocational routes. The manager of this PRU characterised the provision by an ethos of high expectations and made active efforts to ensure consistency with mainstream schools. The number of pupils reintegrated into school was higher at this setting than at the other AP and the percentage of pupils on a shared placement was considerably higher. As well as these two APs, data was collected in a range of secondary schools and one primary school in the area.

**Sampling**

In total, a range of sampling techniques was deployed. Initially, opportunity sampling was used by the researcher to select alternative providers across the LAs. This sample sometimes utilised existing contacts, but was random in relation to how they used shared placements and the settings were not selected on this basis. Contact with the AP was always made via the lead person. A snowball sampling technique was then used to build up a database of the schools that were using, or had recently used, shared placements with the AP.

For each school, contact was made with the head teacher and a discussion took place regarding the aims of the research. After describing the project, the head teacher explained who was responsible for coordinating the shared provision arrangements. This was sometimes one person such as a deputy head teacher or SENCo, but was sometimes two people in the setting. A snowball sampling method was also used in the school to identify any other alternative providers they were using, and this pattern was repeated.

**2.4.4 Data Gathering Tools and Techniques**

**The Semi Structured Interview**

The present study utilised the qualitative data collection tool of semi structured interviews, with the purpose of identifying how mechanisms in certain contexts lead to specific outcomes. As Miles and Huberman (1994) have claimed, qualitative analysis is a powerful method for identifying mechanisms and assessing causality in a complex network of
processes and events. Further details about the reasons for selecting semi-structured interviews are outlined in Appendix 2.

Interview schedules were developed separately for school class teachers (Appendix 3), school SMT/SENCo (Appendix 4) and SMT at the alternative providers (Appendix 5). The interview schedules were designed to elicit data on outcomes, mechanisms and contextual information and consequently, questions were centred on one of these areas. The schedules contained a variety of open questions and some more focused ones, which were selected due to their importance being raised in the literature. For example, ‘tell me about their relationships with peers’ and ‘do you feel their behaviour is the same between settings or better at one?’ were added due to their relevance in previous studies of AP (e.g. Ofsted, 2011). Because of the exploratory nature of the research, some questions were not developed from the literature and were designed to elicit information regarding factors that were considered important by the researcher; for example, ‘for what kind of pupil does a shared placement work best?’ and ‘what strategies do you use for a pupil on a shared placement?’ It is recognised that this introduces a level of subjectivity to the research, and this is discussed further in the limitations section.

Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed fully following the interview (see Appendix 6 for an example transcript). Before the interview began, it was essential to clarify key concepts with the participant. Firstly, the definition of shared placement as stated in the research overview was shared and any questions regarding this were answered. Secondly, participants were reminded that the research was specifically regarding pupils with BESD, and so pupils on a shared placement for other reasons was not of primary interest.

2.4.5 Ethical Considerations

Approval from the University of Exeter’s ethics committee was obtained in March 2012 (Appendix 7). For each setting involved, written consent was obtained from the manager or head teacher (Appendix 8) and for each participant, written consent was obtained (Appendix 9). As well as in writing, each participant was verbally told about their right to withdraw and that data would be confidential and anonymous. The interview recordings were stored on a password protected device for a maximum of three days, and were
deleted following transcription of the data. During data transcription, any data that could potentially identify individuals, educational provisions or the LA was written in an adapted and anonymised form.

2.4.6 Data analysis

The data was analysed following the thematic analysis approach as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible approach which allows the researcher to gain a rich and detailed account of the data. It follows a six step process which begins with familiarisation of the data. Familiarisation with the data was aided by the transcription process, and following this, each interview was read twice more before formal analysis was started. It is important in a realistic evaluation that all data is considered together, as the overall aim is to develop a single theory that is multi-layered.

The texts were analysed using the N-VIVO computer software programme, which provided increased efficiency and usability. The data was coded under one of the three options: mechanisms, contexts and outcomes. All transcripts were coded this way and a large range of codes was formulated. Following this, visual thematic maps were used to bring codes with commonality together, and eventually, themes were generated from the codes. This process was carried out three times, one for each of the codes within mechanisms, outcomes and contexts. The thematic analysis purposefully retained a high level of detail and avoided broad themes as these are less useful in a realistic evaluation. Therefore, a large number of themes emerged, and these were categorised under a smaller number of broader themes. The analysis indicated that there were three main outcome themes. The final stage of data analysis was to search the data for patterns and to identify CMO configurations. This initially involved searching the data for where outcomes were linked to either mechanisms or contexts. This data was coded under the three outcome themes that had already been identified. This meant that for each outcome, there was a range of identified mechanisms and contexts that supported this outcome. A worked example of the data analysis process can be found in Appendix 10. A visual overview of the data analysis procedures can be seen in Figure 3.
Determining the Strength of Themes

When reporting the findings of the thematic analysis, assuming that all of the themes are of equal strength is likely to reduce the usefulness of the findings. As Creswell (2007) suggests, there is no easy or set way of determining the importance of themes. In this study, themes were analysed for strength by taking into account a variety of indicators. For example, it was necessary to consider the number of participants who contributed to a theme. Doing this allowed for a consideration of how widespread a theme was, and the ‘stronger’ themes were discussed by the majority of participants. When the phrase ‘the majority’ is used, it refers to the theme being raised by over half of the participants. However, providing quantitative data in the findings or relying on numerical information alone can be problematic, as it assumes that all codes should be given equal emphasis (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the strength of a theme was also partly determined by factors inherent in the participants’ responses. For example, some participants explicitly stated what they believed to be the strongest factors, and many discussed ‘essential’ contextual factors as opposed to ‘ideal’ contexts. In this scenario, those described as being essential or as most important were considered stronger than those discussed as being less important.

Many participants also provided evidence for their claims and gave examples to support their reasoning. This was particularly important considering the relationship between mechanisms, context and outcomes. For example, contextual factors were considered stronger when the evidence demonstrated clear and reliable links to the outcomes. In one case, an AP described very high success with shared placements and this was reflected with pupils maintaining positive engagement at school and high reintegration rates. In this scenario, the contextual features that this AP stated as being essential and the themes generated were considered to be stronger than from settings that had had less experience of shared placements and did not have strong views.

Determining the strength of a theme therefore relied on the combination of objective measures alongside the subjective interpretations and judgement of the researcher. This is typical of qualitative research and it is important to also recognise that in realist inquiry, replication is not usually considered feasible or necessary as the social conditions in which the research was undertaken can never be replicated exactly (Robson, 2011). Instead, the
aim for future research would be to test, develop and refine the programme theories. However, it is also recognised that the level of subjectivity in this data analysis procedure is a limitation of the research. This is discussed further in the limitations.

Figure 3: Visual Overview of Data Analysis

- Data collection
  - Data transcribing and familiarisation with the data
  - Coding into three broad categories: mechanisms, contexts and outcomes
  - Refining and merging codes and development of themes within each category
  - Themes categorised under a smaller number of broader themes
  - Analyse the data for CMO configurations and code under the three identified outcome themes
  - Develop CMO configurations using the identified mechanism and context themes
2.5 Findings

The findings of each research question are presented and explored in the following section.

2.5.1 RQ1: What are the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement?

All of the participants discussed the outcomes they had experienced and seen as a result of pupils being on a shared placement between a school and AP. Four broad themes emerged, and each of these contained a number of outcome themes. The visual overview of the outcomes is presented in Figure 4 and each outcome theme is then briefly discussed.
**Figure 4: Thematic Map of Outcome Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Engagement in Both Settings</th>
<th>Engagement With the AP but Further Disengagement at School</th>
<th>Disengagement at Both Settings</th>
<th>Non-Pupil Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Behaviour improvement at the school</td>
<td>• Behaviour at school deteriorates further</td>
<td>• Attendance very poor at both</td>
<td>• Negative impact on the perceptions of other pupils and parents at the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Successful reintegration into the school setting full-time</td>
<td>• Pupil positively engages with the AP</td>
<td>• Challenging behaviour when attending both</td>
<td>• Increased learning opportunity for other pupils at the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased academic progress</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reluctance to engage with any curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Longer term outcomes such as entering employment, further education or training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Outcome Themes**

- **Positive Engagement in Both Settings**
  - Behaviour improvement at the school
  - Successful reintegration into the school setting full-time
  - Increased academic progress
  - Longer term outcomes such as entering employment, further education or training

- **Engagement With the AP but Further Disengagement at School**
  - Behaviour at school deteriorates further
  - Pupil positively engages with the AP

- **Disengagement at Both Settings**
  - Attendance very poor at both
  - Challenging behaviour when attending both
  - Reluctance to engage with any curriculum

- **Non-Pupil Outcomes**
  - Negative impact on the perceptions of other pupils and parents at the school
  - Increased learning opportunity for other pupils at the school
**Theme 1: Positive Engagement in Both Settings**

A clear outcome of the shared placement arrangement was that pupils engaged well with the AP, and also engaged with the school more than they had previously. This was also always associated with behaviour improvement at the school and often with positive progress. One primary school SENCo reported that:

> ‘We have seen a big difference... some of them are different children now, engaged and focused... and their progress reflects this’

When this outcome was present, it was also associated with reintegration into school full time and positive outcomes after leaving formal education. A manager of a secondary age AP outlined that:

> ‘We put loads back into school full time. That is always our aim and should be the goal for the large majority of these kids... Last year we only had two of our dual placement students go on to become NEET [not in education, employment or training]. Most are now in colleges or in work and that is great for society’

**Theme 2: Engagement with the AP but Further Disengagement at School**

This was a very strong theme across schools in particular and was characterised by an acknowledgement that although pupils were doing well when at the AP, their behaviour and engagement with the school had deteriorated since the shared placement had started. In one case, it was reported by a member of the SMT in a secondary school that:

> ‘We had a year 9 girl go 2 days a week to [the AP]. She started to push the boundaries even more [at the school] and then was permanently excluded’

Similarly, a member of a different secondary school SMT outlined:
‘[student] made it very clear at his annual review that if he came back to school more, he would smash the place up because he liked playing with tractors and didn’t want to be here longer than he had to be’

**Theme 3: Disengagement at Both Settings**

This outcome was a relatively weak theme in relation to the first two. The evidence suggests that when a shared placement is used, there is usually positive engagement at the AP. However, it was reported that on occasions, the engagement was poor at both of the settings, and this was related to maintenance of challenging behaviours and poor attendance. One SMT teacher at a secondary school reported that:

‘Some of them just don’t go to either to be honest. They don’t care about any of it, and when they do arrive, they kick off and get sent home usually’

**Theme 4: Non-Pupil Outcomes**

Two outcomes arose from the data analysis that are not directly related to the pupil on the shared placement. Firstly, it was a strong theme that one of the outcomes of a shared placement was to benefit the learning of other pupils by the removal of the disruptive student. This theme was common across the age ranges, and one primary school teacher reported that:

‘I’m not being negative, but I think it’s really important that the rest of the class get the peace and quiet when they are not in school’

Secondly, a less common theme arose that because pupils were accessing an AP, often doing activities, some other pupils and some parents also wanted to access this. A secondary school SENCo reported that:

‘I’ve had parents ringing me up asking why little Jonny can’t go down the forest and play like [name]… and they come back from it and tell their mates and then they all want to go. That’s not surprising really – it’s a lot more fun than Maths and English’
As this study aims to analyse what factors lead to different outcomes for pupils, the outcomes under this section are not directly relevant or suitable for a CMO analysis. Therefore, it is outcomes one, two and three which will form the basis of the CMO configurations.

**Key findings**

1) Shared placements have the potential to produce very positive outcomes for young people including successful reintegration into mainstream, increased engagement with the school and behaviour improvement.

2) Often, shared placements lead to reduced engagement within the school environment, whilst simultaneously, the pupil engages positively with the AP.

3) On rare occasions, pupils on a shared placement can be disengaged and display challenging behaviour at both settings and this is associated with low attendance.

2.5.2 RQ2: What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?

The thematic analysis of programme mechanisms resulted in a range of themes which grouped into three higher order themes. These mechanisms are displayed in Figure 5. Each broad theme will be outlined, and the strongest themes within these will be discussed with illustrative data from the data.
# Mechanisms Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</th>
<th>Pupil Attitudes and Feelings</th>
<th>Qualifications and Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The building of skills in relaxation and regulation of emotions</td>
<td>• Pupil feels sense of achievement</td>
<td>• Pupil receives qualifications beyond what a school can offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A degree of emotional development through increased confidence</td>
<td>• Pupil takes ownership of education and gains a sense of responsibility</td>
<td>• Poor attendance prevents recognising achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased self efficacy</td>
<td>• Pupils motivation is high</td>
<td>• Pupil receives recognition of achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased self esteem</td>
<td>• Pupils have their need for control and choice met</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of social skills</td>
<td>• Pupils feels valued, accepted and that they belong at the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil confusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil has feelings of rejection from school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child unhappy with having to attend the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupils have a feeling of failing at school but being successful at their AP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil becomes alienated from the school due to inappropriate curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil has positive experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil has strong feelings of failure in education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil feels that they do not belong to any setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil has no desire to be in education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil not interested in the broader curriculum being offered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 1: Personal, Emotional and Social Development

The majority of respondents outlined that an important part of a shared placement was the development of social and emotional competencies. The AP was often seen as time for the pupils to build self-esteem and confidence and learn social skills that could be applied when back in school. Some alternative providers prioritised social and emotional development and others academic achievement, but all highlighted raising confidence as a vital mechanism in leading to positive outcomes. For example, one AP manager outlined that:

‘It’s usually more about confidence than anything else. We do a functional skills assessment, and we only do it really to show the kids that they can succeed and pass something. They have no self-belief and we do these tests to show them that they can do it – they achieve a C grade equivalent and they can’t believe it. They say “no”, but we explain it and it really helps their confidence levels… that’s essential really’

There was also a more critical perspective on the development of emotional skills that highlighted that often skills were not being taught, but that the pupils’ were simply having a good time. Although it was recognised that having a positive experience could be beneficial, some participants believed that this was not justified, was not measured well and did not help the young person when back at school. For example, a senior member of a secondary school stated that:

‘You would want anyone to have a positive experience. Given how difficult some of these people’s lives are, it can be fine to have a positive experience. But the difficulty is that is sets them up with a false idea of what is going to be there for them. I think that if you are preparing them for life, and the reality of life, then you need to keep it as near to the norm as possible’.

Theme 2: Pupil Attitudes and Feelings

Feelings of Choice and Control

A large number of mechanisms that emerged from the data surrounded pupil attitudes, beliefs and feelings. Many participants outlined that the shared placement programme allowed children to gain a greater sense of responsibility and control over their education. This was most clear when young people had a choice in their timetabling. For those working in AP, this was also linked to motivation, for example, a secondary aged AP manager outlined that:
‘It is important to take into account the pupils views and their thoughts about the
timetables. They often have a view of what they want to do, whether that is Art, Music, PE,
they choose what they want to do and this is linked to motivation… It works because we
often can’t offer as much as schools such as Tech, so schools are usually happy for this
[shared placement] arrangement’

Confusion

Many of the participants highlighted pupil confusion as a mechanism, generally caused by
the inconsistency between settings. This theme was substantially stronger amongst the
mainstream staff, and was a serious concern for some schools; to the extent that they
would prefer not to use a shared placement due to this. Other settings recognised pupil
confusion as an important factor, but believed there were ways to make it less confusing for
the pupils. One SENCo at a secondary school commented that:

‘I have major reservations about it, as you have different rules and that causes a huge
amount of confusion for the student... to be in two places with such different expectations’

Similarly, a member of a secondary school SMT commented that:

‘It is like when you go to different parents, and mum and dad have different rules. Why
create extra challenges for children who have all these challenges anyway’.

Sense of Belonging

A mechanism which was discussed by many of the participants was about the pupils’ sense
of belonging to their environment. This was highlighted across the age range, across
provisions and was related to various outcomes. For some, it was felt that pupils’ sense of
belonging was greater at the alternative provider than at the mainstream setting. For
example, one manager of a primary aged AP reported:

‘When they are in the school, they feel like the odd one out, they feel different and they have
issues. When they come here in a small group, they find out that other children also have
anger problems... They begin to feel part of a group and it is like a sense of belonging that
they get here that they cannot find anywhere else.’

The nature of belonging for pupils on a shared placement is a complex issue and although
there was a general consensus from all participants that a sense of belonging was often high
at the alternative provider, the level of belonging felt by pupils at their mainstream school
was less clear, and depended on the context. Some mainstream staff felt that their pupils
had a high sense of belonging at their school and they were eager to maintain that feeling. Others schools however recognised that the pupils’ sense of belonging to the school was low, for example, one primary school SENCo outlined:

‘A lot of the children who spend a lot of time out of the class do not feel like part of the class. This has caused difficulties. We have reduced the amount of time they spend at alternative centres because they were not being included in their class… I think if you asked our children where they belonged, most would say not in the class’.

**Theme 3: Qualifications and Achievement**

Nearly all of the participants spoke about the curriculum being a key part of the shared placement arrangement. The curriculum will be discussed further during the analysis of contextual factors, but it is relevant here because it is closely related to the mechanisms of additional qualifications and recognition of achievements. Many of the participants believed a key mechanism of a shared placement was the gaining of qualifications and accreditations. These were often related to practical skills in subjects which a mainstream school could not offer. The majority of participants also related qualifications to the mechanism of self-esteem and confidence. A secondary school teacher reported that:

‘Achieving is the key. Those who have a history of non-achievement in normal school... That's why it worked so well with the [AP]. They got a qualification and it was something real life, a practical skill that we couldn’t teach them on our site’.

**Key Findings**

a) The pupils’ emotional development and an increase in confidence are key mechanisms in explaining the outcomes of a shared placement.

b) Many mechanisms revolve around the pupils’ feelings and attitudes as a result of the shared placement. Of these, the strongest are feelings of control and choice, feelings of confusion and feelings of belonging, which are related to various outcomes.

c) The achievement of pupils on a shared placement is often recognised through qualifications or other recognition of achievements that the school would not offer. This has been highlighted as an important mechanism of a shared placement.
2.5.3 RQ3: What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?

The thematic analysis of contextual conditions resulted in a range of themes which were grouped into five higher order themes. These contexts are displayed in Figure 6.

Because of the wide range of contextual factors, only the strongest context themes will be discussed in this section, with some illustrative data. For a fuller discussion of the contextual factors with further illustrative date, please refer to Appendix 11.
### Figure 6: Thematic Map of Context Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff and Institutional Attitudes</th>
<th>Wider Infrastructure Systems</th>
<th>Institutional Practices</th>
<th>Pupil Level Factors</th>
<th>Partnership working between settings/parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception that AP has no specialist knowledge</td>
<td>A consistent and shared approach to supporting those with BESD across an LA</td>
<td>High consistency between settings</td>
<td>Pupil involvement in timetable</td>
<td>Excellent Communication systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception that AP has specialist support to meet needs</td>
<td>Decisions made jointly between schools, APs and the LA</td>
<td>Very different provisions with different expectations, rules and boundaries</td>
<td>Pupil voice at centre of decisions regarding placement and curriculum</td>
<td>Collaboration between settings and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff have realistic expectations</td>
<td>Staff not involved at LA level decisions</td>
<td>Effective transition arrangements</td>
<td>Pupil has friends at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School belief that the AP is separate provision and it is not their place to be involved in this</td>
<td></td>
<td>No planning for transitions</td>
<td>Personal is organised and independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP seen as path to full time specialist provision</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pupil accessing provision for single discrete subjects</td>
<td>Pupil experiencing adverse circumstances out of school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP viewed as an extension of provision not separate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff not willing to invest the time necessary for partnership working</td>
<td>Pupil difficulties related to BESD and finds transitions difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to include children with complex needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils return to class where they have missed the previous lesson</td>
<td>Pupil has severe and complex mental health difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to include children with complex needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pupil only minimally accesses the national curriculum</td>
<td>Pupil isolated from peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic and Social view of Child's difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td>Broader and more varied curriculum</td>
<td>Pupil age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminished sense of responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good Transport arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream has a narrow focus on attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td>AP approach more informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Normal' or high expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>School systems are flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing approach with empathy for child</td>
<td></td>
<td>AP has a focus on self-belief and achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Allow for pupils to develop peer relationships
- AP staff build strong relationships with pupils
- Small class size with high ratio of adults
- Considering individual needs with a highly personalised programme
- Parents made to feel like an active part of the process
- Poor timetabling and inflexible approach where child has to be at the AP for whole days.
- Physical location of settings is close
- Sufficient level of effort and time put into supporting and including pupil
- A range of support mechanisms available in school with a personalised approach
- Curriculum linked with a career or future aspirations of pupil
- Curriculum at AP develops practical skills but also involves NC subjects
- Child-focused view of the problem
- Settings have a shared understanding of what pupil needs
- No clear purpose to the AP, and no way of measuring the success
- AP involved in Staff development
- Awareness of what other setting is doing
- No clear procedures for reviewing placement
- Superficial involvement of parents
- School control referrals and decisions
Theme 1: Pupil Level Factors

A number of themes emerged from the data concerning pupil level factors. Firstly, there was a high agreement between participants that the pupils’ involvement in determining their timetable was important. This made it more likely that the pupils’ attitude would be positive and they would be happy with the shared placement.

Secondly, some participants highlighted that for the shared placement to be successful, there were required personal qualities such as the need for independence and organisational skills. However, others felt whilst this was ideal, these personal qualities were not essential if the right support was put in place for the pupil. Some referred to difficulties at the individual level associated with behavioural and social needs. For example, a member of the SMT at a secondary school reported:

“These students are by their very nature, a group that struggles with changes and transitions. It’s part of their BESD... I mean, even coping between different types of teachers is too hard for most of these”.

Lastly, many participants felt that the pupils’ peer group was an important consideration. Some pupils had maintained positive peer relationships at the school and also had made friendships within the AP. However, many of the staff outlined that pupils who had struggled with peer relationships in the mainstream environment found it easier to make friends at the AP. For example, one primary school teacher reported:

“No, he doesn’t miss out socially when he’s not here because he is someone who wouldn’t be social here, not in a positive way anyway... I think he responds better at [AP] because of the group size and it’s less demanding”.

Theme 2: Staff and Institutional Attitudes

The attitude of the participants towards shared placements was an important part of the context, and there was a wide range of attitudes from the staff. Many of the attitudes are specific to whether the setting is the school or the AP, and when this is the case it will be highlighted.
School’s Perception of the AP

From many participants, there was a perception that the AP was a useful resource and had a variety of specialist support to meet the needs of children with complex needs. For example, one senior member of an AP said that:

‘[schools] know specifically how we can help and what we can offer, and they realise it’s something they can’t do on their own site’

This attitude was also clarified by some schools; for example, one primary school SENCo stated that:

‘We really needed something additional to what we could offer here... The staff are very experienced in emotional wellbeing and behaviour’

Some of the school staff highlighted an opposing attitude during the interviews. This was that AP had nothing to offer in terms of supporting the school to meet the needs of children. For example, a member of a secondary school SMT outlined:

‘What can they do there that we can’t do here? ... they may have specialist staff but so do we. I have a specialist qualification in BESD and other staff have SEN qualifications’

Willingness to include pupils with complex and demanding needs

At the AP, there was a greater and stronger willingness to work with young people identified as BESD. The attitude from school staff was much more varied, with some expressing very strong desires to include and support these children. For example, a primary school SENCo stated:

‘If the child was finding it hard to attend both settings, we would stop the AP immediately and focus on additional support here in school. I see the AP as being supportive for us, but I wouldn’t ever want to say that that takes responsibility away from us...’
The above quote also highlights the related attitude that the AP is an extension of provision and not separate. This was a particularly strong theme in relation to outcomes and meant that schools retained ownership of the pupils even when they were off site.

**Reluctance to include pupils with complex needs**

Alternatively, the attitude of some individuals in school was that children with complex needs were often not suitable for a mainstream education. In these institutions, the AP was usually seen as a very separate placement, the school did not retain full ownership and there was a sense of diminished responsibility towards the pupil. For example, one primary school SENCo reported:

‘A lot of these kids need the specialist support full time and shouldn’t have to deal with this environment. It doesn’t work for everyone... they usually need more [AP], not just a little bit.’

Similarly, some schools were only interested in the shared placement arrangement when they were seeking full time AP. This was outlined by one senior member of a secondary school who stated that:

‘My honest answer... we would use it for kids that we want a statement for. What you have to do is prove the need and go through a process to do that... previously, the LA has recognised the needs and they are now in specialist placements.’

A senior member of staff at an AP also highlighted inclusive attitudes as an importance factor:

‘It’s about inclusion, and the schools attitude has a big impact on whether a shared placement is successful. Schools can have a perception that it is not their role to be dealing with the extreme cases.’

**Theme 3: Institutional Practices**

The practices of schools and APs towards pupils on a shared placement varied dramatically, and this had implications for how the mechanisms were activated to lead to the outcomes. The strongest themes will be discussed and supported with evidence from the data.
Transition arrangements

Although some pupils experiencing a shared placement are timetabled for full days only at their settings, many have a change of placement during the school day. When transition was discussed, it was largely in relation to how pupils negotiated this movement between the two settings on a sessional basis within the day. The transition arrangements were highlighted as an important consideration by many of the participants and it was widely agreed that the sessional transitions between settings could be hard for the young people. However, the practice around sessional transitions was varied between settings. For one primary school where transition arrangements were effective, the SENCo reported that:

‘We knew that we needed to put in strategies for these [sessional] transition periods... We always put one to one in for these transition periods to support them during this... An adult always welcomes them back in, spends as much time as is needed...’

In some cases, sessional transitions were a more serious concern and, in one school, the use of the AP was abandoned due to what was reported as behavioural difficulties over the mid-day placement change. Where there were the highest levels of difficulty there also seemed to be the least support, for example, one primary school teacher stated:

‘When they come back in, they are bouncing off the walls, hyper and they just...it has been very tricky... they already take up high level of resources and we can’t do more...’

As well as these sessional transitions, some participants also raised the importance of placement transitions more broadly. When this was discussed, it was either in relation to preparing the pupil for their initial start at the AP or focusing on the re-integration from shared placement to school full time. Positive outcomes were related to a high level of support being put in place over the placement transitions. For example, a manager of one AP reported:

‘Last year, we agreed with school that a child was suitable for reintegration, but also knew he would need high level of teaching assistant (TA) support. The school hired a TA but we had that TA with us for a few weeks for training purposes and to meet and work with the child in this setting before transition. This was carefully planned and led to full integration as a positive outcome.’
Curriculum

All participants outlined that using a shared placement allowed for a more personalised and broader curriculum as opposed to what a single setting could offer. Pupils accessing and enjoying an engaging and personalised curriculum was a very strong context theme across all settings and ages. The evidence suggests that having a balanced curriculum was the most effective approach. When pupils were not accessing or only minimally accessing the national curriculum, this was highlighted as leading to negative outcomes. The findings also suggest that positive outcomes occur when APs focus on a curriculum which allows the pupil to achieve in the broadest sense. Therefore, those APs that focused on positive experiences were less likely to re-engage pupils at school. This theme was highlighted by one of the AP staff who ran activity days for secondary school pupils:

‘I don’t think it makes any difference at school. That isn’t really my job... I give them an opportunity to try out new things they wouldn’t normally do but it’s not educational in the school sense’.

Consistency between settings

The consistency (and lack of consistency) between settings were major themes which were discussed to some degree by most of the participants. It was also clearly a significant contextual factor in terms of activating mechanisms and affecting the outcomes. In short, for some settings, a great deal of effort was made to ensure consistency between the two settings, and when this happened, the outcomes were most positive. Generally, the greater the differences between the school and the AP, the harder it was for young people to re-engage with the school. The consistency between settings was usually much higher when partnership working was evident. It was clear that some of the alternative providers had consciously tried to create an environment which was as similar to the school setting as possible. For example, a senior member of a mixed age AP outlined:

‘Our boundaries and expectations are the same as school... There is no smoking and there are rules about politeness, they are excluded if they are rude, we don’t accept swearing as appropriate and phone rules are the same as school....’

It was also the case however that some schools had made an effort to be consistent with an alternative provider. One primary school SENCo stated that:
‘We aim to follow the same boundaries, rules and expectations of [the AP]. We have consciously thought about this and... want to provide the most consistent environments that we can...’

Provisions have different rules and expectations

Some staff however felt that it was not possible for the settings to be similar, and acknowledged that lack of consistency was a challenge for the pupils as it caused confusion. For example, a senior member of a secondary school outlined that:

‘One day you can have breaks when you want, no uniform, cigarettes, call teachers by first names, have tea and toast ... We set children up to fail because they struggle to follow one set of rules, let alone two’

Characteristics of the AP

A common theme in relation to the AP was the need for the setting to be more informal than the school. A focus on self-belief and achievement was also seen as key to activating the increased confidence mechanism. Smaller class sizes and high staff ratios were outlined by every participant as being an important factor of the context of the AP and as discussed, additional curriculum opportunities were also seen as a key characteristic of the AP. However, one of the strongest themes about the context was regarding the staff and pupil relationships.

Pupils’ Relationships with Adults

Many individuals outlined that they believed that the shared placement allowed for relationships to be built that would not have been possible in a mainstream school. For example, a member of the SMT at an AP stated:

‘Clearly the pupil-staff relationships are very good here and better than what would be possible at mainstream schools on the whole. We talk on a first name basis, there is more general chatting and communication outside of the curriculum content... more emotional support.’

From the school’s perspective, it was stated by a primary school teacher that:

‘When back in school, the children speak more about the adults and staff than the other children. They develop good relationships with the staff and adults down there as they can invest more time.’

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**Theme 4: Partnership Working**

The extent to which the school and the AP worked together in a partnership was a very important part of the context surrounding shared placements.

Effective partnership working in the initial stages of the shared placement involved a collaboration of key people including parents, the pupil and representatives from both settings. Where outcomes were positive, staff emphasised the importance of working together, having a shared understanding of the pupil’s needs and agreeing a way forward jointly.

**Communication Systems**

Where there was evidence of true partnership working, good communication systems were in place and there was a high level of collaboration between all stakeholders. One AP senior member of staff reported that:

‘We work very well with many of our schools. Some sit on our management committee and have a say in what direction we take... we have a meeting to review every pupil every six weeks, and also send weekly emails at a minimum. Communication realistically is more often... regular phone calls and emails.’

When asked about communication, one senior secondary school teacher said:

‘It’s excellent. I have sent multiple members of my team down to spend a day or half day there to see what goes on’.

Partnership working was facilitated by a school belief that the AP staff had specialist support to meet needs. On occasions, schools requested the AP staff to run training sessions at the school to build the capacity of school staff to meet complex needs. For example, a primary school SENCo reported:

‘They are very experienced in emotional health and wellbeing... we have requested training.’

**Weak Partnership working**

When schools did not feel that the AP had a role to support them, partnership working was often poor. For example, placement choices were not reviewed regularly, school staff had
little or no awareness of the AP, and communication between settings was rare. For example, a senior member of staff in a secondary school outlined:

‘I don’t think we put enough interest in. that might be one of the reasons it doesn’t work... no one has been to see them at [the AP], even though the plan was for him to come back full time. It should be regular contact, not just an annual review.’

Similarly, there were not always any formal processes for reviewing placements or any agreements between the settings. A secondary school SENCo reported:

‘Agreement? There isn’t any agreement. The LA decided and I dropped him there for a visit and that’s the last I have heard of it.’

**Theme 5: Wider Infra-structural Systems**

In many circumstances, the LA acted as the gatekeeper to alternative providers. Shared placements were most effective when the LA had a clear role for the APs, and coordinated the referral process. However, the outcomes were also most effective when all settings felt like they were a part of the decision making process. An AP manager stated that:

‘It works because we have a good system, I sit on the management committee of [the AP] and we have regular meetings with other heads from the other secondaries in the area and the AP. When we refer, it’s a joint discussion with the [LA not in school team manager] and the rest of us.’

The school perception of themselves as referrers and the LA as decision makers was detrimental to the collaboration process. LAs that did not involve school staff in this process facilitated unhelpful attitudes in school staff and reduced the likelihood that schools communicated with alternative providers. When shared placements were not successful, some staff attributed this to the LA making decisions that school did not agree with and were not a part of making. For example, a member of the SMT in one secondary school stated:

‘We don’t really know what goes on up there. They tell us that they want dual placements but we don’t get a say in that. I mean, making decisions about a kids placement at a panel of bigwigs who have never heard of him... come on, just ridiculous.’
Key Findings

a) A shared placement is facilitated by pupil involvement in their timetable and personal qualities such as being organised.

b) The school’s willingness to include children with BESD and a perception that the AP is a useful resource are important factors in a shared placement.

c) A shared placement can lead to a diminished sense of responsibility for some schools.

d) A narrow focus on attainment can be detrimental to the success of a shared placement.

e) Effective sessional and placement transition arrangements, a broad curriculum, high consistency between settings and good relationships are features of the context that support positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement.

f) Effective communication and partnership working between settings is very important to the success of a shared placement.

g) LAs that involve school and AP staff in decision making facilitate partnership working and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement.
2.5.4 RQ4: In shared placements, how are individual mechanisms activated within specific contexts to lead to certain outcomes?

As stated earlier, a key aim of this study is not only to identify what the mechanisms, outcomes and contexts are, but to develop a theory of how these fit together in a shared placement. Programme theories have been developed for the three main outcomes that occurred:

1) Positive Engagement in both settings
2) Engagement with the AP but further disengagement from school
3) Disengagement at both settings

In addition to this, it became clear during analysis that some mechanisms were activated within specific contexts to lead to outcomes. In this case, the single mechanism has its own programme theory.

**Programme Theories: CMO Configurations for Each Outcome Theme**

The theory for how mechanisms are activated within contexts to lead to outcome 1 is laid out in Figure 7. Although the CMO theories outline how mechanisms are activated in contexts, this is an oversimplified picture. Generally, the range of contexts in theory one are supportive of the outcome, and if all are present, the more likely it is that the outcome will be achieved. However, it has also been clear through the data analysis that some contextual factors are more important than others. For example, there were occasions when many were not in place, but the outcome was still achieved. However, when shared placements led to the positive outcomes in theory one, there was always a strong presence of a small number of factors. These core mechanisms and contexts are highlighted in bold text within the table.

The theory for how mechanisms and contexts are related to disengagement at school is shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9 displays the CMO theory for disengagement at both settings. Throughout, the strongest themes are indicated in bold.
This finer analysis is important as it clearly highlights the importance of contextual conditions in whether or not a mechanism leads to the outcome. There were occasions when CMO configurations emerged as specific. This means that the same mechanism could be activated, but the outcome could be different depending on the contextual conditions. Figure 10 provides the CMO theory for the pupil confusion mechanism.
**Figure 7:** Programme Theory 1 in the form of a CMO Configuration for Positive Engagement in Both Settings (Outcome 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PESD</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupil</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A degree of emotional development through increased confidence</td>
<td>- Pupil voice is at the centre of decisions regarding placement and curriculum</td>
<td>- Behaviour improvement and increased engagement at the mainstream school and good engagement at the AP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Build skills in relaxation and regulation of emotions</td>
<td>- Pupil is one that can organise themselves, be independent and responsible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased self esteem</td>
<td>- Pupil has friends at the school</td>
<td>- Quite often led to successful re-integration into full-time school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil attitudes and Feelings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupils feel valued, accepted and that they belong at the school</td>
<td>- Willingness to include children with complex needs</td>
<td>- Academic progress and very high likelihood of entering further education, employment or training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupils feel sense of achievement (irrespective of what they have achieved)</td>
<td>- School Perception that AP has specialist support to meet needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil takes ownership of education and gains a sense of responsibility</td>
<td>- AP viewed by school as an extension of provision not separate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil motivation is high</td>
<td>- Staff have realistic expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil have their need for control and choice met</td>
<td>- Holistic and Social view of child’s difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil has positive experiences</td>
<td>- 'normal' or high expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nurturing approach with empathy for the pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications and Achievement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institutional Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil receives qualifications beyond what a school can offer</td>
<td>- School systems are flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pupil receives recognition of achievements</td>
<td>- AP has a focus on self-belief and achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pupils build strong and positive relationships with adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- High consistency between settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Effective transition arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pupil accessing provision for single discrete subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Good Transport arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• AP approach more informal
• Allow for pupils to develop peer relationships
• AP has a small class size with high ratio of adults
• Highly personalised programme in place
• Parents made to feel like an active part of the process
• Physical location of settings is close
• Sufficient level of effort and time put into supporting and including pupil
• Broader and more varied curriculum offered
• Curriculum at AP develops practical skills but also involves NC subjects
• Curriculum linked with a career or future aspirations of pupil
• A range of support mechanisms available in school with a personalised approach
• Focus on the positives at both settings

**Partnership Working**

• **Excellent communication systems**
• **Good collaboration between parent, AP and school**
• Settings have a shared understanding of what pupil needs
• Good awareness of what the other setting is doing
• Settings feel they are working in partnership
• AP is involved in staff development at school

**Wider Systems**

• A consistent and shared approach to supporting those with BESD across an LA
• Decisions made jointly between schools, APs and the LA
**Figure 8:** Programme Theory 2 in the form of a CMO Configuration for Engagement at AP, Further Disengagement at School (Outcome 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil attitudes and Feelings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupil Factors</strong></td>
<td>Pupil engages well with the AP, but behaviour deteriorates further and becomes more disengaged from mainstream school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil confusion</td>
<td>• Pupil has difficulties related to BESD and finds transitions difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has feelings of rejections from school</td>
<td>• Pupil isolated from peers at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child unhappy with having to attend the school</td>
<td>• Pupil develops positive friendships at the AP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils have a feeling of failing at school but being successful at AP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils alienated from school due to curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils has positive experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institutional Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reluctance to include children with complex needs</td>
<td>• Staff not willing to invest the time necessary for partnership working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diminished sense of responsibility towards pupil</td>
<td>• Very different provisions with different expectations, rules and boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perception that AP has no specialist knowledge</td>
<td>• No planning for transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SP seen as path to full time specialist provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mainstream has a narrow focus on attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child focused view of the problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School belief that the AP is separate provision and it is not their place to be involved in this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Pupils return to class where they have missed the previous lesson
- No clear purpose to the AP, and no way of measuring the success
- Pupil only minimally accesses the national curriculum

**Partnership Working**
- No clear procedures for reviewing placements
- Superficial involvement of parents
- Limited partnership working practices
- Poor communication between settings

**Wider Infra-Structural Systems**
- Staff not involved in LA decisions
**Figure 9:** Programme Theory 3 in the form of a CMO Configuration for Disengagement at Both Settings (Outcome 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PESD</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td>Continued disengagement and behavioural difficulties at school and also a failure to engage with the AP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very low confidence and self esteem</td>
<td>• Pupil is experiencing a range of adverse environmental circumstances out of school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil attitudes and Feelings</strong></td>
<td>• Pupil age: largely older pupils in Key Stage Four</td>
<td>Often resulting in very low attendance at both settings and behavioural difficulties at both settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has strong feelings of failure in education</td>
<td>• Pupil finds it hard to relate to and build relationships with staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feels no sense of belonging to either setting</td>
<td>• Pupil has severe and complex emotional or mental health difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has no desire to be in education</td>
<td>• Isolated from peers (in both settings)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil not interested in the broader curriculum being offered</td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>This outcome was much less frequent than the outcomes expressed in theories one and two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications and Achievements</strong></td>
<td>• Diminished sense of responsibility for pupil at both settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor attendance prevents the recognition of achievements</td>
<td><strong>Institutional Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging the support of external agencies to support re-integration to education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 10: Programme Theory 4: CMO Configurations for Pupil Confusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil confusion</td>
<td>• Settings have very different rules, expectations and boundaries</td>
<td>Pupil engages well with the AP, but behaviour deteriorates further and becomes more disengaged from mainstream school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School is inflexible, and has the same expectations for behaviour for all irrespective of need.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of support put in place for the transition periods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil confusion</td>
<td>• Settings have very different rules, expectations and boundaries</td>
<td>Behaviour improvement and increased engagement at the mainstream school and good engagement at the AP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusive ethos – accepting of difference and understanding of pupils individual needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School is flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transition arrangements in place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Willingness to include children with complex needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A range of support mechanisms available in school with a personalised approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in theory one above, the pupil confusion mechanism is not activated at all when the two settings are very consistent with each other. However, Programme theory four demonstrates that even when settings are very different and confusion does arise, it is the contextual factors that determine the outcome.
2.6 Discussion

2.6.1 Overview of key findings

1) What are the outcomes of the shared placement arrangement?

   a) Shared placements have the potential to produce very positive outcomes for young people including successful reintegration into mainstream, increased engagement with education and behaviour improvement in the school setting.
   b) Often, shared placements lead to behaviour deterioration within the school environment, whilst simultaneously, the pupil engages very positively with the AP.
   c) On rare occasions, the pupil was disengaged and displaying poor behaviour in both settings, and this was associated with very low attendance.

2) What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?

   a) Pupils’ emotional development and increase of confidence is a key mechanism in explaining outcomes in a shared placement.
   b) Many mechanisms revolve around the pupils’ feelings and attitudes as a result of the shared placement. Of these, the strongest are feelings of control and choice; feelings of confusion; and feelings of belonging which are related to various outcomes.
   c) The achievement of pupils on a shared placement is often recognised through qualifications or other recognition of achievements that the school would not offer. This has been highlighted as an important mechanism of shared placements.

3) What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?
a) A shared placement is facilitated by pupil involvement in their timetable and personal qualities such as being organised.

b) School’s willingness to include children with BESD and a perception that the AP is a useful resource are important factors in a shared placement.

c) A shared placement can lead to a diminished sense of responsibility for schools.

d) A narrow focus on attainment can be detrimental to the success of a shared placement.

e) Effective sessional and placement transition arrangements, a broad curriculum, high consistency between settings and good relationships are features of the context that support positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement.

f) Effective communication and partnership working between settings is very important to the success of a shared placement.

g) LAs that involve school and AP staff in decision-making facilitate partnership working and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement.

2.6.2 Discussion

In this study, staff from a range of schools and APs discussed their experiences and views on the subject of shared placements. As Ofsted (2011) also found, this research suggests that there can be various outcomes to the programme. On one hand, shared placements have the potential to be a very supportive and positive arrangement for pupils who are experiencing difficulties within the mainstream setting. However, it is also clear that shared placements can lead to an increase in pupils’ difficulties within the school context.

Although previous research on the topic has been minimal, one finding was that the more flexible environment of APs can exacerbate difficulties when back at school (Burton et al, 2009). Whilst this was also a clear outcome in this study, a more complex picture was indicated. For example, one of the underlying mechanisms that cause this problem seems to be one of confusion for the pupil. However, even when settings were very different, there
were important contextual factors that modified the impact of the confusion. For example, schools with good sessional transition arrangements for pupils and an inclusive and welcoming ethos had a positive impact on pupil confusion.

Ofsted (2011) outlined that APs can increase motivation and re-engage pupils with education, but also found that some pupils felt isolated. This study also found increased motivation and re-engagement with education to be an outcome of a shared placement. When this outcome was present, there was a curriculum in place that allowed that child to achieve, and this was related to emotional development and confidence. Although these factors have been highlighted as important previously, this study also highlighted unique factors that relate specifically to shared placements. For example, shared placements work best when there is a strong sense of connection to the mainstream school and the pupil has feelings of acceptance instead of exclusion. This study has also examined a wide range of contextual factors that support or inhibit the impact of shared placements. As the theory developed here is provisional and will be modified during the next phase of the research, a more comprehensive discussion of the findings will take place in Phase 2.

**Limitations**

Collecting data across three LAs is both a positive aspect to the project and a disadvantage. Although it allowed for interesting comparisons at a wider level than individual settings, it restricted my sample within each LA. This broadness reduced the researcher’s capacity to focus on one LA and doing this may have reduced the depth of the findings. The wide range of provisions studied meant that situations were very different between locations and this diversity was not always captured in the data. For example, some settings were in areas of higher deprivation than others and funding methods would have been different between LAs. These broader contextual factors were often not addressed by the current research, and this means the developed CMO theories are likely to be missing relevant contextual information.
It may have been beneficial to combine further data collection methods alongside the semi-structured interviews. For example, an in-depth focus on one LA may have produced a more coherent theory and increased generalisability. This could have involved incorporating further details on provision characteristics and could utilise ethnographic principles to explore contextual factors that were not assessed through the interviews.

It should also be recognised here that the data collected and therefore, the programme theory developed has been largely directed by the semi-structured interview schedule. Although there were a variety of open questions that gave participants the opportunity to express their general views of shared placement, some questions were more specific to factors that the researcher considered important. This is a difficulty as it may have meant that responses were not varied enough or that potentially important factors were missed. For example, there is only limited data concerning the pupils’ home circumstances as being an important contextual factor. This is somewhat surprising and is likely to be partly due to the design of the interview schedules. The relative absence of comments around pupil background may also be related to the focus on shared placements rather than exploring provision for those with BESD more broadly. Participants may have recognised the impact of the pupils’ social circumstances on their behaviour, but felt that these were not relevant in relation to explaining whether a shared placement was successful or not.

A difficulty in relation to maintaining objectivity was found during an attempt at establishing inter-rater reliability of the coding process. This process was abandoned following a realisation that the researcher’s knowledge of the context was vital to effective analysis. A discussion regarding this and an example of the difficulties faced is presented in Appendix 1a. The lack of inter-rater reliability is a weakness of the current research as it undermines the reliability of the CMO theory that has been developed. The researcher’s interpretation of the interview data is likely to have been influenced by personal biases, beliefs and interests. This reduces the level of objectivity in the research as a whole and consequently, further research would be a useful way of updating and refining the findings.
Section 3

Phase 2: The Experiences of Pupils Receiving Education Through a Shared Placement

3.1 Abstract

The aim of this paper was to extend the findings of the previous study through a process of refining and modifying the programme theories developed in Phase 1. To do this, the study explored the perceptions and experiences of 11 pupils in relation to their shared placements. Using a realistic evaluation methodology (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), a mixed methods design was adopted, utilising semi-structured interviews and also carrying out the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (Goodenow, 1993) to examine pupils’ feelings of belonging. Data was analysed through thematic analysis and the programme theories from the first phase were modified and refined by the pupil data.

The pupil perspective generated valuable and informative data and a range of the mechanisms and context themes previously identified by the staff were modified. For example, the analysis indicated there was little evidence to support pupil confusion as a mechanism. The analysis of the school belonging measures indicated that all pupils felt a high sense of belonging at the AP; however, belonging to school was more varied. A higher sense of belonging to the school was associated with increased engagement in the school, and pupils who were not engaging with the school felt a greater sense of belonging at the alternative provider than towards their school.

Following a brief discussion of this study, a synthesis of Phase 1 and Phase 2 is presented. In this section, there is a detailed discussion regarding the findings of this research project and this is discussed in relation to psychological theories of motivation and development. The implications for professional educational psychologists are then outlined as well as the wider implications of this research.
### 3.2 Phase 2 Figures, Tables and Graphs

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3.3 Introduction

3.3.1 Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) set out four broad areas of Special Educational Needs (SEN). One of these was behaviour, emotional and social development. Under this heading would be children who demonstrate ‘features of emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs’ (DfES, 2001, p.87). Pupils identified as meeting these criteria are deemed to have behavioural emotional and social difficulties (BESD) as a SEN. In January 2011, there were approximately 158,000 pupils identified as having BESD at School Action Plus or with a statement of SEN (DfE, 2011b). As this statistic does not account for those identified at school action, the number of children identified by school is considerably higher.

The education of children identified as having BESD often poses the greatest challenge towards inclusive education (DfES, 2004). As Polat and Farrell (2002) outline, making sure that BESD provision is effective also presents a major challenge to administrators, government, Local Authorities (LAs) and families. A diverse range of provision is needed to offer the appropriate level of emotional support and educational opportunities to meet the needs of a small minority (Lindsay, 2007; Ofsted, 2011). Many tensions still exist and the education of BESD children has been plagued by inconsistency, leading to wide variations in practice (Cole, Daniels, & Visser, 2003). It has also recently been argued that there is a lack of research into the provision for those with BESD (Burton et al. 2009).

3.3.2: Theoretical Frameworks of BESD

Cooper (2007) argues that there is a growing agreement that theories of BESD that recognise the importance of the contextual environment around a pupil have considerably more to offer than a child focused view. Such approaches acknowledge the impact of peers, family, school and wider factors in explaining behaviour. As the emphasis shifts away from the individual and more towards the consideration of the social context, the label of BESD itself becomes less useful. The recent SEN Green Paper (DfE, 2011c) discussed the
difficulties inherent in the term BESD and highlighted the heterogeneity of the group. Because the category is loosely defined and covers a wide range of presenting difficulties in the educational environment, those identified as BESD can have very different needs and the usefulness of the label as a descriptor is questionable. This creates a challenge when researching this population, but also emphasises the need to consider individual differences within this group. There are a range of psychological perspectives that relate to explaining BESD, including those from behaviourist, psycho-dynamic, humanist and ecological perspectives (Cooper, 1999). A range of the relevant theoretical approaches will now be discussed in more detail.

**Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory emphasises the role of the environment in child development and suggests that there are four layers of ecological systems that interact with an individual. The first of these is the microsystem, which focuses on the interactions the child has in their immediate environment such as their family and peers. The mesosystem refers to the relationship between different microsystems. This is of particular relevance to this paper as the school and the AP can be seen as different microsystems and variations between settings may have implications for pupils’ wellbeing and behaviour. The third layer is the exosystem, which describes influences that impact the child but where the child is not directly involved. For example, a teacher’s experiences at home may have indirect consequences for the pupil. The final layer refers to the culture in which individuals live and is termed the macrosystem. This part of the model considers the broad cultural context around a child and the macrosystem influences the social norms and rules of other layers in the system. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory is particularly relevant to the current research project due to its focus on the influence of the context on behaviour. The model is in line with the findings from the first phase of the project that pupils’ behaviour changes depending on their environment. The importance of situational factors also reflects the realistic evaluation approach, where behavioural outcomes are seen as being context dependent.
Self Determination Theory

Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a theory relating to human motivation and general wellbeing. Ryan and Deci (2000) outline an array of research that supports the theory that humans have three core needs, and when these are met, the person is likely to be proactive, engaged and reach their potential. These are the need for autonomy, the need for relatedness and the need for competence. These needs are met through the social conditions in which people develop. When individuals do not have the opportunity to be autonomous, to relate to others or be competent, this can lead to difficulties, including disengagement, reduced motivation and alienation. This theory provides a suitable framework for this paper for two reasons. Firstly, the theory is concerned with increasing motivation and engagement, which has been shown in Phase 1 of the research to be one of the core outcomes of a shared placement. Secondly, the theory focuses on the social contextual factors that support self-determination, and this study is also concerned with how different environmental conditions lead to different outcomes for individuals.

Attachment Theory

As many of the young people identified as having BESD also have difficult attachment histories (O’Connor & Rutter, 2000), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) is a useful model in relation to this group. Attachment theory suggests that social and emotional wellbeing including an individual’s ability to create and maintain positive relationships are heavily influenced by experiences in early childhood. Bomber (2011) describes how developmental trauma can occur during a range of adverse experiences including abuse, neglect, domestic violence and many other situations that occur within the child’s close, early relationships with parents or carers. These early experiences are damaging to the psychological and physical development of the child and can lead to longer term attachment difficulties. At school age, these difficulties may present themselves in a variety of ways including problems forming relationships, failing to cope well with changes and emotional difficulties including negative perceptions of the self and others. Due to the high correlation between those with attachment difficulties and those identified as having BESD, many pupils experiencing a shared placement are likely to have difficult attachment histories. The
findings from the first phase are congruent with this theory as many of the mechanisms and contextual features associated with positive outcomes are important concepts in effective provision for those with attachment difficulties. A fuller discussion of how the findings relate to attachment theory will take place in section 4.

**Sense of School Belonging**

A fundamental human need to belong has been identified as one of the most important human motivations, and fulfilling this need can have major consequences for how people think and behave (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Its importance is reflected in a range of prominent psychological theories, including Maslow (1968), who identified a sense of belonging as a fundamental pre-cursor to self-esteem, confidence and self-actualisation. In relation to school specifically, Goodenow (1993) defines belonging as “the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school environment” (p.80). A high sense of belonging to school is related to a wide range of positive outcomes including positive mental health, higher academic achievement and engagement (McGrath & Noble, 2010). Social isolation and a reduced sense of belonging to school are associated with poorer wellbeing, disengagement from school and poor educational outcomes (Osterman, 2000). A sense of school belonging has overlaps with the construct of relatedness in the self-determination theory. However, sense of school belonging is a broader factor that incorporates the importance of relationships, but also refers to the pupils’ perceptions of acceptance from the school as a whole.

**3.3.3: The Views of Children With BESD About Their Education**

In secondary schools, BESD is the most common SEN (DfE, 2011b), and although some research has looked into the views and perceptions of this group, this is limited (O'Connor, Hodkinson, Burton, & Torstensson, 2011). The importance of considering the pupil voice is now well built into current legislation and guidance. Section 53 of the Children Act 2004 requires that LAs must ascertain and give consideration to the child’s wishes and feelings. In the SEN code of practice, it is one of the five fundamental principles that ‘the views of the child should be sought and taken into account’ (DfES, 2001, p.7). Part of the reason for this emphasis on child voice comes from a rights perspective, where children have a right to
have their opinion taken into account on matters affecting them, as set out in articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Atkinson, 2012). Within the field of education, research has suggested that pupil participation can be crucial in the effective implementation of education programmes and provision (Davie, 1996; Southwell, 2006; Taylor, 1995). During school inspections, it is now an important element of Ofsted’s evaluation process to gather the views of children.

It is likely that children with BESD are less likely to experience democratic schooling in comparison to others (Sellman, 2009). This happens for a variety of reasons, including the quality of teacher relationships, and the perception of those who are identified as BESD. Sellman (2009) argues that listening to children’s views is especially important when they are identified as having BESD. This is because they are an often ignored group who have useful and challenging messages about the relevance of curriculum and teaching styles.

Within the BESD population, some research has looked into the views of children in relation to their placement. Knipe, Reynolds and Milner (2007) examined pupils’ views of AP. A key finding was that the children reflected maturely, logically and gave good insights into complex issues. For example, a strong theme emerged that students should always be given work when on an exclusion, as otherwise it would be too much like a holiday not a punishment (Knipe et al., 2007). Findings such as this challenge the view that children do not have the potential to contribute to the decisions that are made about them. Jahnukainen (2001) looked at former pupils’ reflections of their provision for BESD. Labelling was highlighted as a key negative area as the pupils felt singled out and were sometimes isolated from peers. The specialist provision however allowed for smaller groups, better teacher relationships and fairer discipline, all of which were identified as positives for the children. Class sizes and relationship with teachers has again recently been highlighted as an important aspect of pupils’ experience of BESD provision (Harriss, Barlow & Moli, 2008).

Perceptions of mainstream schooling have also been studied with those identified as having BESD. Wise and Upton (1998) interviewed children in a special school about their former mainstream provision. The students had clear reflections that they needed a more significant relationship with the teachers, and enjoyed teachers showing a friendly and ‘human’ side. Lastly, they reflected that the mainstream curriculum was often irrelevant and
inaccessible. Ofsted (2011) also examined the students’ views in relation to experiences of AP. The perceptions were mainly positive, with students saying they felt more respected and enjoyed the practical nature of the placement. Some expressed they felt isolated when attending AP for long periods. However, no study has been found that has examined pupil voice in relation to shared placements.

3.3.4 Research Problem and General Aims

Although the views of those identified as having BESD has been described as neglected (O’Connor et al. 2011), it is clear that research has begun to examine these views in a variety of settings, including schools and APs. These views have been enlightening, and have led to the improvement of practice. This study aims to address two gaps in the literature. Firstly, when pupils’ views have been sought on their AP, research has not dealt with the factors that explain differences in responses. For example, Ofsted (2011) identified that some pupils felt isolated in AP, but the mechanisms and contexts which led to these feelings were not explored robustly. Secondly, there is currently no research into the experiences and views of children with BESD in relation to a shared placement between two settings. This arrangement is likely to create unique challenges and experiences for those pupils in this group.
3.3.5 Research Questions

Phase 2 of the research sets out to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the outcomes of a shared placement?

2) What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?
   
   2a) What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the school and the outcome of the shared placement?

   2b) What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the AP and the outcome of the shared placement?

3) What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?

4) In a shared placement, how are individual mechanisms activated within specific contexts to lead to certain outcomes?
3.4 Method

3.4.1 Methodology

As with Phase 1 of the research, realistic evaluation provided a suitable methodological framework for this study. The realistic evaluation approach has been described in detail in Phase 1, and is also available in Appendix 12.

3.4.2 Methodological Position

This study adopts a realist philosophy of science. By integrating subjectivist and objectivist approaches (Robson, 2011), a realist approach allows the researcher to explore the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions within complex social realities. This makes the approach suitable for using both quantitative and qualitative methods (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), and in the current study, a mixed methods design is adopted.

3.4.3 Procedures

Participants

Data was collected from a range of schools and settings in three LAs in the South and South West of England. Participants included 11 pupils, ranging in age from 10 to 16 (mean 13.6, SD 2.2). Of these, nine were male and two were female. Seven pupils were currently accessing a shared placement and four pupils had been on a shared placement within the previous three months, but were no longer on this. All pupils had been identified as having BESD by the school or AP, and SEN levels varied across the range from School Action, School Action Plus and Statement. It was initially an intention of this study to incorporate the views of parents regarding the shared placement arrangements. However, although parents were usually willing to consent for their child to be part of the research, none of the parents volunteered to take part in an interview. A more detailed description of the participants is presented in Table 1. Each pupil has a corresponding number and this will be used to identify them throughout the findings section of this study.
**Table 1: Participant Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of AP Provision Attended</th>
<th>Level of SEN</th>
<th>Length of Time Attending a Shared Placement</th>
<th>How Time was Split Between the Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA AP (non-PRU)</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>Had attended a 6 week block.</td>
<td>Had attended AP for 2 half days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>Statement of SEN</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>Attending the AP for 2 mornings per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Nearly full time at the AP, accessing school for 2 hours per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>Had attended for 5-6 weeks</td>
<td>Had attended full time AP with 1 full day and 1 half day at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action</td>
<td>14 Months</td>
<td>Majority time at school. Accessing AP for one day per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Majority time at AP, accessing school for 3 hours per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
<td>Had attended school for 2 afternoons per week. Full time at the AP at time of interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private AP</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>14 months</td>
<td>Majority time at school. Began with 1 day a week at AP, increased to 2 days per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>13 months</td>
<td>Majority time at AP. School 2x week totalling 3.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA AP (non-PRU) &amp; Private AP (Activity based)</td>
<td>School Action Plus</td>
<td>11 weeks LA AP &amp; 3 weeks Private AP</td>
<td>2 half days per week (LA AP) &amp; 1 half day per week (Private AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LA PRU</td>
<td>Statement of SEN</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
<td>Had attended AP 2 afternoons a week. Full time at school at time of interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sampling

Participants were recruited following the interviews with staff in the first phase. A list of all the pupils on a shared placement was created by the setting and a letter (Appendix 13) was then sent to all of the pupils’ parents or carers on this list. The letter included a consent form and a pre-paid envelope in order to increase the likelihood of a response. After a lower than expected response rate in one of the settings, letters were sent again and accompanied by a telephone call from the researcher to the parent/carer to explain the research aims in more detail. Finally, pupils were asked by their setting or school whether they were happy to ‘talk’ to someone about their views on education. All of the pupils where parental consent had been given were willing to be involved in the interviews.

3.4.4 Data Gathering Tools and Techniques

The Semi-structured interview

The present study utilised the qualitative data collection tool of semi structured interviews, with the purpose of refining and updating the mechanisms, outcomes and contexts from Phase 1. Pawson (1996) highlights the importance of entering into a dialogue with the subject when carrying out an interview in a realistic evaluation. This involves the researcher discussing their existing theories, and adapting and refining these theories based on the participants responses.

A range of considerations was made that accounted for the age of the participant. Firstly, for all interviews, there was a large visual component which facilitated discussion and made the situation less formal. This involved the researcher reading out statements from a piece of card and asking the pupil to place the statement into one of three categories. The statements were a range of the mechanisms, contexts and outcomes that had been identified in Phase 1 of the research (See Appendix 14 for statements). Pupils put these into three categories: ‘Not true for me’ ‘true for me’ and ‘little bit true for me’ (See Appendix 15). This was used as a tool to facilitate conversation and qualitative data, and was not intended to produce quantitative data. The other visual and interactive measure used was
the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) scale to assess the pupil’s sense of belonging to school. Further details on this are reported below.

The interviews were also designed to be short to maintain attention and ranged between 20 and 45 minutes. Group interviews were considered but individual interviews were chosen following discussions with the leaders of the educational settings. It was thought that the responses of individuals would be negatively influenced by the presence of their peers. Finally, time was dedicated to rapport building at the beginning of the interviews. This aimed to relax the pupil and create a positive and comfortable atmosphere. Each pupil was interviewed once, thanked for their help and was given the opportunity to ask any questions. Following the interviews, a member of staff met the pupils and offered them the opportunity to spend time out of the timetable. The Interview schedule for pupils can be found in Appendix 16. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed fully following the interview (see Appendix 17 for an example transcript). One exception to this was for a participant who preferred not to be recorded, and in this case, detailed notes were kept as a substitute, and these were analysed in the same way as the transcripts.

**The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale**

The PSSM scale is a measure of pupils’ sense of belonging to their school and has three subscales including caring relations, acceptance and rejection. Further details about the PSSM scale are provided in Appendix 18. The PSSM measure was used in a novel way in this study as each pupil completed the scale for their school and AP, rather than just one setting. One scale was administered at the beginning of the interview and the second scale was completed at the end, minimising the risks of any adverse effects from pupils remembering what they had previously reported. This allowed for an insight into the pupils’ perceptions of both settings. In total, nine pupils completed the PSSM scale, creating 18 responses.

**3.4.5 Ethical Considerations**

Approval from the University of Exeter’s ethics committee was obtained in March 2012 (Appendix 7). Further details regarding the ethical considerations of interviewing the young people can be found in Appendix 7a.
3.4.6 Data analysis

The interviews were analysed in relation to the CMO configurations that emerged during Phase 1. Pawson and Tilley (1997) argue that once a basic theory is in place, these programme theories can be refined by further data collection. The data was analysed following the thematic analysis approach as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The texts were analysed using the N-VIVO computer software program, which provided increased efficiency and usability. The data was coded under the pre-exiting themes that emerged during Phase 1. Codes that did not fit into existing themes were coded under an outcome, mechanism or context category. Following this, data under each theme was analysed to ensure that it accurately reflected that theme. If it did not, then the theme was modified, or a new theme was created.

The final stage of data analysis was to search the data for patterns and to identify CMO configurations. This firstly involved putting each pupil into an outcome group, and this analysis was largely conducted during the interview. All pupils thought that one of the pre-existing outcome themes was a good description for them and all pupils fell into either outcome 1 (positive engagement at both settings) or outcome 2 (positive engagement at the AP, further disengagement from school). To ensure the validity of this grouping, the analysis was also triangulated and confirmed through discussions with relevant staff following pupil interviews. The data was then reviewed, and mapped out onto the existing CMO configurations. During this process, the results of Phase 1 were adapted and updated to account for the pupil perspective.

PSSM

The PSSM Scale was scored as a whole, and also on the three sub-scales as recommended by Shochet et al. (2011). Five items were reverse coded, and a score was produced by adding up the total for each item, and dividing by 18. Similarly, for the subscales, the items were added and divided by the number of items in that scale. Each score therefore lies between one (lowest sense of school belonging) and five (highest sense of school
belonging). Goodenow (1993) suggests that the number three represents a tipping point, and those scoring below three are at risk of negative outcomes.

Analyses were conducted for both sense of school belonging and sense of AP belonging separately. As already discussed the pupils were separated into two groups depending on their agreed outcome. This allowed for direct comparisons between outcome groups in relation to PSSM scores, and an independent Mann-Whitney U test was used for this. A within group analysis was also conducted to compare pupils’ sense of belonging to the AP. Figure 1 shows a visual overview of the data analysis process.
1) The refinement of CMO Configurations

- Data collection
- Data transcribing and familiarisation with the data
- Coding into existing themes OR creation of new codes under three categories: Mechanisms, contexts and outcomes
- Further refinement of themes, and creation of any new themes.
- Divide participants by outcome theme
- Analyse the data for CMO configurations and refine and update existing CMO maps
- Review data for consistency and finalise CMO configurations

2) Analysing the relationship between sense of belonging and outcomes

- Data collection (PSSM Scale administered for school)
- Data collection (PSSM Scale administered for AP)
- Scoring of the scale for each pupil
- Division of pupils into two outcome groups
- Analysis of group differences (for PSSM school scores)
- Analysis of group differences (for PSSM AP scores)
### 3.5 Findings

#### 3.5.1 RQ1: What are the outcomes of a shared placement?

The pupils spoke about two outcomes to their shared placements, both of which reflect outcomes from Phase 1. These can be seen in Figure 2 with illustrative data.

**Figure 2: Pupil outcome themes with illustrative data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Illustrative Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Engagement in both settings</td>
<td>‘[The AP] made me try harder at school. Behaviour improved. Small classes were good and focused more on education.’ (P3, Y9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘[without the AP] I definitely would have been expelled. Would have fallen further behind... My behaviour was much better after starting here... I didn’t fight at all when I went back... I had a focus and could see a career. Messing around didn’t seem important anymore.’ (P8, Y11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Without [the AP] I wouldn’t be on track to get any GCSEs... it has saved me really. I’ve had no issues with behaviour since I had a focus for my life... something to work towards.’ (P6, Y11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with the AP but further disengagement from school</td>
<td>‘It was great at the centre. Not here though.’ (P1, Y5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It makes me a little bit bad when I come back to school... I have been refusing to do my work and be worse than normal.’ (P2, Y6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I’m more angry here because I wanted to stay at the centre. Behaviour was worse because I had to leave.’ (P10, Y6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Coming here made it harder to come back to school. Because of how it is here, I didn’t want to go to school anymore. Behaviour got worse at school.’ (P7, Y10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After discussing the pupils’ experiences, all of the pupils agreed that their outcome could be accurately described by one of the two groups. None of the pupils fell into the outcome of behaviour deterioration in both settings. As described above, a discussion was had with a relevant member of staff following interview to ascertain that the outcome description was accurate. In all cases, the members of staff agreed that this was a fair description of the outcome.

**Key findings**

a) The pupils’ perspective on the outcomes of their shared placement was in line with the responses from staff in Phase 1.

b) Only two outcome patterns emerged, as all the pupils thought that their behaviour and engagement at the AP was positive.

**3.5.2 RQ2: What are the mechanisms that operate in a shared placement to bring about outcomes?**

As described above, visual aids were used to support the interview process and ascertain details about the pupils’ views. The discussions regarding mechanisms revealed a range of responses that built on the results of the first phase. On many of the mechanisms, the pupil perspective was in line with Phase 1 results and this provides further support for the theoretical model developed in the previous study. However, there are a number of instances where the pupil perspective has offered richer and more detailed information on the mechanisms. It is these mechanisms that are important in refining the original theory and these are displayed in Figure 3.
Figure 3: New and Refined Mechanism Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New or refined mechanisms:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Confidence and self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aspirations for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil feel valued, accepted and that they belong at the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil feels rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confidence and Self-Efficacy

The evidence suggests that when outcomes were positive, increased confidence was a key mechanism for the pupils. For these pupils, there was usually an increased confidence in relation to their ability to engage with learning and a school curriculum. For others, the shared placement had allowed the pupils to build confidence in relation to practical skills. This emerged in analysis as a mechanism better described as self-efficacy than a general confidence.

For the majority of pupils whose engagement had deteriorated at school, the AP had provided little opportunity for development of skills and therefore self-efficacy. Pupils enjoyed the activities and the break from the school environment, and some reported increased confidence from this. However, this did not seem to lead to any further engagement or confidence within the school environment.

‘At school, you don't do the fun stuff... It’s the activities, get to do loads more stuff [at AP] so prefer it. Choosing time and baking is the best.’ (P10, Y6)

Aspirations

Although increased self-efficacy was a clear mechanism for the pupils, there was also a new and related theme of aspirations for the future. This was a strong theme from the pupils where school engagement had been positive. Many pupils in this group spoke about their
aspirations for the future, their career and many reported that this hope and focus was the main reason for their engagement. For example,

‘Without [the AP] I wouldn’t be on track to get any GCSEs... it has saved me really. I’ve had no issues with behaviour since I had a focus for my life... something to work towards’. (P6, Y11)

Similarly, a different pupil reported:

‘I want to be going into school... because it’s the best education and that’s important’. (P3, Y9)

**Pupil Confusion**

The pupils’ response to the mechanism of confusion was very interesting as the majority of the pupils reported that confusion was not a problem. Although acknowledging and being very aware that their behaviours between settings were very different, only one pupil indicated that they felt confused by the different rules. He reported that:

‘I’m always in the kitchen at [the AP]. Here I’m not allowed in the kitchen...does my head in’. (P2, Y6)

Whether this pupil was genuinely confused by this rule is harder to tell. It may reflect that he is unhappy with the school rule that he cannot go into the kitchen. He later said:

‘Cooking is my favourite thing. My TA says we can do it here soon’. (P2, Y6)

The main response emerging from this question was that it was not that difficult to deal with the two environments being different. When asked specifically about some of the factors highlighted in Phase 1, these were generally not seen as important. For example:

‘Not really an issue. I’ve been in a school long enough to know what it’s about... I don’t suddenly go in and call teachers by their first names just because I do that here’. (P6, Y11)

It is certainly a finding of this paper that a shared placement can lead to behaviour deterioration in the school. However, this study indicates that the mechanism for this is not one of pupil confusion.
Sense of School Belonging

For a clearer picture of how sense of school belonging was related to outcomes, each pupil completed the PSSM scale. The scores for each individual pupil are presented in Table 2. The pupil numbers correspond to the participant details in Table 1.

Table 2: Individual Scores for Both the AP and School PSSM Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil no.</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>PSSM Score</th>
<th>Caring Relations</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Rejection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ 2a) What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the school and the outcome of the shared placement?

The relationship between sense of school belonging and outcome can be seen in Figure 4 and is visually represented in Graph 1. Outcome 1 (positive engagement) is associated with a higher sense of school belonging (mean = 4.19, SD = .31) than outcome 2 (mean 2.51, SD = .25). An independent samples Mann – Whitney U Test (see Appendix 21 for details) indicates that this difference is significant (p<.05). The analysis of the subscales indicate significant differences in caring relations (p<.05), feelings of acceptance (p<.05) and rejection (p<.05).

**Figure 4**: Relationship between sense of school belonging and outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean and SD for School Scale</th>
<th>Pupil</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>PSSM Score</th>
<th>Caring relations</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Rejection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>1: Positive engagement and behaviour in both settings</td>
<td>4.19*(.31)</td>
<td>4.45* (.45)</td>
<td>3.68* (.59)</td>
<td>4.60* (.28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>2: Deterioration in behaviour at school</td>
<td>2.51* (.25)</td>
<td>2.89* (.72)</td>
<td>2.30* (.60)</td>
<td>2.00* (.47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
**Graph 1:** Bar chart showing the relationship between mean scores on the PSSM (School Version) by outcome group

**RQ 2b)** What is the relationship between pupils’ sense of belonging to the AP and the success of the shared placement?

The relationship between sense of AP belonging and outcome can be seen in Figure 5 and is visually represented in Graph 2. An independent samples Mann – Whitney U Test indicates no significant differences between outcome groups for Caring Relations (p>.05), Acceptance (p>.05), Rejection (p>.05) or PSSM Total Score (p>.05).
**Figure 5:** Relationship between sense of AP belonging and outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>PSSM Score</th>
<th>Caring relations</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Rejection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 5</td>
<td>1: Positive engagement and behaviour in both settings</td>
<td>4.12 (.89)</td>
<td>4.60 (.63)</td>
<td>3.88 (1.08)</td>
<td>3.93 (1.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>2: deterioration in behaviour at school</td>
<td>4.36 (.69)</td>
<td>4.63 (.48)</td>
<td>4.20 (.85)</td>
<td>4.17 (.79)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 2:** Bar chart showing the relationship between mean scores on the PSSM (AP Version) by outcome group

![Bar chart showing the relationship between mean scores on the PSSM (AP Version) by outcome group](chart.png)

- Caring Relations - AP
- Acceptance - AP
- Rejection - AP
- Total - AP
Within Group Analysis

As well as comparing the two outcome groups, within-group analysis was used to compare pupils’ sense of belonging to school with their sense of belonging to the AP. This was done as a whole group, and then separately for each outcome group.

When examining the whole group, a Related Samples (Paired) Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (see Appendix 22) found no significant differences between pupils’ sense of belonging at the school and sense of belonging at the AP (p>.05 for total scale and all sub-scales). For those who had positively engaged with the school (outcome group 1), a Related Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test found no significant differences between pupils’ sense of belonging at the school and sense of belonging at the AP (p>.05 for total scale and all sub-scales). Graph 3 displays a summary of this comparison.

Graph 3: Bar chart comparing the PSSM scores between provisions for pupils who positively engaged with both school and the AP (outcome group 1).
For pupils who further disengaged from school (outcome group 2), a Related Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test indicated significant differences in the sense of belonging between settings for the caring relations (p<.05), acceptance (p<.05) rejection (p<.05) and total scales (p<.05). A visual summary of this comparison is shown in Graph 4.

**Graph 4:** Bar chart comparing the PSSM scores between provisions for pupils who further disengaged from school (outcome group 2).

![Bar chart comparing PSSM scores between School and AP settings](chart.png)

As well as this quantitative data, the interview process also allowed all of the pupils to discuss their feelings in relation to belonging and acceptance. In line with the PSSM results, there was a strong theme that sense of belonging was greater at the AP than at school. For all the pupils, the direct question was asked ‘at which setting do you feel you belong more
at?’ Each pupil in group 2 named the AP in response without hesitation or any difficulty. When asked about the details, it was reported by a range of pupils that:

‘I like it more; I always have fun. I always get on with other people there. I do my work... I was not happy on my last day.’ (P1, Y5)

‘I have a few friends here [at school]. I got lots of friends at [the AP]... most of them awesome... they are similar to me.’ (P10, Y6)

When asked further about belonging, many of the pupils felt like the school environment was not suited to them and the alternative provider was better for them.

‘I belong here definitely, It is well suited to me and I have fitted in well...prefer the hands on approach rather than all the writing at school.’ (P8, Y11)

When the outcomes were more positive, there was a strong theme from the pupils that their sense of belonging was high at the school. For one pupil, being accepted had been a significant part of why things were going well. He said that:

‘Recently, I was told that a lot of them have been asking about how I am doing... I didn’t think anyone actually cared. I was surprised that they wanted me to come back. They have seemed happy to see me and tell me I am doing well... yea, that made a big difference.’ (P9, Y11)

Key Findings

1) The mechanism of general confidence did not seem to relate strongly to outcomes. Instead, self-efficacy was indicated as a key mechanism.

2) Many pupils felt that a change in their aspirations had been a key mechanism in the shared placement.

3) There was little evidence that a shared placement led to confusion for the pupil.

4) A greater sense of school belonging, including positive peer relations and not feeling rejected was associated with a greater likelihood of a positive outcome.

5) A sense of belonging at the AP did not account for any of the differences in outcome.
6) For those pupils who had disengaged further from the school, there was a significant gap between their sense of school belonging and sense of belonging to the AP.

3.5.3 RQ3: What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?

As described above, visual aids were used to support the interview process and ascertain details about the pupils’ views. The discussions regarding contextual conditions were largely in line with the framework developed in Phase 1. However, there are a number of instances where the pupil perspective has offered richer and more detailed information on the contexts. These contexts are displayed in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: New and Refined Context Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New and Refined Context Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil involvement in decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partnership working and Communication between settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils build strong relationships with adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transitions**

Many of the young people identified sessional transitions as being very difficult for them. When the outcome of further disengagement from school was present, sessional transitions were highlighted as a key time for behaviour difficulties. For example, the following extracts were spoken in relation to mid-day transitions:
‘hard...because I had such a good time and then had to come back to school. And here I don’t have much good times...behaviour was a bit bad.’ (P1, Y5)

‘I hated it [sessional transition]. It’s much better there so I hate coming back here.’ (P10, Y6)

‘I find it hard that I’ve been somewhere else. I find it hard to get back on with my work.’ (P4, Y9)

For these pupils, there was usually an expectation to join back in with the mainstream environment on return. Where individual support was in place, this was highlighted as useful and positive:

‘I spend time with my TA before going back to class... would not work otherwise. Don’t know why.’ (P2, Y6)

Some pupils who were accessing multiple APs reported that the mid-day transition was more difficult when their enjoyment of the AP was higher:

‘When I come back from [AP1] I’m fine...because it’s boring anyway...coming back from [AP2] is totally different. Don’t want to come back.’ (P10, Y6)

Although the sessional transitions were highlighted as sometimes difficult in Phase 1, this study revealed the extent to which these transitions were problematic for many of the pupils. Those pupils who did not have to switch placements within the school day were more positive about shifting between settings, and some expressed they would rather attend for a full day to avoid the sessional transition. These views are in line with the findings from the first phase that the mid-day transitions can be problematic. The evidence also suggests that when pupils’ sense of belonging is far higher at the AP than at the school, the transition back to school is harder for them.

**Pupil involvement in decisions**

Most pupils felt they understood the reason for a shared placement, but none felt like they had a real choice in this initial decision. Pupils reported that it was the ‘*Head teachers*
choice’ or ‘I was told I had to go’. Of the pupils where the outcome was further disengagement from school, all reported that they were happy with the decision and to be away from school. For those where the outcome was positive, there was a mixed picture, with some pupils feeling resentful at first, but later thought it was the right choice.

All pupils discussed that they had been involved in decisions about their curriculum. For the pupils with a positive outcome, this was a strong theme and for some of these pupils they were driving the changes. For example, two of the pupils in this group had requested a timetable change and to spend more time in school. This had been agreed and this was seen as important for these pupils.

‘I wanted to do psychology. We can’t do it here so now go there…I asked about it.’ (P6, Y11)

For those in outcome group two, there was a theme that decisions had been made around them and about them, but they were not central to these. This resulted in a curriculum which did not lead to motivation and engagement. It is also important to note here that for these pupils, aspirations seemed to be very low. They may well have had the opportunity to contribute to decisions, but they were not motivated by anything on offer.

**Partnership working and Communication between settings**

Although partnership working was highlighted as a key factor in Phase 1, the impact this had from the pupil perspective was unclear. All pupils believed that their various educational settings should be communicating with one another, and consequently that this would have had many benefits. For some, this was a very positive aspect to the placement arrangement. For example:

‘It was good that they let school know how well I was doing, and that I was behaving. That was important... a lot of people said that I changed. Lots of teachers said well done on doing really well and stuff.’ (P8, Y11)

Where pupils perceived that there was good communication and partnership working between settings, their attitude was more positive towards the school. The greater
perception that pupils had of settings as connected was also related to a greater sense of school belonging:

‘My mentor came out to see me and we had meetings... yea, was good they made the effort.’ (P5, Y10)

‘Just done my options form... [school teacher] said I need to choose the whole lot cus I should be going back.’ (P3, Y9)

When pupils felt that their provisions were very separate and communication was not good, they indicated a low sense of belonging to the school.

‘They wanted me out, especially [the head teacher]. That’s why I come here ... no, nobody from school has been here.’ (P7, Y10)

**Pupils build strong relationships with adults**

As in Phase 1, pupils’ relationships were a very strong theme throughout the interviews. All pupils highlighted that their relationships with staff were very positive at the AP. When this was discussed further, it was apparent that for the majority of the pupils, these relationships were stronger than at the school. For example, when asked what the best thing about the AP was, one pupil outlined that:

‘There are lovely people there... they are just kind. Sometimes when you are not nice to them they are still kind to me...’ (P1, Y5)

As well as highlighting staff qualities and positive relationships, there was also a good deal of evidence that the relationship was a very different type to the ones they had at school:

‘Teachers wouldn’t let me be myself at school. Here I can [be myself].’ (P7, Y10)

‘[at the AP], they are more of a friend, and we are equal. I like that. Everyone is equal here, but at school it’s all about authority.’ (P8, Y11)

‘I think there’s a different relationship between teachers and the children here. There is definitely a feeling that teachers are higher in school, but here there is equality. It’s different... more relaxed, not as formal.’ (P9, Y11)
All pupils discussed staff relations at the AP as positive, irrespective of whether their shared placement had been successful. This suggests that although pupils enjoyed the style of relationship with the AP staff, this was not responsible for increasing their engagement in the school context. This finding is supported further by the results reported in the section above regarding the PSSM scores. The results of the PSSM analysis support the qualitative findings that all pupils felt a high sense of belonging to the AP, and so this was not related to outcome group. The analysis also suggests that for pupils who are positively engaged in school, the sense of belonging is not different between settings. However, for those pupils who further disengaged from school, their sense of belonging at the AP is significantly higher than their sense of belonging at the school. This includes all sub-scales, including the measure of adult relationships.

In summary, although the relationships between pupils and AP staff does not seem to be a factor in explaining the differences between outcomes one and two, the relationship between pupils and school staff does seem to be an important factor. For the pupils in outcome one, there was a strong theme that there were members of staff at the school that they could get on with. Two of the pupils in this group also talked about their adult relationships becoming more positive over time. For example,

‘My teachers wanted me out at first. Some didn’t think I deserved to be getting out and they told me that… I didn’t get on with them. But once they could see that I was achieving things and behaving they were better…yea, we understand each other better.’ (P8, Y11)

Key findings

a) Sessional transitions were a difficult time for the pupils and a key time when behaviour problems were likely to emerge.

b) When pupils’ received support over the sessional transition periods, they felt much more positive about the transition and their behaviour was better.

c) The greater the gap between sense of belonging at the AP and sense of belonging at school, the harder it was for pupils to return to school.
d) None of the pupils felt like they had a real choice in whether they should attend a shared placement or not.

e) Being happy to attend a shared placement was a risk factor for negative outcomes.

f) Positive outcomes did not necessarily mean that pupils agreed with the choice to attend a shared placement originally.

g) Decisions about curriculum were strongly related to engagement, and the results suggest that pupil involvement in curriculum decisions is a key factor that facilitates positive change.

h) Good partnership working fosters a sense of consistency and connectedness between settings for the pupil, and this is related to sense of belonging.

i) There was a high agreement amongst pupils that the relationships with staff at the AP were different to those at the school. This was not only about the strength of the relationship but the type which was more informal, friendly and less authoritarian at the AP.

j) A positive relationship between the pupils and the AP staff could not account for any of the change in outcomes. Conversely, there is some evidence that a greater relationship at the AP can contribute to disengagement from school.

3.5.4 RQ4: In a shared placement, how are individual mechanisms activated within specific contexts to lead to certain outcomes?

The programme theories have been modified from Phase 1 of the research to account for the findings of this study. The revised CMO configurations are presented in Figure 7 and Figure 8. In both cases, new or modified themes are highlighted.
Figure 7: Refined CMO Configuration for Programme Theory 1 Showing Changes in Yellow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PESD</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupil</strong></td>
<td>Behaviour improvement and increased engagement at the mainstream school and good engagement at the AP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased self-efficacy</td>
<td>• Pupil voice is at the centre of decisions regarding curriculum</td>
<td>Quite often led to successful re-integration into full-time school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A degree of emotional development through increased confidence</td>
<td>• Pupil voice heard at time of placement decision</td>
<td>Academic progress and very high likelihood of entering further education, employment or training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build skills in relaxation and regulation of emotions</td>
<td>• Pupil has positive friendships at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased self esteem</td>
<td>• Pupil is one that can organise themselves, be independent and responsible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil attitudes and Feelings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institutional Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils feel valued, accepted and that they belong at the school</td>
<td>• Willingness to include children with complex needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils have increased aspirations</td>
<td>• School Perception that AP has specialist support to meet needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils feel sense of achievement (irrespective of what they have achieved)</td>
<td>• AP viewed by school as an extension of provision not separate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil takes ownership of education and gains a sense of responsibility</td>
<td>• Staff have realistic expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil motivation is high</td>
<td>• Holistic and Social view of child’s difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil have their need for control and choice met</td>
<td>• 'normal' or high expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has positive experiences</td>
<td>• Nurturing approach with empathy for the pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications and Achievement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institutional Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil receives qualifications beyond what a school can offer</td>
<td>• Effective transition arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil receives recognition of achievements</td>
<td>• AP has a focus on self-belief and achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupils build strong and positive relationships with adults at the school and at the AP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School systems are flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High consistency between settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupil accessing provision for single discrete subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Good Transport arrangements
- AP approach more informal
- Allow for pupils to develop peer relationships
- AP has a small class size with high ratio of adults
- Highly personalised programme in place
- Parents made to feel like an active part of the process
- Physical location of settings is close
- Sufficient level of effort put into supporting & including pupil
- Broader and more varied curriculum offered
- Curriculum at AP develops practical skills but also involves NC subjects
- Curriculum linked with a career or future aspirations of pupil
- A range of support mechanisms available in school with a personalised approach
- Focus on the positives at both settings

### Partnership Working

- **School staff visit pupils at the AP**
  - Excellent communication systems
  - Good collaboration between parent, AP and school
  - Settings have a shared understanding of what pupil needs
  - Good awareness of what the other setting is doing
  - Settings feel they are working in partnership
  - AP is involved in staff development at school

### Wider Systems

- A consistent and shared approach to supporting those with BESD across an LA
- Decisions made jointly between schools, APs and the LA
**Figure 8:** Refined CMO Configuration for Programme Theory 2 Showing Changes in Yellow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pupil attitudes and Feelings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pupil Factors</strong></td>
<td>Pupil engages well with the AP, but behaviour deteriorates further and becomes more disengaged from mainstream school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is a significant gap between pupil’s sense of belonging to the AP and their sense of belonging to the school</td>
<td>• Pupil has difficulties related to BESD and finds transitions difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has feelings of rejections from school</td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child is happy to go on a shared placement when told initially</td>
<td>• Perception that AP has no specialist knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil has positive experiences and enjoys the AP much more than school</td>
<td>• SP seen as path to full time specialist provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child unhappy with having to attend the school</td>
<td>• Reluctance to include children with complex needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils have a feeling of failing at school but being successful at AP</td>
<td>• Diminished Sense of Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil confusion</td>
<td>• Mainstream has a narrow focus on attainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils alienated from school due to curriculum</td>
<td>• Child focused view of the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School belief that the AP is separate provision and it is not their place to be involved in this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Institutional Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupils build very good relationships with adults at the AP, but continue to have less positive relationships with adults at school</td>
<td>• Very different provisions with different expectations, rules and boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No planning for transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pupils return to class where they have missed the previous lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff not willing to invest the time necessary for partnership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>working</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No clear purpose to the AP, and no way of measuring the success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pupil only minimally accesses the national curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partnership Working**

- **Limited partnership working practices**
  - No clear procedures for reviewing placements
  - Superficial involvement of parents
  - Poor communication between settings

**Wider Infra-Structural Systems**

- Staff not involved in LA decisions
3.6 Discussion

3.6.1 Overview of Key Findings:

a) The pupils’ perspective on the outcomes of their shared placement was in line with the responses from staff in Phase 1.

b) Only two outcome patterns emerged, as all the pupils thought that their behaviour and engagement at the AP was positive.

c) The mechanism of general confidence did not seem to relate strongly to outcomes. Instead, self-efficacy was indicated as a key mechanism.

d) Many pupils felt that a change in their aspirations had been a key mechanism in the shared placement.

e) There was little evidence that a shared placement led to confusion for the pupil.

f) A greater sense of school belonging was associated with a greater likelihood of a positive outcome.

g) Sense of belonging at the AP did not account for any of the differences in outcome.

h) For those pupils who had disengaged further from the school, there was a significant gap between their sense of school belonging and sense of belonging to the AP.

i) Sessional transitions were a difficult time for the pupils and a key time when behaviour problems were likely to emerge.

j) When pupils were able to spend time with a TA instead of going back to class over transition, they felt much more positive about the transition and behaviour was better.

k) The greater the gap between sense of belonging at the AP and sense of belonging at school, the harder it was for pupils to return to school.

l) None of the pupils felt like they had a real choice in whether they should attend a shared placement.

m) Being happy to attend a shared placement was a risk factor for negative outcomes.

n) Positive outcomes did not necessarily mean that pupils agreed with the choice to attend a shared placement originally.

o) Decisions about curriculum were strongly related to engagement, and the results suggest that pupil involvement in curriculum decisions is a key factor that facilitates
positive change.

p) Good partnership working fosters a sense of consistency and connectedness between settings for the pupil, and this is related to sense of belonging.

q) There was a high agreement amongst pupils that the relationships with staff at the AP were different to those at the school. This was not only about the strength of the relationship but the type which was more informal, friendly and less authoritarian at the AP.

r) A positive relationship between the pupils and the AP staff could not account for any of the change in outcomes. Conversely, there is some evidence that a greater relationship at the AP can contribute to disengagement from school.

3.6.2 Discussion

In this study, pupils’ views were gathered on their experiences of attending a shared placement between a school and an AP. As Knipe et al. (2007) found, pupils responded maturely and offered very valuable insights into their education. By considering the pupil perspective, the programme theories developed in Phase 1 have been enriched and enhanced. For example, where staff identified that pupils’ general confidence had improved, pupils reported that this was more specifically in relation to a belief in their ability to achieve in a certain area. The perceptions of the pupils have also challenged the notion that they become confused because of differences between settings. Instead, pupils explained challenging behaviour at school as a way of rejecting a school environment that they felt little sense of belonging to. One of the main aspects of this study has been the closer examination of sense of school belonging as a key mechanism. For example, pupils often had positive relationships and a high sense of belonging at the alternative provider, but this was not related to being successful at the school. When pupils became further disengaged from the school, this was related to feeling a greater sense of belonging at the AP. A more detailed discussion regarding the findings is presented in section 4.
Limitations of research

A main limitation of this research is that the direction of relationships cannot be known for certain. For example, the PSSM Scale indicated that outcomes were more positive when a sense of school belonging was high at the school. However, it may also be the case that pupils became disengaged for a different reason, and this caused the sense of school belonging to decrease. However, by utilising mixed methods, and examining a wide range of mechanisms and contextual factors, this limitation has been made less problematic. For example, throughout the research, the evidence suggested that sense of belonging was a mechanism and therefore something that was responsible for the outcome. Secondly, pupil outcomes were strongly related to institutional attitudes and practices such as the school retaining ownership of the pupil and willingness to include those with BESD. The strongest contextual conditions therefore promote a sense of belonging in pupils, and therefore this is further evidence that belonging is not simply a consequence of engagement or disengagement.

A second limitation of this research relates to the decision to take a deductive approach to Phase 2, following a more inductive approach during the first phase. The method used is in line with the recommendations of Pawson and Tilley (1997) and was considered a suitable approach as it creates the opportunity to confirm or refine the theory, as well as making additions for new factors. There were also practical reasons for selecting this approach. For example, it was felt that if the interview was more structured, pupils would feel less threatened and uncomfortable. It was also a consideration that the researcher did not have a relationship with the young people, and asking them to use a lot of language may have created anxiety. The approach selected allowed pupils to only use language minimally if they chose, but also gave them the opportunity to talk more if they felt comfortable. It also meant that the situation could be very visual and it is likely that these measures relieved pressure, anxiety and allowed for a rapport to be built.

Although opportunities were given to the pupils to talk more openly about their experiences, the interview situation was undoubtedly dominated by the drive to discuss
factors that emerged during the first phase. It is possible that this approach led to only a surface level understanding of the pupils’ views. A more open and exploratory approach may have elicited deeper information on what pupils felt was important to them. It is likely that to some extent, the adults’ view of the world was imposed upon them during the interviews, and it is acknowledged that this may have resulted in a loss of understanding of the genuine voice of the pupils.

A final limitation is that although the study extended the range of participants by including pupils, the perspective of parents has not been part of the study due to difficulties with sampling. Parents would have offered an additional viewpoint and allowed for a richer account of the contextual factors and mechanisms.
4.1 Synthesis and Discussion of Phase 1 and Phase 2

This study has found that for pupils on a shared placement, the contextual features of an AP that pupils respond well to are similar to those identified in previous studies. These include better staff relationships, a relevant curriculum and smaller class sizes (Harriss et al. 2008; Ofsted, 2011). However, this study has added to the existing research in several ways. Firstly, it has for the first time explored how schools and alternative providers can work together to make collective provision for BESD pupils on a shared placement. Secondly, it has incorporated perspectives from a wide range of staff and pupils, and also across multiple LAs, increasing the robustness of the findings and making them more generalisable. Lastly, a theory has been generated that goes some way in explaining why outcomes for BESD pupils on a shared placement are so variable, and no other study has been found to date that has examined this issue. It is important to note that by no means should this theory be seen as an endpoint or final version. It has developed on the basis of a relatively small project and within a variety of constraints. Future research on this topic could build upon these findings and further test and refine this theory. For example, future studies could increase the range of participants by including parental views and also explore a greater number of locations to examine contextual factors that may not have been identified in this study.

As introduced previously, the theory of self determination (Ryan and Deci, 2000) predicts that positive engagement and wellbeing occurs when people’s needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence are met. The findings of this research will now be discussed in relation to these needs and alongside other theoretical models.
Autonomy

Autonomy is an important aspect of intrinsic motivation and giving individuals choice and self direction leads to greater likelihood of engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within the school environment, studies suggest that pupils with greater autonomy experience positive behavioural, cognitive and affective consequences (Guay, Ratelle & Chanal, 2008; Hardre & Reeve, 2003). Whilst the majority of pupils in school will feel autonomous to some degree, it is likely that those with BESD will feel autonomous to a lesser extent. For example, many will be subject to quite regimented procedures of punishment within the school.

A number of the mechanisms and contexts that were found to facilitate a positive shared placement are related to feelings of autonomy. For example, in AP, pupils’ receive a far greater level of control regarding their curriculum, and some even have ‘choosing time’ built into the timetable. This theoretical perspective can also explain why pupils responded well to the less authoritarian styles of teaching and more flexible approach of the AP. Niemic and Ryan (2009) suggest that autonomy can be supported by a curriculum that is relevant and valued, reducing a sense of coercion and giving pupils greater choice in what they do. All these aspects were found to be factors supportive of positive outcomes in this research.

Competence

Ryan and Deci (2000) outline that an individual’s perceived competence towards an activity is an important factor in determining whether they are likely to engage in that activity. This is a similar construct to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which was a key mechanism found in this study. When self efficacy of a task is high, pupils are more motivated and engaged in that task. For many pupils in Phase 2 of this research, a mainstream curriculum had instilled low feelings of competence, and there was a history of under achievement at the school. When shared placements were positive, access to the AP always developed feelings of competence and this research supports this as a key factor in engagement. This perspective accounts for why the curriculum was found to be such a strong contextual feature, and why self-efficacy and achievement were key mechanisms in re-engaging pupils with education.
When AP provided a positive experience rather than an opportunity for the development of skills, this did not support pupils’ re-engagement with school. This key finding can be explained by the self determination approach, as pupils’ feelings of competence were not being enhanced by the provision, and therefore, the conditions for engagement were not optimal.

**Relatedness and Sense of Belonging**

It is an interesting finding that larger schools have been found to foster a greater sense of belonging than smaller schools, mainly due to the wider range of pupils and therefore greater socialisation opportunities (Sancho & Cline, 2012). This project however has found that many pupils have a greater sense of belonging within very small groups in AP than large primary and secondary schools. An important part of understanding this discrepancy involves noting that Sancho and Cline (2012) were discussing the belonging of all children, and this is unlikely to apply to those with BESD who are on a shared placement. For those pupils who feel isolated in school and struggle to form meaningful friendships, AP can provide opportunities for the development of positive peer relationships. This is likely to be related to the finding that pupils who have been rejected often gravitate towards others who are similar and willing to accept them (Hoza et al. 2005; McGrath & Noble, 2010).

It has been argued that in the normal development of adolescents, a sense of belonging is largely fostered by peers and adult relationships are less important, especially as age of the pupil increases (Cotterell, 2007). However, this current study indicates that pupils of all ages felt very strongly regarding the quality of adult relationships. This finding is reflected in a review paper by McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) who highlight that teacher pupil relationships are especially important for vulnerable students including those with mental health concerns or those at risk of disengaging from school. This finding is likely to be partially explained by attachment theory, which sees the pupil-staff relationship as fundamental to effective provision. The higher staff to pupil ratios of the AP were important to the pupils in this study, and many outlined the quality of these relationships. A related concept in attachment theory is that of the additional attachment figure or key adult. This suggests
that pupils with insecure attachments benefit from the development of a close relationship with a suitable adult. Some of the aims of this relationship are for the pupil to develop trust in the key adult, to feel secure in the environment and to develop an increased sense of self-esteem by experiencing acceptance (Bomber, 2011). Such a relationship is likely to promote the inclusion of the child and give them a greater opportunity of being successful in the school setting. This model can explain why positive engagement at the school was related strongly to positive adult relationships, and when pupils’ engagement deteriorated, relationships were frequently negative and pupils’ often felt a sense of rejection from school staff.

Attachment theory also predicts that children with an insecure attachment will often find transitions and coping with changes difficult due to the levels of anxiety provoked. As shared placements create a variety of changes and increase both placement and sessional transitions, it therefore seems likely that pupils will find these times problematic. As Bomber (2011) suggests, reducing the anxiety of pupils at transition times requires careful planning and thought. This is in line with the findings of this study that pupil’s sessional transitions were more successful in those settings where tailored support was designed and delivered over the transitional periods.

For pupils on a shared placement, this study highlights the importance of both positive peer and adult relationships in the school. When pupils develop positive relationships at an alternative provider, but fail to have this at the school, this reduces their sense of belonging to the school and consequently has a significant and negative impact on their motivation to engage with the school context. A shared placement cannot re-engage pupils by attempting to compensate for poor relationships at the school. This is an important implication for schools, as often there can be a perception that the AP should meet the emotional and social needs and the school continue with the learning focus. This approach only serves to increase a sense of difference from the pupils’ perspective, and ultimately does not support the development of a sense of belonging within the school environment.
This piece of research has also explored institutional practices which support a sense of belonging that goes beyond relatedness to others. This includes factors such as involvement in school activities, and for those on a shared placement, whether the school retains ownership of the pupil. The view that difficulties arose from within child factors was apparent in many school staff, and this was associated with more negative experiences of shared placements and behaviour deterioration at the school. When pupils become disengaged further from the school environment, they often do not feel part of the community of the school and there is a strong sense of not being accepted in this institution. These feelings of rejection and not ‘fitting in’ are enhanced by accessing a provision that evokes the very opposite feelings in pupils, and it does this by meeting the childrens needs for relatedness and belonging. Therefore, the greater the gap in sense of belonging between settings, the more likelihood there is of school disengagement.

4.2 Research Conclusions

There are many debates that surround the placement of children with SEN. Some professionals define their vision of inclusion as all pupils attending their local mainstream school (e.g. Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000), whilst others construct inclusion as about ‘including all children in the common educational enterprise of learning, wherever they learn best’ (Warnock, 2005, p.14). One of the central tensions in this area can be characterised by what has been called the ‘dilemma of difference’ (Norwich, 1993), where there is a dilemma between treating children differently to meet their personal needs, and treating them the same to maintain commonality and avoid segregation.

Although it has been noted that the central dilemma has no easy solutions (Stringer, 2009), Norwich (2008) suggests that it is about finding a way to have it both ways as far as possible. One way in which a pupil may receive specialist provision whilst maintaining access to the mainstream community is through a shared placement, and this has been the focus of this project. This research indicates that under conductive conditions, a shared placement can go some way to resolving the dilemma of difference in pupils with BESD by providing
specialist support to meet their individual needs, whilst simultaneously maintaining a link with school and promoting reintegration into the mainstream environment. The findings of this project suggest that this positive outcome can only be achieved when a number of important contextual considerations are met.

For shared placements to offer a useful package of provision for individuals identified as having BESD, good partnership working between the two settings is essential. This includes regular communication, good awareness of what the other setting is doing and jointly planning and reviewing the provision. Shared placements lead to negative outcomes frequently and this is often related to school staff having a sense of diminished responsibility towards these vulnerable pupils, combined with a belief that a mainstream setting is not the best place for them. Where the schools retain ownership of the pupil, relationships are often better and the pupil has a stronger sense of belonging towards the school. For shared placements to be effective, this sense of belonging to the school is important and this is a key finding of the current research. Alternative providers are often excellent at building positive relationships with young people, but this in itself does not seem to positively influence the pupils’ engagement at school. Similarly, when the AP focuses on giving the pupil a positive experience but not building self-efficacy or their aspirations for the future, this did not support an improvement in school. This research supports previous findings that emotional wellbeing is enhanced by achievement (Roeser, Eccles & Sameroff, 2000). Therefore, an effective shared placement involves the delivery of a programme that meets emotional and social needs as well as developing pupils’ aspirations and self-efficacy. The findings of this study indicate that there should be a focus on achievement and providing conditions which promote autonomy, competence and relatedness. When this is in place, pupils have the best opportunity in becoming self-determined and the likelihood of positive outcomes are maximised.
4.3 Implications of Research

4.3.1 Implications for Educational Psychologists

Educational Psychologists (EPs) apply psychology to support the wellbeing of young people in education (Cameron, 2006). EPs are frequently involved in supporting schools and settings in meeting the needs of pupils identified as having BESD. In many services, they do this primarily through consultation with school staff, maximising the social conditions which facilitate the inclusion of all pupils. As the primary findings of this research centre around environmental contexts, EPs are well placed to support schools that work with individuals on a shared placement. For example, in facilitating effective transition arrangements or ensuring that ‘pupil voice’ is being heard within the setting. The findings of this research suggest a clear relationship between the poor outcomes of shared placement and school staff having a child focused view of difficulties. When staff had a holistic and contextual understanding of pupils’ needs, provision was often used more effectively and resulted in an improvement in pupil outcomes. This highlights the possibility of EPs raising the awareness of staff in relation to psychological understandings of behaviour and emotional development. This could be in the form of a systemic approach that focuses on building the capacity of staff to understand and respond to challenging behaviours. This would likely draw from a range of theory including those discussed throughout.

In many LAs, EPs have a role in the decision-making processes that determine whether a shared placement is likely to be a successful option. The findings of this study suggest that shared placements can lead to positive outcomes, but only under certain conditions. EPs would be well placed to be involved in the initial stages of a shared placement plan, using the findings of this research to ensure the necessary provision is in place.

This study has highlighted a sense of school belonging as a very important factor to consider when pupils are on a shared placement and arguably, this is still a largely neglected mechanism within schools (Sancho & Cline, 2012). In comparison to other professionals, EPs are well placed to understand the psychological construct of school belonging and promote the importance of this in their work with schools. This could be done at all levels of EP work.
including casework, group level work and systemic intervention with schools and training sessions. For example, EPs can support schools in promoting positive peer relations by advocating restorative approaches, peer mediation, social skills development or delivering the circle of friends intervention.

Pupil wellbeing in schools is strongly related to the senior management team understanding its importance and making it a priority in the school (McGrath & Noble. 2010). EPs can also support pupil wellbeing at this level through staff consultation, training and policy development. Cotterell (2007) suggests that the fundamental challenge for schools is to create a community where all students feel they belong and their contributions are valued. This kind of whole school approach is likely to promote a sense of belonging and act as an early intervention measure by promoting inclusion and engagement. There are many school systems that promote pupil voice and allow for child-led contributions. For example, pupil governing bodies, pupil interview panels and pupil led teaching. However, those pupils identified as having BESD may be excluded from these. There could be a number of reasons for this including the pupils’ motivations and a reluctance to participate in a public and mainstream activity. However, it is also the case that in many schools, such opportunities are not presented to those with BESD, reinforcing a sense of difference and rejection. Having said this, those with BESD may not be best suited to the existing forums and structures that schools offer for pupil contribution. It is not being suggested here that BESD pupils should be treated like all other pupils, it is being argued that to instil a sense of belonging in those with BESD, there needs to be accessible systems in place that are additional and different to those available for other pupils. EPs could work creatively with school staff in developing procedures that specifically promote a sense of school belonging by building a culture where pupils with BESD can contribute, be valued and be heard.

Lastly, this study highlights the utility of using realistic evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) as a research methodology in educational settings. A recent report by Goldacre (2013) and supported by the Department for Education argues for the use of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) within education. However, it is argued here, as it is by Pawson and Tilley (1997) that such an approach cannot deal with complex social issues or build an understanding of
why outcomes have occurred. In this project, realistic evaluation has provided a flexible and productive way of examining a complex social programme. EPs are very well placed to conduct research and drive evaluative projects at different levels (Marsh, 2011). Bozic and Crossland (2012) indicate that a growing number of EPs and Trainee EPs are using realistic evaluation and it is proving to be a useful methodology for use at multiple levels including the school and LA. The skills required to do a realistic evaluation are well suited to EPs including interviewing, bringing together complex findings and a focus on the importance of context is in line with EP practice.

4.3.2 Wider implications

This study also has implications for schools, settings and the LA. Most obviously, the implications for practice are inherent throughout the research and this applies to schools, alternative providers and LAs. Participants in this project were not aware of a LA or school policy regarding shared placements and no evidence was found to suggest that such policies existed. This research supports the development of a LA policy that sets out a level of expectation for how schools work with alternative providers. The findings from this study could contribute towards what these expectations would be in practice. However, with an increasing number of schools and APs becoming separated from the LA, AP is likely to become more independent in the future. For this reason, schools would benefit from a policy on their use of AP, and within this, outline arrangements for those on a shared placement.


Section 6: Acknowledgements

Over the period of this research project, I have had the privilege of working alongside a variety of dedicated staff within both schools and alternative provisions. I have been continually grateful and impressed by the level of commitment and energy shown by staff, particularly those who worked closely with me in obtaining parental consent and co-ordinating the interviews.

I would like to thank the following people for this valuable support:

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- All the parents of the involved pupils for giving consent for them to be involved.
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Finally, a special thank you to the many young people who displayed a great deal of patience and concentration throughout what was sometimes a quite lengthy interview. I was consistently impressed by the honesty and openness of all pupils involved, and for this I am very grateful. I have enjoyed hearing about the pupils’ experiences and I wish all of them the very best for the future.
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Appendix 1: Ensuring Reliability, Validity and Reducing Bias

Issues of reliability and validity are normally terms associated with fixed design research. Within flexible designs, there is much debate regarding both the terminology and importance of these constructs. Lincoln and Guba (1985) avoid the terms, instead suggesting that qualitative research should be credible and confirmable. However, as Morse (1999) has suggested, undermining the importance of reliability and validity in qualitative inquiry is associated with a less scientific and rigorous approach. Robson (2011) also argues that reliability and validity are important in flexible design research, and operationalises these concepts in relation to qualitative inquiry. The current study will now be discussed in relation to Robson’s (2011) discussion of reliability and validity in flexible design research.

Description

A main threat to validity in qualitative research lies in the inaccuracy or incompleteness of data. As suggested by Robson (2011) audio taping of all interviews was carried out, and this was accompanied with full transcriptions.

Interpretation

Robson (2011) suggests that the link between the data and the end product must be explicit and, the interpretation of the data must be justified. To meet this standard, each broad theme is discussed alongside a range of illustrative data from the original source materials. Furthermore, Appendix 10 highlights the process of data analysis, giving an example of how raw data was analysed to generate the themes.

Bias

To guard against bias and to maintain a rigorous approach, a number of considerations were made.

1) Methodological triangulation refers to the combining of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this study, the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) scale was used as a quantitative measure of belonging, alongside semi-structured interview data which also elicited thoughts and attitudes related to sense of belonging.
2) Participant triangulation was also conducted in this project by examining the views of both staff and pupils.
3) The validity of the project has been increased through the use of a sample which involved a range of staff covering both alternative providers and mainstream schools. Similarly, staff represented their work with a wide range of ages and were also working in multiple LAs.
4) Inter-rater reliability is the process of ensuring that other individuals would have coded in the same way as the researcher. Although this was attempted, there were difficulties and these are described in Appendix 1a below.

Member Checking

What Robson (2011) calls member checking is also a recommendation of Pawson and Tilley (1997), which involves feeding back to the interviewee your interpretation of what they are saying. This was done throughout the interviews in the form of CMO configurations. For example, towards the end of one interview, the following was asked to the participant:

Researchers: Okay, so it seems as if you are saying that the dual provision idea works fairly well most of the time and you have sent kids back to school full time, and these are also more re-engaged with school during the time here.

Participant: Yea

Researchers: You are also saying that when this works, it’s mainly about confidence in the classroom environment

Participant: Amongst other things, but that is key yes.

Researchers: I know we have talked about a range of different things, but a main point you have made is that this confidence comes about because you build positive relationships with them and give them an opportunity to succeed with academic tasks.

Participant: I think those are key points really and of course what I said about being there for them emotionally as well as the academic side.

Generalisability

Maxwell (1992) distinguishes between internal and external generalisability. When research has a very narrow pool from which data is collected, the findings likely only apply to the settings where the data came from. However, because this study examined multiple settings in multiple areas, the findings are to some extent, externally generalisable. This means that the theory developed in this project would likely be of interest to all schools and settings within the three LAs examined. Furthermore, there is a good justification that the findings could apply nationally, although it is recognised that at this wider level, the theory would be less powerful and applicable. It may be more useful to look at generalisability on a scale, where the findings are highly generalisable to the settings that have been used, slightly less generalisable to other settings in the three LAs, and moderately generalisable nationally.
Inter-rater reliability is the process of testing agreement between individuals. For the purposes of this study, it referred to the coding process, where raw transcript data was coded into codes and then themes. Following full analysis of the data, this process was arranged with another researcher with the intention that each researcher would act as a second-coder for the other person. Unfortunately, this process became unmanageable and was not an accurate test of the reliability of the data. The reason for this is that the raw transcript is essentially context free and to a new individual, there are huge gaps surrounding the location of collected data, history of the institution/participants, environment and knowledge of the overall contextual conditions. To illustrate the difficulties faced during this process precisely, an example is given of part of a transcript that was due to be coded.

'We have been using the same providers for years... but the feedback isn’t helpful or particularly interesting for us. We have one there now two days a week…'

'Which setting is that?'

'That one in [names nearby area] - can’t remember the name of it'

'Who is your contact there?'

'Well, the staff seem to change all the time and so who knows at the moment... we never actually get to meet these people.’

One of the key themes identified from this text was one of ‘poor partnership working’. Part of this came from the participant’s response that they did not know the name of the AP that the school were accessing. This however was not picked up by the second coder because of a lack of awareness of how significant this was. For example, the AP was very closely situated to the school; the school had used the AP for many years and with a variety of pupils and the name of it had not changed. The second aspect that indicated a poor partnership working was the statement regarding staff seeming to change all the time. As the researcher spent time in both the AP and the school and became familiar with the provisions, there was the knowledge that staff had not actually changed dramatically in recent years and not at all with the key management staff. Again, this was important contextual information that supported the coding process, but only the researcher knew.

This research could have been strengthened in relation to bias and reliability if a team of researchers had been conducting the project, and each one developed an awareness of the contexts and intricacies of the data. This would have allowed for a greater level of objectivity and inter-rater reliability efforts would likely have been more successful.
The semi-structured interview was the chosen method of data collection for a number of reasons. Firstly, the complexity of people’s experiences around the shared placement arrangement meant that it was suited to a qualitative approach. The semi structured interview was considered appropriate as opposed to an unstructured interview, as it was important that data was gathered within the structure of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes. The interview also benefited from a degree of structure as there needed to be consistency between the subjects, and taking this approach allowed for the responses of participants to be comparable. The semi structured interview was more appropriate than a highly structured interview due to the degree of flexibility needed to explore the wide range of mechanisms, contexts and outcomes. Pawson (1996) highlights the importance of entering into a dialogue with the subject when carrying out a realistic evaluation. This involves discussing answers in more detail, asking them to expand or clarify answers and also involves the researcher discussing their developing theories.
Appendix 3: Class Teacher Interview Schedule

The interview will begin with some general rapport building and problem-free talk. The aim of this is to relax the participant. The consent forms will then be completed, and right to withdraw, confidentiality procedures will be discussed. Definition of shared placement to be shared.

1. Tell me about your experiences of shared placements in your career
   - Has it become more common? How many students in your classes are on shared placements?
   - How often is your student in class? What subjects do they miss?
   - What are your general thoughts about shared placements as an idea?

2. What is the purpose of using shared placements do you think?
   - Have you noticed children's behaviour/social skills become better following this?
   - How are shared placements used to support academic achievement, if at all?
   - At what level does the benefit occur – e.g. school, class, pupil?
   - What are the long term outcomes, and what are the short term ones?
   - Are there any undesirable outcomes of shared placements?
   - What is your perception of what the other setting is doing?

2. Under what conditions do shared placements work best?
   - For what kind of pupil do shared placements work best?
   - For those where it has not been beneficial, why was this?
   - What strategies do you employ for a child on a shared placement?
   - Are you aware of what the other setting is doing?
   - How do you communicate with the other setting, and how often?

3. What conditions make a shared placement difficult to make work?
   - What are the transition periods like?
   - Do you manage to offer the child a rich and consistent curriculum with low attendance in your class?
• How is this managed? Do the children ‘catch-up’ what has been missed? Is the child ever at a disadvantage having missed previous work on a topic?

• Tell me about their relationships with peers

• Do you feel their behaviour is the same between settings or better at one?

4. When shared placements work well, what is it about them that leads to this outcome?

• Do the children change how they feel about themselves or their abilities?

• Does the alternative curriculum have an impact?

5. When shared placements don’t work, what is it about them that lead to this outcome?

• Are any of these difficulties overcome? How? Are there any particular strategies you employ for a child on a SP?
Appendix 4: School SMT/SENCo Interview Schedule

The interview will begin with some general rapport building and problem-free talk. The aim of this is to relax the participant. The consent forms will then be completed, and right to withdraw, confidentiality procedures will be discussed. Definition of shared placement shared.

1. **Tell me about your experience of shared placements in your career**
   - Has it become more common? How many students do you have on a SP?
   - What are your general thoughts about shared placements as an idea?

2. **For your school, what is the purpose of using a shared placement?**
   - At what point do you start to consider a SP?
   - What are normally your best hopes (outcomes) for children who go to SP?
   - Have you noticed children’s behaviour/social skills become better following a SP?
   - How is a SP used to support academic achievement, if at all?
   - At what level does the benefit occur – e.g. school, class, pupil
   - What are the long term outcomes, and what are the short term ones?
   - Are there any undesirable outcomes of a SP?

3. **Under what conditions does a shared placement work best?**
   - For what kind of pupil does a SP work best?
   - For those where SP has not been beneficial, why was this?
   - What school factors are important in making a SP successful?
   - Are you aware of what the other setting is doing?
   - How do you communicate with the other setting, and how often?
   - What AP factors are important in making a SP successful?
   - What do they get from the AP that they cannot get here?
   - How do you work with parents for children on a SP?

4. **What conditions make a shared placement difficult to make work?**
• What are the transition periods like?
• Do you feel their behaviour is the same between settings or better at one?
• What is the impact on their curriculum?
• Tell me about their relationships with peers within the school.

5. When shared placements work well, what is it about the program that makes the difference?

• Do the children change how they feel about themselves or their abilities?
• Does the alternative curriculum have an impact?

6. When shared placements do not work well, what is it about them that leads to this outcome?

• Are any of these difficulties overcome? How? Are there any particular strategies you employ for a child on a SP?
Appendix 5: Alternative Provision SMT Staff Interview Schedule

The interview will begin with some general rapport building and problem-free talk. The aim of this is to relax the participant. The consent forms will then be completed, and right to withdraw, confidentiality procedures will be discussed. Definition of Shared Placement will be shared.

1. Tell me about your experience of shared placements in your career
   - Has it become more common? How many students do you have on this arrangement?
   - What are your general thoughts about a shared placement as an idea?

2. For your setting, what is the purpose of using a shared placement?
   - What are the advantages of this over being full time at this setting?
   - What are normally your best hopes (outcomes) for children who still access school?
   - Have you noticed differences in pupils’ behaviour, social or emotional development?
   - How are shared placements used to support academic achievement, if at all?
   - What are the long term outcomes, and what are the short term ones of this?
   - Are there any undesirable outcomes of shared placements?

2. Under what conditions do shared placements work best?
   - For what kind of pupil does it work best?
   - For those where it has not been beneficial, why was this?
   - What school factors are important in making shared placements successful? Tell me about the school where it works best and one where it doesn’t work so well.
   - How do you communicate with the school, and how often?
   - What do you do that helps make shared placements successful?
   - What do you offer that school cannot? What is your role?
   - How do you work with parents for pupils on a shared placement?

3. What conditions make shared placements difficult to work?
   - What are the transition periods like?
• Do you feel their behaviour is the same between settings or better at one?

• What is the impact on their learning?

• Are there differences between settings in terms of expectations, boundaries?

• Tell me about their relationships with peers within the setting.

• Are any of these difficulties overcome? How? Are there any particular strategies you employ for a child on dual placement?

4. When shared placements work well, what is it about the program that makes the difference?

• Do the children change how they feel about themselves or their abilities?

• Does the alternative curriculum have an impact?
Appendix 6: Example of a Transcript (SMT, Secondary School) *Bold font = researcher

- Confidentiality and anonymity discussed.
- Consent form signed

I just want to start by distinguishing between the shared placements and other but similar arrangements you probably know about. So I will start by reading the definition:

A shared placement is when a pupil receives their education at two or more placement locations on a weekly basis, and this continues for a minimum of six weeks. One of these placements must be a mainstream school, and the other an alternative provision. Alternative provisions can include PRUs and a wide range of practical, creative or vocational programmes. This excludes a college placement and any provision which is delivered ‘on-site’, even if this is a segregated unit. This also excludes outreach programmes.

I also need to be clear that my focus here is regarding pupils with BESD rather than a wider analysis of all types of children who access other provisions.

Yea, you are talking about dual placements.

Exactly, it has different names in different places. Often, children who are dual registered spend time in only one setting, but I am only interested in those who go between two settings on a regular basis.

OK so does that not include kids who are on a college placement for one day a week?

It is a similar and related issue, but I am focusing on alternative provision for children with BESD. These can be private providers or PRUs for example. Can you tell me what your experience is of these shared placements, have they become more common do you think?

It varies depending on what the political climate is. It depends on funding and the number of places available. At times, we have been placing children in centres. But the focus became getting the child GCSEs and therefore there was a time when it was reduced.

What is the current situation given the political climate now?

Well they still want high levels of attainment, and we are penalised if the students don’t get the required qualifications. It is good that PRUs have had to up their game and offer qualifications. In the past, kids were there and that was it. But now we have to monitor closely and ensure they are achieving.

Do you use the PRUs mainly as full time support or do you have students on shared placements?
Full time is better, but we did have two last year. As we have made better links with primary schools, any students who may be in need of a statement are identified by us working with the primaries. We had three last year who went on to specialist provisions because they had needs that were just way beyond what we can deal with in a mainstream school.

So, early intervention work with the primaries means you don’t need it so much.

Well that is the ideal situation, having these students in the right placements as soon as possible, and sometimes that is not mainstream.

So what is the process for shared placements? At what point do you consider it may be a good idea?

Do you want my honest answer?

Of course.

We would use it for kids that we want a statement for. What you have to do is prove the need and go through a process to do that. We have two kids at the moment, one at **** and one at ****. One has a statement and we have put in a request which is in process. When we have done this previously, the LA has recognised the needs and they are now in specialist placements.

Full time?

Yes. We also do such a range of interventions here that they have to need something extra to what we are doing here. But you have different rules and that causes confusion for the student. I feel it is better if they go somewhere full time and then are reintegrated back. Some of the units around here are just so vastly different to here.

So you are not really seeing this as an intervention, but as part of your graduated process evidence?

Well, however it used, it is still a measured decision which needs to go to panel, and is discussed by the wise and good of the LA.

You have said a little bit about the impact of shared placements, but can you tell me more about the outcomes you have seen when students go part time to an alternative provision.

We have used it but it doesn’t really work. We use it at KS3 if we do. I tried to be very creative and use it with a child with ASD. I felt that by going to PRU, he wouldn’t feel rejected by us, so the idea was that he would do a mixed GCSE programme, for example doing music here, and then went to the PRU for the rest. The LA said that the specialist
setting didn’t have the right specialism. So I said that we would be prepared to work alongside them but it was turned down.

**So are there any positives when children are on the shared placements?**

We have been using the same providers for years really but no. They are reliable in terms of not cancelling and things but the feedback isn’t helpful or particularly interesting for us. We have one there now two days a week.

**Which setting is that?**

That one in ******* Can’t remember the name of it

**Who is your contact there?**

Well, the staff seem to change all the time so who knows at the moment.

**Oh I see, so that makes it more difficult?**

Well, certainly is not helpful. We never actually get to meet these people usually.

**In terms of the curriculum they access, what are the positive outcomes in relation to this area? What they actually access by being there**

There is a lot of hair, beauty and nails. It is a difficult one. You would want anyone to have a positive experience. Given how difficult some of these people’s lives are, it can be fine to have a positive experience. But the difficulty is that is sets them up with a false idea of what is going to be there for them. I think that if you are preparing them for life, and the reality of life, then you need to keep it as near to the norm as possible within individual needs because if students are going and learning social skills and concentration, I am not sure how explicit that is, and if it was more explicit what the objectives were from the pupils view. So they are not going just to have a nice time, but for example they get there in the morning, and they are told that today we are going to work on how you work with others in your group. It is vital the children know the aims and this is reviewed at the end.

**Is this happening now?**

No, that’s the point really. The PRUs don’t offer much in terms of suitable curriculum and a lot of it to be honest seems to be filling the time. This is important for when you go back to school, and it’s not that surprising they don’t want to come back. PRUs should be doing more focused work on maths and literacy instead of doing what they do. I have just got a report back for ******* . It’s just a summary of what he’s been doing. Not helpful. Academic work there would increase their chances of getting on here. If it was very explicit what the aims were. What we get back now is very wooly and can be very poor. Although a recent
one was very good, and came back under curriculum areas. If that was happening more, we would use them more I think. Have a look at this report [shares a report].

So this is a new way of communicating with you?

Yea it’s the first one I have seen in curriculum areas.

I don’t know ******, but given what you know about him, is academic progress his primary need at the moment?

No, probably not. He’s back in care and off the wall quite frankly. Actually, what he needs is a specialist residential provision.

Is there any other communication systems in place?

Well we get these every so often and there is much more at the important times such as the beginning and transitions.

How do you work with the PRU in terms of reviewing?

We use the feedback reports as guidance for how well things are going, but if there are problems or something urgent we could always ring. The difficulty with relationships is the number of staff changes, I never know who to contact as there is always someone new. They come to our multi-agency meetings sometimes

So what is the plan for this pupil?

He’s not coming back. His life is very complex and will soon be a looked after child. He will likely have very poor outcomes in life.

When you have used it, how has the timetabling work?

Well that’s another negative, because they miss all those lessons on that day.

It is interesting point, as at primaries it can be difficult as they are always going to miss something as its full class all the time.

That is interesting because I would have said the opposite. I think there is more flexibility at primary, but at secondary the timetable can’t be changed. Something like maths, if you are out for a day, you will miss a key part of the teaching. Science is every day, and whatever day you go out, you will miss something important. The only thing that makes it easier is for KS4, who have an option day, where some go to college. That’s only KS4 though.

Tell me about the child who went on a full time placement instead of dual?
Very positive. If he was on a dual, he would have been permanently excluded. He even came back to the ceremony and was fantastic- polite and friendly.

**That’s nice you could maintain that link with school, do you think he felt like part of the school still?**

It’s an interesting one, and I think that these are children who have had a lot of rejection in their lives often. We agreed early on that he could come back for it as long as he got his head down and did some work and got through. So we kept the deal, and he was fine. We had plenty of staff about but wasn’t needed.

**What was it about the PRU setting that made it work for him?**

Because he had the opportunity to build relationships and work in a different way, he was successful. We like to keep an eye on children when they are not here still. It is slightly different with younger ones in ks3, as it’s a long way away until they leave.

**For it to work best, what needs to be in place?**

It needs to be a partnership. The problem is that there is a high staff turnover in these centres, and that can be difficult as you build relations with heads and then they change. This is the first time I have seen a report like this, and I would say that if I could I would buy more into that as it is a huge improvement. There are still the days out, but they are clearly increasing the way they work in curriculum areas. The question is, what are they going to do that makes a difference?

**What do you think the longer term goals are of these shared placements?**

Re-integration is what the goal should be.

**What do you think the PRUs would say if I asked them what their purpose was?**

They would say short term intervention to try and retrack and keep the academic side going in order to get them back into mainstream. This boy we have discussed should be coming back to us, but that decision won’t be made yet due to the high level of need. He will stay there whilst they decide where to put him.

**What is your communication like with them?**

We don’t have any at the moment. When we applied, I put forward the case that part time placement was completely inappropriate, they agreed so he is on full time placement

**Do you think there is a place for shared placements?**

Not as a means to end.
In an ideal world, where providers did everything you wanted and said earlier, for example having very clear aims, actions plan and working on very specific and measurable social skills and personal development. Basically, if you could design your own alternative provider, would you then see a role for that provider as working with you for a child and sharing a placement?

No

You still wouldn’t?

No, because of the mixed messages. I would rather they worked with people here rather than having to go between two places. These children with complex needs need stability and consistency, clear and firm boundaries, need to feel part of a place. It is like when you go to different parents, and mum and dad have different rules. Why create extra challenges for children who have all these challenges anyway. We put in a lot of support here and I have to be very clear that if we say that a child is going to go off for a day, this intervention has to have a greater impact than what they are missing.

Yes, and people often forget what children miss when they are doing interventions

Yea exactly and we do a lot here. I believe if you have a nurturing environment but focus on learning then its good. Sometimes there are underlying learning needs in behaviour, and we can deal with those. Deep rooted social and emotional needs combined with learning needs can create needs which are too big for us. It is all about closing the gap, and I am reluctant for children to be on a dual placement. They are out of peer group, new people, new rules, what can they do there that they can’t do here? We have highly specialised staff here with a range of interventions.

So you don’t see these providers as having specialist resources and knowledge in BESD that you can access?

They may have specialist staff but so do we. I have a specialist qualification in BESD and other staff have SEN qualifications. We identify needs a lot younger now and work with primaries much more than we have ever done. What tends to happen in primaries is that they accommodate the children but don’t enable them to come here. We have primary staff come here and observe our meeting, and then they realise that they are not preparing them for secondary. As a result of our intervention, a child has recently got a diagnosis of ASD, and they were just seeing him as different. So I think early intervention is important, but sometimes this setting will be too much for those with very complex needs. I think there is a role for specialist settings.

But the link between these specialist settings and your school?
I think there is a possibility of working together. But this works best with a child with down syndrome or ASD, not those with behaviour and complex difficulties. However, they do seem to be moving towards a more learning and curriculum focused approach, which is shown by this report. If this continues, then we may well use it more, and I may have different answers in 6 months.

Just thinking more specifically about individuals which you have had on a dual placement, can you tell me how that went?

We had a year 9 girl go 2 days a week to [the project]. She started to push the boundaries even more and then was permanently excluded. She wasn’t making links between the two. It’s always a similar story. To date, dual placement has not been effective.

My next question was to ask about a situation where the outcome has been positive, can you think of one?

We have been forced into using it quite a few times, but it has never had a good outcome. The environments are too different, which causes them to kick off more here, because they get too used to small classes and short lessons.

So you have not seen any benefits in terms of behaviour or social skills?

No.

Do you think their behaviour is different between settings then?

Yes I think they often don’t see what we see because they enjoy it more there, which isn’t surprising really.

Ok, just to summarise so far, you have said that in your experience, dual placements have led to behaviour actually getting worse when they are here. This has resulted in permanent exclusions and you think if they had been full time somewhere this may not have happened. The main reason for this is that the PRUs are very different to here, and you said this is difficult for students to adjust to. Can you tell me a bit more about why you think behaviour gets worse?

These are kids who are largely, boundaries have been blurred anyway and they have no rules at home. Here it is very structured and the bar is very high for expectations in lessons. Going from that to spending the day outdoor activities, which has its place, but to do that when you would have been at school, it causes high levels of confusion for them, and also you put naughty children together and they become even naughtier. Here, the behaviour is very good.

Great, sorry that has gone a bit over time. I have asked everything I wanted to, is there anything else you would like to add?
I would be interested to hear what your conclusions are. I do feel strongly it doesn’t work but if you are going to [LA] and it is working, then that would be interesting to hear how they manage that.

Yes, I think that is one advantage of doing these interviews across different counties. Thanks very much for taking the time today.
Appendix 7: Ethical Approval for Study

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 600035767

Title of your project: The Experiences of Dual Provision for Teachers and Students identified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: The Best of Both Worlds?

Brief description of your research project:

This research project looks into the perceptions of individuals in relation to the dual placement of children identified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). The overall aims of the research are:

- To improve our understanding of pupils’ and staffs’ experiences of dual placements
- To explore whether there are any contextual mechanisms or factors that influence individual perceptions of dual placement

The research will comprise of two linked studies. These are as follows:

Study one: Interviews with students

Research Questions:

- What are the positive experiences of pupils in relation to their dual provision?
- What aspects of being on a dual placement do pupils find difficult?
- Are there mechanisms and processes that facilitate a positive dual placement?

Study two: Interviews with teachers

Research Questions:

- What are the positive experiences of staff in relation to their pupils’ dual placement?
- Is dual placement a barrier to effective teaching or learning? Is so, how?
Are any barriers overcome, and if so, how?
Are there mechanisms and processes that facilitate a positive dual placement?

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

In both study one and two, the participants will be selected from a variety of schools and educational settings across Torbay primary and secondary schools. Therefore all children will be aged between five and sixteen.

**Study one**

The sample for study one will consist of six pupils who have been identified as having BESD, and are currently on a dual placement. They will cover a range of ages from primary to secondary school age.

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with the 6 children identified through the sampling process. All interviews will be conducted by the researcher using an interview schedule. The whole interview will be recorded and later transcribed. Information will also be gathered about student age, year group and SEN level (school action, school action plus or statement).

**Study two**

The sample of study two consists of 6 teachers from a variety of schools as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Specialist Primary Age (Class teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>Specialist Secondary Age (Class teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>Mainstream Primary (Class teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>Mainstream Primary (Class teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5</td>
<td>Mainstream Secondary (SENCo/SMT/Pastoral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 6</td>
<td>Mainstream Secondary (SENCo/SMT/Pastoral)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

a) informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this documents.

Staged Plan for Accessing Participants:

Stage 1:
I will telephone the school/provision and explain the background to the project and my sample requirements. This will involve a conversation with the head teacher, where verbal consent will be gained. This will be followed up with written consent from the head teacher (See Appendix A)

Stage 2:
During the telephone conversation with the head teacher, I will arrange a time to meet with them, and discuss my sample requirements. This will involve getting the contact details of parents/carers and the teachers.

Stage 3:
Letters of consent will then be sent to the identified parents/carers, explaining the nature of the project, and asking for their permission for their child to take part in the study. A pre-paid envelope and short slip will be attached to make this an easy process (See Appendix B).

Stage 4:
The children’s permission will be gained face to face before the interview, again through the signing of a paper slip (see Appendix C). Similarly, teacher’s written permission will be gained prior to interview (see Appendix D). In both cases, it will be made clear that they do not have to participate and can withdraw at any time.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Studies one and two
Data will be gathered via semi-structured interviews in both studies. These will be guided by separate interview schedules (see Appendices E, F and G for interview schedules).

There is a small possibility that the material covered by the questions may be sensitive, and evoke an emotional response in the participant. Therefore, the researcher will be constantly aware of this, and prioritise the emotional needs of the participant over the data gathering at all times. This may involve stopping the interview early. The participant has the right to withdraw at any point, and this will be made clear to them.

The interviews will be transcribed and analysed through a process of thematic analysis. During the research process, every effort will be made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, and this will be made clear to all participants.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical concern</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawing from the study</td>
<td>The right to withdraw will be set out in writing in the slip that is signed. This applies to children, staff and will also be clear on the parental letter. Furthermore, the right to withdraw will be reinforced verbally at the beginning of each interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to anonymity and confidentiality</td>
<td>All data collected will be treated as confidential, and will not be used for any other purposes than that of the research. Each subject will remain anonymous and nothing that helps to identify subjects during interviews will be published. This right to anonymity and confidentiality will be stated in writing on all letters of consent, and will be reinforced verbally before each interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The original recordings and transcripts will be deleted once data analysis has been done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sensitive Issues:</strong> As this research is closely related to ideas of inclusion, it may bring up strong feelings. As settings work closely together, they may feel reluctant to speak negatively about their experiences.</th>
<th>It is important that participants feel comfortable to be as open and honest as possible. As has already been outlined, the confidentiality and anonymity of the data will be reinforced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If participants become upset, I will prioritise their needs and wellbeing ahead of the data collection at all times. This may involve stopping the interview.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

Not applicable

*This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School’s Research Support Office for the Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

**N.B.** You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

---

**This project has been approved for the period:** Jan 2012 until: Jan 2014

**GSE unique approval reference:** D/11/12/4D **date:** 13.03.2012
Appendix 7a: Ethical Considerations for Phase 2: Interviewing Young People

Consent

For each school involved, signed consent was obtained from the head teacher (Appendix 8) and signed parental consent was also gained for each participant (Appendix 13). Before beginning the interviews, a full description of the study was given to each participant and signed consent was also obtained from them (Appendix 20).

Right to Withdraw

It was made clear to each participant from the beginning that although I was an adult, I was not a teacher and that they were under no obligation to stay or discuss their experiences with me. This went some way to addressing any potential power imbalance. It was made very clear both in writing and verbally that the participant was free to leave and withdraw if they wanted to.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Every effort has been made to ensure both the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected. Although some details of the young person were collected such as date of birth, this information was destroyed once age had been calculated. The interview recordings were stored on a password protected device for a maximum of three days, and were deleted following transcription of the data. During data transcription, any data that could potentially identify individuals or educational provisions was written in an adapted and anonymised form.

Protection of emotional health and wellbeing

The nature of the sample requirements meant that many of the young people involved in this research were emotionally vulnerable. Because the discussion topics were potentially emotive, the researcher had to be very aware of the potential wellbeing of all participants. This was highlighted in initial discussions with senior staff and it was agreed that a member of staff who knew the pupil well would always be in close proximity, and would meet them at the end. The emotional wellbeing of the participant was prioritised at all times, and constantly monitored during the interviews. At no point were any pupils put under any
pressure to respond and the researcher made active efforts to make the experience informal and enjoyable for the young person. The pupils’ emotional wellbeing was also prioritised after the interview was finished, and the researcher made sure that all necessary support was in place if it was needed. This included a debrief with a relevant member of staff to give general feedback and highlight any concerns.
Head Teacher/Setting Manager Consent Form

I ________________________________ give my consent for staff and students at ____________________________ to take part in the research project exploring experiences of shared placements.

I understand that:

- All data collected will be anonymous
- All data collected will be kept confidential
- At no point will the school or setting be identified or reference made to specific provisions
- I may withdraw this permission at any time

.................................................. ..................................................
(Signature of Head Teacher/Setting Manager) (Date)

..................................................
(Printed name of Head Teacher/Setting Manager)
Appendix 9: Teacher Consent Form

Teacher Consent Form

I _____________________________________________________________________ give my consent to take part in the research project exploring experiences of shared placements.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications
- all information I give will be treated as confidential
- the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

(Signature of participant)  (Date)

.......................................................... ...............................................  

(Printed name of participant)

..........................................................
Appendix 10: A Worked Example of the Data Analysis Process

This appendix demonstrates the data analysis procedure by following a worked example through the process of thematic analysis. It begins with an interview extract consisting of four paragraphs. Following each paragraph, a list of the codes derived from that paragraph is given. Subsequently, Table 1 and Table 2 provide examples of how the codes have been grouped into themes. Tables 1 and 2 also indicate how these themes have been further grouped under the broader themes. Finally, the transcript extract is used to demonstrate an example of how the data was analysed for CMO configurations.

Interview extract:

What do you think it was about this and similar cases which allows it to be so positive?

I think the partnership with schools. We have a good understanding of each other’s roles and expertise, and work well together. For example, our policies and procedures and the schools relevant procedures are jointly agreed by a committee in which I am involved.

Codes:

- AP has a clear understanding of school’s role and expertise (Context)
- School has a clear understanding of the APs role and expertise (Context)
- AP and school policies/procedures jointly agreed and involve staff from both settings (Context)

What makes the difference for the child?

Confidence in the classroom to be honest, the knowledge that they can learn, the ability to ask for help, the high level of support, the relationships with adults and the emotional support rather than the academic.
Can you give me an example of what you mean by partnerships with school?

They can transfer these things, what we have done is have teaching assistants from here go back to school for a six week period to bridge the gap between the two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil increases confidence in class (Mechanism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil learns that they are able to learn (Mechanism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil is able to ask for help (Mechanism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of adult support (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with adults (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not just a focus on academic learning (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP shares staff to assists transitions (Context)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So you send one of your staff to school?

Yes, full time. It is a lot to offer but is important. Last year, we agreed with school that a child was suitable for reintegration, but also knew he would need high level of TA support. The school hired a TA but we had that TA with us for a few weeks for training purposes and to meet and work with the child in this setting before transition. This was carefully planned and led to full integration as a positive outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to invest high level of support (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions are jointly agreed between AP and school (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School staff shared to assist transitions (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP shares expertise with school staff (Context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full reintegration (Outcome)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have mentioned confidence, but you also talk a lot about the learning side of things, are both equally important do you think?

If we are going to give a chance, I mean, my family would have given me a second chance if we fail education. But these kids, there is no second chance, they have one chance to achieve in their exams. We got 88% 5 A-G, 28% A-C… It is about getting the right staff, who are
passionate about making a difference. They all want to work with this group and I know how good they are. Our results are a reflection of this set up. There is always something that these kids are good at, every one of them has an area where they can achieve more than thought they ever could, whatever that is. It is our job to find out what that is. This tells the kid that they are above average in that subject – this is a really important message.

**Codes:**

- AP staff passionate about supporting and helping pupils with BESD (Context)
- Significantly above average GCSE pass rate for a PRU (Mechanism)
- AP staff have positive attitude towards pupils (Context)
- Always an area where a child can succeed beyond their expectations (Mechanism)
- Responsibility of the setting in raising pupils confidence and engagement in education (Context)

**Table 1:** Developing Mechanism Themes from the Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism Code</th>
<th>Mechanism Theme</th>
<th>Broad Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil increases confidence in class</td>
<td>A degree of emotional development through increased confidence</td>
<td>Personal, Social and Emotional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil learns that they are able to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil is able to ask for help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always an area where a child can succeed beyond their expectations</td>
<td>Pupil feels sense of achievement</td>
<td>Pupil Attitudes and Feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Developing Context Themes from the Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Code</th>
<th>Context Theme</th>
<th>Broad Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High level of adult support</td>
<td>AP staff build strong relationships with pupils</td>
<td>Institutional Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationships with adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significantly above average GCSE pass rate for a PRU</td>
<td>Curriculum at AP develops practical skills but also involves NC subjects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not just a focus on academic learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP staff have positive attitude towards pupils</td>
<td>AP has a focus on self-belief and achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to invest high level of support</td>
<td>Willingness to include children with complex needs</td>
<td>Staff and Institutional Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP staff passionate about supporting and helping pupils with BESD</td>
<td>Holistic and Social view of child’s difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility of the setting in raising pupils confidence and engagement in education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP shares staff to assists transitions</td>
<td>Effective Transition Arrangements</td>
<td>Partnership Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions are jointly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing CMO configurations

Following thematic analysis, transcripts were then analysed again for how these themes related to outcomes. As an example, the same text is used and areas have been highlighted that contributed to the development of the CMO configuration as seen in Table 3.

**Extract:**

What do you think it was about this and similar cases which allows it to be so positive?

I think the partnership with schools...

What makes the difference for the child?

Confidence in the classroom to be honest, the knowledge that they can learn, the ability to ask for help, the high level of support, the relationships with adults and the emotional support rather than the academic...we had that TA with us for a few weeks for training purposes and to meet and work with the child in this setting before transition. This was carefully planned and led to full integration as a positive outcome.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A degree of emotional development through increased confidence</td>
<td>Partnership working</td>
<td>‘Positive’ (engagement with both school and AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP staff build strong relationships with pupils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP has a focus on self-belief and achievement</td>
<td>‘led to full reintegration’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11: Full Section of 2.5.3

2.5.3: RQ3: What are the contextual conditions that either facilitate or inhibit the impact of the mechanisms?

Theme One: Pupil Level Factors

A number of themes emerged from the data concerning pupil level factors. Firstly, there was a high agreement between participants that the pupil’s involvement in determining their timetable was important. This made it more likely that the pupil’s attitude would be positive and they would be happy with the shared placement.

Some participants highlighted that for the shared placement to be successful, there were required personal qualities such as the need for independence and organisational skills. However, others felt whilst this was ideal these personal qualities were not essential if the right support was put in place for the pupil. Many highlighted difficulties at the individual level associated with behavioural and social needs. For example, a member of the SMT at a secondary school reported:

*These students are by their very nature, a group that struggles with changes and transitions. It’s part of their BESD. They are not mature behaviourally and they lack the social skills to you know... and emotional stability to cope with different environments – I mean, even coping between different types of teachers is too hard for most of these.*

Lastly, many participants felt that the pupils’ peer group was an important consideration. Some pupils had maintained positive peer relationships at the school and also had made friendships within the AP. However, many of the staff outlined that pupils who had struggled with peer relationships in the mainstream environment found it easier to make friends at the AP. For example, one primary school teacher reported:

*‘No, he doesn’t miss out socially when he’s not here because he is someone who wouldn’t be social here, not in a positive way anyway... I think he responds better at [AP] because of the group size and it’s less demanding’.*

Theme Two: Staff and Institutional Attitudes

The attitude of the participants towards shared placements was an important part of the context, and there was a wide range of attitudes from the staff. Many of the attitudes are specific to whether the setting is the school or the AP, and when this is the case it will be highlighted.

School’s Perception of the AP
From many participants, there was a perception that the AP was a useful resource and had a variety of specialist support to meet the needs of children with complex needs. This attitude was highlighted by both alternative providers and those in schools. For example, one senior member of an AP said that

‘A few years ago we were like a dumping ground for those not conforming. But now, they know what we offer and their perception of us has changed. They know specifically how we can help and what we can offer, and they realise it’s something they can’t do on their own site’

This attitude was also clarified by some schools; for example, one primary school SENCo stated that:

"It came at the right time for us, we really needed something additional to what we could offer here. We didn’t know what to do with some of ours, and they not only went to [the AP], but the staff there came here to do some training. The staff are very experienced in emotional wellbeing and behaviour and we have recently requested some extra training for our staff.

An opposing attitude which also came across very strongly in the interviews was only highlighted by schools staff. This was a view that AP had nothing to offer in terms of supporting the school to meet the needs of children. For example, a member of a secondary school SMT outlined:

‘no I don’t like it... What can they do there that they can’t do here? We have highly specialised staff here and we do an awful lot of intervention for this group... they may have specialist staff but so do we. I have a specialist qualification in BESD and other staff have SEN qualifications’

Similarly, an assistant head teacher outlined:

‘I haven’t seen any evidence that this so called specialist input has any impact. I don’t think they can in reality offer anything that is useful to us in any way. Sure the kids can go off and have a good time, which is fine, but it doesn’t make them better here’

Need for realistic outcomes

Another attitude that emerged from the data was that the outcomes expected from the shared placement programme needed to be realistic and some benefits were longer term. As one primary SENCo stated,

'I think the main thing is managing expectations. If you want a miracle solution, or somebody to take the child away and mend them, you will not likely have any positive experiences with
this. You have to be realistic, and need to know that change happens over long periods and this is an intervention for the future as well as helping children straightaway.

Willingness to work with pupils with complex and demanding needs

The data analysis presented two themes in relation to willingness to work with pupils with complex needs. The first theme details staff attitudes that are inclusive and where there is a high willingness, and the second theme details attitudes where there was either a staff or institutional attitude of exclusion, where there was a low desire to support these pupils. As may be expected, at the AP, there was a greater and stronger willingness to work with young people identified as BESD. The teachers or leaders had specifically entered the role because of a desire to support this group, and they were motivated to help these pupils make progress. One of the managers of an alternative provision believed that success with the pupils was partly about staff attitudes:

It is about getting the right staff, skilled teachers who are passionate about making a difference and who want to work with this group.

The attitude from school staff was much more varied, with some expressing very strong desires to include and support these children. For example, a primary school SENCo stated:

If the child was finding it hard to attend both settings, we would stop the AP immediately and focus on additional support here in school. I see the AP as being supportive for us, but I wouldn’t ever want to say that that takes responsibility away from us... we will try all we can to help all of our pupils succeed in school.

The above quote also highlights the related attitude that the AP is an extension of provision and not separate. This was a particularly strong theme in relation to outcomes and meant that schools retained ownership of the pupils even when they were off site.

Reluctance to include pupils with complex and demanding needs

Alternatively, the attitude of some individuals in school was that children with complex needs were often not suitable for a mainstream education. In these institutions, the AP was usually seen as a very separate placement, the school did not retain full ownership and there was a sense of diminished responsibility towards the pupil. For example, one primary school SENCo reported:

The truth is, a lot of these kids need the specialist support full time and shouldn’t have to deal with this environment. It doesn’t work for everyone. The part time idea is not a solution. County sends them off for a couple days a week to one of the PRUs or to the forest or whatever, but they usually need more of that kind of thing, not just a little bit.
Similarly, some schools were only interested in the shared placement arrangement when they were seeking full time alternative provision. This was outlined by one senior member of a secondary school who stated that:

*My honest answer… we would use it for kids that we want a statement for. What you have to do is prove the need and go through a process to do that. We have two kids at the moment, one at [AP] and one at [AP]. One has a statement and we have put in a request for the other which is in process. When we have done this previously, the LA has recognised the needs and they are now in specialist placements.*

A senior member of staff at an AP also highlighted inclusive attitudes as an importance factor:

*It’s about inclusion, and the school’s attitude has a big impact on whether a shared placement is successful. Schools can have a perception that it is not their role to be dealing with the extreme cases, such as those with mental health difficulties.*

**Holistic view of the child**

A related theme to this one of willingness to include pupils was a theme regarding the perception of the child’s difficulties. Where schools were more willing to include those with BESD, they were also more likely to be understanding of the difficulties and have a holistic view of the pupil. For example, a primary school SENCo reported:

*‘it’s just sad really. No one wants these kids to miss out on a mainstream education just because of the type of homes they have been born into… they all have had a lot going on out of school and their behaviour isn’t actually that surprising given that..’*

**Differences between the primary and secondary schools**

It is also worth noting here that certain themes were generally stronger depending on whether the school was a primary or a secondary. For example, primary schools were slightly more likely to have a greater willingness to include children with BESD, and this was related to a more social view of the child. Secondary schools were more likely to have an attitude where the pupil’s behaviour was the main problem, and their willingness to include complex children was sometimes less. It must be emphasised that this finding is only a general trend and was by no means a rule. There were some primary schools that were not inclusive in their attitudes and there were secondary schools that were very willing to include pupils with challenging behaviour.

**School focus on attainment**

The final theme in this section concerns the school’s need to maintain academic standards for each pupil, which sometimes led to a narrow focus on attainment and belief that this
was the priority for all pupils. This is illustrated by the following extract from an interview with a member of the SMT at a secondary school:

PRUs should be doing more focused work on maths and literacy instead of doing what they do. I have just got a report back for [child name], it’s just a summary of what he’s been doing. Not helpful. Academic work there would increase their chances of getting on here.

Question: I don’t know [child’s name], but given what you know about him, is academic progress his primary need at the moment?

No - probably not. He’s back in care and off the wall quite frankly. Actually, what he needs is a specialist residential provision.

Theme Three: Institutional Practices

There were a wide range of important provision practices that emerged as important contextual factors during the data analysis. The practices of schools and APs towards pupils on a shared placement varied dramatically, and this had implications for how the mechanisms were activated to lead to the outcomes. The strongest themes will be discussed and supported with evidence from the data.

Transition arrangements

Although some pupils experiencing a shared placement are timetabled for full days only at their settings, many have a change of placement during the school day. When transition was discussed, it was largely in relation to how pupils negotiate this movement between the two settings on a sessional basis within the day. The transition arrangements were highlighted as an important consideration by many of the participants and it was widely agreed that the sessional transitions between settings could be hard for the young people. However, the practice around sessional transitions was varied between settings. For one primary school where transition arrangements were effective, the SENCo reported that:

‘We were warned about the transition challenges early on. We were told that their behaviour would be difficult before going and also on arriving back. So we knew that we needed to put in strategies for these [sessional] transition periods. We know that they will be anxious. We always put one to one in for these transition periods to support them during this. Otherwise they would just get into trouble, and all their hard work will be not worth anything. An adult always welcomes them back in, spends as much time as is needed, and make sure they are in a good frame of mind’.

In some cases, sessional transitions were a more serious concern and in one school, the use of the AP was abandoned due to what was reported as behavioural difficulties over the mid-day placement change. Where there were the highest levels of difficulty, there also seemed to be the least support, for example, one primary school teacher stated:
It is very difficult for them to reintegrate back into my class and this has become even worse this year. When they come back in, they are bouncing off the walls, hyper and they just...it has been very tricky... they already take up high level of resources and we can't do more...

As well as these sessional transitions, some participants also raised the importance of placement transitions more broadly. When this was discussed, it was either in relation to preparing the pupil for their initial start at the AP or focusing on the re-integration from shared placement to school full time. Positive outcomes were related to a high level of support being put in place over the placement transitions. For example, a manager of one AP reported:

‘Last year, we agreed with school that a child was suitable for reintegration, but also knew he would need high level of teaching assistant (TA) support. The school hired a TA but we had that TA with us for a few weeks for training purposes and to meet and work with the child in this setting before transition. This was carefully planned and led to full integration as a positive outcome.’

Related to this theme is the finding that transport arrangements also had to be effective. This was particularly important when the school and AP were far apart. When these arrangements were unreliable, it contributed to difficulties with the arrangement.

**Timetabling**

It was widely agreed amongst participants that transitions were much less problematic when the placement was for a whole day as this avoided a mid-day transition. This however becomes more complicated as it was also a finding that a shared placement led to the most positive outcomes overall when pupils timetable were considered on a detailed basis rather than full days. This was especially true in secondary schools, where pupils could access a range of individual subjects and so timetables were considered on an hourly basis. Where the outcomes were not positive, timetables generally were not considered at this level. For example, one teacher at a secondary school reported that:

*It’s far easier in primary for this kind of thing. The core subjects are every day here, there is no good day to go out, not even a good half day really...*

When this approach was taken, pupils would be going back into lessons where they had missed the previous lesson, and this was related to poor outcomes.

**Curriculum**

All participants outlined that using a shared placement allowed for a more personalised and broader curriculum as opposed to what a single setting could offer. The curriculum delivered at the alternative provider was often seen as different in nature to what a mainstream could offer, and contained more vocational subjects and developed practical skills. Pupils accessing and enjoying an engaging and personalised curriculum was a very
strong context theme across all settings and ages. The evidence suggests that having a balanced curriculum was the most effective approach. When pupils were not accessing or only minimally accessing the national curriculum, this was highlighted as leading to negative outcomes. The findings also suggest that positive outcomes occur when APs focus on a curriculum which allows the pupil to achieve in the broadest sense. Therefore, those APs that focused on positive experiences were less likely to re-engage pupils at school. This theme was highlighted by one of the AP staff who ran activity days for secondary school pupils:

‘I don’t think it makes any difference at school. That isn’t really my job... I give them an opportunity to try out new things they wouldn’t normally do but it’s not educational in the school sense’.

However this was not always seen as vital, and staff at one AP believed that the uniqueness of the shared placement was not the curriculum content, but the way the curriculum could be delivered at the AP. For example:

In the past, there was a focus on sitting around and getting [pupils’] views and less focus on attainment and achievement. Not now, and this is a very positive thing and they respond well to it. They don’t come to us because they haven’t got a brain, but because they are not reaching their potential at the school for whatever reason. So it’s a combined effort of a new approach plus an academic timetable.

The evidence suggests that having a balanced curriculum was the most effective approach. When pupils were not accessing or only minimally accessing the national curriculum, this was highlighted as leading to negative outcomes. This happened when the AP did not focus on curriculum subjects, and when they were also not accessing these at school.

**Consistency between settings**

The consistency (and lack of consistency) between settings were major themes which were discussed to some degree by nearly all of the participants. It was also clearly a significant contextual factor in terms of activating mechanisms and affecting the outcomes. In short, for some settings, a great deal of effort was made to ensure consistency between the two settings, and when this happened, the outcomes were most positive. Generally, the greater the differences between the school and the AP, the harder it was for young people to re-engage with the school. The consistency between settings was usually much higher when partnership working was evident.

It was clear that some of the alternative providers had consciously tried to create an environment which was as similar to the school setting as possible. For example, a senior member of a mixed age AP outlined:
Our boundaries and expectations are the same as school. The only significant difference is the uniform. There is no smoking and there are rules about politeness, they are excluded if they are rude, we don’t accept swearing as appropriate and phone rules are the same as school... appropriate clothing is important...We are clear and there are sanctions.

It was also the case however that some schools had made an effort to be consistent with an alternative provider. One primary school SENCo stated that:

We aim to follow the same boundaries, rules and expectations of [the AP]. We have consciously thought about this and requested extra training, and we want to provide the most consistent environments that we can between the two settings... It is very important that the boundaries are similar between settings’

Provisions have different rules and expectations

Some staff however felt that it was not possible for the settings to be similar, and acknowledged that lack of consistency was a challenge for the pupils as it caused confusion. For example, a senior member of a secondary school outlined that:

I have major reservations about it, as you have different rules and that causes a huge amount of confusion for the student... to be in two places with such different expectations... allowing them to smoke when they get annoyed and have special calm down time.

Similarly, a senior member of a secondary school stated:

One day you can have breaks when you want, no uniform, cigarettes, 20 minutes lessons with break, tea and toast constantly. I have no problem with all that, it is suitable for some, what I don’t like is that this of course cannot be replicated in a mainstream school. We set children up to fail because they struggle to follow one set of rules, let alone 2 very different set of expectations.

Where the AP and school were so different that the environment could not be similar, there were acknowledged difficulties, but also solutions. A primary AP manager stated:

I think it’s an issue, and we have seen it here... when necessary, we tell children that they will not be allowed to do this when they get back to school. So sometimes we do direct and explicit teaching about what the differences between the two, this is simple but effective.

Characteristics of the AP

A common theme in relation to the AP was the need for the setting to be more informal than the school. A focus on self-belief and achievement was also seen as key to activating the increased confidence mechanism. Smaller class sizes and high staff ratios were outlined
by every participant as being an important factor of the context of the AP. As discussed, additional curriculum opportunities were also seen as a key characteristic of the AP. However, one of the strongest themes about the context was regarding the staff and pupil relationships.

Pupils’ Relationships

Many individuals outlined that they believed that the shared placement allowed for relationships to be built that would not have been possible in a mainstream school. This happened on a number of levels, including peer relationships, where it was outlined by some that this was easier at the alternative provision. Both teachers in mainstream and in AP recognised that the pupils could build up closer and more personal relationships with the adults in alternative providers. For example, a member of the SMT at an AP stated:

Clearly the pupil-staff relationships are very good here and better than what would be possible at mainstream schools on the whole. We talk on a first name basis, there is more general chatting and communication outside of the curriculum content... more emotional support.

From the school’s perspective, it was stated by a primary school teacher that:

At the [AP], the staff have a very nurturing approach and to a young person, this makes what they do and what we do seem very different. For one boy, he felt like they respected him at [the AP], and therefore in comparison, every time he was in school, he would associate this with teachers not respecting him... it’s not that we don’t respect him, but his teacher can’t have that kind of relationship with him as he has to – well - teach the whole class.

Similarly,

When back in school, the children speak more about the adults and staff than the other children. They develop good relationships with the staff and adults down there as they can invest more time.

School characteristics

One theme that emerged outlines the importance of school being flexible in their practice. This meant that they would adapt their systems to suit the individual needs of the pupil. This involved personalised policies and plans for the child and required a reasonable level of effort from school staff. When this did not happen, the shared placement was less likely to be successful. As one teacher of an AP reported:

Some [schools] can be black and white in terms of behaviour, and have an inflexible policy, which makes it harder as they are less accommodating.
Theme Four: Partnership Working

The extent to which the school and the AP worked together in a partnership was a very important part of the context surrounding shared placements. There were clear examples of excellent partnership working and some settings had very good systems in place to support this.

The Initial stages

Effective partnership working in the initial stages of the shared placement involved a collaboration of key people including parents, the pupil and representatives from both settings. Where outcomes were positive, staff emphasised the importance of working together, having a shared understanding of the pupil’s needs and agreeing a way forward jointly. However, many schools did more traditional referrals and when decisions were made at LA level without the representation of schools or parents, the placements were often less successful. One AP manager reported:

“We have re-arranged a meeting three times because the parent keeps forgetting to turn up...It is a jointly agreed program with the school, child and parents, and this is when the outcomes are the most positive and things work”

Communication Systems

Where there was evidence of true partnership working, communication systems were in place and there was a high level of collaboration between all stakeholders. One AP member of staff reported that:

“We work very well with many of our schools. Some sit on our management committee and have a say in what direction we take... we have a meeting to review every pupil every six weeks, and also send weekly emails at a minimum. Communication realistically is more often... regular phone calls and emails.”

When asked about communication, one senior secondary school teacher said:

“It’s excellent. I have sent multiple members of my team down to spend a day or half day there to see what goes on. It’s great to do that and makes a real difference for the kids, that we know where they go. Gives them a feeling that we are working together.”

Sharing expertise

Partnership working was facilitated by a school belief that the AP staff had specialist support to meet needs. On occasions, schools requested the AP staff to run training sessions at the school to build the capacity of school staff to meet complex needs. For example, a primary school SENCo reported:
They are very experienced in emotional health and wellbeing... we have requested training.

When schools did not feel that the AP had a role to support them, partnership working was very poor. For example, placement choices were not reviewed regularly, school staff had little or no awareness of the AP, and communication between settings was rare. In these situations, schools also reported that their only communication were written reports, which they described as unhelpful. For example, a senior member of staff in a secondary school outlined:

*I don’t think we put enough interest in. that might be one of the reasons it doesn’t work... no one has been to see them at [the AP], even though the plan was for him to come back full time. It should be regular contact, not just an annual review. At the end of the day, neither side are making much effort to keep communication open. I think we have a duty that is often forgotten sometimes.*

Similarly, there were not always any formal processes for reviewing placements or any agreements between the settings. A secondary school SENCo reported:

*Agreement? There isn’t any agreement. The LA decided and I dropped him there for a visit and that’s the last I have heard of it.*

The following extract from a secondary school SMT interview will also demonstrate the extent to which partnership working was not happening in some schools:

*‘We have been using the same providers for years... but the feedback isn’t helpful or particularly interesting for us. We have one there now two days a week...’*  

*‘Which setting is that?’*  

*‘That one in [names nearby area] - can’t remember the name of it’*  

*‘Who is your contact there?’*  

*‘Well, the staff seem to change all the time and so who knows at the moment... we never actually get to meet these people.’*

**Theme Five: Wider Infra-structural systems**

There were some important factors to consider at wider levels than the institutions. One of the benefits of collecting data across three LAs was to explore potential contextual factors at this level. Although there were not a high number of factors at this level, analysis of the
data suggests that there are some important factors at this level in relation to shared placements.

**Shared Systems**

The majority of alternative provisions were run by the LA but there were also some independent providers. A clear finding was that LA schools and APs did not necessarily work more effectively with each other. An LA factor that facilitated the shared placement arrangement was having a LA behaviour strategy that applied to all settings. This provided a degree of consistency and encouraged partnership working. One primary school teacher reported:

‘Because we all work from the same model, it’s easier really... that means for people like [pupil name], the way we all work with him is more in line...

In many circumstances, the LA also acted as the gatekeeper to alternative providers. Shared placements were most effective when the LA had a clear role for the APs, and coordinated the referral process. However, the outcomes were also most effective when all settings felt like they were a part of the decision making process. An AP manager stated that:

‘it works because we have a good system, I sit on the management committee of [the AP] and we have regular meetings with other heads from the other secondaries in the area and the AP. When we refer, it's a joint discussion with the [LA not in school team manager] and the rest of us.

The school perception of themselves as referrers and the LA as decision makers was detrimental to the collaboration process. LAs that did not involve school staff in this process facilitated unhelpful attitudes in school staff and reduced the likelihood that schools communicated with alternative providers. When shared placements were not successful, some staff attributed this to the LA making decisions that school did not agree with and were not a part of making. For example, a member of the SMT in one secondary school stated:

*We don’t really know what goes on up there. They tell us that they want dual placements but we don’t get a say in that. I mean, making decisions about a kids placement at a panel of bigwigs who have never heard of him... come on, just ridiculous.*

**Key Findings**

a) A shared placement is facilitated by pupil involvement in their timetable and personal qualities such as being organised.
b) School’s willingness to include children with BESD, a perception that the AP is a useful resource are important factors of a shared placement  
c) A shared placement can lead to a diminished sense of responsibility for schools  
d) A narrow focus on attainment can be detrimental to the success of a shared placement  
e) Effective sessional and placement transition arrangements, a broad curriculum, high consistency between settings and good relationships are features of the context that support positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement.  
f) Effective communication and partnership working between settings is very important to the success of a shared placement  
g) LAs that involve school and AP staff in decision making facilitate partnership working and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for pupils on a shared placement
Appendix 12: Details of the Realistic Evaluation Approach

Realistic Evaluation

Realistic evaluation provides a methodological framework for evaluating the impact of a social programme. The aim of realistic evaluation is to develop a theory of how a programme works by understanding the causal mechanisms and the contextual conditions under which they are activated that lead to specific outcomes (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). As Pawson and Tilley (2004) note, the basic question is multi-faceted, and asks ‘what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’ (p.2). During a realistic evaluation, there is a focus on identifying the outcomes of the programme, the mechanisms that the program creates and the contextual conditions that allow these mechanisms to lead to the outcome. These key principles will now be described in more detail and an example from a previous realistic evaluation is provided.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the consequences of programmes resulting from the activation of different mechanisms in different contexts. It is important for this analysis to highlight that the outcomes can be both intended and unintended consequences of the programme. For example, shared placements may have a variety of outcomes, some of which are undesirable. Realistic evaluation sees all outcomes as an important part of developing a coherent theory; irrespective of whether they are positive or negative.

Mechanisms

A mechanism describes what it is about a programme or intervention that brings about any effects (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). Mechanisms are often hidden, and taking these into consideration avoids the less helpful view of evaluating whether a programme works. For example, an alternative question could ask whether a shared placement is useful, and the focus of this research would look at the outcomes of those who are on the programme. However, this would be unhelpful as almost certainly the answer would be that it leads to different outcomes, both positive and negative. As Pawson and Tilley (2004) have stated, it is never the programme itself that works. Instead, it is about how individuals relate to and act on the resources that the programme offers. Therefore, mechanism refers to the ways in
which any one of the programme components or any set of them brings about change. Matthews (2010) suggests that the mechanisms that are most likely to be of interest to EPs are social and psychological in nature. For example, individuals’ emotions, attitudes and motivations are important, as well as considering what else the programme has offered such as qualifications or increased skills in an area.

Context

A consideration of the context is an essential aspect of the realistic evaluation framework. When developing a theory of what mechanisms lead to certain outcomes, it must be understood that mechanisms will only be activated under certain conditions. For example, the nature of the social environment, the attitudes and beliefs of individuals and institutional practices are all potentially important contexts. Pawson and Tilley (2004) suggest that when considering contextual conditions, it needs to be realised that programmes are embedded in multiple layers of social reality. It has been proposed that the following four layers are considered during a realist analysis:

1. Individual capacities of key people involved
2. Interpersonal relationships
3. Institutional settings
4. Wider infra structural support systems

CMO Configurations

A key part of the approach is the development of context mechanism outcome (CMO) configurations. A CMO configuration is a model indicating how a programme activates mechanisms in certain conditions to lead to specific outcomes. Table 1 provides an example of a CMO configuration as described by Bozic and Crossland (2012).
Table 1: CMO Configuration From a Realistic Evaluation of a Pilot Local Authority Common Induction Programme (taken from Bozic & Crossland, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants develop a sense of group identity and realise that they share many of the same values and responsibilities.</td>
<td>Participants value the training.</td>
<td>Increased sense of shared aims, roles and responsibilities. Shared processes such as the CAF have greater relevance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive work environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study will utilise the principles of realistic evaluation by identifying the outcomes, mechanisms and contexts of the shared placement arrangement. This will lead to the development of programme theories, displayed in terms of CMO configurations.
Appendix 13: Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent/Carer

Between March 2012 and March 2013 a research project will be taking place in a number of schools and settings across ___[LA]_____. The research aims to explore the issues around shared placements (being educated in more than one setting), and will involve interviews with young people, parents and teachers.

After speaking with [Head Teacher/Setting Manager], [Child Name] has been identified as fitting the criteria for this research. With your permission, they will be asked to participate in an interview, where they will be given the opportunity to discuss their views on education and their schooling.

All the data gathered will remain confidential and be accessible only to the researcher. The results of the study will be reported in an anonymous form. Your child will be able to withdraw from the study at any stage, including after the data has been gathered. They do not have to participate, and can stop at any time if they wish.

If you are happy for your child to participate, I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it back in the envelope provided.

For more information about the study or to be involved, please contact: Tim Cockerill (Trainee Educational Psychologist) by email: [email protected] or phone: 036573565

As parent/carer of [Child Name], I give my consent for them to be involved in an interview looking at their views of education. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent for my child to take part in the study at any stage, by contacting Tim Cockerill.

I would also like to be involved in this study and participate in an interview  ☐

Parent/Carer Signature:  Date:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My behaviour has improved</th>
<th>My behaviour is better at one setting than the other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It has helped me get on better with others</td>
<td>The settings have very different boundaries and rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happier on this arrangement</td>
<td>My schools talk to each other a lot and both know what I do in the other setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident</td>
<td>My schools agree on what is best for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My achievements are recognised</td>
<td>My settings work well together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to two settings has helped me to be more responsible</td>
<td>My parents have been involved a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am motivated to work harder</td>
<td>School would like me to come back full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get confused about having to adjust between two school settings</td>
<td>School have put a lot of effort into helping me succeed there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel rejected from my school</td>
<td>I need more than what the school can offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My timetable is not good</td>
<td>School are only interested in results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a say in what has happened and was listened to</td>
<td>There is more focus on the positives at the centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The centre has made me try harder at school</td>
<td>The transition back to school is hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The centre has helped me</td>
<td>I am doing something related to what I want to do for a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both settings like having me</td>
<td>School don’t understand me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy school more than the centre</td>
<td>The centre and school work together well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the centre more than school</td>
<td>This arrangement has improved my confidence and belief in myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People here are nice and friendly</td>
<td>I wish I was full time at one setting and not attending both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am here because of my bad behaviour</td>
<td>I get more control and choice at the centre than at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer the small class sizes here</td>
<td>The settings have very different boundaries and rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easier to get on with the adults here</td>
<td>My schools talk to each other a lot and both know what I do in the other setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have better relationships with teachers here than at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 15: Placement Cards for Pupil Activity

- True for Me
- Not True for Me
- Little Bit True for Me
Appendix 16: Interview Schedule for Pupils

The interview will begin with some general rapport building and problem-free talk. The aim of this is to relax the participant. The consent forms will then be completed, and right to withdraw, confidentiality procedures will be discussed.

1. Activity one - I am now going to read out some statements and I want you to tell me how much you agree with these. Each one is rated on a scale from one to five where one is not at all true and five is completely true. Three would be in the middle, do you understand?
   - Complete the PSSM Scale for setting one

2. Tell me about your education so far up to this point
   - What placements have you been in?
   - How many schools have you attended?
   - What is your current situation?
   - Who decided you should be at two settings, and did you agree with that choice?

3. Tell me a bit about what it is like being at two schools
   - How is your time split between the two?
   - Why do you think you go to two places?

4. I am going to read out some statements and I want you to tell me where to put them. We have three options: true, not true or in the middle which means it is a little bit true.
   Follow up questions:
   - Can you tell me a bit more about why you feel that way?
   - What are the main reasons for you thinking that?
   - How did that affect you?

5. Complete the PSSM Scale for setting two.

6. At which setting do you feel you belong more at?

7. Do you ever feel like you would rather be at one school more, or are you happy with your current arrangement?

8. Clarify pupil perspective on outcome group

9. I have asked everything I need to ask. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank the pupil for taking time to talk, and recognise they have chosen to do this. Ensure they are happy with the interview and know where they are going next.
Appendix 17: Example Transcript from Pupil Interviews

Interview Transcript

Thank you for taking some time out to speak to me. I am going round to different settings and talking to different pupils to ask them about what it is like for them at the school and other settings that they attend. What I hope to do afterwards is think about what can be changed to make the experience better for those who go to different settings in the future. Do you understand what I am doing?

Yea

and you're happy to talk to me about this?

Yes

Ok great, what I do at the end, is write a report about the kind of things that people have been telling me. I need to let you know that I will not mention any names including yours at any time or talk about the schools by their name. You can stop whenever you like during this interview, just let me know if you don't want to do it anymore and you can go back to class. You do not have to be here so anytime you want to leave you can. So I need you to be as honest as possible, you can tell me about teachers or school and I will not be telling people what you have said. Ok, I am going to read you this sheet here just before we start.

[anonymity and confidentiality sheet read out to pupil and consent form signed]

Ok, the first thing to do is answer a few questions in relation to your school. What I want you to do is give me a number between one and five. One means not at all true and five means completely true, three would be in the middle. Is that ok?

Yea,

[PSSM completed]

Ok, can you tell me about your school history – did you go to more than one primary school?

I only went to one primary, then I went to ******** middle school, and then to my last school for years 9,10,11.

Ok cool, so were you full time in middle school?

Yea

So at what year did you begin doing shared placement?
Year 10, I was normal lessons in year 9.

**At what point during year 10 did this happen?**

When I started fighting. Near the beginning of year 10.

**Tell me about your placement when you first started.**

It was one day a week, on a Friday at [AP]. Later on in year 10, I started doing 2 days a week instead, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and this carried on in years 10 and 11.

**Have you had any other placements?**

No, I have only had one placement.

**Ok, we are going to do an activity now. I am going to read some statements out and I want you to put them down on one of the three squares. So we have true for me, for when the statement is true, not true for me and then little bit true for statements which are kind of in the middle somewhere. That make sense?**

Yea.

**Ok, my behaviour has improved**

True, definitely.

**How has your behaviour improved?**

My behaviour was much better after starting here

**How exactly?**

I didn’t fight at all when I went back

**Why not? What changed?**

Just because I knew that I didn’t have to fight, and there was no need for it.

**You learnt that here?**

I was forced to be polite here and learnt from that. I was focused on cooking career. I used to enjoy fighting and look forward to it, but when I had a focus and could see a career, messing around didn’t seem important any more.

**Are there any other reasons why your behaviour was better?**

Also because I got used to taking orders, and you can’t really argue. So I didn’t argue in school either.
So you got used to following instructions from adults?

Yea definitely.

Ok – my timetable is not good.

No, not true.

Ok – my parents have been involved a lot

Yea quite a bit. My mum comes to the meetings.

My schools talk to each other a lot and both know what I am doing in the other setting

Yea, true.

How do they communicate and work together?

Every month, I got a tick thing. Either good, superb, or needs to improve. I got good and superb on everything, I remember that. It was the best thing to happen.

Who saw that at school?

I got a reward for it. Best one they have ever had. I got an award by the governors.

So how was that, getting recognised?

Yea, alright.

Make you feel good?

Yea it did actually, all my certificates about cooking have built up and look good with the CV.

That is a good recognition of achievement. Without the [AP], what would have happened?

I wouldn’t have achieved anything at school without this. Probably not even my food grade.

Would you have liked school to have been more involved than they were?

Hmmm, It was good that they let school how well I was doing, and that I was behaving. That was important. I kinda, um, a lot of people said that I changed. Lots of teachers said well done on doing really well and stuff.

Do you think they starting seeing you differently?

My teachers wanted me out at first. Some didn’t think I deserved to be getting out and they told me that, Yea, they didn’t think I would last.
How did you feel about that?
I didn’t get on with them. Told them to shove it. Not much to say.

So the feedback from here helped change that?
Yea definitely, they started supporting me after that. But once they could see that I was achieving things and behaving they were better.

And now are things better with those teachers who were difficult?
Yea, we understand each other better

I feel more confident
True

My settings work together and agree what’s best for me
True

It has helped me get on better with others
Yea, true.

Yea, I think we have covered that one already really.

School would like me to come back full time
Not true,

I enjoy school more than the centre
No.

I enjoy the centre more than school
Yea, true

What is it about it that made it better?
Better atmosphere, something useful for career and the hours were good

Did you consider school to be relevant for you?
No, not useful for me. When I had English, I would skive off and go help my food teacher. I never got on with my English teacher, and he said don’t bother coming to my lesson, and if there is something better I can do then do it. So I spent all my English lessons helping with cooking.
Were you happy with that?

Very happy.

I am doing something related to what I want to do for a career

Yea. Very true.

How important has that been in terms of it working well?

Very. Given me a focus and totally changed how I think about things.

School don’t understand me

Not true,

Ok, next one - The transition to back to school is hard

Can be disappointing but not too bad. Middle one.

I wish I was full time at one setting and not attending both

Not true, but I would have chosen school for 2 days not 3.

I get more control and choice at the centre than at school.

True. I get a say in a lot more things than when at school.

The centre and school work together well

True,

Yea, sorry think we have covered that one really.

The settings have very different boundaries and rules

Not really. More strict at school.

How have you found those differences?

Fine

Is it ever confusing because they are different?

Not really no. I pretty much behave in both now.

I prefer the small class sizes here

Yea,
My behaviour is better at one setting than the other – like you have just said – is that not true?
not really

I am here because of my bad behaviour
True

People at [AP] are nice and friendly
Yea, very.

I find it easier to get on with the adults here, and this one is similar - I have better relationships with teachers here than at school
Yea,
Can you tell me more about that?
Yea, teachers were strict and more, but here, they are more of a friend, and we are equal. I like that. Everyone is equal here, but at school it’s all about authority. They ask you and you have more control and say in things.

Good point, very interesting. Do you think you got treated like an adult more?
Yea not like at school.

I had a say in what has happened and was listened to
Yea, true.

When and how did that happen? What happened at the beginning?
The school wanted to get me out, my mentor didn’t want me there anymore I don’t think.

Did you agree with this?
Didn’t bother me. We came to an agreement about doing something different.

What was your involvement in the decision?
I was asked.

Who by?
My mentor. We were in a meeting with my mum, and we decided where we wanted to go. I already knew about the [AP]. I chose it.
The centre has helped me
True

My achievements are recognised- I think we have covered that.
Yea true

I am motivated to work harder

Were you happy with that and how it worked out?
It worked out how I wanted it.

What had been the best thing about the placement?
Learning the practical experiences of cooking, and not having to go to school – to have a break. The hours were not the same, about 4 or 5 hours a day.

So you were happy with the decision, got asked whether you wanted to do it, and also chose your placement.
Yea

What would have happened if you had to stay at school full time?
I Definitely would have been expelled. Would have fallen further behind and have had to do French and that.

Which setting did you prefer?
[AP], definitely.

What would you have done at school?
Food and food studies.

So when you focus on one thing, the rest are...
Irrelevant yea. That’s why I got bad grades. Everyone studied and revised English and maths and all I studied was food.

Did you ever miss out lessons when you were at the [AP]?
No I made sure that the days were not days when I had food lessons. I missed other stuff but I dropped that anyway.

We have talked about your lessons and subjects. How did coming here impact on your friends and socialising?
I always used to hang around with girls and not boys. Didn’t like football.

Did you miss that when not there?
Not really, people at [AP] better.

Would you ever go back, and feel that you had missed out on anything else?
Not really, only with fights. I still enjoyed watching them, and couple of times I missed people hitting teachers, and that was annoying as the teachers I didn’t like.

Did you miss out on anything else by doing the placement?
Girlfriends. But I made up for times I missed. The [AP] was better than anything else.

The main reason for your behaviour change?
I learnt to follow instructions; I learnt a lot more here in the workplace. I took that from here and applied it at school. I got a new attitude.

It sounds like a real success story
Yea I think so.

So if you could describe the general outcome in terms of the shared placement, would you say that your engagement and behaviour have been good at [the AP] and this has also improved your engagement and behaviour at school?
Yea

When people go between 2 settings, they sometimes feel like they belong at neither of them, or both of them or sometimes they feel a better sense of belonging in one over the other. What was that for you?
I belong here definitely, It is well suited to me and I have fitted in well

What’s the main reason if you could pick one?
I prefer the hands on approach rather than all the writing at school. And the people as well.

Ok, last thing is to just to complete one more scale – just a few questions..

[Belonging scale completed for Placement 2]

Great, thanks so much for talking with me – it has been really helpful.
The PSSM scale is a measure of pupils’ sense of belonging to their school. This has been defined as ‘the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school environment’ (Goodenow, 1993, p.80). The PSSM scale has been administered on pupils between the ages of 9 and 16. It consists of 18 items covering pupil perceptions of liking, acceptance, inclusion, respect and relationships with peers and adults. For example, one statement is ‘other pupils here like the way I am’ and another is ‘teachers here are not interested in people like me’. Pupils respond to each item using a five point scale where one is ‘not at all true’ and five is ‘completely true’.

Longitudinal research has found a predictive link between PSSM scores and future mental health problems (Shochet, Dadds, Ham & Montague 2006) and McMahon, Parnes, Keys and Viola (2008) found that high belonging scores on the PSSM were associated with academic self-efficacy and school satisfaction. In the original studies, Cronbach’s alphas were between .78 and .95 across primary and secondary aged pupils. Hagborg (1994) reports a high test-retest reliability of .78. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha of the main scale was .93, indicating a very high internal consistency of the scale.

A recent factor analysis of the PSSM scale (You, Ritchey, Furlong, Shochet, & Boman, 2011) supported a three factor model to the measure. These factors were named 1) caring relations 2) acceptance and 3) rejection, and indicate that these are discrete measures of the scale. Therefore, Shochet, Smith, Furlong and Homel (2011) recommend that when the PSSM measure is used, the scale is scored on these three subscales as well as the overarching measure of school belonging. Internal consistency was also analysed on these sub-scales, and the details of this can be found in appendix 19.
Appendix 19: Reliability Analysis of the PSSM Scale

Internal Consistency

Chronbach’s alpha is a measure of the internal consistency of the items. This involves correlations between items to determine the extent to which responses are similar. Field (2005) discusses that there are no strict cut off points about what constitutes high reliability, but .07 or higher is considered a good level. Field (2005) also emphasises the importance of analysing each subscale separately when there are multiple factors to a scale. The results of this reliability analysis are shown below.

Table 5: Cronbach’s Alpha’s for Complete Scales and Sub-Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School PSSM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Scale</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Relations Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Provision PSSM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Scale</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Relations Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection Sub-Scale</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 20: Pupil Consent Form

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Student Consent Form

I ___________________________ give my consent to take part in the research project exploring experiences of shared placements.

I understand that:

- I do not have to stay and I can leave at any point if I want to.
- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.
- Information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.
- All information I give will be treated as confidential.
- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Signature of Student) ................................................................. (Date) .................................................................

................................................................. .................................................................

(Printed name of Student) .................................................................

.................................................................
Appendix 21: Details of the Between Group Analysis

The analysis of the PSSM data

Although there exists a great deal of debate regarding the appropriateness of tests towards likert scale data, there is a general agreement that parametric tests will often be inappropriate. As Field (2005) notes, parametric tests such as the t-test assume a normal distribution of data, homogeneity of variance and that the data is interval level or higher. Generally, data from scales such as the PSSM create ordinal data, are often not normally distributed and so are more suited towards non-parametric analyses. Winter and Dodou (2010) compared the utility of the t-test with the Mann-Whitney test based on five point likert scale data. This is comparable to the current study, and the authors concluded that both tests produce a similar level of power. For these reasons, the Mann Whitney Test was the appropriate one for this analysis.

A Mann Whitney U Test was used to compare between the two groups. An example output of one of the analyses is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A comparison of the PSSM dimensions at the school by outcome (Raw output of the Mann-Whitney U Test).

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The distribution of Caring Relations - School is the same across categories of Outcome.</td>
<td>Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test</td>
<td>0.0159(^1)</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The distribution of Acceptance - School is the same across categories of Outcome.</td>
<td>Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test</td>
<td>0.0159(^1)</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The distribution of Rejection - School is the same across categories of Outcome.</td>
<td>Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test</td>
<td>0.0159(^1)</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The distribution of Total - School is the same across categories of Outcome.</td>
<td>Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test</td>
<td>0.0159(^1)</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

\(^1\) Exact significance is displayed for this test.
Appendix 22: Details of the Within Group Analysis

A Related Samples (Paired) Wilcoxon Test was used to analyse within group differences. An example of the raw results for one of these tests is displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A comparison of the PSSM dimensions between settings for Group 2 (Raw output of the Related Samples Wilcoxon Test).

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The median of differences between Caring Relations AP and Acceptance School equals 0.</td>
<td>Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The median of differences between Acceptance School and Acceptance AP equals 0.</td>
<td>Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The median of differences between Rejection School and Rejection AP equals 0.</td>
<td>Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The median of differences between Total School and Total AP equals 0.</td>
<td>Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>Reject the null hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Experiences of Dual Provision for Parents, Teachers and Students identified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: The Best of Both Worlds?

This review examines a wide range of literature from many sources including government reports, peer-reviewed articles and publications from various organisations. The following databases were searched for relevant papers: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, EBSCO, British Education Index and Google Scholar. The following search terms were used: ‘Dual Provision’, ‘Dual Placement’ ‘Dual registration’ ‘Alternative Provision’ ‘Managed Moves’ ‘School Exclusion’ ‘Pupil voice’ ‘child voice’ ‘student voice’ ‘BESD’, ‘EBD’.

Introduction

The current policy context around inclusion in the UK was informed by a drive for integration, set out by the Warnock committee, and subsequently outlined in the 1981 Education Act. Educational inclusion is part of a wider drive for social inclusion that became prominent in the 1990s, but it remains a difficult concept to define. For the purposes of education, inclusion has been defined as ‘the participation in the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools’ (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000). With the use of the word local in this definition, it is implied that inclusion involves all children being in the same location, following a common curriculum. For Warnock (2005) however, inclusion is about ‘including all children in the common educational enterprise of learning, wherever they learn best’ (Warnock, 2005, p.14). This perspective clearly sees inclusion as being about a common curriculum, but not necessarily in the same location. Norwich (2008b) identifies a continuum of provision ranging from most separate to most included. Within this, there are a number of options including a shared placement between an ordinary school and specialist provision.

There are many debates that surround the placement of children with special educational needs (SEN). One of the central tensions in this area can be characterised by what has been called the dilemma of difference (Minow, 1990; Norwich, 1993), where there is a dilemma
between treating children differently to meet their personal needs, and treating them the same to avoid stigma. This dilemma of difference has been recognised in various countries (Norwich, 2008a), and Stringer (2009) recognises this is a very complex issue which has no easy solutions. Although it has been noted that the central dilemma can never be solved (Dyson and Howes, 2009), Norwich (2008a) suggests that it is about finding a way to have it both ways as far as possible. Although little is known about the impact of Dual Provision between two settings, it has been suggested that this arrangement can bridge the gap between commonality and difference, and give a child the best of both worlds (Flewitt & Nind, 2007). Although Dual Provision may be utilised for a variety of children, it is clear that schools often use this arrangement for pupils identified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD).

**Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties**

During the time of the Warnock Committee, the term ‘Emotional and behavioural difficulties’ (EBD) was adopted to replace the earlier label of ‘maladjustment’, introduced by the 1944 Education Act. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) set out four broad areas of SEN. One of these was ‘behaviour, emotional and social development’. Under this heading would be children who demonstrate ‘features of emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs’ (DfES, 2001, p.87). As Ofsted (2005) note, there are also clear overlaps between BESD and mental health problems in young people. The phrase however remains problematic (Fovet, 2011), and a recent green paper on SEN (DfE, 2011) has questioned the usefulness of the term and called for it to be reviewed.

In January 2011, there were approximately 158,000 pupils identified as having BESD at School Action Plus or with a statement of SEN (DfE, 2011a). As this statistic does not account for those identified at school action, the number of children identified by school is considerably higher. 30 percent of all state funded secondary school pupils at School Action Plus or with Statements had BESD, making it the most common need in secondary schools.
The education of children identified as having BESD often pose the greatest challenge towards inclusive education (DfES, 2004). As Polat and Farrell (2002) outline, making sure that the BESD provision is effective also presents a major challenge to administrators, government, local authorities and families. There seems to be quite a broad agreement by researchers and government that mainstream provision will not be suitable for every child with BESD. A diverse range of provision is needed to offer the appropriate level of emotional support and educational opportunities to meet the needs of a small minority (Lindsay, 2007; Ofsted, 2011; Polat & Farrell, 2002; DfES, 2004; DfE, 2010). Macleod (2006) goes further by suggesting that the dominance of the inclusion agenda has had a negative impact on the ability of separate provision to do its job effectively. Many tensions still exist and the education of BESD children has been plagued by inconsistency, leading to wide variations in practice (Cole, Daniels, & Visser, 2003). It has also recently been argued that there is a lack of research into the provision for those with BESD (Burton, Bartlett, & De Cuevas, 2009).

As the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2004) comments, the rights of other pupils to learn in a disruptive free environment is important and has to be balanced against the rights of a child who is causing that disruption, and stopping others from learning. This argument that those with BESD cause continued disruption to the learning of others is often used as the reason for fixed term or permanent exclusion from school (Ofsted, 2005). Although the number of permanent exclusions have reduced in the last decade, the exclusion of pupils from school continues to constitute a major challenge to the government’s social inclusion agenda (Vincent, Harris, Thomson, & Toalster, 2007). The relationship between exclusion from school and later negative outcomes has been well documented, and shows that those excluded are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, be not in education, employment or training and have poorer mental health (DfE, 2008; Ofsted, 2004). Therefore, a high exclusion rate in the education system clearly has wider national effects on the health of society. It is partly for these reasons that many initiatives have been aimed at supporting schools to meet the needs of those identified as having BESD. For example, the Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2010) seeks to build the capacity of schools in providing an inclusive education for these students.
However, it has also been recognised that there will be times when students identified as having BESD will require more intensive support. The government encourages groups of schools to share responsibility for the provision of BESD pupils, particularly those at risk of exclusion (DfES, 2004; DfES, 2005). One example of this happening is through the process of ‘managed moves’, which involves the pupil at risk of exclusion moving to a different collaborating school (Vincent, Harris, Thomson, & Toalster, 2007). Another example however is through the use of Alternative Provision, whereby the school organises some provision for the child that takes place off the school site.

**Alternative Provision**

In the United Kingdom, there is a wide range of provision set up for children identified as having BESD. Many of this takes place outside of regular schools, and can be referred to as ‘Alternative Provision’. Ofsted (2011) defines Alternative Provision as something in which a young person participates as part of their regular timetable, away from the site of the school and not led by school staff. This is a very wide definition and so includes a variety of placement types.

The most formal and widely used Alternative Provision is the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). In 1989, the Elton Committee concluded that off site units would be suitable as a temporary measure for those who could not be educated in a normal school (Hill, 1997). The term PRU was introduced in a Department for Education (DfE) Circular in 1994 (Hill, 1997). This guidance emphasised that the PRU was to be a short term measure, and links with other schools should be open and flexible, with reintegration as a key goal. In January 2011 there were 14,050 registered pupils attending PRUs. (CSJ, 2011). However, when counting the number of pupils in PRUs nationally, some of those who are dual registered are not counted. Furthermore, all pupils who attend a PRU on a more flexible arrangement are not counted either (CSJ, 2011), and this is likely to vastly underestimate the numbers (Cole, Visser, & Education, 2000). PRUs offer a wide variety of provision, from a therapeutic approach to being a place for teenage parents (Ofsted, 2007). In 2006, only one percent of 15 year olds in PRUs achieved five A-C grades at GCSE, compared to 45.8 percent in mainstream schools (Ofsted, 2007).
Recent developments in policy will bring about the extension of Alternative Provision, and the Education Act 2011 brought in legislation giving PRUs the same status as maintained schools. The government white paper (DfE, 2010) made it clear that PRUs should have a head teacher and a governing body. Furthermore, PRUs will no longer be short stay schools as they were originally set up, but will allow children to stay for as long as necessary (Taylor, 2012).

As well as the PRU, there are a wide range of other providers of Alternative Provision. These vary in size and can be ran by the voluntary sector, private sector, public sector or other institutions such as colleges (Ofsted, 2011). Providers offer a wide range of options to suit various needs, including those that focus on personal development or offer a therapeutic approach. Other placements offer work experience such as mechanics or hairdressing, and sometimes involve accreditation (Ofsted, 2011). It is also Alternative Provision when pupils learn via a Virtual Learning Environment (Cook, 2005). In 2008, the government estimated that 135,000 children received Alternative Provision during the school year, with about 70,000 in this provision at any one time (DCSF, 2008). The majority of these pupils are of secondary age, and one third of them attend a PRU as their form of Alternative Provision (DCSF, 2008).

The Department for Children's, Schools and Families (2008) stated that Alternative Provision was regularly used for those who have been excluded or those at risk of exclusion from school. Ofsted (2011) identified a number of reasons for schools commissioning Alternative Provision. As well as being an alternative to exclusion, other reasons were to secure examination success, counter disaffection and re-engage pupils in the curriculum. It was also noted that sometimes, this provision was used as a way of removing a child, for the benefit of the other children’s learning.

Many of the arrangements for pupils to attend Alternative Provision are set up by schools with local providers, and can be used as a short term intervention. However, it is also clear that school can use Alternative Provision as a longer term solution, where the young person attends full time. In these cases, the pupil often remains registered on the schools attendance role, but does not attend the school physically (CSJ, 2010). Because schools create and control these local arrangements, there is limited data collected by the Local
Authority (LA) on the extent to which this happens or the quality of provision being offered. Although the DCSF (2008) estimated numbers in Alternative Provision, accurate national statistics do not exist, and the extent to which this happens will vary across the country.

The fact that schools can avoid a permanent exclusion by utilising full time Alternative Provision has led to some controversy, and consequently, the practice of students attending Alternative Provision has become increasingly well publicised in recent years. A review of educational exclusion by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ, 2011) refers to a variety of unscrupulous and illegal practices that can take place when children attend Alternative Provision. Similarly, a report by the Institute for the Study of Civil Society (Ogg, 2010) has argued that the political pressure to reduce exclusions has led to an industry of alternative providers to cater for these pupils under different arrangements such as the managed move and referral systems. More recently, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012) has published the findings of its school exclusions inquiry. It is made clear in this report that although the use of Alternative Provision is often used as an alternative to exclusion, the quality of the provision varies dramatically and can be very poor. The report also emphasises that although schools have a legal basis for using off site provision, if they fail to consider the pupil’s views, then they risk not complying with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

A recent literature review by the Centre for British Teachers Education Trust (CfBT, 2011) examined a wide range of international research that has been conducted on Alternative Provision. 119 papers were analysed, including systematic reviews, national evaluations and other large scale research projects. The findings of correlational research suggest that Alternative Provision can positively affect student motivation, achievement, behaviour and measures of self concept. The report identifies a number of characteristics that are associated with effective provision. For example, one of these is that effective settings cultivate a strong sense of connection between students, teachers and families. Ofsted have also recently reported findings from their own research into Alternative Provision. Across the 16 mainstream schools surveyed, 7 percent of children in years 9-11 were attending some form of Alternative Provision off site (Ofsted, 2011). However, it is important to note that the schools were selected on the basis that they commissioned Alternative Provision,
so this was not a completely representative or random sample. Students spent anywhere between half a day a week to full time in the provision, but this varied dramatically. Whilst visiting sites, inspectors met and had discussions with school leaders and also LA staff. Ofsted identified a wide range of good practice in Alternative Provision, and the report highlights a number of positive outcomes. When it was done well, the Alternative Provision was enjoyable and attendance increased. It was also found that when pupils learned new practical skills, their confidence increased and this had a positive impact when back at the school. Some students were identified as being re-engaged and motivated whilst also achieving accreditations from their placements. However, it was also noted that Alternative Provision could lead to feelings of isolation. Lastly, Ofsted (2011) identified a number of challenges that pupils and staff face when Alternative Provision is part-time, and therefore time is spent between two settings. It is this concept of Dual Provision which will now be examined in more detail.

**Dual Provision**

Dual registration is when a student is registered at more than one provision. This concept is built into government policy and guidance, and is an encouraged way for schools to make collective provision. However, for dual registration to happen, both of the settings must be maintained and registered as independent schools (CSJ, 2011). Dual Registration frequently refers to a pupil remaining on the roll of a mainstream school whilst attending a special school or PRU. As it has been discussed however, much of the Alternative Provision that exists is unregistered. Therefore, there are a large number of students who receive Dual Provision but are not necessarily officially dually registered. The reality and principles however are the same for these children (DCSF, 2008; CSJ, 2011). It is also important to note that many who are dual registered only spend time at the Alternative Provision, despite being kept on roll at the original school (CSJ, 2011). For the purposes of this research, the term Dual Provision will be used instead of dual registration, to include those who attend Alternative Provision that is not registered with the LA. By using this term, it also restricts the focus to those who actually spend time going between two settings on a regular basis. This phenomenon of Dual Provision is under explored (Nind, Flewitt, & Payler, 2011). Because of the scarcity of research, Nind et al (2011) suggest that Dual Provision policy is
based on philosophical and practical justifications, and this may neglect important considerations.

Although there has been little guidance from the government on Dual Provision, they have encouraged greater moving of pupils between schools, and would like professionals to ‘consider the scope for a dual placement’ (DfES, 2004, p.35). The concept however has been criticised by the Centre for Social Justice, as there is confusion about the extent it is used as well as the reasons for its use (CSJ, 2011). A recent investigation by the CSJ (2011) found that Dual Provision is not as rare as would be expected, and a similar finding has come from Ofsted (2011), who found that out of the 39 settings visited, 37 of them had children on part-time placements.

The aim of Dual Provision is not clear but a government report highlighted is as useful as it enables pupils to access a school curriculum, whilst allowing them to engage in activities to support their social and personal development (Kendall et al., 2007). There is very little research into the processes that are involved in Dual Provision. The vast majority of related literature stems from government and Ofsted publications. As would be expected, these do not approach this issue from a strong psychological or theoretical basis. Although no direct research on the Dual Provision of those with BESD has been located, there are a number of peer-reviewed studies which are relevant, and these will be discussed alongside other publications.

Timetabling

In one of a series of related publications, Flewitt and Nind(2007) examined the parental experiences of Dual Provision in the early years. Questionnaires were conducted with 19 parents, 14 of which expressed that the Dual Provision had been positive. Through a smaller number of interviews, the parental perceptions were explored deeper, and a common theme was that Dual Provision allowed for specialist teaching and resources alongside participation in the mainstream peer group. Similarly, in a study of the education of those with down syndrome, Cuckle(1997) outlined that Dual Provision can offer specialist teaching alongside participation in the mainstream activities, allowing experience of normal language
and social interaction. However, there are also indications that there are aspects to a Dual Provision which can cause difficulties.

The recent Ofsted (2011) review into Alternative Provision discussed a number of effective practices, many of which apply to Dual Provision. The first is the importance of timetabling. As pupils spent significant amounts of time away from school, it was important that the school provided a consistent curriculum that worked around this absence. When this was done well, it meant that there was no catching up or missing work, which helped the pupil to remain engaged. Although not looking at Dual Provision, Anderson (2009) explored the views of children who were withdrawn from their primary school class to attend small group literacy. Anderson (2009) found that withdrawal sometimes occurred during enrichment activities, and students showed resentment at having to leave their class. It is important to note however that the author also identified the withdrawal groups to be of poor quality and not pitched at the right level. It is possible that this caused the resentment, not leaving the class. Through observations and interviews, Anderson (2009) also identified a double demand phenomenon, where children are put back into regular classrooms, but have missed the previous lesson on the topic. This can create a variety of emotions and behaviours, and it was noted that instead of paying attention, these pupils can spend time trying to copy missed work from others. Both Ofsted (2011) and Anderson (2009) highlight the importance of considering timetabling issues for those on Dual Provision.

Confusion and change of behaviour between contexts

It is an interesting and repeated finding that children’s behaviour is often better in their Alternative Provision than at the school (e.g. Ofsted, 2011). As Nind, Flewitt and Payler (2010) highlight, different educational environments clearly give rise to different behaviours. There are many reasons for this, such as differences in staff expectations and daily routines (Donegan, Ostrosky, & Fowler, 1996). Burton, Bartlett and De Cuevas (2009) looked into staff perceptions of PRUs. Some felt that the more flexible environment of the PRUs, combined with the socialisation of others experiencing BESD exacerbated the difficulties when the child returned to school. Some thought that this provision made it harder for them to cope in a normal class, and therefore caused more disruption (Burton et al., 2009). Cuckle (1997) also noted that some believe that the children can become
confused as they have to make adjustments on a regular basis between settings. However, it is important to note that Cuckle (1997) cited no evidence for these claims which is likely to reflect the lack of research that has been done into this topic. These are very interesting findings considering that the desired outcomes of Alternative Provision usually include re-engagement with the school and exam achievements (Ofsted, 2011). The findings however may not be surprising when considering research on the best practice for children with BESD. One of the most common recommendations for supporting those with BESD is to provide consistency and predictability. Furthermore, many children with BESD find transitions and change very hard to cope with (Clough, 2005). As behaviours differ between contexts, Donegan et al. (1996) suggest that it is important to consider which skills will transfer between two settings.

**Belonging**

Another finding from Ofsted (2011) was that Alternative Provision was more effective when the child felt part of the original school. This happened when the school kept ownership of the pupil. The fundamental human need to belong has been identified as one of the most important human motivations, and fulfilling this need can have major consequences for how people think and behave (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In the Hierarchy of Needs, Maslow (1968) identified a sense of belonging as a fundamental pre-cursor to self esteem, confidence and self actualisation. The Ofsted (2011) finding that Alternative Provision was more effective when close links were maintained with the school fits in with research on belonging. For example, threats to separate individuals from those they are close with has lead to negative affect, depression and loneliness (Leary, 1990). Relating this to school pupils, Goodenhow(1993) defines belonging as the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school environment. As well as negative outcomes being associated with less belonging, findings also suggest that acceptance is related to a positive attitude and enjoyment of school (Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1998). Therefore it makes sense that in a case study of Alternative Provision, an important element of good practice was that mainstream staff should go and visit the student in their alternative setting (Normington & Boorman, 1996). As Flewitt and
Nind (2007) note, attending to the special and ordinary in different places may mean children ultimately belonging nowhere.

Although there are many studies relevant to Dual Provision, only one study has been found that has the single purpose of examining this issue. Donegan, Ostrosky and Fowler (1996) looked at how the two settings communicated with each other and found that staff often knew very little about the other setting. Poor communication systems were found to be a barrier to effective provision, and this finding has also been mentioned in Ofsted’s (2011) review. Although this study explored the views of teachers, the perceptions of families and pupils were a missing element.

The Views of Children with BESD About Their Education

The number of pupils identified as having BESD is growing (Hunter-Carsch, 2006) and although some research has looked into the views and perceptions of this group, this is limited (O’Connor, Hodkinson, Burton, & Torstensson, 2011). The importance of considering the pupil voice is now well built into current legislation and guidance. Section 53 of the Children Act 2004 requires that LAs must ‘so far and is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child’s welfare, ascertain the child’s wishes and feelings, and give them due consideration (having regard to the child’s age and understanding)’. In the SEN code of practice, it is one of the five fundamental principles that ‘the views of the child should be sought and taken into account’ (DfES, 2001, p.7). Part of the reason for this emphasis on child voice comes from a rights perspective, where children have a right to have their opinion taken into account on matters affecting them, as set out in articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Within the field of education, research has suggested that pupil participation can be crucial in the effective implementation of education programmes and provision (Davie, 1996; Southwell, 2006; Taylor, 1995). During school inspections, it is now an important element of Ofsted’s evaluation process to gather the views of children.

It is likely that children with BESD are less likely to experience democratic schooling in comparison to others (Sellman, 2009). This happens for a variety of reasons, including the quality of teacher relationships, and the perception of those who are identified as BESD.
Sellman (2009) argues that listening to children’s views is especially important when they are identified as having BESD. This is because they are an often ignored group who have useful and challenging messages about the relevance of curriculum and teaching styles. Within the BESD population, some research has looked into the views of children in relation to their placement. Knipe, Reynolds and Milner (2007) examined pupils views of Alternative Provision. A key finding was that the children reflected maturely, logically and gave good insights into complex issues. For example, a strong theme emerged that students should always be given work when on an exclusion, as otherwise it would be too much like a holiday not a punishment (Knipe, et al., 2007). Findings such as this challenge the view that children do not have the potential to contribute to the decisions that are made about them.

Polat and Farrell (2002) examined the views of individuals who had spent time in a specialist residential provision for those with BESD. Overall, the participants reflected that the experience was very positive, and helped them personally in many ways. The most negative aspect highlighted was being labelled, and concerns around the stigma which is attached to spending time in a specialist setting for BESD. Jahunakien (2001) also looked at former pupils reflections of their provision for BESD. Labelling was again highlighted as a key negative area as the pupils felt singled out and were sometimes isolated from peers. The specialist provision however allowed for smaller groups, better teacher relationships and fairer discipline, all of which were identified as positives for the children. Class sizes and relationship with teachers has again recently been highlighted as an important aspect of pupils experience of specialist provision. Harriss, Barlow and Moli (2008) interviewed five pupils to examine their views of a residential BESD school. As well as being a relatively small sample, these pupils were also chosen on the basis that they would respond well in an interview situation. This bias in the selection process means it is possible that the views captured do not represent the views of all or most of the pupils.

Perceptions of mainstream schooling have also been studied with those identified as having BESD. Wise and Upton (1998) interviewed children in a special school about their former mainstream provision. They found that those with BESD experienced difficulties across many domains in a mainstream school. Similarly to Jahunakien (2001), school size and class size were seen as too big and the strict and impersonal discipline system across the school did not work for them. The students also had clear reflections that they needed a more
significant relationship with the teachers, and enjoyed teachers showing a friendly and ‘human’ side. Lastly, they reflected that the curriculum was often irrelevant and inaccessible.

It has recently been argued that it is essential that the child’s views need to be listened to and respected during the process of exclusion and Alternative Provision. The Children’s Commissioners (2012) inquiry explains how there is no effective, systematic or statutory place for children to be heard during the process. As has been noted, pupil voice is a requirement under the UNCRC, leading this inquiry to conclude that illegal practices are taking place in schools. This inquiry by the Children’s Commissioner has received a large amount of public attention and makes a number of claims about exclusion and Alternative Provision. Although discussions were had with many children, it is important to note that of the 86 written submissions that the inquiry received, only 11 were from children and young people. Despite the messages in this report about pupil voice, the inquiry itself has collected very little formal data from this group.

Ofsted (2011) also examined the students’ views in relation to experiences of Alternative Provision. The perceptions were mainly positive, with students saying they felt more respected and enjoyed the practical nature of the placement. Some expressed they felt isolated when attending Alternative Provision for long periods. Although it was important that Ofsted gathered the views of young people, there is a distinct lack of depth to the research. During the investigation, Ofsted visited 61 alternative providers, and talked to 55 students about their experiences. It is not clear how this qualitative data was recorded or analysed but the reader must presume that this was done informally. It is likely that this would have created disparity between the topics discussed by different inspectors and led to a shallow level of understanding regarding the young people’s experiences. For example, it is not clear what proportion of pupils felt their behaviour differed between settings, or what factors led to behaviour being worse at the regular school. Similarly, although feelings of isolation were found, the mechanisms and contexts which led to these feelings were not explored in detail. Having said this, Ofsted’s remit for the investigation was broad and obtaining pupil views was only an aspect of the report. Although this does not give in-depth
data on the children’s perceptions, it does highlight that students can have interesting insights into their Alternative Provision.

Although the views of those identified as having BESD has been described as neglected (O'Connor, et al., 2011), it is clear that research has began to examine these views in a variety of settings, including mainstream and special schools. These views have been enlightening, and have led to the improvement of practice. However, there seems to be no research as yet into the experiences and views of children with BESD who receive Dual Provision.

**Summary and Future Research**

This review has outlined the most current and relevant literature that surrounds the topic of Dual Provision. The majority of this consists of government publications, ofsted reports and the findings of inquiries by organisations such as the Centre for Social Justice and the Children’s Commissioner. Although these provide interesting insights and explorations, they do not present the findings of highly rigorous and systematic research. Rather, they highlight a number of hypotheses and possible areas for future research to investigate. One of these areas and the one focused on here has been Dual Provision. A small number of articles have addressed this topic, and some interesting findings have emerged. Many of these however cannot generalise beyond the context in which they were investigated. For example, the research on pre-school aged pupils illustrated some important considerations, but many of the issues for school aged children are significantly different. Similarly, the challenges of maintaining good Dual Provision for those with down syndrome is likely to differ from the challenges facing pupils with BESD. The only consistent finding from the research on Dual Provision is that children will respond differently to it. For some, it may indeed present the best of both worlds, where they participate in the mainstream social activities, but still have access to the specialist provision which is engaging and motivating. On the other hand, it can lead to feelings of isolation and confusion for pupils, as well as the challenge that the behaviour only improves in the Alternative Provision. This is a very mixed picture, and future research needs to begin to examine the complex issues that underlie
why responses can vary. There are likely to be a wide range of variables that impact upon whether a Dual Provision is successful or not. As noted by Robson (2002), the question should be ‘what works best for whom, and under what circumstances (Robson, 2002, p.39).