"And your future is looking…?"
"…Hopeful":

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study exploring the experience of school for young people of African-Caribbean descent.

By Maria Abijah-Liburd

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Applied Educational Psychology, September 2017

Word count: 40,409

Abstract

This research took an Interpretative Phenomenological approach to explore the school experience of young people of African-Caribbean descent. Four young people aged 16-18 were interviewed using a semi-structured format. Data generated from the interviews were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Three Master themes were drawn from the young people's accounts; Wanting to succeed; Fitting in; and Transcending challenge. From the participants' accounts it was interpreted that the young people valued learning, although they demonstrated differing significance that learning held for them. The young people made distinctions between schooling and education, sometimes being critical of schooling whilst continuing to value education. It was interpreted from the accounts that participants demonstrated both a desire to achieve and progress, as well as self-belief in their ability to do so. Concepts of 'Success' were drawn from the young people's accounts including personal ownership of personal effort, overcoming challenge, achieving beyond expectations and aspiring to reach full potential. Agency, resilience and resistance were discernible in the young people's accounts and revealed themselves through expressions of positive self-concept, aspiration, self-determination, challenging negative expectations, growing out of experience, application of coping strategies, goal orientation and demonstrations of autonomy.

The young people experienced varying degrees of fitting in to their school environment, which appeared to be mediated by how they experienced their racialised identity in their school setting, the emotional experiences they had in school and the level to which they experienced a sense of belonging. The young people who experienced a greater sense of belonging attended diverse schools, they described the sense of being one of many and experienced their schools as safe and caring places. For others, school was experienced as an uncomfortable place, wherein they experienced a sense of being 'othered' and of being treated unfairly.

Implications for schools focus on the need to develop a positive school ethos through which young people are able to feel valued and cared for, developing understanding of the cultural and 'racial' dynamics at play within the school environment and how these may be experienced by pupils of African-Caribbean descent, and addressing issues of diversity in the setting. Implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs) focussed on ways in which they can apply their psychology to support schools in understanding the needs of pupils of African-Caribbean descent, however, it is also suggested that the profession participate in introspective exploration related to its understanding of inequality.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people for their continual support during this research project and throughout my doctoral training as a whole:

To the young people who participated in this research for sharing their stories with openness and willing. The future belongs to you!

To the tutor team at the University of Nottingham, with particular gratitude extended to Neil Ryrie and Anthea Gulliford for their guidance and support. My thanks also go out to my fellow TEPs, 'cohort 14', for your humour, kindness and wisdom throughout the course.

To my placement Educational Psychology Service for your encouragement and advice.

To my friends and, particularly, my family for their love, understanding, encouragement and support always. I would not be where I am without you and I am eternally grateful *for* you and *to* you. I would like to give special thanks to my son, Isaiah, for being my reason in life. You inspire and motivate me every day to make your world a better place.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men" - Frederick Douglass

Lastly, but most certainly not least, to my community. I am we.

"We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated." – Maya Angelou

Contents

Tables

1.0 Introduction

This study is concerned with exploring the perceptions of pupils of African-Caribbean descent around their school experience. It is particularly interested in the young people's views on successes and the ways in which the concepts of resilience, Resistance and agency are discernible in the pupils' accounts of their experiences. There is a paucity of research relating to young people of African-Caribbean descent and schooling in the UK. For example, a search on research database 'Web of Science' using the terms 'African Caribbean', 'school' and 'U.K' returns only 12 studies. Where research does exist it often tends to be 'deficit focussed', by this it is meant that much of the research focusses on what is going wrong for such children and their communities, for example the over-representation in exclusion figures or in relation to underachievement. Whereas it feels important to highlight inequalities that exist in education and the wider society, as I do myself in the following literature review for context, it appears that often missing from the discourse of 'black' experience is the young people's capacity to function effectively from childhood to adulthood regardless of the potential adversities faced (Nicolas et al, 2008). It is towards this focus that this research turns. In doing so the study attempts to provide three things: a space where individual 'black' experiences can be voiced, acknowledged and archived; a means by which these experiences can be reflected upon; and a method through which conceptions of success, resilience, Resistance and agency can be explored.

1.1 Personal interest

I am of African-Caribbean descent and attended school in the UK. Whereas some of my family members experienced the negative aspects more often explored in research (such as being excluded, streamed into lower sets, leaving without qualifications etc.), my experience was different. I was what could possibly be seen as a 'success story', i.e. academically successful since I left

school with numerous GCSEs. However, my personal *experiencing* of school is not one that is recalled positively. I now have my own son who is also of African-Caribbean descent and who is at the very start of his journey into the UK schooling system, as such I have both a personal and a professional interest in hearing how young people today are experiencing school.

Alongside being a Trainee Educational Psychologist I also consider myself to be a community advocate/activist and so it was important to me that the nature of my research seeks to highlight the strengths which exist within the members of my community, rather than diminish them under the shadow of adversity. Furthermore, as the paucity of research demonstrates, the voices of the young people from my community are very rarely heard and as such I feel it important to utilise my opportunities to facilitate this.

1.2 Professional interest

The research has relevance to the role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) for two main reasons. Firstly, the UK has a relatively diverse population, within which children of mixed heritage (in particular 'white' and 'black' –African-Caribbean) are considered to be the fastest growing ethnic 'minority' (ONS, 2011). It is therefore highly possible that many in the role of EP will work with African-Caribbean descent children and young people at some point. It is hoped then that this research will facilitate understanding of what the experience of being in school can be like for some children and young people from this background and will provide knowledge on how EPs can support their wellbeing.

Secondly, EPs have a commitment, and some might argue a moral obligation, to promote equality. Desforges, Goodwin and Kerr (1985) and Booker, Hart, Moreland and Powell (1989) referred back to Educational Psychology's 'murky' past in relation to their involvement with processes and practices that contributed to racial inequalities of 'black' children in particular. Francis Galton, who some might argue was the founder of Psychology as a discipline (Richards,

1997) was responsible for the founding of Eugenics, a scientifically racist approach to the classification and valuation of humans. Galton was furthermore instrumental in pioneering the development of psychometric evaluation which emerged out of his Eugenics work and which went on to be used (thanks in large part to the founding father of Educational Psychology, Cyril Burt) as a legitimated tool in the hands of EPs for inappropriately consigning disproportionate amounts of 'black' children in Britain to unsuitable special education (see Coard, 1971). As such, there potentially remains a bridge to be built and a 'credibility gap' to be filled to convince the 'black' community of Educational Psychology's commitment to equality (Grant and Brooks, 1998, p30.), particularly given the void which currently exists in papers directed at Educational Psychologists addressing the 'black' perspective. Engaging in research which seeks to provide a platform for unheard voices, highlight positive ways in which members from a community function, and actually using what we find to influence practice, may go some way towards aligning what the profession aspires to with what it does in practice.

1.3 Research approach

This research takes an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. IPA is a recognised data analysis framework developed within the field of psychology with the aim of supporting detailed exploration of how participants make sense of their worlds. IPA is phenomenological in its approach, meaning that rather than seeking to produce an objective statement about an object or event it is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account and the meaning that particular events and experiences hold for them. Thus it aligns itself well with the purpose of this research.

IPA involves a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2008) which operates at 2 stages. The initial stage aims to try to understand the participants' world through the account and meanings they themselves give. The second stage provides a more overtly

interpretative analysis, which positions the initial descriptions and meanings given in relation to wider social, cultural, psychological and theoretical contexts (ibid). Contained within these stages is a commitment to understanding the participant's point of view, a move from description of experiences to interpretation of experiences, progression from what is unique to an individual to what are shared experiences/ meanings, and psychological analysis of 'meaning making' within a particular context.

1.4 Original Contribution of research

This research is unique and exploratory in nature and offers an original contribution to research both in methodological terms and in relation to its foci. Although it shares some of its traits with individual aspects of previous research, such as participants ranging between the ages of 14-18, the researcher being of African-Caribbean descent or the research being of a qualitative nature, the bringing together of these things, and others, is unique. The table below highlights the combination of features that contribute to the originality of this proposed research.

Table 1-1: A table to demonstrate the unique contribution of the current research.

Participants	Research/er	Research Question
Age range 14-18	Researcher is of African-Caribbean descent	Solely concerned with the lived experiences of young people as opposed to parents and teachers also.
Male and female	Grounded in psychology as opposed to sociology	Seeks insight into how schooling is

		experienced for this generation of pupils.
In mainstream setting (risk/experience of exclusion not part of the selection criteria)	Not ethnographic in nature	Specifically concerned with how young people perceive notions of success, failure and the presence of resilience, Resistance and agency.
Participants recruited by community means.	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis used to analyse data	

1. 5 Definition of terms

'African-Caribbean descent' for the purpose of this thesis refers to the descendants of 'black' people from the Caribbean.

Throughout this thesis 'black' and 'white' appear in quotation marks to reflect that this thesis takes the stance that 'Races as objectively existing biological entities do not exist' (Richards, 1997, p x) and that '..criteria commonly used to ascribe 'racial' identity are social and cultural rather than biological'(ibid).

'Racialized' refers to the application of a 'racial' identity, which may or may not be with the receiver's consent, and links to the above view that 'race' is not inherently something owned by people but is something that is ascribed, the meaning of which is fluid and changing given socio-political context, time and location.

'Blackness' refers to a state of being or consciousness, either self-ascribed or imposed related to ones 'racialized' status being 'black'.

'Whiteness'- refers to the socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of white identifications and interests (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

'minority'/'minoritised' recognises the way in which language can be used to influence political concepts. The use of 'Minority'/'minoritised' reflects a process having taken place, rather than a state of inherent 'lesser-ness', which results in a person occupying a minoritised place in UK society. In a global sense those who are 'minorities' here in the UK are often 'majorities' in other parts of the world, as such minority is not a fixed status.

'Othered' reflects a process by which people are made to feel /are considered different to the 'majority' population. 'Othering' reflects the action by which an individual or group becomes classified in the view of another as 'not one of us'.

Resistance appears at times throughout this thesis, such as in research question 4, with a capital 'R'. This is to reinforce that resistance as it is defined for the purpose of this thesis relates to resistance to oppression (positive) as opposed to resistance to some beneficial entity (negative). See section 2.5.1.

2.0 Literature review

This chapter seeks first of all to present the context within which this research takes place in relation to inequalities in the U.K educational system for children of African-Caribbean descent. In doing this, this chapter briefly touches upon some of the theories proposed to explain these inequalities, drawn predominantly from Sociological and Critical Race Theory domains with a particular focus on constructions of 'race' and 'racism'. This chapter will then present research relating to the schooling experience of 'minoritised' children before considering the potential psychological impact of this experience and the concept of 'belonging'. The final part of this chapter will present psychological theories related to resistance, resilience and agency with a view to further supporting an understanding of the school experience of 'minoritised' pupils and the resources they may draw upon in relation to that experience.

2.1 Inequality in U.K schooling

2.1.1 Educational inequality

Figures relating to academic attainment, exclusions or progression into work offer support to the argument made by Warren (2005) that pupils of African-Caribbean descent draw the least benefit from their time in schools here in the UK. For example, over the last decade figures reflecting disproportionality in exclusion rates have highlighted that children of African-Caribbean descent have been from 2.2 times to 4.3 times more likely to be permanently excluded from schools than their 'white' peers (2.4-3.1 in last available figures, DfE, 2016). For African-Caribbean descent pupils remaining in schools these figures also indicate that they are 1.5 times more likely to be identified with a behavioural difficulty, less likely to be streamed into the top sets/entered into higher tiers and, relatedly, less likely to achieve the same A-C GCSEs as their

'white' peers (DCLG, 2009, Gillborn, 2010, Strand, 2012, DfE, 2017). As a result African-Caribbean descent students are the lowest attaining students (after Travelling and Gypsy Roma Children) achieving 3.6-4.5 percentage points below the national average of 49.9 (DfE, 2017).

Tikly, Osler and Hill (2005) argue that Government initiatives charged with raising the achievement of ethnic minorities appear to have done little, if anything at all, to impact exclusion or underachievement and they suggest that this may be because any such initiatives need to be accompanied by major changes at all levels of the educational system from initial teacher training to a revamp of the current curriculum and as yet this has failed to happen (ibid). Blair (2008) argues that despite well-polished rhetoric successive governments have continuously failed to implement the practical and ideological shifts necessary to make real change at a social or educational level and in light of this lack of change Gillborn (2008a) suggests that governmental commitment to combating racial inequalities should be judged on the outcome of its policies and practices and not its intent.

There have been 23 race relation policies since 1976 however since that time there has been very little change in educational inequality (Parsons et al, 2004, Parsons, 2008, 2009) leading many concerned with matters of equality to question whether race relation policies were ever meant to be anything more than aspirational. Further concern has been raised that bodies charged with monitoring disparities in education such as Ofsted make '…unacceptable, but accepted, omissions…' (Parsons, 2009, p262) such as very rarely commenting on the long-standing disproportionality in exclusion rates which race relation policies and legislations are intended to prevent (ibid).

2.1.2 White Supremacy/ Racism and Education

Attempts have been made to understand how inequalities in the education system have come about, with a large body of this work being drawn from Sociology of Education.

Blair (2008) and Gillborn (2008) argue that a conspiracy exists against 'black' students, the term conspiracy being used here in the legal sense which sees conspiracy as a number of systems working together to ensure the power and interest of one group to the detriment of others. It is argued that part of the power of this conspiratorial system '…lies in its ability to refocus educational problems onto the Black students themselves…'(Blair, 2008, p251) which results in '..racialized accounts of exclusion..' (Howarth, 2004, p9). These feed the myth of an anti-education 'black' culture, individualise the issue of exclusions and underachievement and pathologise the 'black' child, their family and/or their community (ibid).

This pathologizing of 'black' children, in juxtaposition to a 'blame free' educational system, has a long history. From the early use of inappropriate psychometric testing, which contributed to a disproportionate amount of 'black' children becoming subject to schooling for the 'educationally subnormal' (Coard, 1971), the 'violent and dangerous' label ascribed to 'black' youth throughout the 1980s and 90s following political uprisings and racial profiling (Cole, 2004), the seeping through of this into school processes relating to over identification of behavioural difficulties and relatedly school exclusions (ibid), through to how these issues have been addressed in political and academic research framed as the problem *with 'black' children*, rather than the problem *with 'white' society* (ibid).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) posits that in understanding how racism, which CRT terms White supremacy/racism, works one can understand the processes at play which sustain inequalities in education. White supremacy/ racism, it is argued, is characterised by subtle and hidden processes which are deeply ingrained legally, culturally and psychologically (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and that such processes have become so normalised, like breathing or blinking, they are no longer acknowledged (Gillborn, 2005, 2009). Critical Race Theorists posit that 'white supremacy' viewed in its traditional sense, that is being the deliberate and intentional action of individuals, is misleading and distracting (Gillborn, 2005, Vaught and Castagno, 2008). This traditional view prevents the consideration of racial power, and its impact, at a level which can structure institutions and influence the inequalities that take place within them related to

'black' people (Vaught and Castagno, 2008). They therefore argue that White supremacy/racism's influence on inequality continues to exist because most people are unaware of, or refuse to make the conceptual shift needed to acknowledge, its existence (ibid). Gillborn (2005) states that critical race scholarship '…is not an assault on white people per se: it is an assault on the socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of white identifications and interests' (p488), such that they are normalized, taken for granted, made invisible and not readily interrogated when questions of disproportionality are raised (ibid). Instead, with the absence of 'visible' racism, the finger is more readily pointed at the 'black' child and its background.

2.1.3 Culturalism

It has been argued that as not all 'non-white' groups, or even all 'black' groups, are affected by over-representation/under-representation equally, White supremacy/racism isn't at fault. For example, Lindsay, Pather and Strand (2006) state that as 'black' African students are not disproportionately represented in BESD figures it is unlikely that racism is at the root of African-Caribbean disproportionality. Positing instead 'an interaction between a number of inter-related, and often self-perpetuating, factors' (p117) related to teachers' perceptions, expectations and understanding, pupils' responses to this, and teachers' reactions to this responding. Gillborn posits however that 'racism' is a misperceived concept simplified to imply the 'white race' against all other 'races' in an equal fashion. However, he argues that racism should be viewed from a socio-political paradigm rather than a biological perspective because minorities have endured different conditions of oppression, domination and shared experiences (Gillborn, 2008b). As such, not all 'minority' groups need to be affected equally for racism to exist. Lipsitz (2006), Lopez (2006) and Wise (2008) also posit 'race' is a more accurate reflection of socio-political, cultural and historical standing than it is of 'colour'. As such, not all ethnic groups are starting from the same point regarding existing and past inequity, and therefore

particular policies and practices may potentially have a more negative impact on some ethnic groups over others.

Overt racism, of a nature where people are openly classified and placed on a continuum of inferiority and superiority based on racial characteristics, is no longer acceptable in the general public domain (Cole, 2004). However, it is argued that a form of 'culturalism' has replaced the more watched for 'traditional' racism which allows the blame for continued inequalities to be laid at the feet of 'black' people themselves (Cole, 2004, Lopez, 2006, Grant, 2011), while pretending 'racism' no longer exists. Cole (2004) argues for a wider definition of racism which includes 'intentional as well as unintentional racism; biological as well as cultural; and racism that is 'seemingly positive' as well as obvious negative racism' (p38) The reference to the 'seemingly positive' racism refers to the experience of Asian and Chinese descent pupils who have high expectations placed upon them based on a racial stereotype, whilst detracting from the more traditionally understood forms of racism that they're exposed to.

'Racism' is a complex phenomenon which it is argued takes on differing manifestations in different historical eras and geographical locations and that these manifestations cannot be examined or understood in isolation from socio-economic, geo-political factors (Cole, 2004, p47). Schools, as with all institutions, operate within, are influenced by and reflect the social, cultural and political attitudes of the society within which they are located and as such play a fundamental role in the reproduction of said attitudes (Graham and Robinson, 2004). This is no different on matters of 'race' or culture, and as such societal attitudes relating to these matters form a fundamental part of schooling systems and structures (ibid).

2.2 Schooling experience of minoritised children and young people

A small number of studies have focused on the schooling experience of minoritised groups. The following section will consider this from a (Western)

global context (i.e. research from countries with majority 'white' populations) before focusing specifically on the UK context, and more specifically the experience of 'black' within that context.

2.2.1 Experiences of minoritised pupils in a (Western) global context

Juvonen, Nisheena and Graham (2006) investigated 11 public middle schools of varying diversity levels in the US and concluded that for Latino and African American students higher levels of diversity were 'associated' with feelings of safety and social satisfaction. Students reported that they felt 'safer in school, were less harassed by peers, felt less lonely, and had higher self-worth the more ethnically diverse their classrooms were, even when controlling for classroom differences in academic engagement.' (p393). These results were for both whole school and individual class level.

Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert (2016) explored the experience of 64 students of Afro-Caribbean, Latino/a, South Asian and Asian descent in a US high school who were either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants. They concluded that many experienced acculturative stress in trying to manage the tension between their own culture and that of the school. Participants reported that they preferred to build relationships with students from similar backgrounds, however in doing so this threatened their sense of belonging with other groups and this sense of belonging influenced the choices they made about relating, or not, to same/different groups. Participants reported feeling marginalised by both students and staff and discrimination was felt to be an everyday and normalised experience. Interestingly Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert (2016), posit that as well as the level of diversity in a school providing a protective factor it also provides a stage upon which racial tensions and discrimination may more readily be observed.

A Danish study (Madsen et al, 2016) looking at data relating to 4583 11-15 year olds concluded that students not belonging to the ethnic majority of the school

'had increased odds' for higher levels of loneliness compared to peers from the majority ethnicity, but that having more class mates who shared one's ethnicity decreased the odds and levels of loneliness. Loneliness here is defined as' the painful feeling of sadness and emptiness that is caused by a cognitive awareness of a discrepancy between the social relationships one wishes to have and those that one perceives one actually has' (p1351).

Ethnic minority students, in a study of 263 eight to 17 year olds across seven schools in Australia (Priest et al., 2014), also reported experiencing higher levels of racist incidents and experiencing increased levels of loneliness than students from the majority ethnic group. Interestingly levels of depression and loneliness for the majority ethnic group were also reported as higher if they reported having higher numbers of ethnic minority friends perhaps suggesting a level of 'ostracism by association'.

Zinga and Gordon (2016) considered the experiences of aboriginal students in Canada and concluded that racism, ostracism and managing cultural conflict were all having a negative impact on the development of minoritised students. They highlighted a need for the systemic context within which these students live and are schooled to be recognised in order to better understand their perceptions and experiences. These systemic contexts refer both to things such as community attitudes as well as the Eurocentric privileges that permeate systems and which may influence the ways in which the minoritised young people experience their realities.

There are a number of common themes which arise from the research presented in this section. Several of the studies (Juvonen, Nisheena and Graham, Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert, Zinga and Gordon, and Priest et al.) highlight discrimination or racism as being present in the students' school experiences. Students' sense of belonging was noted as being impacted upon, with one study (Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert) mentioning this explicitly and other research reflecting on students' increased levels of loneliness, which it could be argued implies a lack of integration. Levels of diversity in the schools were posited as mediating some of the negative affect experienced by participants and some participants expressed a preference for

being with others from their ethnic group however it was also reported that this could have a detrimental impact on school belonging.

2.2.3 Experiences of minoritised pupils in a UK context

Studies in the UK report similar experiences for minoritised groups in the UK context as those experienced in a (Western) Global context.

Monks, Ortega-Ruiz and Rodriguez-Hidalgo (2008) considered the experiences of 620 11-16 year olds across 3 schools in Spain and 2 in England and reported that, whereas there was no difference between the minoritised and majority groups in reported experiences of victimisation, minoritised pupils were more likely to report this experience as being related to a cultural context, particularly in relation to social exclusion and name calling (1 in 3 reported racist name calling and 1 in 8 reported feeling socially excluded due to culture). Perhaps not surprisingly, pupils who experienced culture-based name calling reported higher levels of anger than those whose victimisation was based on other personal characteristics not related to ethnicity

Archer and Francis' (2005) study relating to the experience of British Chinese pupils found that contrary to teachers' views that they didn't experience much racism, pupils felt that racism was very much an 'every day' occurrence. The everyday nature of it did not lessen the negative impact of the experience however. Many pupils reported high levels of isolation and noted the issue of not being able to 'blend in' with the rest of the school as a particular issue. Many pupils reportedly employed an approach of attempting to befriend their abusers or taking on a hyper-masculinised persona in the hopes of minimising abuse. Pupils also reported that 'friends' and staff would unwittingly perpetuate racism through adhering to stereotypes or making inappropriate comments with cultural connotations.

Burgess, Wilson and Lupton (2005) considered the extent of ethnic segregation experienced by pupils across secondary schools in England and concluded that children were more segregated in their schools than in their neighbourhoods and that this was particularly the case for African-Caribbean descent children and Asian children.

Reynolds' (2008) qualitative research concerned with migrant children's experience of inclusion in secondary school considered two schools: one in which the ethnic 'minority' population made up 93% of the school population (with African- Caribbean being the biggest group) and one in which they made up 11% (mainly Roma). They concluded that the school with the smaller 'minority' population achieved a lower level of inclusion, with less mixing across majority and 'minority' groups, as well as there existing higher tensions between 'minority' students and majority students and staff. The school with the lower percentage of 'minority' pupils was located within an area of highly racist and anti-immigration feeling which Reynolds posits was transmitted into the school both by pupils *and* staff, suggesting an importance be given to both the individual characteristics of pupils and staff and the socio-political/historical contexts as influencing factors on the situation in which 'minority' students find themselves.

Biggart, O'Hare and Connolly (2013) conducted research in Northern Ireland, particularly concerned with young pupils (aged 7-12) of Traveller, Chinese/Asian and European Migrant backgrounds and concluded that all of the ethnic 'minority' children had lower levels of a sense of belonging and felt more excluded than their majority population ('white', Northern Irish) peers. Although higher levels of educational aspirations were found to be present with Asian and Chinese pupils they demonstrated lower levels of self-worth and participation in social clubs than their 'white' peers. Biggart, O'Hare and Connolly's finding were supported by Frehill and Dunsmuir (2015) who concluded in their study of 12-15 year old traveller and non-traveller children, that non-traveller children had an increased sense of school community belonging and connectedness.

The participants in a study carried out by Gautler and Green (2015) reported positive views of school and stated that they felt staff, peers and the opportunity

to learn contributed to this, suggesting a sense of inclusion. However, whether children shared the same ethnicity was considered as the main marker of *sameness* for the 'minority' children, with Gautler and Green concluding that ethnic identity may have a level of significance in relation to 'belonging' beyond any other factor.

Arshad et al (2012) carried out the first study to investigate the perspectives of 'minority' ethnic pupils in Scottish education. It considered the experience of 96 minoritised young people aged 11-18 in Scotland, the largest group of which were African descent. Amongst the conclusions drawn were that the understanding displayed by teachers in relation to matters of race affected the level of exclusion or inclusion felt by pupils. Pupils reported that it was important to them to have teachers and staff in their schools that reflected their own ethnicity as they felt they shared an understanding of their experience and this stopped them feeling so isolated as well as acting as a source of inspiration. A number of pupils recounted feelings of being perceived as 'foreigners', despite being born in Scotland, and voiced the belief that colour, ethnicity, religion and language were barriers determining acceptance or not. Pupils also noted the importance of a supportive peer group in making the difference to their sense of inclusion and often sought support from this group in order to cope or deal with experiences of racism. Furthermore, pupils noted the role that the school and its ethos played in their overall experience, in that positive regard displayed towards diversity seemed to influence the overall attitude of the members of the school. It was noted that division appeared to exist between ethnic groups and that minoritised groups often clustered together by ethnicity, this was viewed critically however and it was felt that schools should intervene to create opportunities for mixing.

Reflecting findings from Archer and Francis (2002), contrary to the lived experience of the pupil participants in Arshad et al (2012) who noted that direct and indirect racism was an everyday occurrence, most teachers in this research felt that racist incidents in their schools were rare, or certainly declining, and that the bigger concern was for pupils out in the larger community. Teachers did however note a concern about community values and how they may be transmitted into the school. There was a notable focus of this solely being in

relation to pupils however rather than staff. As such pupils reported that they felt there existed an abyss between themselves and their teachers in relation to the pupils' lived experience of racism and staff understanding. Pupils expressed feelings of upset, hurt, humiliation and anger as a result of considering themselves to have been failed by school staff in relation to this. Concerningly, a number of members of staff who did note incidents of racism in their schools did so in relation to other staff members, such as through comments overheard in the staffroom or perhaps most concerning, from comments made directly to pupils.

A second study based in Scotland (Hopkins, Botterill, Sanghera and Arshad, 2015) provides both supporting and contradicting findings to Arshad et al (2012). Young participants, having made the distinction between overt and covert racism felt that they did not experience much overt racism and felt that as a country Scotland was generally accepting, particularly when they compared it to England. Most young people in this study viewed schools as 'safe spaces' from racism, especially when the school had a strong ethos of diversity and equality. Although many participants were able to recount a number of experiences of racism, particularly in relation to comments made by peers, it was noted that these had been most frequent in primary and early secondary school after which point participants felt peers had either learnt that racism was wrong or that they at least shouldn't express it so overtly.

Cline et al's (2002) study exploring the experience of minoritised pupils in 14 majority 'white' schools found that a high number of pupils reported racist name calling and verbal abuse, with a quarter reporting that they'd experienced this very recently (as recent as the week of the data collection in fact). Pupils who had been at the schools for a while reported that they felt socially integrated, nonetheless a number spoke about the importance of 'connectedness' and shared understanding that they experienced with same ethnicity peers. This research also found that in most of the schools, pupils and their parents had little faith in the school's official procedures for tackling race related bullying. Across the 14 schools there were only 3 teachers who were from minoritised

backgrounds and the majority of teachers in the schools noted that they had not had training related to addressing racism or diversity either during their initial training or subsequent CPD. The research noted that whereas there was generally a lack of knowledge and confidence amongst teachers in relation to multi-cultural education some reflection of the diversity of modern society was at least to be found in the Religious Education curriculum, if not much elsewhere.

Andreouli, Greenland and Howarth (2015) noted in their research with 12-14 year olds that in mixed-ethnicity focus groups in schools with lower ethnic minority populations, racism often tended to be 'othered', that is to say that participants spoke about it in terms of it occurring in other times, other places, by other people or not existing at all. The authors also posited that minoritised pupils that endorsed the views of their 'white' peers, under these circumstances, may have been doing so to ingratiate themselves into the majority group and may not have felt able to express their honest views. In support of this they noted that when racism *was* reported under these circumstances, those expressing this appeared to work particularly hard to provide evidence and validity for their experience which the authors posited may have been the result of the participants concern that they would not be believed or be perceived as having a chip on their shoulder. For participants in schools with high percentages of minoritised pupils claims of common everyday racism were often expressed, although the authors felt that the pupils' ability to support these claims were not as strong.

It is notable that there are similarities between the research in this section as it pertains to minoritised pupils in the U.K context and those in the (Western) global context. Perhaps most prevalent is the reported experiences of racism, which is noted by participants across almost all of the U.K studies. There are also a number of different manifestations of a common theme- social exclusion- with studies reporting isolation, segregation, lower levels of inclusion and lower levels of a sense of belonging. As in section 2.2.1, diversity is highlighted as a factor which provides protection and promotes a sense of safety, whereas having peers who share one's ethnicity is also identified as an important factor.

2.2.3 Research specific to 'black' children in the UK context

Although the above section contained research wherein some of the participants were 'black', this section focusses on research which was conducted specifically with the experience of 'black' students in mind and as such all of the participants are 'black'.

A small number of seminal studies have been conducted related solely to the 'black' experience in British schools, most being set within the context of school exclusions. Participants in Blair's research (2001) articulated a sense of being subjected to unfair treatment as a result of racism, however the analysis within this research was limited to relaying the experiences that they'd had rather than any exploration of how these young people navigated their way through this inequality. Wright, Weekes and McGlaughlin (2000) also presented pupil accounts that concur with those in Blair in relation to the experienced racism. Rhamie (2007, 2012) presented findings from 32 adults who in reflecting back on their schooling experiences all reported negative experiences relating to 'a sense of being treated differently to white peers, lack of support and encouragement from teachers, low expectations directed towards them, being prevented from taking higher examinations and being subject to racism from teachers and pupil' (p12). This was regardless of the academic success that the participants had managed to attain during that time. Given that all participants were subject to some or all of these negative experiences, Rhamie concluded that what made the differences for academic success was the protective factors that the child was exposed to in order to support resilience.

A study carried out in five secondary schools in London (Robinson, 2001, Graham and Robinson, 2004),focussing on the experiences of 'black' boys, noted that one of the most notable concerns of the participants was the way attitudes which existed in wider society impacted on their school experience. Many reported that they felt subject to racial discrimination in school, that their teachers were racist and that they were subject to differential treatment to 'white' peers. However, despite their experiences in school the participants still valued education and the opportunities it offered.

Gosai, (2009, 2011) explored the experience of 'black' Caribbean boys, aged 15-16, in a school in which minoritised pupils made up 40% of the population. Each of the 4 participants reported that they felt their parents positively impacted their education as opposed to teachers or society in general, both of which they felt were influenced by negative stereotypes of 'black' males. It was felt that 'white' teachers did not identify with the participants and that they failed to understand 'the lived experiences, social meanings and cultural differences that 'black' pupils carry with them from their home and community into schools.' (p113). Participants also noted the importance of 'black' peers, who they considered to be a means of support, a source of comfort and as providing encouragement in the face of negative treatment by teachers.

Abdi (2015) notes the way in which 'black' students (boys) enact racialized identities based on the way they perceive they are expected to act, in other words they perform 'blackness' as a way of reflecting back what 'whiteness' expects to see, and that this expectation is reinforced both by school and their peers. However pupils, such as the participant in Abdi's research, also enact resistance to the limitations placed on them by this performance of 'blackness' by seeking to do what is necessary to achieve academically away from the classroom 'stage'. This is a point which will be explored further below in relation to Resistance.

As with research in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 the research here pertaining to the experience of 'black' pupils have a number of related themes running through them. The most frequently highlighted are in relation to the sense of differential and unfair treatment the participants feel they have been subjected to, and the identification of racism as being the root cause of this. What comes through from two of the studies in particular (Robinson, 2001, and Abdi, 2015) is how this racism is reflective of attitudes held by society in general. Nonetheless both Robinson and Abdi highlight that, despite the adversity faced, students still demonstrated an interest in education, a point which is also implicitly implied in Rhamie's (2007,2012) research where there were a variety of levels of achievement attained by participants. The role of resilience is noted by Rhamie in mediating achievement levels, whereas Gosai (2011) notes the role parents and peers play in supporting young people.

Drawing from the experiences of research participants in the above sections, this literature review now turns to consider the psychological impact of racism, followed by a focus on belonging. The review will then look at ways in which young people respond to acts of oppression.

2.3 Psychological impact of racism

Racial discrimination is considered a significant stressor which undermines the mental wellbeing of 'black' young people, impairs racial self-concept, lowers self-esteem and increases depressive symptoms (Seaton and Yip, 2009, Wilson et al, 2009, Kogan, Yu, Allen and Brody, 2015). In their study, which considered the extent to which young adolescent 'black' Americans experience racial discrimination and related stress, Lanier et al (2016) concluded young 'black' people experience racial discrimination and suffer psychological distress as a result. Furthermore, they posited that even infrequent experiences of discrimination, with minimal *perception* of related stress, still had a negative impact on the psychological well-being of young 'black' people, particularly in relation to the presence of depressive symptoms.

Young people, in a study of student experiences in Australian schools (Priest et al, 2014), reported higher levels of racist experiences and loneliness if they were from an ethnic minority group. Interestingly students from the majority group who had more friends from different ethnic groups also reported higher levels of loneliness and depression than those from the majority group who didn't have as many friends from the 'minority' group. Having friends from other groups was not found to alter the levels of loneliness or depression for minoritised students. The study concluded that experience of racism was strongly linked to higher loneliness and depressive symptoms.

Studies in the UK have also posited that there are strong associations between racial discrimination and common mental disorders, particularly in relation to people of African-Caribbean descent (Bhui et al, 2005, Karlsen et al, 2005). Bhui et al. (2005) conducted an analysis of 6 ethnic groups from a national

sample of workers and concluded that the risk of mental health issues was most prevalent amongst those who reported experiencing discriminatory treatment, and was most prevalent with those from an African- Caribbean background. Karlsen et al. 2005, focusing on a sample spanning the lifespan (aged 16-74), reported findings that those experiencing racially motivated abuse had a twofold increase (where abuse was verbal) and threefold increase (where abuse was physical) risk of mental health disorder. Furthermore, those who reported experiencing employment-related discrimination were found to have an almost 50% additional increased risk.

In their study exploring the schooling experience of minoritsed groups in the UK and Spain, Monks,Ortega-Ruiz and Rodríguez-Hidalgo (2008) found that a high percentage of their minoritised group sample expressed feeling anger and upset when experiencing rumour spreading about their culture. Furthermore, students who had experienced bullying based on their cultural background were more likely to report related feelings of anger than those who experienced non-cultural victimisation, based on personal characteristics for example.

2.4 Belonging

Baumeister and Leary (1995) formulated the 'belongingness hypothesis' in which they posited humans have a 'pervasive drive' to develop and sustain long-lasting, emotionally rewarding and meaningful relationships with others (p497). In order for such relationships to be most satisfactory they argued that they needed to be frequent and pleasant in nature and reflect a reciprocal concern for each party's welfare. Baumeister and Leary conducted an extensive review of literature related to human interaction and concluded that having a sense of belongingness leads to a variety of positive emotions which contribute to good mental health. Conversely, they concluded that poor physical and mental health was more common in people who reported lower levels of belongingness and that 'real, imagined, or even potential threats to social bonds generate a variety of unpleasant emotional states.' (p505), leading them to conclude that belongingness is a human *need* rather than a *want*.

A related theme contained within the literature linked to schooling experience and psychological health, is that of school belonging or 'psychological membership' as it is also referred to. Goodenow (1993) defines this as the 'extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported in the school environment.' (p80). A more elaborated definition proposes school belonging as 'a student's level of attachment (personal investment in the school), commitment (compliance with school rules and expectations), involvement (engagement with school academics and extracurricular activities), and belief in their school (faith in its values and its significance)' (Kia-Keating and Ellis, 2007, p30).

It is posited that developing a sense of school belonging occurs as the result of factors both internal and external to the pupil. That is to say, it comes about as the result of the pupil experiencing positive affect related to a setting, as well as the actions and attitudes of those within the setting (Cartmell and Bond, 2015). Internal and external factors are interrelated rather than separate. For example, Shochet, Smith, Furlong & Homel (2011) considered the relationships between the perception of caring adults in a school and a sense of acceptance, and the perception of rejection in schools and negative affect. They concluded that sense of rejection and acceptance in school immerged as robust predictors of negative affect. Osterman (2000) posits that there is a reciprocal element to these factors in the sense that students who feel accepted in the school environment are more committed to it, and that feeling accepted impacts on interaction and quality of relationship with others. Producing a cyclical interplay of 'better affect equals better relationships equals better affect' and so on. Tillery et al (2013) posit that students at higher risk of being disadvantaged in schooling, including minoritised children, may benefit most from supportive adult connection in schools and that this should therefore be considered a key factor in developing school connectedness.

It has been argued that the impact of a sense of school belonging has a far reaching impact beyond just the school years. For example, Pittman and Richmond's study (2007) of an ethnically mixed university student population

concluded that not only does school belonging impact on students whilst in the school setting but that it may also be a fundamental factor influencing positive experience for students once they've moved into university.

2.4.1 Belonging and ethnicity

Faircloth and Hamm (2005) posit that students experience schools in different ways and as such may connect to school through differing means. Their research considered 4 areas of schooling experience: relationships with teachers, involvement with peers, engagement in school activities, and perceived ethnic-based discrimination and indicated that for Asian and African American student's friendship nominations did not appear to be a reliable indicator of their sense of belonging, indicating that these students may experience school friendships differently in terms of the benefit they derive from them in supporting their sense of belonging in the school setting.

Research particularly concerned with self-concept, school belonging and engagement with academic achievement of African-American students (Singh, Chang and Dika, 2010) noted that the level of relationship between these factors varied between ethnic groups. For African-American students, level of school belonging was a major predictor for school engagement and academic achievement. Self-concept however was not found to have any significant relation. As such, it has been argued that 'belonging is not a fixed construct; it can have different meanings for different people and can involve different needs over time.' (Cartmell and Bond, 2015, p98).

Anderman (2002) analysed data from a large scale piece of US research which covered 132 schools and included 90,118 participants. Interestingly this research found that when the sense of belonging for pupils overall in a school was high, reports of psychological impact and social rejection were higher for those individuals who did not feel they belonged in comparison to individuals with a low sense of school belonging in a school where many felt the same way. The impact of ethnicity on one's sense of belonging was not felt to be a major

factor once school-level variables were taken into account. Anderman therefore suggests that school reform encouraging school belonging would be an effective direction to take to support psychological wellbeing, noting the proviso of the impact of those who may continue to be left out (also suggested by Kia-Keating and Ellis, 2007). In contrast however Booker (2006) suggests that as a result of already being a minority in the setting, young 'black' people can be more psychologically vulnerable to impersonal and uncaring school environments. He also notes that whereas minoritised pupils may value school and education, their experience in relation to negative interactions with majority populations of the school (both peers and staff) may prevent them from developing a genuine sense of belonging to the school.

Using the PSSM devised by Goodenow (1993) to measure young people's sense of belonging in the school environment, Booker (2007) examined the experience of 14 African –American students and concluded that feelings of belonging were supported when pupils felt accepted and appreciated in their school environment, there were shared interests with their peers (such as music and dress) and students participated in peer activities. Booker posited that having access to 'same-ethnic' friendship groups may contribute to students' positive sense of belonging due to there being a shared understanding and experience and it was noted that the participants in the research tended to associate more with 'same-ethnic' peers, although they did not appear uncomfortable interacting with others.

Students experience a stronger sense of school belonging when they consider there to be less difference between the majority school population and themselves (Biggart, O'Hare and Connolly, 2013). Where 'minority' pupils form a small percentage of the school population they may be less able to acquire effective protective strategies for belonging, or rather not belonging, than for pupils in schools with a high level of diversity (ibid). Gummadam, Pittman & Ioffe (2016) posit however that a strong sense of belonging to one's own ethnic group, outside of school, may serve to protect minoritised students who feel disconnected from their academic surroundings

In light of the inequality in education for pupils of African-Caribbean descent and the experiences of schooling shared by participants in the research included in this literature review, the focus of this review now turns to explore theories related to how young people may choose to address these issues.

2.5 Response to oppression

As noted above, young people who find themselves as ethnic minorities in a school setting, both globally and locally, report being subjected to unfair treatment, discrimination, ostracism and, most prevalent, acts of racism. The acts of racism are not confined to peers but may also be displayed by staff and, as CRT would argue, exists at a systemic level to an extent that impacts on equality for children of African-Caribbean descent in the educational system. Deutsch (2006) defines oppression as 'the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice. It need not be extreme and involve the legal system (as in slavery, apartheid, or the lack of a right to vote) nor violent (as in tyrannical societies).'(p10) and argues further that that '… oppressions are systematically reproduced in the major economic, political, and cultural institutions.' (p10). This echo's Charlton's (1998) definition, wherein he states 'oppression occurs when individuals are systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social degradation because they belong to a social group…results from structures of domination and subordination and, correspondingly, ideologies of superiority and inferiority.' (p8). Given these definitions, systemic racism can be classified as oppression.

As noted in section 2.3., it is argued that there is a psychological impact of racism. Case and Hunter (2012) posit that the same is true in relation to oppression, noting in particular that an individual's self-concept is harmed. They state however that 'despite the ubiquitous and pernicious nature of oppression, many individuals who experience marginalization have displayed a propensity to thrive in the face of chronic dehumanization.' (p257) and propose the term 'adaptive responding' to refer to the process by which a mitigating response is made to oppression. Case and Hunter (2012) argue that adaptive responding

incorporates a number of processes, for example coping (addressing the stress caused), resistance (efforts to change oppressive conditions), and resilience (the process and outcome of adaptive processes). With this in mind this literature review will now consider Resistance, wherein it will be defined and explored as a response to oppression, followed by a consideration of the concept of resilience. The roles of agency and aspiration will also be explored as concepts which interplay with both Resistance and resilience.

2.5.1 Resistance

2.5.1.1 Defining Resistance

Wade (1997) offers the following definition, formulated around that which appears in the Oxford dictionary:

'…any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any type of disrespect), or the conditions that make such acts possible, may be understood as a form of resistance.'(p25)

Wade adds to this that indeed any efforts to create a life furnished with respect and equality, both as an individual or on behalf of others, in the face of violence/oppression may be considered resistance.

What is notable about 'Resistance' defined in these terms is its juxtaposition to the therapeutic definition, that is as positive acts verses negative ones as opposed to negative acts verses beneficial ones. In relation to this, Raby (2005) notes how the same activity exercised by young people can be differently defined (e.g. as resistance, rebellion, deviance, oppositional etc.) and that definition then serves to either reinforce or undermine the agency and political consciousness located within that action.

When considering the concept of Resistance part of the challenge is in overcoming the pre-conceived notions that people may have of the term. These notions are often influenced by the long standing meaning 'resistance' has in therapeutic fields relating to the putting up of barriers against actions/situations considered non-desirable to an actor in that moment in time (Wade, 1997). In this sense, these actions/situations are usually considered in some way beneficial to the actors and their resistance therefore is framed as negative.

2.5.1.2 Resistance Theories

Resistance Theory, Warren (2005) argues, has 'provided an explanatory language for understanding the practices of subordinate groups in the context of schools.' (p246), however it is also accused of defining all oppositional acts in a school setting as resistance (ibid). This is, in Warren's view, due to what he terms 'The virtuousness of White oppositional cultures' (p246) whereby the oppositional acts of a particular group ('white' male working class youth) imbued with working class politics becomes the focus point. Giroux (1983) raises a related criticism in that resistance theory fails to consider the socio-political and systemic mechanics that have brought about varying forms of oppression and in response varying forms of oppositional behaviour. In this oversight, which oppositional behaviour constitutes 'political' resistance and which does not becomes unclear. Furthermore, this oversight also makes it difficult to consider what actions are directed towards the school because of inequalities in that setting, or what might actually be behaviours in reaction to wider societal issues (ibid).

Nonetheless theories of resistance allow us to consider how, when faced with adversity, many individuals actually reject the positions and meanings placed upon them during power differentiated interactions and instead battle with the oppressive systems to assert their own meanings (Solorzano and Delgado-Bernal, 2001). This recognition of agency is in contrast to the more 'deterministic reproduction models' often associated with education, whereby pupils are represented as the downtrodden who passively accept their fate as

the next generation of factory, unemployment or prison fodder (ibid, Giroux, 1983). Warren (2005) warns that, whereas the potentially transformative agency afforded to young people through resistance theory is a positive thing, one must be careful to ensure this does not place the responsibility for transformations, and blame for the failure to do so, on the shoulders of the young.

2.5.1.3 Resistance verses oppositional behaviour

In relation to behaviours observed in schools, Zine (2000) makes a distinction between anti-authority behaviours deemed to be self-injurious (resistance as conceptualised in the aforementioned therapeutic sense perhaps) such as fronting up to teachers, or truanting and which in the end may prove to be counterproductive, and resistant behaviours which allow the students to contest 'negative constructions of social difference through positive representation.' (p111). Resistance, in this sense, serves as a means for students to exercise agency and determine the identity they are ascribed or choose to adhere to.

Rather than make a distinction between oppositional behaviour and resistance, whereby oppositional behaviour is automatically negative and resistance positive, Solorzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001) instead posit oppositional behaviour as an umbrella term within which behaviours are ascribed a 'type'. Under this term they therefore pose four types of oppositional behaviour; (a) reactionary behaviour, (b) self-defeating resistance, (c) conformist resistance, and (d) transformational resistance. Transformational resistance can be split into two distinct but interactional 'approaches'- internal and external. Internal resistance refers to behaviours which appear to conform to the norms and expectations of institutions, but which are influenced by the actor's conscious awareness of this 'conformity' as a means of enabling the student to gain a position whereby they can challenge inequality and oppression. Pupils who seek to navigate their way through the education system and succeed despite the adversity would be considered to fall within the Transformational quadrant. External resistance refers to more overt behaviours, such as students

participating in a strike or generating a petition to seek to influence change within classroom practices.

Hidalgo (2011) also refers to a notion of transformative resistance which she argues encompasses behaviours such as public displays of intelligence or actions which overtly reflect drive and ambition.

Participants in Hidalgo's research were taught to 'resist strategically', which involved viewing their time in school as a war and them being taught how to 'play with the enemy' by remaining success driven and seeking to achieve. Although Hidalgo also makes reference to self-defeating acts of resistance, she calls for consideration of how these acts also serve a self-preserving function, and therefore could equally be seen as *self-preserving resistance*. Giroux (1983) argues that it is not the behaviour per se that determines its status as resistance rather it is whether 'it emerges out of a latent or overt ideological condemnation of the underlying repressive ideologies that characterize schools in general.' (p289).

2.5.1.4 Everyday acts of resistance

Referring to the classic works of Scott (1985, 1990) on peasant resistance, Wade (1997) notes that an often made observation of resistance in the face of oppression is that overt challenges to such oppression is often met with shows of (often disproportionate) power to supress such challenge. As a result, many who wish to engage in resistance do so through various means of 'playing with the enemy' in the form of small everyday acts. Tuck and Yang (2011), also drawing on Scott (1985, 1990), and Vinthagen and Johanson (2013) note the departure these everyday acts take from overt oppositional actions designed to bring down oppressive systems in one fell swoop and argue instead that every day acts of resistance are covert and concerned with immediate gains. Tuck and Yang (2011) suggest the strength of such acts of resistance is in their invisibility and in being so, their ability to 'limit the capacity for power to reconstitute itself in response.'(p524).

Such acts are not necessarily always invisible however. McFarland (2001) refers to visible manifestations as everyday forms of active resistance and defines them as the efforts to bring about change within a classroom setting. Although the overt nature of active resistance calls attention, and subsequent attempts of suppression, McFarland nonetheless locates them under the title of 'transformational resistance' noting that such forms can 'diminish the level of authority' in the classroom, ensure little work gets done and ensures a social reign which is uncomfortable for many educators (p615).

However, such acts of everyday resistance are not necessarily considered as such by those enacting them, not because they're not anti-oppression in nature, but because by their very everyday-ness they have become so normalised that they become indistinguishable as a conscious acts of resistance (Vinthagen and Johanson, 2013). Criticism aimed at the concept of 'everyday resistance' therefore is that all actions, whether they have resistance at their core or not, can easily become labelled as resistance, and somewhat romanticised in doing so (Vinthagen and Johanson, 2013). As such it becomes necessary to examine behaviour *and* its meaning rather than simply to name it resistance. The wholesale labelling of all such behaviours as resistance runs the risk of making the term meaningless, however this must also be counterbalanced against its under-use rendering acts of anti-oppression obsolete (ibid).

2.5.1.5 Resisting racism

Mac an Ghaill (1988) put forward three themes under which resistance against racism within schooling was expressed by the young people in his research: Resistance with accommodation; resistance with visibility and resistance with invisibility.

The concept of resistance with accommodation, whereby young people see achievement within the system as a way to beat it, was supported by Wright, Standen and Patel (2010) who posited that many young black women in particular utilised engagement with schooling as a form of resistance. Portnoi and Kwong (2015) also refer to this form of resistance as 'resistance through

achievement' and posit that the participants in their study used their desire to 'prove them wrong' in relation to negative racial stereotypes as the motivation to resist inequality and achieve success.

The female participants in Fuller's study (1980) were considered as being pro-education, however they were not *pro-school*. To some extent their expressions of resistance incorporated a number of themes suggested by Mac an Ghaill. For example, they worked hard at their school work and avoided engaging in behaviours that could result in them getting into serious trouble at school, however they nonetheless engaged in activities that frustrated staff. Fuller recognises that school rejection and school failure can be viewed as resistance to oppression, but disputes that being pro education and succeeding is simply conforming, it is posited instead that 'achieving' serves as an alternative expression of resistance. Mirza (1992) criticises Fuller's appraisal of the participants' actions rendering it as unrealistic and romanticised, arguing that Fuller's views that the participants were somehow 'highly politicised…and planned their actions as a defiant gesture to the world, does not stand up to greater scrutiny.' (p23). However as suggested above in relation to 'everyday acts', acts of resistance do not necessarily need to be either politicised or consciously planned to be considered 'resistance'.

Resistance with visibility, whereby young people openly challenge the inequalities they face by for example choosing not to conform to school rules, was also reported by Payne and Brown (2010) who posited that behaviours such as antagonising teachers and engaging in subculture based activities constituted 'responses to and strategies for coping with psychologically and physically hostile school environments' (p332). Whereas, as touched on earlier, it is important not to misinterpret and romanticise oppositional behaviours, it is also important to note that such behaviour is not necessarily representative of a rejection of education but instead may be viewed as a 'self –preserving and self-creating process' through which students can generate, and exercise autonomy (Nolan, 2011 p570).

Allen (2013) notes the precarious position 'black' students, particularly males, are placed in in relation to expressions of resistance, noting that behaviours

enacted by 'black' pupils are already often misinterpreted and more readily viewed in negative terms, therefore when they enact 'resistance' this is viewed as a problem of 'blackness' rather than examining the circumstances that may have provoked such acts of 'resistance'.

Resistance with invisibility which reflects disengagement from the schooling process without the overt opposition that accompanies resistance with visibility is also considered a means of psychological self-preservation utilised by those who already feel marginalised, alienated and ostracised from, and within, the schooling system (Harris and Parsons, 2001). Nicholas et al (2008) support this suggesting that educational disengagement is indicative of the use of psychological withdrawal from what is considered to be a discriminatory and oppressive environment.

Although some of the participants in Mac an Ghaill's study considered resistance by way of disengaging from schooling to be a positive strategy in facing adversity, and this view is supported on some level by the scholars above, Wright, Weekes and McGlaughlin (2000) argue that 'resistance by way of disengagement limits the transformative potential of resistance as a protest action.' (p40). They do however make a distinction between those who disengage from education (in the generic sense) and those who disengage from school but not from the education which can be gained in the community, positively referring to the latter as 'emancipatory dissent' (p41).' This distinction is also made by Fernandez (2002) who noted that although students may not disengage from school with clear social justice motives in mind, they may do it for the betterment of their families nonetheless, through seeking to find work instead. Furthermore, engagement in cultural expressions such as was the case with the Rasta boys in Mac an Ghaill may, through its expression of an emancipatory practice, reinforce identity and agency (ibid).

2.5.2 Resilience

Resilience is often defined simply as the ability to bounce back, repeatedly and effectively, when faced with adversity (Gu and Day, 2007), or the capacity to

transcend negative circumstances and succeed in spite of such circumstances (Yates and Masten, 2004). Some, Yates and Masten (2004) for example, argue that resilience is not a personality trait, but instead is an adaptive system developed to confront adversity, whereas others (Cohn et al, 2009) suggest that it is in fact the presence of a particular trait of the personality which influences an individual's capacity to adapt to changing, challenging environments. A middle ground proffered is that which suggests both may be true, that is that there exists 'ego resilience' which refers to a personality characteristic and resilience as an action, or rather reaction, to adversity (Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker, 2000).

Shepherd, Reynolds and Moran (2010) conceptualise resilience as a process 'marked by certain pivotal moments followed by both short-term and longer-term, multi-faceted recovery strategies (p289). Cefai (2004, 2007) also offers a definition which positions resilience as a *dynamic* process, adapting across time and contexts, influenced by the specifics of an individual's life. Painted in these terms, the concept of resilience appears somewhat more idiographic. Suggesting that both the presence and extent of resilience is different both between individuals and for an individual at different times, based on the way that internal, social and environmental resources interact during adverse times.

Resilience research suggests that whether an individual has the ability to overcome challenging situations, and even whether they find themselves facing such challenges, is influenced by the assets, risks, protective factors and vulnerability factors that they have access to/ are exposed to (Young and Masten, 2004). Assets are defined as resources that promote the probability of positive outcomes. These can be internal (i.e. traits that the individual has such as the ability to think positively) and/or external (i.e. such as supportive relationships). Risks are seen not as the adversity itself but as events or situations that heighten the likelihood of adversity occurring. Protective and vulnerability factors are defined as processes that come into their own only once adversity is already present, that is to say such factors will determine the level of impact the adversity is likely to have. Protective factors include social interaction skills, significant relationships, a sense of personal efficacy, a future

orientation and autonomy amongst other things (Howard and Johnson, 2004, Brooks, 2006). The importance of personal efficacy and autonomy is highlighted by Lemay and Ghazal (2001), who argue that the ever increasing trend to rely on professionals to support individuals through adversity actually runs the risk of depleting/ negating the resources that young people themselves own.

2.5.2.1 Young People and resilience

Protective factors particularly pertaining to young people and resilience include having an easy disposition that draws positive responses from those around them (Brooks, 2006), connectedness to caring and responsive adults (ibid), and social competence, autonomy and opportunities for meaningful engagement (ibid). Furthermore, to support resilience students need to be provided with opportunities to develop a sense of self efficacy and identify and take ownership of their own personal goals and achievements (Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001, Tiet, Huizinga and Byrnes, 2010) and educators need to display high success expectations for all students (Rubie-Davis, Hattie and Hamilton, 2006). However, in order for individuals to be able to enact upon personal agency, young people need to be located in environments that are able to provide these resources (Bolzan and Gale, 2011). Given what we know from the above literature about young, 'black' people's experiences of education question may be raised as to whether they are in such environments.

Resilience capabilities build on themselves (Tiet, Huizinga and Byrnes, 2010) causing what is termed in the educational field as 'the Matthew effect' (Stanovich, 1984), in other words those that have protective factors develop and strengthen more, whereas those who don't not only fail to develop in new areas but also see a decrease in those that previously existed. Resilience as such may be considered an environmental product (Brooks, 2006), it is like a muscle that grows stronger as the result of external manipulation either in terms of nurture (protective factors) or resistance (risk factors/ adversity).

Specifically in relation to young people and school, Cefai (2004, 2007) argues that it is problematic to frame resilience simply as academic achievement

suggesting that in doing so theories of resilience move away from considering resilience as part of a wider set of social processes to focussing on the individual child. Ungar (2008) picks up on this theme in relation to culture, arguing that if education is provided in ways that are 'culturally less meaningful' to individuals and promotes goals which are disproportionately more restricted, its role in resilience is compromised.

Payne and Brown (2010) refer to sites-of-resilience theory, which pertains to locations within which different conceptualisations of satisfaction or accomplishment are considered alongside the strategies people choose to address adversity given issues of racism, sociohistorical patterns, the intersection of economic poverty and resilience and personal constructions of resiliency (p318). This theory suggests that pupils denied the means of gaining a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment through school related achievements may seek out other locations, such as the streets, whereby they are able to do so and through this gain the means for scaffolding resilience.

2.5.2.2 Cultural bias of resilience research

Ungar (2006/ 2008) suggests that resilience cannot be understood separately from the culture from which a person belongs, or the resources available to that culture, and therefore offers the following definition:

Resilience is both an individual's capacity to navigate to health resources and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these resources in culturally meaningful ways (p55/ 225).

Furthermore, Ungar also argues that *'All aspects of resilience are not created equal'* in other words, factors that are more or less protective will depend on both the culture and the context within which that culture exists.

However much of the research into resilience has focused on studies conducted on 'white' participants only (Ungar, 2006, Clauss-Elhers, 2008) and those that do focus on other ethnic groups often use measures of resilience which have

been validated via white-only studies with no consideration made to either cultural implications of, or on, resilience or subsequent interventions (ibid). Without taking into account cultural implications, approaches to support resilience may fail to take into consideration relevant risk factors to be addressed or protective factors which can be capitalized upon (Boyden, 2003, Tiet, Huizinga and Byrnes, 2010), as what may be considered a risk or protective factor in one culture may not be in another (Botrell, 2009). In other words, Eurocentric research into resilience fails to take into account that influencing factors may be in the culture tinted lens of the beholder (Aldwin, 2008) and when stressors are identified, more harm than good may be done by promoting coping strategies that are in contradiction to the cultural norms of the recipient (ibid).

2.5.3 Resistance as resilience

Bottrell (2007) calls for the concept of resistance to be viewed as 'practices which express opposition to rules and norms in specific contexts, and which contain critiques of social relations, from the lived experience of marginalisation.' (p599) as opposed to behaviour that is simply oppositional, reflective of a deficit in the individual and viewed remote from social context. Given the position of marginalisation of some young people, Bottrell argues that resistance can be viewed as resilience, that is to say that it can be seen as the young person making adaptions to survive and prosper in their environment in spite of the adversity they face. The question of whether this is a positive adaption or not becomes dependent on the audience. Bottrell argues that primacy of viewpoint is reflected in the way that young people's acts of resistance have been misconceptualised and how resilience has been defined- that is to say how people have learned to find their place in the 'mainstream' world rather than opting out and redefining their world and its values for themselves. Taken from the latter stance the rationale of some resistance, despite initially appearing negative or counterproductive, can be better understood and suggests that the change which needs to be made may in fact relate to the perspective of the adults interpreting 'resistance' or 'resilience' rather than the young people enacting them.

2.6 Agency

Lister (2004) notes that agency 'characterizes individuals as autonomous, purposive and creative actors, capable of a degree of choice.' (p125). It is considered important in supporting young people to make sense of their world (Munford and Sanders, 2015) and yet is dependent on the level of voice they have in that world (ibid). In this sense many young people experience an agency which is bounded by their social situation and the socio-political, social-historical and socio-economic influences which dictate this (ibid). Nonetheless the young people in Munford and Sander's study found ways to develop their sense of agency and bolster self-worth, however these 'ways' were not always of a nature that ultimately provided positive results, rather they were negative behaviours that ran the risk of resulting in further restrictions of autonomy and agency.

Aaltonen (2013) suggests that in contrast to adults, young people are hyper-aware of the restrictions placed on their agency as a result of power structures and that this restriction, in the same 'bounded' sense as mentioned above, means that they only ever have a limited range of options available to them to exercise this agency. Again it is noted here that oppositional behaviours fall within this limited range of options and are therefore possibly taken up, however misguidedly, as a means of exercising autonomy and agency.

2.6.1 Aspiration

2.6.1.1 What influences drive to succeed?

St. Clair and Benjamin (2011) raise a number of interesting points for consideration in relation to aspiration. Firstly, they argue that the aspirations expressed by young people are tempered by the expectations and limits of the

environment in which they find themselves. They note that there is little evidence to suggest that increasing aspirations has a direct impact on increased achievement. Yet a focus on aspirations very easily leads to those exposed to restricted environments being blamed for their limited aspiration and limited achievement-i.e. 'if only they'd dreamed bigger they'd have made something of themselves'. St. Clair and Benjamin argue instead that the issue isn't people not aspiring enough, but rather the restrictions they find themselves up against in trying to achieve these.

Of course some young people do have what could be characterised as low aspirations. However St.Clair and Benjamin invite the consideration that this may be a psychological strategy implemented to avoid the impact of failing- e.g. set your expectations low and you won't be disappointed. Or a pragmatic evaluation of what is achievable within acknowledged limits. They further note that aspirations are often not static, but rather dynamic, responding to changes in circumstance or a person's evaluation of those changes.

But even for those who demonstrate high aspirations St Clair and Benjamin question whether this is a true reflection of their aims or whether they have simply learned that when asked about aspirations you get a positive response if you say you want to go to college/university/become a doctor, regardless of whether you actually believe you can achieve those things. Regardless of stated aspirations, St, Clair and Benjamin posit that what remains 'far more problematic is affecting the material and cultural factors that affect actual outcomes rather than the outcomes aspired to' (p516).

Law, Finney and Swann (2014), in contrast, argue that aspiration is influenced by a sense of self, which also influences a person's motivation to act- the more highly developed the sense of self, the higher the aspiration and motivation to act. Subsequently they suggest this leads to higher academic achievement. They do however concur with St. Clair and Benjamin in that they consider development of a person's sense of self is bound up in social, political and economic factors where 'possible selves are validated and affirmed or threatened or ignored by those around us.' (p 577).

2.6.1.2 Aspiring while black

A number of studies on aspiration conclude that there is no clear or strong link to suggest that young 'black' people have lower aspirations (Archer, DeWitt and Wong, 2014, Law, Finney and Swann, 2014). Archer, DeWitt and Wong (2014) found that U.K 'minority' ethnic groups showed greater aspirations towards becoming doctors/ working in the medical field than their white British counterparts. 'Black' respondents had the highest percentage indicating such with 53.8% in comparison to 29.9% of their 'white' peers.17.7% wanted to go into science, in comparison to 13% and 80% wanted to go into business compared to 59%. Archer, DeWitt and Wong concluded that there wasn't a poverty of aspiration amongst young people, particularly U.K 'minority' young people, and therefore the continual rolling out of initiatives to raise aspirations does nothing to address inequality in education but rather serves to hide it whilst essentially blaming young people themselves for not aiming high enough.

Law, Finney and Swann (2014) note that what may risk influencing aspiration is the awareness these students have of the inequality they are faced with. Nonetheless the participants in their study were considered to have developed a strong resilience, accompanied by high aspirations and influenced by family expectations and their own sense of autonomy and agency, despite the adversity faced within the schooling system.

A study by Strand and Winston (2008) identified a number of factors which they felt to be significantly associated with academic aspirations. The highest predictive factors were: Commitment to schooling; academic self-concept; positive peer support; disaffection/negative peers; and home educational aspirations. Children of African-Caribbean descent scored highest for 'Disaffection/negative peers' and 'commitment to schooling'. Although the paper doesn't go into the reasons as to why African-Caribbean children score highest in these areas, one could hazard a guess based on research presented earlier in this review. What is interesting to note is that African-Caribbean children scored second highest, after African children, for 'academic self-concept', 'home

educational aspirations' and 'positive peer support', suggesting that their disaffection and lower commitment to schooling is not as a result of how they view their ability or no home/peer support.

Frostick, Phillips, Renton and Moore (2016) offer support to Strand and Wilson's identification of factors influencing academic aspirations noting that relationships with school staff and identification with the school community serve as supportive factors. However parental aspiration for their children's education was argued to be the most influential. An interesting point they raised, and which might support in understanding the differences observed in African commitment to schooling and low levels of disaffection, pertains to the diminishing protective factors of culturally influenced high expectations the longer an immigrant population faces inequality. In other words, African populations (in any significant numbers) are relatively new to the U.K compared to the African-Caribbean populations and so have yet to experience the accumulative impact of multi-generational inequality.

2.7 Conclusion

Figures relating to academic streaming, attainment, identification with behavioural difficulties and exclusions indicate that inequality in UK schooling, as it pertains to pupils of African-Caribbean descent, remains an area of concern. However, of equal concern is what this review suggests in relation to the way in which pupils may be *experiencing* school. Research presented here relating to the experience of 'minority' ethnic groups in school suggests that racism and discrimination form a part of that experience, with some young people encountering this on a daily basis. Relatedly, there is a common thread weaving through much of the research which indicates that issues of inclusion, low levels of belonging and loneliness are present as part of how many 'minority' ethnic groups experience their time in school. Although the research indicates that these issues exist for numerous ethnic groups who find themselves in a minority position in schools, research (e.g. Bhui et al, 2005, Karlsen, 2005) posits that in the UK the impact of racism and discrimination on

mental health for people from African-Caribbean descent may be more significant than for other groups. Given the figures relating to inequality in schooling it might be argued that although these issues exist for other 'minority' ethnic groups, the levels and the outcomes are more significant for people of African-Caribbean descent. This difference is perhaps better understood when the issue of racism is viewed in the way proposed by CRT both as how racism pertains to a number of systems working together and as a socio-political paradigm which reflects the differing conditions of oppression experienced by different ethnic groups. Meaning that not all groups are starting from the same point and as such the impact of certain experiences will not be the same either.

In relation to belonging, the above research suggests that the level of sense of belonging can be impacted by one's 'minority' status and mediated through access to same-ethnicity peers and high levels of diversity. Anderson (2002) posited that ethnicity was not a major factor in pupils' sense of belonging when all other things were equal, Booker (2006) argued that one's ethnicity ('black' American in that case) could make some pupils more vulnerable and more likely to experience negative interactions which subsequently impacted on their ability to develop a sense of belonging.

Despite the inequalities that occur within the UK school system, research (Law Finney and Swann, 2014, for example) suggests that pupils of African-Caribbean descent continue to aspire and achieve. Research (Wright, Standen and Patel, 2010, Portnoi and Kwong, 2015 etc.) in relation to both the experience of young black pupils and response to oppression, suggests that this may be a form of resistance, however young people may also choose to resist by challenging the system and withdraw their engagement from it. Interestingly participants in Mac an Gail's study (1988) who employed these very different approaches saw them as a form of successfully navigating the school system and prompted an interest for me in how young people perceive success during their time in school.

Case and Hunter (2012) argue that resistance alongside resilience (and coping) form a means of adaptive responding. Resilience in young people is argued to

be supported by meaningful engagement, personal efficacy, autonomy, taking ownership of personal goals and future orientation. Autonomy and taking ownership of goals and future orientation aligns with the characteristics of Agency, being autonomy, purposive and the ability to exercise a degree of choice. Which in itself is reflective of aspiration as it pertains to a means of exercising autonomy and agency. Aaltonen (2013) notes that agency is bounded by social situations and as such can limit the options available to marginalised young people, however since there does not appear to be a paucity of aspiration for young people of African-Caribbean descent, this would suggest that they are able to engage adaptive responding to counteract the discriminatory social situation they are faced with.

2.8 Rationale for current research and research questions

Drawing on the themes emerging from the literature review relating to the experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in schools in the UK, this current study aims to offer an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon from a psychological perspective, utilising an interpretation of the perceptions of young people as they reflect on the way they experience school. The study attempts to provide three things in relation to this phenomenon: a space where- individual experiences can be voiced, acknowledged and archived; collective experiences can be reflected upon; and resilience, Resistance and agency can be explored. Section 1.4 highlights the original contribution of this research.

In light of the aims of this current research, the research questions are:

•What are the attitudes of pupils of African-Caribbean descent towards their schooling and education?

•What are the perceptions of pupils of African-Caribbean descent around their school experience?

•In what ways do conceptions of personal success emerge from the participants' accounts in relation to their school experience?

• In what ways are the concepts of resilience, Resistance and agency discernible in the participants' accounts of their experiences?

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Paradigms in research

A paradigm refers to one's way of looking at the world. Although many paradigms exist there are four major ones most often referred to in research: Postpositivism, constructionism, transformative and pragmatic (Merten, 2015). The paradigmatic position adopted in one's research is reflected in/reflective of the ontology (belief surrounding the concept of reality), epistemology (view on the concept of knowledge- how it comes to be known and validated) and methodological approach (how knowledge and understanding can be obtained) of the researcher. Table 2-1 below (adapted from Merten, 2015, p 11) summarises each paradigm. Positivism is the paradigm most readily associated with science and a quantitative approach and is characterised by the belief that there is only one version of the world, or reality, and that in order to be claimed a 'truth' knowledge needs to be testable (Ashworth, 2015). Qualitative researchers reject this positivist stance and more readily align themselves with a relativist standpoint which concerns itself with how individuals construct and create meaning and make sense of their reality (ibid).

Table 2-1: A table showing a summary of the four main paradigms referred to in research.

	Positivism/ Postpositivism	Constructionism/ social constructionism	Transformative	Pragmatic
Ontology What is 'real'?	Only one reality exists, can be 'knowable'	Multiple realities which are socially constructed through an individual's interaction with others.	Multiple realities possible based on socio-historic position.	Single reality made different through individual interpretations

Epistemology	Objectivity is possible and is paramount	Interactive relationship between researcher, participant and production of knowledge	Interaction between researcher and participant, power and trust has influence, knowledge is situated in socio-historic context	Changes depending on what researcher deems apt
Methodology	Quantitative, decontextualised	Qualitative	Qualitative (dialogic)	Varies depending on research question

3.2 Ontological and epistemological stance

Relativism is the belief that our interpretation of artefacts (things, experiences etc.) is not a mirror reflection of how things are but rather is a construction, in other words that their 'being' is relative to an individual's construction (Sullivan, 2010, Willig, 2013). In contrast, realism refers to the view that the way something is represented is a *true reflection* of how something *is* (Sullivan, 2010). In this sense, realism aligns itself with positivism or postpositivism, whilst relativism aligns with constructionism or social constructionism as it is also known. Given that this research aligns itself on some levels with the social constructionism paradigm, and in doing so adopts something of a relativist outlook, it may seem fitting to refer to it as relativist social constructionist in nature. However, this claim is arguably weak because 'the relativistic view that all perspectives, accounts or versions of events are potentially equally valid has political consequences' (Sullivan, 2010, p29), that is it risks creating a situation wherein no claim can ever truly be supported or refuted and in turn making it impossible to challenge oppressive and discriminatory practices (ibid). A more fitting stance is one in which it is acknowledged that a socially constructed element exists in people's 'reality', and consequently the existence of multiple versions of 'reality', which is foregrounded by the view that the legitimacy of a

person's version of reality must be mitigated by an acknowledgement of socio-political, socio-historical, economic influences and vigilance must be employed to prevent the potential over-privileging of views which if given equal legitimacy risks negating marginalised voices and continuing social inequality (Merten, 2015).

An alternative position to take to 'relativist social constructionist' comes from the recognition that although realism and relativism are polar opposites there is room for other standpoints in-between. Two such standpoints appear as potential alternative candidates: Critical realism and Phenomenology.

Critical realism, despite its name, aligns with relativistic approaches in that it subscribes to the principals of constructionism in rejecting the notion of science and knowledge as objective, however it also rejects the notion that a person's concept of reality is purely a construction resulting from social interaction (ibid). Instead it adheres to the view point that the world/reality is made up of a series of actual happenings/entities to which individuals bring their own interpretations (Frost, 2011). In relation to research, Critical Realists do not consider data in itself to 'reflect' (be the thing) that is going on in the world but instead that interpretation of this data needs to be employed to support the understanding of the phenomena being explored (Willig, 2013, p16).

Phenomenologists take the view that there are many 'worlds' since one phenomenon can be experienced in as many ways as there are individuals (Willig, 2013). They adhere to the idea of there being a 'reality, which is evidenced through the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of individuals and phenomenologist researchers are concerned with the subjective experiences of individuals (ibid). As such, research of this nature is not concerned with gaining an accurate reflection of a pre-determined reality rather it is concerned with gaining in depth knowledge of one's 'experiencing' of their reality, in other words the research is about what that experiencing *is like*. Phenomenologists believe then that there is a reality that individuals reflect on in their own way and as researchers they do not take this account at face value but seek to 'interpret' it. This interpretation is performed taking into consideration both the story told by

the participant and the social, cultural and theoretical context within which the phenomenon takes place (ibid).

Wertz (2011) intimates a natural fit between phenomenology and psychology when he posits that 'no other discipline is closer to phenomenological philosophy or has received greater attention in the movement than psychology' (p129). As I adhere to the critical realist paradigm I consider my epistemological and ontological stance to be Critical Realism, and as the current research is both concerned with the experiencing of a phenomenon by individuals and sits within Psychology, my approach within this is aligned with phenomenology as a complementary paradigm (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006). I consider this research to be Interpretative Phenomenological and have chosen Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an appropriate method.

3.3 IPA

Given my ontological and epistemological stance it seems pertinent to dedicate a little time to presenting some of the philosophical and theoretical foundations of IPA in order to understand how my stance is aligned with this approach and therefore further the reasoning behind my choice of this as a method of research. IPA is informed by three central tenets: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Idiography. The following section will explore these tenets starting with phenomenology.

3.3.1 IPA's philosophical foundation

3.3.1.1 Phenomenology

The following section builds on the introduction to phenomenology in section 3.2 by considering IPA's philosophical foundations and the ways in which these influence/ support IPA as an approach.

Phenomenology is described as a philosophical approach, the focus of which is the exploration of lived experience or, perhaps better conceptualised as, the 'experience of living'. It seeks to explore what *experience* is like rather than placing focus on the individual activities that make up that experience (Frost, 2011) and in doing so provides guidance to others in how to explore, and understand, the phenomena of being human (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009.)

3.3.2 Phenomenological research

Phenomenology as a term in the domain of psychology characterises research, theory or practice concerned with first-person experience (Wertz, 2011). As opposed to being concerned with the 'how' or 'why' of a phenomenon, Phenomenological research has at its core a desire to know what the *experience* of a phenomenon is like. It does not therefore seek to offer us theoretical musings through which we will then be able to understand and solve the phenomena as a problem but instead it furnishes those interested in the phenomena a means of gaining insight into what it means to those experiencing it so that it can be better understood from their world view (Van Manen, 1997). The focus is on meanings not statistical relationships and as such the aim of phenomenological research is to give space to, and elucidate, meaning as they are lived. Phenomenological research is then in its most simplest term the study of lived experience and perhaps in the most grandeur terms the search for what it means to be human (ibid, p10).

3.3.2.1 Phenomenological research giving voice to marginalised groups

Scientific research, rather than being an objective entity, is ultimately a social activity conducted under the influence of socio-histo-political contexts (Sullivan, 2010). As such it has often not been a friend to marginalised peoples, at times being used to nullify their voice and justify or engineer their subjugation (ibid). Phenomenological research offers a methodological framework which provides

a space for people to speak for themselves (Tillman, 2002), for the participant's own point of view to be captured and provides space for participation in research in meaningful ways (Orbe, 2000).

Whilst championing the use of phenomenological research with marginalised people Orbe (2000) does present a number of potential risks from its use: that the thematization process risks reducing complex racial experiences to oversimplified 'themes'; that the analysis process universalises and in doing so may be perceived to privilege 'commonality over diversity' and 'ultimately create generalisations' (Orbe, 2000, p617). Nonetheless it is acknowledged that it is possible for phenomenology to be used to reveal 'commonalities in diverse experiences' whilst still acknowledging that diversity exists (ibid, p617).

Taking a phenomenological approach does not in itself provide a panacea for inequality in research. Given that it ultimately remains one of the 'master's tools' it is unlikely that it will ever truly be able to dismantle the 'master's house' (inequitable access to a heard voice/power structure/ researcher elitism etc.) (Orbe, 2000). However, the key is to ensure that it is used in such a way that it doesn't add to inequality either.

3.3.3 IPA's theoretical perspectives

3.3.3.1 Hermeneutics

A second tenet of IPA is that of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is most often defined as the theory of interpretation (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, Frost, 2011), although Howitt and Cramer (2014) also note that it has been conceptualised as the *analysis of message*. Hermeneutic's presence as a tenet in IPA highlights interpretation as an important and necessary aspect of phenomenology, reflecting an understanding that much can be hidden in plain sight. The role of interpretation then is to reveal hidden layers (Frost, 2011). The purpose of which in IPA is to seek to *understand the speaker* as much as it is to *understand what is said* (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Those engaged in the interpretation may, by drawing on their psychological knowledge as well as

other shared stories, proffer a perspective which the participant was previously unaware of and as such the researcher may come to understand the participant more than the participant understands them self (ibid).

3.3.3.2 Interpretation and 'bracketing'

In relation to the act of interpreting, Heidegger posits that it 'is never a pre-suppositionless apprehending of something presented to us' (1970/1927, p191-2) and therefore interpretation will always take place through 'fore-conception' shaded lenses. Consequently, he calls for an awareness of this to be in place during interpretation so that preconceptions are able to be recognised as such when they appear.

Continuing with Heidegger's thread, Gadamer (1990/1960) argues that there exists a complexity between the person doing the interpreting and the one whose 'text' is being interpreted in that the interpreter also has their own lived experience which produce pre-conceptions and which run the risk of being projected on to the text and influencing their interpretations (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Prevention of this 'projection' calls on the researcher to apply the process of 'Epoche' or 'bracketing' as it is otherwise described. This is a means by which the researcher seeks to block the influence of their own lived experience and the presumptions it has created. Langdridge (2007) defines the aim of epoche as allowing 'the researcher to describe the 'things themselves' and (attempt to) set aside our natural attitude or all those assumptions we have about the world around us' (p18) so that we are able to consciously set these aside and meet another person's 'story' as if for the first time.

The phenomenology camp however is split regarding the viability of achieving this (Langdridge, 2007). The transcendentalists posit that it is possible to move beyond one's own experience, to step outside of it and see an occurrence as others might, whilst the existentialists believe that, although a noble quest, one can never really achieve a complete bracketing off (ibid). However, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) posit the important thing, regardless of one's

viewpoint on the viability of bracketing, is an awareness, and open and honest acknowledgement, of one's own presumptions and preconceptions, in order to ensure any interpretation is of the participant's reality and not ours.

3.3.3.3 Idiography

Idiography, the 3rd tenet at the nucleus of IPA, encourages intense focus on, and detailed analysis of, the 'particular' as opposed to primacy of concern being the ability to make generalised claims about groups or whole populations (Smith, 2010, Frost, 2011). 'Particular' in the IPA sense refers to 'how particular experiential phenomena have been understood from the particular people, in a particular context.' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p29). Particular, from an IPA stance, is not considered to be the same as 'individual', as, being influenced by Heidegger, IPA recognises a person's being as always existing in relation to something or someone else (ibid). In other words, a person's experience does not occur in a bubble.

3.4 Other qualitative analysis methods

There are a number of alternative methods for analysing qualitative research and table 3-1 highlights some, including the basis of their exploration. Given the research questions and the epistemological stance within which they are grounded, IPA was chosen as the most appropriate.

Table 3-1: A table showing alternative methods for analysing qualitative research (adapted from Frost, 2010, p4).

Grounded Theory	Seeks to explore the psychological processes which help answer the question of what/how/why something is happening
Discourse analysis	Seeks to explore how language is used, what is said, why, the power represented, and the impact

Narrative analysis	Seeks to explore how individuals make sense of their worlds and create meaning through the use of stories
IPA	Seeks to explore and interpret an individual's perception related to a particular phenomenon and the meaning this holds

3.5 Reflexivity and positionality

Since the notion of objectivity is not claimed by the phenomenological researcher and reflexivity/positionality are acknowledged instead, in taking up a phenomenological approach an additional protection is afforded to participant voice against hidden, unacknowledged bias. The phenomenological approach encourages me as a researcher to acknowledge my 'inner' (i.e. part of the community) relational status to the phenomena/participants in my research, to explore how this risks influencing my interpretations (bias) and therefore seek to bracket off what is 'mine' from what is 'theirs' (Frost, 2010).

As a researcher I recognise that through engaging with participants and texts I, as a tool of my research, will inevitably have an influence on the production of knowledge contained within this research (Yardley, 2015). It is important therefore that I engage in a reflexive process, whereby I seek to turn a critical gaze upon myself in order to identify the ways in which my 'being' may influence the research (Frost, 2010 p147). This reflexivity can be understood as a 'critical self-awareness of the ...historical-cultural situatedness of the researcher and the context of the research' (Finlay, 2014, p130) and calls for the researcher to engage in a continual process reflecting upon both oneself and the interpretations and conclusions drawn.

Reflexivity of this nature is particularly pertinent when the research involves groups that have been traditionally marginalised by society wherein 'dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen can emerge for researchers when they do not pay careful attention to their own and others' 'racialized and cultural systems of coming to know, knowing, and experiencing the world' (Milner, 2007, p391).

Milner (2007) provides a framework to support researchers in engaging in reflexivity taking a culturally sensitive approach (see appendix A1) and it is both this and guidance provided by Langdridge (2007) that I have drawn from to guide my reflections.

As a researcher I consider myself on some level to be an 'insider' of the group that this research is concerned with. As a person of African-Caribbean descent and educated in the UK's mainstream schooling system I share some of the characteristics of the participants. However, I am an outsider in the sense that I am of a different generation to the participants and therefore although we may 'share' an experience I am not a young person living this experience in the present. I am aware that at least 3 of the 4 participants come from professional households and so in this sense I am also an 'insider' in that I match their experience of African-Caribbean adults being highly educated and having professional roles. However, in relation to the actual participants I am an 'outsider' in the sense that we are at different stages of our life and learning journeys.

I have strong core beliefs about the presence of social and racial inequality in the Education system, both in a UK and global context. This initially comes from reflections on my own personal experience. Firstly, as a child of African-Caribbean descent navigating the system myself and secondly as a family/community member hearing and witnessing stories of inequality from elder, peer and younger generations. However, I have also read and researched widely in this area for both personal interest and for the purpose of assignments and final dissertation for my Masters, all of which have served to strengthen my core belief. This strong core belief presents a personal challenge to me as a researcher for a number of reasons. Firstly, I feel a duty to my community to be able to present a piece of research that acknowledges some of the barriers they face. I am also very mindful however of not presenting the community as hapless victims and therefore have a strong desire to be able to present their approach to these barriers in a way that demonstrates Resistance. I am continually conscious of the potential impact of my research on the wider

community and I am fearful of letting them down by ultimately producing something that can be used against them. For example, I wrestle with the fear of not encountering any examples of the young people having experienced racial inequality, and this being used as proof that it doesn't exist. Or the fear of finding examples of this, but not of any resilience/resistance which may then tie my research to those that position African-Caribbean people as victims. Reflection on these fears very much remind me of what W. E. B Dubois (1903/1994) refers to as 'double consciousness'. This is a term used to describe the way in which, it is posited, 'black' people have two streams of thoughts or consciousness running concurrently. Dubois posits there are our thoughts and how we see the world, but that we are also always looking at ourselves through the eyes of 'white' society and measuring ourselves by means of a nation that looked back in contempt (ibid). In other words, we continuously think about how our actions are viewed by 'white' society and, as in my case, ask what are the possible negative consequences of my actions for me and my community?

3.6 Validity

3.6.1 Validity and reliability in qualitative research

The criteria for measuring the quality of quantitative research are long established and continue to hold 'gold-standard' favour through their relationship with a hierarchical system which reinforces the value and necessity of such rigorous criteria (Yardley, 2015). In contrast no such established or rigorous criteria exist relating to qualitative research. Where criteria do exist, Yardley notes that it is within disciplines outside of psychology, meaning that their application is not always appropriate for judging the approach, methods or rationale taken.

Having a 'one-size-fits-all' set of criteria runs contrary to the kinds of philosophical ethos in which many qualitative approaches are grounded-that is

'that our knowledge and experience of the world cannot consist of an objective appraisal of some external reality, but is profoundly shaped by our subjective and cultural perspective, and by our conversations and activities' (Yardley, 2000, p217). As such, establishing fixed criteria which seek to establish a shared 'truth' or value whilst still holding to the above is challenging.

Reliability, the idea that it should be possible to replicate findings in different contexts, to different people at different times is also counter-intuitive to most qualitative research which instead is concerned with the impact of context and idiosyncratic differences. The purpose of such research is not to produce something that is necessarily generalizable from a small sample to a large static one but rather to shine a spotlight on a particular situation, from which it is hoped insights may be provided into similar contexts.

Qualitative researchers are somewhat caught in a 'Catch 22' then in relation to developing criteria. On the one hand, the very nature of most qualitative philosophies run contrary to the idea that 'truth' is universal and that the validity of its presentation can be measured by a formulaic set of criteria, however on the other hand they are at risk of constant criticism and devaluation of the research they produce as 'validity' holds such imposing weight in empirical research. The danger then is that select qualitative approaches whose criteria are more reflective of quantitative methods become more scientifically valued whilst others are relegated to an almost shaman like status (Yardley, 2015). Nonetheless Langdridge (2007), referring specifically to phenomenological psychology, argues that 'not only is it important for those of us working qualitatively to establish guidelines for best practice, but it is also necessary to make available such guidelines to quantitative psychologists interested in qualitative research so they have clear criteria for evaluating the quality of the work' (p155)

Attempts have been made at addressing the considered need for measuring validity, whilst still holding to the ethos. For example, Yardley (2000, 2015) coming from a psychology perspective, presents criteria (see appendix A2) within which she attempts to balance the arguments for and against criteria by

making 'diversity, mutation and openness to multiple viewpoints' central (2000, p218) as well as posing them as guidelines open to interpretation rather than being prescriptive. Tracy (2010) also posits 'criteria' which is presented as eight quality 'hallmarks' to be applied across paradigms (see appendix A2.1). For the purpose of this research I have chosen to adopt the Yardley guidelines.

3.6.2 Criteria particular to IPA

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) advise researchers to remember that IPA is a fluid, creative process which requires any validity criteria to be applied flexibly in order to take into account the idiosyncratic nature of each research piece (p184). Essentially application of the criteria is to support the process of validating the narrative presented as a sound one, rather than determining it to be one that presents the sole version of 'truth'. To this end Smith (2011) provides an IPA quality evaluation guide (see appendix A3) to support colleagues in the peer review process pre-publication which I found a useful supplement to Tracy's criteria for self-evaluating my research from an explicitly IPA standpoint.

3.6.3 Culturally sensitive research

Given the context within which this research takes place, it was felt that its validity should also be predicated on assessment of the research taking a culturally sensitive research approach. As such the framework for assessing culturally sensitive research approaches provided by Tillman (2002) was adapted and also used (see appendix A4).

3.7 Research design

3.7.1 Ethics

As a researcher who also has the dual role of Trainee Educational Psychologist it was essential that my practice during this research was informed by ethical guidelines pertaining both to the research process and to the profession. With this in mind this research was guided by the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics and conduct (2009), the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011) codes of conduct for research with human subjects, the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) (2012) guidance on conduct and ethics for students and the BPS's code of human research ethics (2014). The research also received ethical approval by the Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham prior to its commencing (see Appendix A5 for a copy of the ethics approval letter).

The nature of this research (i.e. involving young people, recalling experiences) meant that it required particularly close consideration of the guidance pertaining to informed consent, right to withdraw, doing no harm and confidentiality. Rather than cover these areas in a separate section entitled 'ethics' I will instead weave them through the following sections in order to demonstrate how the areas were addressed throughout the research process as a whole.

3.7.2 Sample size and homogeneity

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that three to six participants is a reasonable sample size to allow for 'the development of meaningful points of similarity and difference between participants' (p52), however in recognising the demands placed on those such as myself completing a professional doctorate they choose not to give a prescriptive number of participants. Instead they choose to note typical numbers of interviews included in previous research (4-10) whilst emphasising the point that analysis requires time and reflection which larger data sets may not allow for. Ultimately, the aim should be 'to gather enough experientially rich accounts that make possible the figuration of powerful experiential examples or anecdotes that help to make contact with life as it is lived' (Van Manen, 2014, p353). Within IPA there also needs to be a

level of homogeneity in the sample to the degree that the research questions will be meaningful to them.

The young people in this research were homogenous in that they were all of African-Caribbean descent, fell within a particular age range (14-18) and attended/ recently completed mainstream education. The final number of participants included in this research was 4 (totalling 4 interviews). The age of the participants were two 16 year olds, one 17 year old and one 18 year old and consisted of 2 males and 2 females. All of the participants went to different schools.

3.7.3 Recruitment Process

Following Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) guidance, the approach taken to recruit participants for this research was a purposive one. My research is concerned with the experience of young people of African-Caribbean descent and therefore it was only young people from this group that I was seeking to recruit. I employed a number of methods to seek participants. I am of African-Caribbean descent myself and I am involved in a number of community events which bring me into contact with parents and young people I therefore took the opportunity to present information about my research at a number of meetings. Although several people showed an interest, in the end only one of the final participants was recruited through this approach. I further employed an 'opportunities' method in that I provided information about my research to young people and parents that I know personally within the African-Caribbean community and of the final four participants one was recruited this way. I shared information about the research on a number of community related pages on social media (Facebook), this generated interest in the research and I was contacted by a number of parents. However, this ultimately did not prove a successful means of recruitment (for example the young people referred to by parents were too young/old or when the information was shared with the young people they didn't want to participate). Following interviews two of the participants spoke with me about other young people that they knew who may

wish to participate in the research (snowballing), information was given to the participants to share with the potential participants however this also proved unsuccessful. Two people who work in community engagement in different parts of the city approached me after hearing about the research and offered their support in recruiting participants. They shared information about the research across their networks, which resulted in the final two participants being recruited.

3.7.4 Informed consent

During the recruitment process, a brief overview of the research was given and permission was sought to forward more detailed information to those who expressed an interest. It was made clear that expressing an interest or giving permission to be sent further information would in no way be taken as consenting to take part in the research.

In the information provided to interested people (see appendix A6) a full explanation as to the purpose and requirements of the study was given, including what the data collection method would be, how data would/will be stored and details of how the findings would be disseminated. Explicit reference was made in relation to the potential risks which may arise from involvement in the research, such as the possibility of sensitive or personal topics being raised, recall of unpleasant personal memories and/or the potential for feelings of distress or anger to be experienced as a result of these. The potential benefits were also posited such as the participant having the opportunity to tell their story and have their voice heard. Details related to the right to withdraw were also made clear and explicit. This information was given both verbally and in writing on the consent form (see appendix A7) and an additional information sheet accompanied this, alongside the offer for any questions that the potential participant may be holding to be answered.

3.7.5 Right to withdraw

It was made clear to interested parties that they were under no obligation to participate and this was reiterated even after people had agreed they would like to take part in the research. A time lag was built in (between agreement and interview) to provide a period of reflection time for those who had agreed to take part to decide if they did indeed wish to participate. They were contacted again prior to the interview to review their involvement and again the right to withdraw, without prejudice or detriment, was made clear. This process was also repeated just prior to the actual interview taking place. An additional time lag was built in following the interview, with a stated cut off point, to allow time for participants to withdraw their contribution should they choose to do so.

3.7.6 Data collection

3.7.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews and Interview Design

Semi-structured interviews were used as the means of data collection in this research as IPA calls for a method which encourages participants to provide full and detailed accounts of their lived experiences. Such interviews allow questions to be developed and modified in reaction to the responses given by the participants allowing for deeper exploration of particularly interesting/relevant areas and adding to the idiosyncratic nature of the process (Smith and Osborn, 2015). Furthermore, such interviews are considered especially useful for idiographic research concerned with understanding how the participants make sense of their experiences (Frost, 2011).

It was hoped that the use of semi-structured interviews would allow the participants a level of freedom to raise their own concerns on an issue and generate questions idiosyncratic to them, which may prove to be more valid than ones predetermined by me (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998). Furthermore,

semi-structured as opposed to no structure was decided upon because in my experience of previous research complete abandonment of structure is counterproductive. Although any level of imposed structure runs the risk of limiting the scope of topics presented by the participant for exploration, I felt some structure to be beneficial in that it would allow me to maintain 'some consistency across interviews, the collection of good quality data and in achieving the aims of the study.' (Langdridge, 2007, p68) in an effective way as possible given the time constraints that I was working under (ibid)

3.7.6.2 Interview structure

Each participant was interviewed once only on a 1-1 basis. They had previously been informed that they were able to have a trusted adult present with them in the room during the interview but none chose to take up this option. The interviews took place in various settings pre-agreed with the participants, this was for the purpose of identifying somewhere that they would feel comfortable talking. One interview took part in a young person's home, and the other 3 took part in community venues. Prior to the interviews beginning I reviewed the information that the participants had been given including the consent form. It was reiterated that participation was voluntary and details of how to withdraw from the research during the interview and following it were particularly highlighted. This was done again at the end of the interview and given to the participants as part of a debriefing letter (see appendix A8). No participants chose to withdraw at that point, during the interview or afterwards.

Prior to the recorded part of the interview, I spent time engaging in general conversation with the participant for the purpose of building rapport and to support them in possibly feeling comfortable in talking with me about other topics. As anticipated in my ethics application some personal and sensitive topics arose during the interview which called for me to monitor closely the young person's mood. None of the participants appeared upset/distressed during the interview and therefore it was not felt necessary to terminate any of them.

I sought to end the interview on a positive note and therefore revisited strengths/positive reflections that the participants had raised again at the end of the interview. The recorded part of the interview was followed by a debrief whereby further conversations about how the participants had found the interview process were used to assess their moods. I gave the participants positive feedback on their contribution and engaged them in strengths-focussed conversation related to the positive futures that they had mentioned.

A debrief sheet was talked through with the participants which reviewed the purpose of the research and the participants right to withdraw, as well as providing information on where they could go if they felt upset in the future about any of the topics raised. All of the participants commented that they felt participation had been a positive experience nonetheless I contacted each participant a few hours after their interviews were complete with the purpose of assessing their mood after having some time to reflect on the experience.

3.7.6.3 Interview questions

The purpose of the interview process in providing a means by which the participants can share their lived experience is to produce thick, rich data for analysis (Smithy, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA interviews attempt to approach a research question 'sideways' (ibid, p58), in other words, research questions can often be quite abstract in nature and so rather than ask this question directly the interview provides the opportunity for a discussion of topics to take place which allows the overarching research questions to be asked through subsequent analysis (ibid).

Following the guidance proposed in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) I devised four open ended questions which it was hoped would be sufficient to open up space for the young people to provide rich answers. These questions were linked to the research questions and to themes emerging from the literature relating to the experience of children of African-Caribbean descent in schools.

1.0 Tell me about your views of school?

2.0 What does 'success' mean for you in relation to school/ education?

3.0 What kinds of things about being in your school are most challenging for you?

4.0 What do you do if you face challenges in your school?

On the interview schedule there was also the addition of a fifth question which asked if the young person wanted to add anything else, this was there to ensure that the young person had the opportunity to contribute anything that they may have felt was important but had not felt they'd had the opportunity to say.

Each question (bar the 5th) was accompanied by a series of additional questions that could be asked to draw out the young people's views on the themes/issues emerging from the related literature if these had not been spontaneously generated, alongside additional prompts (see appendix A9). Although there were a high number of sub-questions, many of which were closed questions, these were there to guide me in my questioning rather than necessarily to be asked of the young person directly. Furthermore, they had been included for the purpose of submitting to the ethics committee so that they were aware that sensitive questions relating to 'race', differential treatment, fairness etc. may be asked. In practice, question 1.0 was the only question that was asked both in the form written and in the order given. The rest were generally drawn out from points raised by the young people as part of the direction their interviews took.

The hope in starting with quite broad open ended questions was that this would allow the participants to generate their own concerns spontaneously, with additional questions allowing topics to be touched upon if they didn't spontaneously arise (Langdridge, 2007). Another purpose of the additional questions was to enable me to plan for any difficulty that I may encounter- such as drawing out experiences from particularly shy participants (ibid).

3.7.6.4 Data analysis

Although guidance is offered to support both the novice and experienced IPA researcher in analysing the data collected, there is not a prescriptive, one-size-

fits-all method to be applied, leading Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) to commend IPA's 'healthy flexibility' (p79) in this area. They do however note that a common vein which ties the IPA researcher's chosen analysing methods together is the focus on making sense of the participant's experience. This is informed by the shared principle of a commitment to understanding the world view of those participating in the research, alongside the application of a psychology influenced focus on the significance this has to the particular individual and context. As a result, a set of common processes to how analysis is considered have developed amongst IPA researchers whilst a flexibility in the application of these processes remains. For the purposes of this research I chose to follow analysis guidance from Smith, Larkin and Flowers (2009) (see appendix A10 for example).

Step 1: Verbatim transcription of interviews.

Although this isn't explicitly stated as a step in the process, it is an essential one which I feel worthy of reflexion. Guidance suggests transcription is done by the researcher to allow them to become fully engaged with the data and immersed in the participant's story. However, transcribing can be a long and arduous process and due to time restraints I had considered using the services of a transcriber but in the end decided not to. I found transcribing the interviews to be an invaluable activity which then allowed me to hear and record the nuances in the way the participants told their stories and subsequently engage better with the transcripts. Engaging in this activity laid a supportive foundation for the next step. I chose to transcribe all of the interviews at the same time before applying steps 2-6 to each individual case.

Step 2: Reading and rereading transcripts

Once transcribed I spent time repeatedly reading through the transcripts whilst listening to the recording. This served a number of purposes. Firstly, it allowed me to check that I had not made errors in my transcription. Secondly it allowed me to reflect on what the structure of the interview was so as well as noticing what was said I began to reflect on more on how it was said, what depth the

participant went into, where in the interview subjects came up etc. This activity allowed me to become further immersed in the stories being told whilst at the same time paying attention to my own reaction, giving me the opportunity to practice 'bracketing off' my own views and experience of the world and listen instead to those of the participants.

Step 3: Initial noting

Following the transcribing I set up the transcripts in such a way that space was made available on either side of the text for making notes, I kept the right hand side for initial noting and the left was used for emergent themes. Notations were made on paper copies of the transcripts as I personally find it easier to interact with text in this way rather than reading on a screen. Following the guidance by Smith, Larkin and Flower initial noting involved making descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments. The transcript was read and re-read a number of times to allow for deeper considerations, whilst at the same time allowing checking of the 'sense' of previous comments to be done.

Step 4: developing emergent themes

This involved revisiting both the notes made and the participant's original words, making interpretations and noticing themes contained within them. This called for me to imagine what a particular 'event' might be like and therefore how it may have been experienced for the young person. This posed something of a challenge for me in trying to 'imagine' while at the same time trying to bracket off my own similar experiences. This felt somewhat contradictory to me. The other challenge for me as a researcher, particularly given that I am applying an Interpretative Phenomenological approach, was in relation to the 'bracketing off' of my experience in order to ensure that it is the young person's story being told and not mine. For me this involved an acknowledgement, as done here, of my position. Alongside this it involved a recognition that in reality a truly complete bracketing can never occur regardless of the nature of the research or the

position of the researcher. We are human beings telling human stories. However, to attempt to sure up my attempts of bracketing to some level I chose to seek support from my research supervisor, a 'white', middle aged, male, to ensure the interpretation I was making and the conclusions that I was drawing could reasonably be seen to come from the voices of the young people/related literature.

Step 5: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Once I had identified themes these were noted down in chronological order. During the process of developing themes and in their noting down links between themes were already starting to become apparent and these were clustered into groups. What I also noticed was that some themes could be clumped together in more than one 'group', whereas others were outliers. At this stage those that could go into more than one group were placed in as many as fit, whilst the outliers made a 'group of one'. The text was then revisited to gain further clarity about the meaning of the interpretations, and their authenticity in light of the participants 'words', which resulted in themes only fitting under one group (sub-ordinate). Each sub-ordinate group was then given a title that reflected the overall theme, on occasion this was taken from the name of one of the emergent themes, where fitting.

Step 6: Moving to the next case

This involved moving through steps 2-6 and repeating the process with each subsequent participant. However, it called for an additional 'bracketing off' element than was needed for the first participant as in order to approach each story afresh it was necessary to bracket off the experiences shared through the transcripts as well as my own.

Step 7: Looking for patterns across cases

Once the steps had been proceeded through for all of the transcripts, the sub-ordinate themes for each participant were put together and compared. Continuing the analysis and interpretative process groupings emerged which became the super-ordinates for participants' sub-ordinate and super-ordinate themes).

Step 8: Identifying master themes

The super-ordinate themes were then analysed further and grouped under master themes.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings from the current study. It does this firstly by presenting the overarching master themes and associated super-ordinate themes, accompanied by a brief account of the process taken to discover and bring these together from across the participants. This will then be followed by a more in depth look at each of the super-ordinate themes, offering both quotes as they were presented by the participants and my interpretation as to their meaning and significance.

4.2 Master themes and Superordinate themes

From the analysis described in section 3.7.6.4, six super-ordinate themes emerged, 5 of which were shared across all 4 participants and 1 of which was shared by 3 of the 4 participants, as such all themes were carried forward (see table 4-1). This commonality of themes indicates a level of similarity across the participants in relation to the areas of significance to them, although as will be seen in the discussions below differences sometimes emerge in the meanings given to these areas of significance by the participants.

Super-ordinate themes	Makeda	Shaka	Candace	Malik
Valuing learning	X	X	X	x
Sense of racialized identity	X	X	X	x
Belonging	X	X	X	x
The emotional experience of schooling	X	X	X	
Overcoming experiences	X	X	X	X
Aspiring for the future	X	X	X	X

The final step taken in relation to analysis of themes was to consider what had already emerged across the previous stages from both individual participants and the group as a whole and to use this to identify how the super-ordinate themes group together under overarching master themes. These are presented in table 4-2.

Table 4-2: A table showing overarching master themes, the super-ordinate themes contained within them and the participants to whom the super-ordinate theme pertains.

Wanting to succeed	
Valuing learning	Makeda Shaka Candace Malik
Aspiring for the future	Malik Candace Shaka Makeda
Fitting in	
Sense of racialized identity	Makeda Candace Shaka Malik
Belonging	Shaka Candace Malik Makeda
Emotional experience of schooling	Makeda Shaka Candace
Transcending challenge	
Overcoming experiences	Shaka Malik Makeda Candace

4.3 Discussion of findings

4.3.1 Master theme 1: Wanting to succeed

This Master theme contained 2 super-ordinate themes, 'Valuing learning' and 'Aspiring for the future'. It reflects a theme which emerged across the participants related to the perceptions that they had around learning, and in particular the importance that it held for them, as well as perceptions of their capabilities and aspirations to achieve.

4.3.1.1 Super-ordinate theme: Valuing learning

All of the participants expressed that learning was important to them. This was expressed in a way that suggested the value of learning wasn't merely restrained to academic subjects or only took part in the school. For example, Malik stated:

…education was important because it allowed me to do things that I hadn't done before and it taught me new things that I'd never done before and kind of broadened my mind on certain things .(Malik 5:177)

There is a sense in Malik's account that he perceives there to be value both in the skills he was able to acquire as well as the transformative impact education had on his outlook towards certain things, and as such there were opportunities made available to him that would not otherwise have been. Shaka related the importance of learning to the impact it could have on his future self:

It's very important to me. I want..I..I aspire big. I want to do things in the future that not a lot of people will do, so I need to be educated in everything, anything I can be and, yeah, yeah, it's, it is a..it plays a big role in my life-teaching myself, yeah. (Shaka, 3:100)

Shaka's use of language here emphasises the significant role he perceives learning has and could have on his life, and he appears to demonstrate this

importance further by taking on the role of teaching himself. There is the sense in his 'need to be educated in everything' that he feels the more he learns the more guaranteed his success will be and his choice to take on educating himself may reflect a perception that what he learns in school will not be, in itself, sufficient.

In contrast to Shaka's future-focussed value orientation, Candace reflects the importance of learning to her as being the benefit it should provide in the here and now. This is in particular related to the role she perceives it is able to have in self-discovery.

Erm.....I think it's important to learn...to take a break from this focus on the future and learn about things that you need to know currently, about yourself rather than all these school topics which seem to be focused on all the time. (Candace, 5:178)

Here Candace appears to suggest that whereas learning is important, there is something of a divergence between what young people learn 'in school' and what is actually needed or important. Candace goes on to further state:

…there's certain things that you need to learn that you don't necessarily learn in school and you never really get the chance. (Candace, 5:150)

There is a sense that Candace feels there are things in life that are essential to know, to aid you in day to day life, and that she perceives there to be this element of beneficial learning 'missing' from school. As such Candace appears to give importance to learning and education that takes place 'outside' of school:

…very important for guidance into...life as well as work because school seems to just be focused on where you're going to work and what your future's going to be rather than what else comes with that. (Candace, 5:166)

This suggests that for Candace there is the belief that there is additional learning which needs to take place to support a successful transition into the world beyond school and that the nature of this learning is linked to understanding how 'the self' works. The other participants also describe ways in

which they make the distinction between the value of school (or not) and of learning

…schooling is often about hitting targets and...erm...you know about numbers and grades and stuff like that and it's not necessarily about what stays in and what sticks with you and what's useful, which is what I'd say is education and like half the stuff I was taught in secondary school I can't remember a word of it (laughs)...(Makeda, 3:128)

This suggests that for Makeda she experiences a mismatch between what she considers 'to be useful' to learn and what the school actually provides, this seems to be particularly pertinent to her in relation to the value this has in moving beyond school in that she feels what a lot of what she learnt was not retained, held on to or meaningful in her real world. This disconnect between what is valued in school and what is valued for her is also reflected in how Makeda describes the benefit she feels she gains from learning. Although there is some acknowledgement about the academic results of learning, she appears to equate the real value as providing her with evidence of her strength and tenacity.

I think, yeah, its, for me, like, you know it's not even about necessarily- well yeah I do like getting good grades and stuff (laughs) but I want the grades to be able to say that I actually overcame that rather than to say I'm like this kind of academically you know great student. It's more about you know, what I've been able to achieve regardless to what I've come through sort of thing. (Makeda, 13:549)

Malik also made reference to an external 'agenda', which appeared to locate the *purpose* of learning in school as being outside of his overall concept of the purpose of learning for life.

I guess education was more important than the schooling part cos the schooling is the government and what they want me to do but education is like me learning how to do those things so yeah that's basically how it goes. (Malik, 5:188)

Here Malik appears to perceive school as being something of a tool used by the government to their benefit, whereas he considers education as a benefit to him in that it imparts skills. Shaka articulates the mismatch between his value of learning and his views on school in the following ways:

I am bothered about school I just don't like it. Like, I want to learn, it's what I like doing but, yeah. (Shaka, 9:334)

Erm, I learn things at home, I read a lot, I have so many books. I can do that myself. (Shaka, 3:89)

Yeah I want to be able to do well..just get schooling out of the way so I can get the grades to do what I want to do. (Shaka, 14:533)

This suggests that Shaka appears to recognise 'school' as something important in the sense that doing well in school provides certain opportunities, and it is this that he is 'bothered about'. Rather than viewing school as a vehicle aiding him in achieving his future goals, Shaka appears to feel that school is something of a hindrance that just needs to be got through before he can do what it is that he actually wants to do.

4.3.1.2 Super-ordinate theme: Aspiring for the future

Each of the participants had threads running through their narratives which indicated their desires and plans to do well. Shaka demonstrated a steadfast perception that he would be able to achieve the things he wanted to even when he had been told this was not likely to be the case. In fact for Shaka, his very concept of success appears somewhat formulated around achieving more than what others think possible for him. He describes these points in the following two excerpts:

It's striving to achieve to what you've set which is higher than what anybody can think you can achieve. Like success for me is the Olympics, like being able to compete in that with a professional football team. I've been told I'm not good enough to play professional football but I'll try and get there and once I have I'll go further and I'll achieve the unachievable really, so yeah. (Shaka, 13:490)

But in GCSE maths I got told I wasn't gonna get graded, it was gonna be a 'U'. I got told that like 3 months before the exam constantly by teachers yet I came out with an A and they were shocked. I was..I wasn't shocked. I knew I could do it. It was simple, I found the paper really easy. (Shaka, 14:503)

Shaka describes the reaction of others having been of shock, however his own reaction appears to demonstrate a faith he held in his ability, he found the exam easy and so achieved because he could. As with Shaka's earlier comments relating to his perception that he has the ability to teach himself, the above implies a positive self-concept in relation to him feeling that he has the personal means to succeed and achieve both inside and outside of school.

As with Shaka's aspirations, Candace makes reference to aspirations both in terms of academic achievements and personal achievements:

Hopefully get good grades in mock exams coz then I can definitely see what career I'd want in the future. (Candace, 9:293)

...probably just to stay motivated...to achieve and learn, constantly learn new things coz you can never stop learning new things. (Candace, 8:280)

I'd like to do more performances outside of school which I have started to do with my singing and music. I've started doing little shows around, like performing for charities that I started doing over the summer coz that was always a goal of mine to kinda step out of that kind of safe area in school where people can't judge you, into like public spaces. (Candace, 9:300)

Here Candace provides a description of her aspirations on multiple levels. For example, she hopes to achieve in school, which she appears to suggest would then provide the foundation for her in moving into a career, as opposed to a job, in the future implying that she has hopes of continuing to be successful beyond her school years. She also appears to reflect that there is an 'affective state' to aspire to in order to support achievement i.e. 'motivated'. For Candace a distinction is made between the goals she has in school and outside of school. Part of this is a recognition on Candace's part that for her she needs to be outside of her own comfort zone to progress, however part of it may also relate

to her view that school is about academic targets and is somewhat in opposition to personal goals:

Inteviewer:...do you consider things away from the academic side to illustrate success?

Candace: Not in terms of school. Personally, then success would be achieving those kinds of dreams but school kind of back you away from that. (7:243)

As with other participants (Shaka and Candace), Malik demonstrated a lack of clarity around the exact nature of his future academic route, nonetheless it appears clear that progressing on to university was a hoped for part of that future:

Uhm..I mean I have a rough idea of what I want to do, not an exact idea. So after my A Levels, I have to take AS and then I have to take A2.I don't have to take A2 but I can if I do very well, after I take A2 I hopefully want to get into Uni where I want to do like a BioChemistry course or something amongst those lines of like science, cos I like science and I'm horrible at literature (laughs). (Malik, 10:408)

As with Candace, Malik makes reference to the importance of motivation, or 'pay off', to him in staying on track in relation to doing what needs to be done to achieve, particularly when things are 'boring'. For Malik this 'pay off' appeared particularly centred around an emotional concept wherein positive affect was both gained from achievement and used to drive him forward to aspire further:

…the process of learning can be kind of boring but when you get re..not rewarded but like when you work and get results it kinda makes you happy..ish. So when you put like a hundred percent in and you get a hundred perc..and like 5 percent back it kinda pays off and just makes you feel warm and fuzzy on the inside, so there you go. (Malik, 2:60)

Everyone..most of my friends, I actually asked them this week, most of my friends that are really happy and would rather receive achievements from doing exams cos it gives them a motivation and a drive to do something. It's kinda like working for a job and getting paid, it's kinda like..yeah, you get something out of it so kinda pay off. (Malik, 2:72)

Having an eye on future goals also seemed to support Malik in calibrating successes/disappointments in order to keep him on track.

It was, er, 1 mark off an A (laughs) in science, but I didn't m..care that much because I had succeeded any way and to become more successful at that point doesn't mean anything cos I know I've still got A Levels to do..I wanna go Uni..got all this other stuff, so it's just like one little..it's like a little stone in this like long road that I've got ahead of me. (Malik, 10:397)

Makeda illustrates her aspiration in the description she gives of wanting not only to attend university but to attend the top university for her chosen subject. For Makeda this display of aspiration is juxtaposed against a position of being made to feel this aspiration was beyond her means and as such appears intricately linked to the benefit she gained from achieving her desired results and being able to prove her doubter wrong:

…and I remember in one of our one-to-ones I said I wanted to apply to XXXXX university which is, you know, the top for English in the country and he said 'Errr, I think that might be a bit above your ability' and I was like 'What?! (laughs)...who says that to a student?!' You know I was getting my As in my English and stuff! Erm, and he was like ' yeah, I think I think you should apply to somewhere that's more fitting to you' or something like that, and he even wrote that in my report and it was just like astonishing to me.. and then when I ,you know, when I got my AS grades, which were decent like, and I told him that they could easily get me in the university that, that XXXXX university, he came back and he kind of asked what I got and his face just dropped because I think he remembered what he'd said. Erm, and to be honest that was just a great moment for me to be able to, you know, I didn't rub it in his face or anything but I just, you know I said the grade and that, that for me felt better than, I don't know, just getting grades. (Makeda, 14:572-594)

4.3.2 Master theme 2: Fitting in

This Master Theme contained 3 super-ordinate themes, Sense of racialized Identity, Belonging and Emotional Experience of Schooling. The theme of Fitting In emerged out of the reoccurring sense of 'sameness' and 'othering' that were reflected in the participants' accounts in relation to the super-ordinate themes. Overall I interpreted there to be an interplay between the participants' experience of 'blackness', their emotional experience of schooling and their sense of belonging through which sameness and othering can be seen as an interweaving thread. As such there is much cross over within the themes and where as they remain distinct, lines are at time indistinguishable.

4.3.2.1 Super-ordinate theme: Sense of racialized identity

All of the participants talked about what they felt the impact of being 'black' in their school setting was like for them. This was experienced differently for the participants depending on the setting. For those who went to a diverse school, they describe the experience as a positive one wherein their 'blackness' does not appear to carry any significance. For those in less diverse schools, there is a sense of 'othering', of being misunderstood and of not being in a place where they belong. These points will be illustrated below

Makeda, who attended a school with very little diversity (majority 'white') describes a changing sense of identity in moving into her secondary school. She expresses a sense of her *becoming minoritised* through the experience of entering into her 'blackness' in a way that she had not felt before in her previously 'raceless' primary school environment:

..where I kind of moved from the school that was very multicultural in primary school and to one where I was you know part of a significant minority in secondary school. (Makeda, 1:7)

…almost because there was that entire mix there was almost no concept of race almost (laughs)..and everyone got along regardless but.. erm then I went to my secondary school and it was predominantly white erm..I was one of about..I think about like..18 black students in, like, the hundreds in my year… (Makeda, 1:18)

...it was a really kind of weird shift. (Makeda, 1:28)

For Makeda moving into this new environment presented a 'culture clash' which she perceived as being in relation to how *she* was viewed and understood, as opposed to how she viewed and understood others. There is a sense in her account that she is the 'other', the new and unusual entity and that her presence required a shift in thought and behaviour from the majority population which, illustrated through their unintentional racism, did not seem to be forthcoming.

I think it was just...a complete culture clash really, just people not understanding...you know...the way I was, what the the music I listened to or the..you know just my culture really and they..they had no clue about it and you know, even the racism you'd experience because of that...sometimes they'd be completely oblivious to the fact that they were being racist... (Makeda, 1:32)

Shaka also attends a predominantly 'white' school and describes the experience of being a minority:

In my school there was only 4 people of African..African-Caribbean descent so it was kind of difficult being in a situation where it was just 4 of us and 1900, no, 1196, so.. In the whole school there was 4, yeah. Erm, yeah it was different. I didn't have as many friends, and I could see that, as some of the other kids who weren't of African..African-Caribbean descent. (Shaka, 6:197)

Here Shaka highlights his perception that simply the experience of being a 'minority' in a setting was difficult and that he was aware of a difference between the African-Caribbean pupils and the majority pupils ('white'). For Shaka, there is a sense of him encountering his 'blackness' as a negative thing, not from his own view point but from the treatment of others. Throughout his narrative he gives examples of how he and others that share his ethnicity are viewed and treated by society, teachers and peers:

…I'm stereotyped as lazy, not bothered about school that sort of thing like. (Shaka, 9:332)

…in class if there was somebody sat next to me who wasn't of African-Caribbean descent wasn't concentrating and I wasn't concentrating it would

always be me that got picked on to answer a question. And it..it was always, I can tell you that, about..no doubt.. (Shaka, 6:213)

…they've been called something and then been told they're not allowed to play football.. yeah..'go away Blackie' that sort of thing, like. Erm, that's..from the year below us as well, from the younger kids, that do that so it's even worse to be honest. (Shaka, 11:421)

Makeda also describes ways in which she appears to have had her 'blackness' imposed as a negative entity by her peers and staff, and the way in which she felt society in general reinforced this.

…I had some, you know, really grim experiences. I had you know people insult my hair and the texture of it, I had people insult my skin. Once I had a friend tell me.. 'do you like being black? I'm glad I'm not black'..my own friends and stuff… (Makeda, 2:52)

…it was a drama class and..the cl.., she separated the class into groups and the.., she separated 4 groups and it was 'the loud ones' and they were all like black students, then the 'beautiful, talented ones', all the white students, then the 'could be great' some of the white students again and then 'the mice', and I was in 'the mice' as the, you know, the introverted, black girl…(Makeda, 10:445)

I think black kids are often kind of viewed as the trouble makers immediately...or there's this, you know, kind of just societal view that black students aren't going to do as well.. (Makeda, 4:146)

The accounts given for both Shaka and Makeda highlight a perception that not only were they seen as different but that 'blackness' was considered an undesirable thing, furthermore there was the sense that 'whiteness' was something which provided a level of privilege and protection that 'blackness' did not.

...I can remember incidents you know where a black student was clearly kind of [00:07:18] (pulled out of...) or they'd be doing something that everyone else was doing and they'd get singled out for it, (Makeda, 4:155)

...they were very quick to kind of pull him out on it and stuff but when it was a white student kind of thing, ridiculous thing, cos I don't feel they would've been like that...(Makeda, 5:212)

…it's that kind of thing as the black student again being kind of put in this way, or presented in this way, and even when he was doing well, you know what I mean, that he was always just 'the trouble maker', so, you know? (Makeda, 5:220)

..there'll be some...er, say a white kid dropped a kit bag on the floor in P.E, erm, I'll be going into the changing room, this is an example as well, it happened, I walked into the changing room and the teacher came in and said ' Shaka go and pick that up' and I was like 'why?' and he was like ' well why not?' . Why me, I'm getting changed, I had my boxers on and there was other people done and he was like 'no you do it, otherwise you'll have detention'. But that's not fair and...I'm not saying he's racist but I can't see why there'd be any other reason to pick me cos I was the only one in the PE class who was of African-Caribbean descent. So it just seemed really unfair. (Shaka, 11:398)

Candace attended a relatively diverse setting and provides a contrasting account in relation to having 'blackness' imposed. Rather than having blackness imposed upon her as a negative entity from 'whites'/non-'blacks', Candace expresses a sense of having a 'way of being black' prescribed to her by other 'black' students. In one sense she shares a view with Makeda and Shaka that there are stereotypes about 'blackness' but for her these were predominantly adhered to and maintained by 'black' pupils themselves:

I think in terms of being black..like, you'd be like.. if you were different to the usual stereotype of being black it'd be like 'oh you shouldn't be doing that because you're black' if that..kinda makes sense? (Candace, 13:446)

I think it was sometimes yeah other black students..it was mainly black students actually I think..coz I think they sort of believed that they had to act a certain way and kinda..look a certain way.. (Candace, 13:457)

...every now and then you'd see a post (on Facebook) like 'black girls always trying to be white' or something but you just ignore it (laughs), yeah. (Candace, 13:469)

Here Candace appears to experience 'black' as an oppressive label which serves to restrict what people feel they and other 'black' people, are able to do, and in this sense perceives it as negatively imposed. She chooses to resist this, however she perceives others as feeling as though they must uphold an ascribed identity.

Malik, also attending a relatively diverse setting, presents a view of 'blackness' both as he experiences it *in* others and how it is experienced *by* others.

Sometimes what I see at my school is that when African-Caribbean kids come into education in quite a childish mind-set..they become quite..they kind of stand out more because they tend to do things that are more out there and not of like, typical standards. So they kind of get, not targeted but like..watched because of their, like, let's say 'boisterous' behaviour. So they kinda like, even though other kids could do it as well, they'd still be watched. (Malik 8:289)

Malik's perception here suggests there are 'typical standards' which are different to the more 'out there' ones of 'black' pupils. This contrast suggests that he believes the behaviour of 'black' pupils is somehow both atypical and undesirable, suggesting he perceives that of 'whites'/non-'blacks' as being typical and desirable. It is interesting that he attributes the cause of the 'black' students being watched as the students' boisterous behaviour, where the 'cause' could also be perceived as unfair treatment since he recognises that other pupils behaving in the same way would be treated differently. Contrastingly he provides a positive view of both other 'black' students, and himself, once he perceives them to have '*got it'.*

But as soon as they kind of hit that like point where they realise that..what's important they kind of just like go for..they kind of aim straight for like...and they're very good at it, they'll aim and they will like achieve certain things, so yeah. That's kind of what I did to be fair, but I kind of got that belief about like what was important very early on in the school life, so I achieved it a bit more quicker than they did. (Malik, 6:202)

As mentioned above there are links and crossovers between some of the super-ordinate themes. This is particularly evident between 'sense of racialized identities' and 'belonging', which may be because for some of the participants there appeared to be an association between how racialized identities were perceived and the sense of otherness and/or belonging they expressed. The theme of 'belonging' incorporates ways in which participants felt they did not belong to groups as well as the ways they felt they did particularly along racialized lines. It also incorporates perceptions through which participants felt belonging was fostered (e.g. through a sense of understanding, diversity in the setting etc.)

As touched on above, there is a sense through Makeda's reflections that following the transition to a less diverse environment she was 'othered'. She found fitting in as a 'minority' difficult but nonetheless expressed a desire to do so. Makeda's account reflects complex choices made in relation to fitting in, challenging or accepting negative treatment and changing or maintaining self. Makeda reflects:

..but because you are in that significant minority and its hard trying to fit into a completely new school, with people you don't know...erm...you just kind of let it slide sort of thing and you know you want to fit in so you kind of feel like you're almost having to change… (Makeda, 1:40)

Makeda presents an awareness of having different experiences from others and describes a sense of both being invisible and hyper-visible in ways that distinguished her experience from those of 'white' peers:

...you know these kind of experiences that no other students were having really...it just made you feel very isolated...yeah. (Makeda, 2:59)

…but when you're a...[00:08:49] yourself, a black student in a room full of white students and they're talking about slavery and you know, there's pictures of like

a white slave master beating a black person, that's uncomfortable… (Makeda, 5:189)

…you are the only black student so, you know, even in English classes when you'd be doing books such as Mice and Men and the N-word would come out and everyone would turn to you and you'd be like 'Uagh...again? Really?' (Makeda, 2:88)

Makeda highlights her status as being the only 'black' student in the setting as uncomfortable, particularly when sensitive topics arise. However Makeda's reflections provide the sense that her impression of isolation, of not being a part of the school, goes beyond a particular subject topic and is in fact a pervasive feeling which she carries with her as a part of her everyday experience, the impact of which, for her emotional wellbeing, are significant:

..yeah, yeah, it was just kind of...just this clear kind of sense of being kind of isolated in the classroom, I can't explain it. (Makeda, 10:414)

Erm...I think that's something again that's not [00:11:17] (in their knowledge?) that it can actually really have quite a psychological effect when you're that isolated for that long? (Makeda, 6:246)

Shaka also makes specific reference to experiencing being part of a small minority as difficult. Furthermore his use of language-i.e. giving the exact number- serves to emphasise the exact nature of his minority status which may help Shaka in reinforcing exactly how bad he perceived things to be, for example:

…it was kind of difficult being in a situation where it was just 4 of us.. (Shaka, 6:199)

In the whole school there was 4, yeah. Erm, yeah it was different. (Shaka, 6:204)

There is a real sense in Shaka's account that he considers there to be a mismatch between him and his school setting and that it is not a place in which he feels comfortable. As such there is the sense that for him, school wasn't something which related to him, or to which he related to positively, but instead was something to be endured and overcome.

But, yeah, schooling just feels like it's away from where you're comfortable. (Shaka, 1:63)

No, no I've never felt like school really applied to me. I didn't feel at one with it, like some pupils do. (Shaka, 8:309)

...it's like being forced to do something to try and be happy where I'm not really happy cos it's school, if you know what I mean, like? (Shaka, 8:289)

…but, it's harder for me to be..to learn somewhere where I'm uncomfortable, such as a school. (Shaka, 3:93)

…personally I don't struggle that much anymore. I've got used to it. It's only a couple of years of my life. But when you start out you think this going to last and drag but if you get on with it, it doesn't, so. (Shaka, 5:159)

Here Shaka seems to recognise school as having an emotional effect on him and describes how this is different to how some pupils experience it. It is interesting that he does not make explicit links between his sense of not being at one or with feeling uncomfortable with his sense of being 'othered', and this may reflect that for Shaka the mis-match experienced is more significant as Shaka v School rather than 'racialized Shaka' v school.

Despite a sense of being 'black' meaning that Shaka and Makeda felt they were 'othered' and placed outside of the majority group, there was also a sense of belonging and connectedness expressed by participants in relation to being 'black' with other black peers/people. Their accounts in relation to this provided a sense that feeling 'understood' was important to them and facilitated connectedness. Malik expressed this link with other 'black' peers as a 'bonding', which resulted from a shared history beyond the school walls:

...if you and someone else are the same race, you already have this like..kinda bond...but what I mean by that is like, you're brought up very similar in old ways and because of that you are basically almost one and the same in the way that you're raised but you might be 2 people…but like because you're raised the same way you're kinda drawn together because you share this like standing on the same platform. (Malik, 7:251)

...because of our parents being Africa-Caribbean like, joining together because they're just friends and they..our, like, grandparents knew each other, like we have like a long family history so that kinda helps with that process of like bonding I guess. (Malik, 7:274)

Yeah, it was like a joint experience. As like I already shared..previous things with them. (Malik, 7:281)

Shaka describes how he got on well with the other 4 'black' students in his school and that he felt that:

They were the only people that I truly got on with, had a connection with (Shaka, 7:241).

For Shaka this connection came about as the result of experiencing a 'sameness', both in terms of their interests as well as the experiences they were having in the school:

We were interested in the same things, kind of had the same attitudes at the start. We all matured at the same rates so we just sort of grew up together from the point we met in the school where we were at a disadvantage (Shaka, 7:260)

…they were the people that would say hello to me before I said hello to them. Like if I wanted to start a conversation with anybody else I'd have to go up to them and ask them like 'how are you?'. But they would come up to me without f..secret handshake and that sort of thing. We were all friends and, this was right at the start when we wasn't really friends with anybody else, they were my only friends really, so. (Shaka, 7:249)

Makeda however describes a contrasting experience in the sense that as well as not fitting in with 'white' peers she didn't feel that she fit in with other 'black' students either and as a result, although she felt they were living a shared experience, she didn't feel able to benefit from being a part of a group:

I was a very introverted person, I was a bit kind of geeky and stuff like that, I just didn't fit in with them, erm, I'm sure they, they probably got on a lot better because they had each other (Makeda, 9:395)

…and I've no doubt they were aware of, you know, the way that, you know, the none-black students could act and stuff and the things that they were faced from teachers, like they knew, you know what I mean? erm, I have no doubt that I wasn't the only one that kind of felt that way at times and stuff, erm, but you know, there was never a kind of moment when we verbalised that with each other, it was just that kind of thing of 'oh, that's just the way it is so' mentality (R: right) yeah. (Makeda, 10:399)

For Makeda and Shaka this sense of importance being ascribed to feeling 'understood' by 'black' others extended to accounts of adults and they both describe how they sought out staff for support with differing results:

…there was one black teacher who was kind of like a mentor and erm I'd see her every week and stuff and I'd be able to talk about how I was really feeling because she was black and stuff (Makeda, 6:253)

He'll never have a conversation with you...cos I think he finds it awkward because all the other members of staff are white and we've obviously singled him out to talk to because he's black and he must have gone through the same sort of thing, so, but no, he won't interact with us..like that. (Shaka, 12:443)

Both excerpts suggest that Makeda and Shaka believe their shared 'blackness' indicates shared experiences and shared understanding of those experiences. However, whereas Makeda felt better able to talk to the teacher openly because of this, Shaka felt the teacher's own experience of being isolated in a 'white' environment prevented him from offering support.

Makeda's and Shaka's accounts provide a sense that they often feel they, and their experiences, are not understood by white others. For example, the following ways in which Makeda also describes a lack of understanding between her and white peers and staff compounds the sense that she is different and does not belong

…but when you're a...[00:08:49] yourself, a black student in a room full of white students and they're talking about slavery and you know, there's pictures of like a white slave master beating a black person, that's uncomfortable, erm, and

there was just this complete lack of sensitivity in my view with most of the teachers at that school. (Makeda, 5:189)

…but if I was to bring up anything as being racist they'd be like 'Ugh, why are you being so dramatic? Why are you taking this out of proportion?' and stuff. (Makeda, 11:481)

…it was a situation where I was with a white counsellor who, who I didn't necessarily feel that comfortable talking about with, you know, race and stuff and I even have a family member who is at the same age was, you know, encouraged to start counselling but she just physically did not feel comfortable having counselling with someone who just wouldn't get her… (Makeda, 7:291)

The sense of not being understood by 'white' staff was also expressed by Shaka who described the response given to friends who had been racially abused and excluded from a game of football:

..yeah they'll go to a teacher and say 'I've been called this' and they'll be like 'just don't play then'. But they want to play cos all their other friends are playing. (Shaka, 12:429)

I interpreted that Shaka's response appears to serve both the function of explaining why a pupil in that position would want to play football despite being excluded, as well as highlighting the inadequate response of the teacher, both of which appeared to reinforce for Shaka a void between the 'black' experience and the understanding of 'white' teachers.

For Makeda I interpreted from her account that she holds a perception that it isn't 'whiteness' per se that creates a barrier to her sense of being understood or belonging, but rather a lack of consciousness that some 'white' people display to what the 'black' experience is like. She describes the differences this consciousness makes:

I have white friends and I get on with them amazing and stuff but those white friends have, like, consciousness to racial issues and stuff and if they were to hear any racism they'd call it out… But that group of friends I've never had those kind of issues where I've felt any kind of pressure or kind of anxiety and stuff. Erm, they're just a group of... that make me feel happy and everything and

with them I think they've heard me talk about any issue I've had and, you know, they all validate it and stuff. If I say you know 'I think this may have been racist you guys' and stuff and that, and then I'll tell them about it and they'll either say yeah or no, and they'll talk to me about it, it won't be this kind of taboo issue. (Makeda,15:642)

Malik describes a very contrasting experience of belonging to Makeda and Shaka, in that there is a sense of 'sameness' for him that comes about as the result of the presence of diversity in his school

…at my school it's very racially diverse, like the teachers are racially diverse, the kids are racially diverse so there's..there tends to be a load of equality at school. But because of this exposure to like loads of different groups like from literally ev..loads of places in the world, there tends to not be a void..that there usually is. So people are just kind of drawn together and you just kind of see like huge different groups and stuff..of like different cultures (Malik, 6:234).

For Malik then, he is able to both belong to an African Caribbean grouping through cultural bonding as well as the wider school as 'one' of 'many'. I think it interesting to note here the way in which Makeda also ascribes diversity with protective properties 'from being somewhere where I was kind of cushioned by loads of different diversity and stuff to kind of being completely like isolated and stripped of all of that' and in the way she describes herself as 'counting down the days' until she could return to a diverse learning environment (which she accredits as being '99% of the reason I went for that college').

Similar to Malik Candace describes how she felt a sense of 'sameness' through the level of diversity in the school:

…it wasn't really acknowledged we were just kind of seen as people..and that it was normal to have different types of people around. (Candace, 15:527)

Candace also describes how she felt that there wasn't any racism in the school she attended or the area in which it was located. I interpreted that through this account Candace demonstrated a level of security, and confidence, that her school was a safe and protective environment:

But there was definitely no racism. (Candace, 11:382)

…because I know certainly in the area where my schools are it was just not accepted. Like, erm, if there was any sign of racism happening it just, it would get stopped immediately. (Candace, 7:219)

This sense of being in a protective environment is also demonstrated by Malik in relation to how he felt issues of racism are viewed and addressed in his school:

…it's not encouraged at all and it's scorned upon, yeah, scorned upon. (Malik, 13:528)

…Everyone… if someone was racist there would be an outrage and it's like Jesus' crucifixion all over again and..yeah, it's not pretty. I'm not gonna lie (laughs) it's not pretty at all. (Malik, 13:532)

For Candace there appears to be the perception that the pupils accepted differences and looked out for each other and that this was something that came about as the result of her school instilling this ethos in them with a guiding hand:

__..__Erm...I think it was good on the side that students, if they did see anything they would definitely go and tell a teacher. (Candace, 12:423)

I think it was because we were guided in both ways. Like we learned all of our academic subjects but we also learned how to look after people with those extra things on the side..and how to accept people through that kind of EAL group that we had. (Candace, 15:537)

Although Candace's account suggests that she had a positive sense of belonging in her school she does perceive herself as 'lucky' and notes that other 'black' pupils in other schools may have had a different experience of schooling to other groups:

In my 2 schools I'd say it (experience of schooling) was pretty much the same as everybody else, but probably not the same in other areas, I think I was quite lucky. (Candace, 6:194)

But, I've heard in other schools it's not quite much like that from, like, other people. (Candace, 7:222)

Candace describes an experience of schooling in which she feels included and protected, which is in contrast to Makeda's in particular. For example, Candace describes how sensitive class topics were handled:

Erm..I think it was mainly like in History lessons like when we were learning about Black history, the teacher would make sure that they go around and check that we're ok. Not like deliberately... but they'd say at the start of the lessons 'there's gonna be some sensitive topics and if you want to step outside or talk to somebody afterwards it would be fine'. So you always had that support network around you. (Candace, 11:361)

I interpreted that here Candace appears to perceive a sense of consideration being shown to her as a 'black' person. This suggests she perceives there to be an understanding within the school of what the 'black' experience might be like in a given context, whilst at the same time maintaining a level of sameness by not specifically identifying the 'black' students as the ones needing support.

Malik also describes a sense of being valued and cared for in his school environment. There is a sense of equality for him and that the school is like a family. This view is particularly scaffolded by his belief that teachers genuinely care about pupils:

They tend to do it the best way possible as well, like, they treat everyone equally and it's kind of like a little..little family, a little community of, well yeah..and everyone just respects each other, yeah. (Malik, 14:569)

Go to a teacher because the teachers are there to help you if you're ever stuck, if you've got..if you're stuck on homework, if you've got problems outside of school you can go to counselling, you can talk to a teacher about it because they're there to help you and they see it as their duty to help you when your parents aren't here because that's their..well, job, really..and they care for you. (Malik, 14:559)

Candace expresses a sense of social belonging in the school and emphasises the importance of her friends. She emphasises how close she is with her friends ('I'm very..I'm really close with my friends'), however although she notes that

there were very clear friendship groups she demonstrates a sense of unity amongst all pupils in emphasising how they all intermingled:

…but people crossed over them and were all friends with each other, so. (Candace, 14:491)

I was friends with the kind of intelligent group mainly but I'd always like cross over and sit on the table with some of the girlie people sometimes or..we'd all cross over and sit with each other cos… (Candace, 14:500)

4.3.2.3 Super-ordinate theme: Emotional experience of schooling

Candace, Shaka and Makeda all describe aspects of the emotional impact schooling experiences have had on them.

Although Candace's reflections on schooling have generally been such that they imply a positive experience, she does note how a wrongful accusation of bullying impacted on her confidence,

...in my first year of (secondary) school I got accused of bullying, which I didn't do...and that was the last thing at the end of the year and that's what made my confidence kind of go down. (Candace, 3:73)

Erm, I kind of...make me into a person that I wasn't..and I sort of believed that I was that person for a while. (Candace, 3:90)

This experience appeared to rock Candace's self-concept and she describes how she became reserved and fearful that this experience would be repeated:

Erm,..I was a lot more quiet because I was scared of getting accused of...erm...other things that I hadn't done. So I sort of kept to myself more. (Candace, 3:94)

Shaka describes a number of unwanted feelings as he reflects on his time in school, in the extract below there is a sense of his experiences feeling unfair. My interpretation of this extract is that he also appears to be trying to

understand his experiences against a backdrop of potential racism, without feeling confident enough in his appraisal to name it as such:

Why me? I'm getting changed, I had my boxers on and there was other people done and he was like 'no you do it, otherwise you'll have detention'. But that's not fair and...I'm not saying he's racist but I can't see why there'd be any other reason to pick me cos I was the only one in the PE class who was of African-Caribbean descent. So it just seemed really unfair. (Shaka, 11:404)

For Shaka it appears that the negative effect of his experiences were pervasive and remained with him even outside of school. He describes how thoughts about his situation were often present, how he would act at home as a result and in his account he gives the sense that he has tried to make sense of both his situation and his behaviour, concluding that the two are linked:

It was always on my mind, like. I would always come home and just be like, 'why are there only 4 of us there?' like. (Shaka, 7:239)

Err, yeah, like every few months I'll just get so annoyed for no reason at the tiniest things at home and have a huge row and not feel responsible or bothered about it and then just leave the house and go stay at my mates without telling them, that sort of thing. Like that must, it must be a contributor to that..I don't see why else I'd do that. Cos it is..it's just a sort of frustrated rage that I go into, for no reason sometimes. (Shaka, 13:468)

It must be yeah, I can't see any other explanation, like, something must be building up and there will be things that are contributing to it, yeah (Shaka, 13:478)

Makeda describes how her experiences, particularly in relation to feeling isolated had a significant impact on her emotional wellbeing:

mmm...well in the secondary school it did actually have quite a major effect on my mental health and so I did actually have to seek counselling. Erm...I think that's something again that's not [00:11:17] (in their knowledge?) that it can actually really have quite a psychological effect when you're that isolated for that long? (Makeda, 16:243)

erm...and...yeah, you know, it meant that I was taking a lot of time out of school and I was always kind of later, erm, because I just didn't want to be there, I didn't feel safe there, I didn't feel comfortable there… (Makeda, 6:260)

…it was really tough and stuff, and it was hard on my family as well cos they could see I was really struggling (Makeda, 7:274)

I was...towards the end of my school I was becoming a bit more withdrawn and … (Makeda, 2:74)

Through Makeda's account a sense of helplessness, or powerless acceptance of the situation, is interpreted given the approach taken at times by herself and fellow 'black' peers. There are a number of times where reference is made to how *'you just kind of let it slide sort of thing'* and *'that's just the way it was.'*

…sometimes they'd be completely oblivious to the fact that they were being racist...erm... but because you are in that significant minority and its hard trying to fit into a completely new school, with people you don't know...erm...you just kind of let it slide sort of thing and you know you want to fit in…(Makeda, 1:38)

…but if I was to bring up anything as being racist they'd be like 'Ugh, why are you being so dramatic? Why are you taking this out of proportion?' and stuff. Erm, so yeah, that's just the way it was.(Makeda, 11:481)

…nnnnot really, I think...they just kind of got on with it, I don't know, it was just kind of 'this is the way this school is' kind of perceptions. Maybe they, maybe the black groups would talk about it among themselves and, like, laugh about how like racist that was and stuff, but it was, it was never a situation where they'd go and then take that to, erm, like an authority or anything. (Makeda, 12:488)

4.3.3 Master theme 3: Transcending challenge

4.3.3.1 Super-ordinate theme: Overcoming experiences

Shaka, Makeda and Candace spoke about the ways in which they had overcome negative experiences that they had encountered in school. These 'coping strategies' spanned a range of actions however an underlining thread appeared to be the way in which it was often the young people themselves who were attempting to implement things that might support a change in their circumstances.

For example, Shaka taught himself to play the piano and as well as having the benefit of helping him with his Maths, he also noted:

'..it's an amazing sound and it really did help me. It's relaxing. It clears your mind, sort of thing...' (Shaka, 16:580)

For Shaka it seems that having something to focus on rather than the issue was helpful in the short term and he would actively seek out an activity to serve this purpose:

Rea..I just go and do something like play football, that sort of thing. Take my mind of it, play pool, I'm not bothered how. I don't forget..I just like to sort of put it back and not think about it… (Shaka, 12:458)

In applying the above strategies, it appears that Shaka is attempting to adjust his affective state rather than the external stimulus and may be reflective of him feeling powerless to change the latter. It could however be that he had simply chosen to take a pragmatic stance in the face of what he may have seen as the overwhelmingly difficult challenge of changing the school culture. Interestingly he notes:

But I started to gain confidence and understand it's..er..yeah, it's not going to last..the experience...an experience like that doesn't carry on, you can get through it and get friends, but yeah...(Shaka, 6:207)

Erm, personally I don't struggle that much anymore. I've got used to it. It's only a couple of years of my life. (Shaka, 5:159)

Makeda describes an attempt at changing her situation by confronting the person who was subjecting her to abuse, it seemed however to take her sometime before she felt able to do this:

…that was like the first kind of major racist thing since I could remember and eventually I just called her out on it and stuff and you know I think that's the first time I really kind of stood up for myself and stuff in regards to those kind of issues. (Makeda, 8:342)

Whereas this seemed to have positive results for Makeda, Shaka's attempts at challenging an issue of racism resulted in him being excluded:

…like I hit somebody because of it cos I was with my friend and he got called it and I..that's not on. Er, I got..I got excluded for a day. Er, yeah, that's it. (Shaka, 10:370)

Shaka, Makeda and Candace all describe ways in which talking to people or finding a means of having a voice is helpful to them. For Makeda and Shaka this was expressed in relation to talking with others, caring adults for example:

Erm, yeah I feel talking to people helps more than just letting it sort of build-up…(Shaka, 4:145)

…but when I started settling down and people started co-operating with me more and talking to me more, like heart to heart conversations, then it started getting more comfortable…(Shaka, 4:121))

Erm, so it did become a matter of me just needing to,erm, you know, vocalise how I was feeling in like a confidential space…. and so, you know, it was a matter of me just having to find ways to vocalise it and stuff (Makeda, 6:266).

Candace utilised a skill that she had, singing, for a number of purposes, one of which being a means of having a voice. In her description it appears that singing also served as a 'place' of sanctuary and through gaining positive feedback, also served as a means of changing misperceptions about her:

…I kind of like singing because it gives me a voice rather than…cos I kinda kept it to myself at the start of secondary school it kind of gave me somewhere to go and have that voice….and it's made me more confident now..as a person rather than just in the performance as well…. Yeah..coz I'd get really positive feedback about it and that kind of built my confidence and showed that I was like a good person rather than this bad person that I was made out to be at the start. (Candace, 9:315)

Both Candace and Makeda also describe ways in which they chose to sever social relationships, despite this being difficult to do, in order to move forward in more positive ways:

Yeah (laughs) when I basically just stopped hanging out with my friends basically, who did make me feel bad about myself a lot of the time and I just cut them off completely. (Makeda, 8:232)

But I sort of just ignored it and moved on and found a new group of friends which are still my friends now. (Candace, 4:133)

Throughout Makeda's narrative there is a strong sense of the importance of proving wrong the perceptions of her and others as 'black' students. This was seen in her valuing of learning and in her drive to achieve and can be revisited again here where it may be seen as something that she draws upon both to strengthen her own self-concept and to use as a means of challenging the erroneously imposed views of others.

…I want the grades to be able to say that I actually overcame that rather than to say I'm like this kind of academically you know great student. It's more about you know, what I've been able to achieve regardless to what I've come through sort of thing. (Makeda, 13:551)

...and actually showing them that, you know, I can still achieve way better than you thought. (Makeda, 13:565)

Erm, and to be honest that was just a great moment for me to be able to, you know, I didn't rub it in his face or anything but I just, you know I said the grade and that, that for me felt better than, I don't know, just getting grades. (Makeda, 14:589)

Makeda and Candace also describe ways in which they felt they have grown through their experiences, suggesting that reframing of negative experiences or 'looking for the positives' is a strategy both utilise to overcome negative situations. Makeda's references to this are more frequent than Candace's which perhaps reflects that Makeda's experience in school was overall more negative than that described by Candace and as such she was presented with more opportunity to reframe adversity as a positive.

…yeah it was a lot going on but I think that if it hadn't happened I wouldn't be the way I am so...obviously it shouldn't happen but it's kind of made me more aware I think. (Makeda, 8:349)

…kind of made me, I think, a lot stronger as a person, erm, kind of shaped my opinions and kind of morals a bit more as well and ,erm, kind of taught me how to also be like alone in a sense, how to kind of stand on my own sort of thing. Erm, so I guess that's one, like the main good thing that came out of it, erm just kind of learning how to overcome those kinds of setbacks that just are purely or majorly coming from your race and stuff, so yeah. (Makeda, 9:359)

… these are things that certain people may not only, may only experience until Uni', you know, the type of peer pressure and everything like that so, you know I feel like it's kind of prepared me a bit more for things (Makeda, 9:376)

probably building up confidence, cos I wasn't very confident until I started doing drama...(R:ok)..because I'm quite quiet off stage but as soon as I get on there (laughs)... (Candace, 2:34)

yeah, I see it more as like a positive experience cos it kind of made us more mature in the end. (Candace, 5:145)

4. 4 Summary of findings

Three Master themes were drawn from the young people's accounts; Wanting to succeed; Fitting in; and Transcending challenge.

'Wanting to succeed' contained 2 super-ordinate themes, 'Valuing learning' and 'Aspiring for the future'. From the participants' accounts it was interpreted that they all valued learning and demonstrated a significance that learning held for them. However, the young people made distinctions between schooling and education. It was interpreted from the accounts that participants demonstrated both a desire to achieve and progress, as well as self-belief in their ability to do so.

Master Theme 'Fitting in' contained 3 super-ordinate themes, sense of racialized Identity, Belonging and Emotional Experience of Schooling. Perceptions of 'sameness' and 'othering' were interpreted as being reflected through the participants' accounts, the significance of which appeared related to an interplay between individual participant's experiencing of 'blackness', their emotional experience of schooling and their sense of belonging.

'Transcending challenge' contains one super-ordinate theme, Overcoming experiences. Although 3 of the young people recount experiencing some difficult situations in school, Ways in which the participants sought to overcome these were interpreted as being attempts to change the situation, gaining voice, utilising skill and reframing the negative situation as a positive opportunity.

5.0 Discussion

The following chapter will seek to explore the themes which emerged from participant accounts in relation to the four research questions, considering, where appropriate, links to existing literature. The research questions to be addressed are:

•What are the attitudes of pupils of African-Caribbean descent towards their schooling and education?

•What are the perceptions of pupils of African-Caribbean descent around their school experience?

•In what ways do conceptions of personal success emerge from the participants' accounts in relation to their school experience?

• In what ways are the concepts of resilience, Resistance and agency discernible in the participants' accounts of their experiences?

For all of the young people there was a focus on their secondary schooling experience. This was of their choosing and perhaps reflects that as they were still in that situation, or had only very recently left, these were the freshest memories for them. When primary schools were mentioned it was generally done so as to add emphasis to the experience they were describing, either in the sense of showing contrast between good and bad experiences or reinforcing positive experiences.

The interpretative analysis continues in this section and as a result new points may be introduced.

5.1 What are the attitudes of pupils of African-Caribbean descent towards their schooling and education?

The interpretative analysis suggested that the young people in this research perceived there to be a value in learning and held positive attitudes towards

education. For example, through learning and education Malik felt he was able to develop his skills in new areas. He also experienced a transformation in his outlook in certain areas and perceived there to have been a broadening of his mind as the result of education. Shaka, through taking charge of his own learning, demonstrated the way in which he felt learning was key to successfully achieving the significant aspirations he held for himself.

There was a perception presented by the young people that 'learning' and 'education' were separate to 'schooling' and as such talking about one was not the same as talking about the other. Furthermore, schooling appeared not to provide all of the aspects the young people valued from learning/education. Learning held significance for the young people in the way that it could be applied to them in meaningful ways, for example Candace felt that learning about the 'self' and how to navigate life were important however she perceived school as just focusing on subjects that would boost their ratings. This was a shared perception with the other young people- that 'school' as a system was driven by an outside agenda which stood in juxtaposition to the value the young people placed on learning and as such, impacted on the meaningfulness of the learning which took place within school. For the young people this limited the value they gave to schooling, over education, perceiving 'school' to be government target focussed as opposed to something that is adapted to be meaningful to the young people.

 The value given to learning, or rather achieving, within the school setting by some of the participants appeared to support them in persevering in an environment they perceived as difficult, even hostile at times. For example, Makeda felt getting good grades was a way that she could prove doubters wrong, gain positive psychological affect and boost her self-concept. For Shaka, he recognised good school grades were needed to get into university and so it was important for him to gain these. As such rather than 'learning in school' being the thing of value, it is the *significance* that these young people attached to the *outcome* of learning that they consider to be the real benefit. The findings of this research concur with that of Robinson (2001) who concluded that despite the difficult experiences 'black' pupils had in school, they continued to value education and the opportunities that it offered.

5.2 What are the perceptions of pupils of African-Caribbean descent around their school experience?

The findings of this research indicate that the participants appeared to have contrasting perceptions relating to their experiences of school, although they also shared some experiences in common. On some levels these contrasting perceptions were linked to the way in which their 'blackness' was *experienced* within the school setting, particularly in relation to the extent to which this facilitated or restricted a sense of belonging, or psychological membership.

From Makeda's and Shaka's accounts there is a clear sense of them 'becoming minoritised' in a way that seemed new to them. Part of this 'experiencing' was linked to their sense of being 'othered', which in turn seems interlinked to the experiencing of 'blackness' as something perceived by the majority population as being something undesirable and negative. This is acutely described in the experiences given by both Shaka and Makeda of differential treatment and expectations, as well as more explicit acts of racism. This reflects research wherein young people of African-Caribbean descent have relayed experiences of unfair treatment and racism, being treated differently to 'white' peers and having low expectations directed towards them in school (Blair, 2001, Wright, Weekes and McGlaughlin (2000), Robinson, 2001, Rhamie, 2007).

Although there appears to be an interplay between Shaka's 'racialized' identity and his sense of (not) belonging, there also seems to be an additional level of complexity related to his experiencing a sense of not fitting in at school and his 'not being at one with school'. It seems this is not simply because he is a 'black' body in a 'white' environment, although I believe this compounds it, but also because schooling feels forced upon him.

Candace describes the way in which attempts are made to define her 'blackness' by other 'black' students. This is resisted, and there is the sense from her account that this may be done for a complex interplay of reasons. Firstly, she does not feel a need to define herself as 'black' or 'white' because she doesn't feel there is any significance attached to it in her school setting,

furthermore her reference to 'black' people feeling as though they *have to* adhere to certain ways of 'being' suggests she recognises an outside pressure which she has chosen to take a stance against. Candace's views on the expectations placed on 'blackness' are on some levels reflective of those expressed by Abdi (2015) who makes reference to 'black' students (boys) enacting racialized identities based on the way they perceive they are expected to act, and that this expectation is reinforced by their peers. Abdi's overarching point in relation to young people's *performance* of 'blackness' however is that it is done as a way of reflecting back what 'whiteness' expects to see and as such peer pressure to act a certain way is a symptom of this rather than the root cause. There is a sense from Candace's account that 'black' people feeling as though they 'have to act' a certain way exists from a pressure which is external to 'black' people themselves, coming ultimately from society. However, an explicit reference to 'whiteness' is not made by Candace. Abdi and Candace's views differ in the sense that Abdi makes reference to an expectation also coming from school, whereas Candace's account suggests that she doesn't feel any expectations placed on her by her school related to enacting 'blackness' because of the colour-blind stance she ascribes to her school.

There is a duality to the way in which Malik appears to experience 'blackness' as part of his school experience. On one level he reflects on the 'blackness' of others, in the way that 'they behave' and in the way that they are at odds with *typical behaviour*, and in doing so appears to both 'other' black pupils as being different to the norm and privilege 'white' behaviour as typical. Although he references differential treatment towards other 'black' students in his account it is against the backdrop of their atypical behaviour and as such suggests he perceives the treatment as being justified. At other times Malik makes reference to both himself and other 'black' students in a way that almost ascribes 'superior' qualities to 'blackness'. In this sense his experiencing of 'blackness' in his school environment on a personal level is transformed to one of positivity. This suggests a strong self-concept held by Malik wherein 'blackness is good' when he associates it with himself, however he chooses to disassociate himself from the examples he has of 'blackness is bad'.

Candace, Makeda and Shaka all describe ways in which there were negative psychological consequences to their school experience. For Makeda and Shaka there appears to be a significant interplay between their experiences of being 'black' in their schools, their sense of belonging and psychological consequences. There is a strong perception of injustice permeating Shaka's descriptions of differential treatment and he appears to struggle to make sense of his experiences both in relation to how it is that he has come to be 'minoritised' and in the treatment he receives. For Shaka, negative psychological consequences appeared to take on a permanency within his school experience and he describes thoughts pertaining to his situation as always being on his mind. Furthermore, the impact of his school experience, which he describes as 'a building up of something' and 'a frustrated rage', was carried with him beyond the school and into his home life. Makeda's experience of school (Secondary) was one characterised by an overwhelming sense of isolation which was not alleviated until she moved to a diverse 6th Form. In school she felt a sense of 'difference' and as such did not feel understood, included or protected. Her experience of school in this sense was one of not feeling safe and of 'uncomfortableness', a concept which is reoccurring in both her's and Shaka's accounts. Makeda accredits her school experience as having 'quite a psychological effect'. Although this can be clearly seen through the sense of isolation Makeda shared, I feel it can also be seen in less obvious ways in the level of helplessness or powerlessness both Makeda and her 'black' school peers demonstrate within their situation.

The findings as they relate to Makeda and Shaka concur with research which suggests racial discrimination may be experienced as a significant stressor which impacts on levels of psychological distress (Seaton and Yip, 2008, Wilson et al, 2009, Kogan, Yu, Allen and Brody, 2015, Lanier et al, 2016). These findings also concur with research which highlight the experiences of racism for young people who form 'minority' groups in the school setting and subsequent ostracism, loneliness and psychological impact (Zinga and Gordon, 2016, Priest et al, 2014).

In contrast, although Candace ascribes negative psychological consequence to a particular experience at school there seems to be a separation between this

and her overall perception of her school experience. I posit that there are two things at play here, firstly Candace's account suggests a strong perception of school belonging/ psychological membership and therefore this may serve to mediate her perception of school as a whole. Secondly, Candace does not appear to attribute her negative experience to an ever present 'racialized' identity and as such may be better able to compartmentalise experiences.

The extent to which the young people in this study perceived their school experience as being one of belonging, or fitting in, appeared to be mediated by social interaction, levels of diversity and the overall ethos they felt their school had. In relation to social interactions there was a strong perception that feeling 'understood' made a difference to the young people and this facilitated or limited relationships with both 'black' and 'white' people.

Malik, Shaka and Makeda all perceived there to be some level of shared understanding between themselves and other 'black' people in the school, which facilitated varying degrees of belonging. For Malik this was experienced as a natural bonding, a coming together, experienced with other 'black' pupils which was as the result of them having shared history and experiences. Shaka appeared to have the experience of being both on the outside (of the majority group) and the inside (of his 'racialized' group) resulting in a belonging/not belonging duality. Again, for Shaka this sense of 'belonging through blackness' was facilitated by the perception of shared interests and shared experiences within school which prompted a *reaching out* to each other when rejection was felt from others. Makeda's experience of isolation feels all the more pervasive due to the lack of fitting in she felt with other 'black' peers and yet nonetheless she reflects a sense of having shared reactions and perception of treatment with other 'black' peers. Furthermore, she feels 'understood' by a 'black' teacher in a way that she doesn't with a 'white' counsellor/'white' teaching staff providing the sense that she feels she and other 'black' people are automatically bonded.

To some extent this sense of 'belonging through blackness' created a perception of shared 'experiencing' of school for some participants, in the sense that what happened to others was also felt as an experience of theirs. For example, another pupil being racially abused, picked on or discriminated

against became part of the participants' experience in that it related to the significance of their being 'black' in that setting.

These findings support previous research in this area. Having more pupils in the class that share the same ethnicity may serve to decrease the chance and extremeness of loneliness (Madsen et al. 2016), furthermore Booker (2007), Reynolds (2008), Gautler and Green (2015) concluded shared ethnicity significantly influenced sense of 'sameness' and belonging. Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert's (2016) participants noted a preference for building relationships with similar peers. Whereas Cline et al. (2002) noted that even for pupils who felt a sense of belonging, the importance of feeling connected to, and understood by, same ethnicity peers was expressed.

Booker (2006) posited that as a result of already being a minority in the school setting, young 'black' people can be more psychologically vulnerable to impersonal and uncaring school environments. Furthermore, negative interactions with majority members of the school (both peers and staff) may prevent them from developing a genuine sense of belonging to the school. A sense of feeling valued and cared for is facilitated through a 'sense of understanding' for some of the participants in the current research in relation to their interaction with 'white' people. For example, on moving to a different 6th Form Makeda was able to form a close group of 'white' friends as she felt they demonstrated an understanding of her experiences and Candace feels her positive schooling experience was facilitated by teachers demonstrating an understanding relating to sensitive racial issues. This reflects the overall approach that Candace felt her school had- one of caring about each other and she experienced school as positive in that she felt protected and considered. Malik shared this positive experience of school and reflects a sense of being respected, valued and cared for within his school environment. For both Candace and Malik this is perceived as an ethos which permeates their schools and as such bolsters their experience of belonging. These findings concur with research in which having a supportive peer group is considered to boost inclusion (Gosai, 2011) and understanding displayed by teachers in relation to matters of race affects the level of exclusion or inclusion felt by pupils (Arshad et al., 2004, Gosai, 2011).

Arshad et al. (2004) and Gosai (2011) also reported that having a school ethos which demonstrates an authentic valuing of diversity positively influenced psychological membership, whilst having staff in school that reflected one's ethnicity was felt to be important as is was felt they shared an understanding of the what being a 'minority' was like and this stopped pupils feeling so isolated (Arshad et al., 2004, Gosai, 2011). The experience of belonging for Candace and Malik appeared to be bolstered by the level of diversity in their school and the extent to which both Candace and Malik *experience sameness through experiencing diversity*. This is reflective of research which suggests higher levels of diversity in schools promotes feelings of safety and social satisfaction for children who are a minority in that setting and appears to provide a protective factor (Juvonen, Nisheena and Graham, 2006, Biggart, O'Hare and Connolly, 2013, Tummala-Narra and Sathasivam-Rueckert, 2016. A sense of school belonging is therefore supported where there is perceived to be less difference between school minority and school majority populations, howsoever that is achieved (Biggart, O'Hare and Connolly, 2013). In the same vein, Makeda and Shaka's experiences reflect the findings in Reynolds' (2008) research which concluded that a lower level of inclusion of ethnic populations is achieved where they make up a significant minority in comparison to schools in which there are higher levels of diversity or in which ethnic populations make up the majority.

5.3 In what ways do conceptions of personal success emerge from the participants' accounts in relation to their school experience?

The young people's accounts had a distinctively positive orientation in relation to the concept of personal success. That is to say that even in their descriptions of negative experiences there did not appear to be a concept of personal failure attached to them, rather these experiences were often referred to in order to demonstrate a sense of 'success' related to their overcoming.

The desire to succeed and do well was present in each of the participants' accounts. Three of the young people shared their aspirations to attend

university and the fourth indicated that a career was planned. For Shaka this desire to succeed came through both in relation to the descriptions of his future goals as well as through the recounting of his achievements to date. However, for Shaka succeeding wasn't simply about attaining a goal but rather in obtaining a goal that someone had ascribed as being out of his reach. As such success for Shaka had two levels to it- the attainment and the additional significance of this attainment. This duality was also reflected in Makeda's account wherein she reflects on the experience of achieving goals as providing her with a means to demonstrate that she has the capability to overcome adversity as well as a means of counteracting the negative views she perceives as being held about her and other 'black' students. In this sense Makeda perceives success as both the attainment and more importantly to her the significance of this attainment being that she is able to demonstrate she is better than was expected of her, that 'black' students are as good as 'white' and perhaps most poignantly that she did not buckle under the weight of the adversity she experienced but survived it and prospered.

Constructs of success emerge in Candace's account in a number of implicit and explicit ways. Candace reflects on her hope to do well in her exams and there is the sense that this forms a significant part of her concept of academic success, interestingly however there is also the sense that this concept isn't fully owned by Candace but is in fact 'foist' upon her as an expectation of school, and perhaps this also somewhat accounts for her lack of defined plans beyond her mock exams. Interestingly Candace does take ownership of personal goals and has started to see her plans of performing in more shows and of challenging herself come to fruition. What was revealing about Candace's concept of success was in response to being asked her perception of what had been her greatest achievement to date Candace gave her answer as building up confidence which she again relates to performing.

The aspirations demonstrated by the young people reflect findings in related literature which suggests that there is not a paucity of aspiration held by 'black' pupils, however it is noted that aspiration may be tempered by the expectations and limits of the environment within which 'black' pupils find themselves (St. Clair and Benjamin, 2011), in other words the barriers are more external than

internal. Frostick, Phillips, Renton and Moore (2016) note that there doesn't seem to be support for the argument that relationships with staff and psychological membership of the school served as a factor influencing academic aspiration, this appears to be reflected by the findings in this current research wherein all of the young people share high aspirations regardless of the expressed levels of a sense of connection to their schools.

5.4 In what ways are the concepts of resilience, Resistance and agency discernible in the participants' accounts of their experiences?

Resistance

It feels pertinent to start this section on Resistance with a review of some of the definitions and concepts touched upon in the Literature Review in order to revisit the concept of 'Resistance' referred to in this research question. 'Resistance' as it is conceptualised here, aligns itself with Wade's (1997) definition in which it is posited as:

'…any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any type of disrespect), or the conditions that make such acts possible...'(p25).

Solorzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001) made reference to an internal transformational resistance approach to denote behaviours which appear to conform to the norms and expectations of institutions, but which are influenced by the actor using this 'conformity' as a means of enabling them to gain a position whereby they can challenge inequality and oppression. This concept is reflective of Mac an Ghail's (1988) concept of 'Resistance with accommodation' which proposes that young people see achievement within the oppressing system as a way to beat it, and is embodied again in Portnoi and Kwong's (2015) 'resistance through achievement' theory which posited that the participants in their study used their desire to prove wrong the negative racial

stereotypes imposed upon them as the motivation to resist inequality and achieve success. This concept of Resistance runs strongly through Makeda's account, wherein she emphasises the significance that 'achieving' has for her as a means of challenging expectations and proving wrong those who perceive her and other 'black' young people as being less able. It is important for Makeda to say that she has overcome her experiences, that she has survived them. As mentioned above, this importance appears to hold significance on a personal level but also on a cultural level in the sense that Makeda's successes are not just representative of her but of her ethnic community. There is a clear sense of these actions impacting positively on Makeda's emotional wellbeing and in this sense there exists an interplay between Resistance and resilience. Similarly to Makeda, Shaka formulates his concept of success around achieving beyond the limitations expected of him and it could be argued that his drive to succeed therefore represents Resistance.

Participants in Fuller's study (1980) were considered as being pro-education, however they were not considered to be *pro-school*. To some extent their expressions of resistance incorporated a number of themes suggested by Mac an Ghaill (1988), for example they worked hard at their school work and avoided engaging in behaviours that could result in them getting into serious trouble at school, however they nonetheless engaged in activities that frustrated staff. Some of the actions of Shaka may also be understood as resistance in this way, in that he too works hard on his work and does not (often) do anything that would result in him getting into serious trouble but he explains that he also often displays behaviour that could be perceived as not listening or not engaging, which could be frustrating to staff. Shaka attributes significant importance to taking control of his own learning and educating himself away from the school setting in a way that is reflective of Wright, Weekes and McGlaughlin's (2000) 'emancipatory dissent' (p41), that is he has somewhat disengaged from school, which he feels is a place that he is at odds with, but not from the education he can gain elsewhere.

Both Makeda and Shaka can also be seen to enact Resistance though their explicit attempts to confront people who are displaying racism, Makeda choosing to challenge this verbally and Shaka choosing to hit the perpetrator.

Resistance is discernible in Candace's account in relation to her having identities (being a bully and being 'black') placed on her which she seeks to repel. In relation to being falsely accused as a bully, Candace considers her singing and performing as giving her a voice and a means of gaining positive affirmation, which offers her a means of resisting a negative label. In relation to a 'black' identity, Candace expresses 'black' as being a label which can be oppressively ascribed by other 'black' people in a way that is limiting. She exercises Resistance by choosing to ignore the attempts made by others to determine what being 'black' should mean and instead chooses to maintain her own concept.

Resistance, as it is most commonly discernible in the young people's accounts, seems to provide a means by which the participants can enact agency and determine the identity they wish to adhere to.

Agency

Lister (2004) posits that agency 'characterizes individuals as autonomous, purposive and creative actors, capable of a degree of choice.' (p125). Agency allows people to feel that they are able to exercise control over their lives and it is accompanied by the belief that it is within the person's capacity to change situations that they find themselves in and achieve a set goal. All of the young people in this research demonstrated strong aspirations to achieve and succeed. There is a sense that all of the participants view themselves as capable of achieving their future goals, even when those goals have yet to be fully defined, and that they have choices available to them. Therefore, they are able to show some degree of control in relation to their future.

Malik makes reference to both his future hopes of achieving and of his achievements to date. He makes explicit reference to the effort that he has put in and the need for continued effort to support future gains. Throughout Malik's

account there seems to be a strong sense that he is in control of his achievements and that he will succeed if he chooses to.

Shaka mentions a number of times that he is capable of teaching himself and is in fact engaging in this as an action. The reasons for this are not fully apparent and could be related to his feeling that school does not apply to him, his strong self-concept as an able person or his determination to achieve, nonetheless I would argue that through this he is enacting agency and autonomy by taking his learning into his own hands and attempting to influence his future. In his account, Shaka mentions that it is important to him to achieve beyond the expectations that others hold of him and so in this sense any action that can be seen as making this more likely could also be consider as resilience/Resistance.

Candace talks about ways in which she is following goals outside of school in relation to her singing and performances. This denotes her aspiration, which she demonstrates through the ways in which she is developing her autonomy and creating opportunities for herself such as setting up shows for charity.

Agency can also be seen to be present in the approaches Makeda, Candace and Shaka take to addressing the difficulties they are facing. For example, Shaka talks about the things that he does, plays football or the piano and at times has hit out at aggressors, to manage his situation. Candace takes action and utilises her singing to 'give her a voice' and support her confidence. Whereas Makeda also chooses to confront the behaviour of others. Shaka and Makeda actively seek out adult support and both Makeda and Candace choose to sever friendship groups that they feel to be having a negative impact upon them.

However, in the accounts there are also 'references' to areas where there's a sense that agency is lacking in the young people's experience. For example, in relation to what is learned in school. Candace makes reference to there being things that she feels are important to learn but that pupils 'never really get the chance'. Whereas Malik makes reference to an external agency (e.g. the Government) and the impact of this on schooling and in making him do 'what they want me to do.'. Shaka's account provides a sense that schooling feels

forced upon him, it is not somewhere that he wants to be or something that he wants to do. However, at the same time, there is a recognition for Shaka that he *has* to be there in order to get the grades he needs to move forward with the things he actually wants to do.

Whereas Candace creating opportunities for herself in relation to her music can be seen as her exercising agency, it could be argued that it reflects a lack of agency for her in her school where she notes they 'kind of back you away from those dreams', indicating that the 'dreams' she follows in school are on some level out of her hands.

Wherein both Malik's and Candace's accounts provide examples of ways in which they have been able to enact agency and align as they wish with 'blackness' (Candace in particular demonstrating this as Resistance to being pigeonholed), Makeda's account in parts can be seen to evidence a sense of powerlessness. For example, when faced with overt and covert racism or a lack of understanding from staff about the impact of the topic of lessons, Makeda makes reference to just letting things slide or an acceptance of 'that's just the way it was'. However, as will be touched upon below, this is reflective of where Makeda was during one stage in her schooling however she is later able to enact Resistance and demonstrate resilience in how she grows beyond this.

Resilience

As stated in the Literature Review, resilience is often defined simply as the ability to bounce back, repeatedly and effectively, when faced with adversity (Gu and Day, 2007), or the capacity to transcend negative circumstances and succeed in spite of such circumstances (Yates and Masten, 2004). Protective factors particularly pertaining to young people and resilience include connectedness to caring and responsive adults, social competence, autonomy and opportunities for meaningful engagement (Brooks 2006). Furthermore, to support resilience students need to be provided with opportunities to develop a sense of self efficacy and identify and take ownership of their own personal goals and achievements (Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001, Tiet, Huizinga and

Byrnes, 2010) and educators need to display high success expectations for all students (Rubie-Davis, Hattie and Hamilton, 2006).

Given the young people's accounts in this research, it is easy to note how these protective factors where more readily available to Candace and Malik in their school setting than to Makeda and Shaka. Perhaps what supported Makeda and Shaka best was in relation to taking control of their personal goals and achievement, linked with their agency.

Shaka chose to take control of his own learning and despite being told he was going to fail his Maths exam, he continued under pressure and achieved his goal because he was aware of his own ability to do so. Shaka expresses ways in which he actively sought out others to talk to (although not successfully) and how he implemented his own strategies for altering his affective state such as playing the piano or engaging in sport.

Both Makeda and Candace's account reflect a sense of having 'grown out of' their negative experience as such they appear to have reframed their negative experiences as something positive. Makeda valued her achievements more because they stood as testament to her having overcome the difficulties she faced in school and she reflected on her difficult times as providing her with positive skills to move into adulthood.

Candace notes positive outcomes such as gaining more confidence and maturing. Although Malik's account does not reflect the same level of adversity to 'bounce back from' as the other young people, where it did occur Malik also appeared to use reframing as a tool to support him in maintaining a positive outlook and was able to give greater focus to the success that he had achieved rather than the thing he hadn't (such as being one mark off an 'A' grade).

Case and Hunter (2012) posit that there is a conceptual overlap between resilience and Resistance based on their function, i.e. they both serve as processes by which people respond to oppression and scaffold positive psychological wellbeing. Bottrell (2007) also argues that Resistance can be viewed as resilience, that is to say that it can be seen as a person making adaptions to survive and prosper in their environment in spite of the adversity they face. It could also be argued that the making of these adaptions also draws

'agency' into play and as such all of the above examples related to Resistance, agency or resilience can be seen as reflecting an interplay between these three factors, or processes. This is perhaps well illustrated in the shifts made through Makeda's journey during her schooling towards her simple answer below:

R: And your future is looking...?

P1: yeah...hopeful. (Makeda, 16:681)

I would posit that through giving this answer Makeda demonstrates resilience in the sense that she has retained a level of positive psychological wellbeing despite the challenges faced and remains optimistic about her future. Her declaration of hopefulness stands as testimony that she has not become defeated but has instead transcended negative circumstances to retain a belief in her future. In remaining hopeful, Makeda also demonstrates Resistance against the oppression she perceives herself to have encountered in school and indicates that she has chosen to withstand, strive against and repel visions of a negative, limited future. Agency is exhibited through that choice and further still in that through her hopefulness Makeda displays that she is able to exercise control over her future and continue to make choices to furnish herself with opportunities for success.

6.0 Implications for practice

This chapter will give consideration to the findings, discussion and literature in thinking about the possible implications for practice for both schools and Educational Psychology Services/profession. The young people in this research were also asked directly what they felt made their experience of schooling positive and/or what they felt would help young people in schools and these views will also be drawn upon to both inform, and authenticate, some of the implications that I have derived from the research.

6.1 Implications for Schools

6.1.1 School Ethos

The implications in this section can be categorised into two areas: aspects of the participants' experience that one might expect *any young person* to reflect upon, such as those contained in the following paragraph, and aspects which relate to the experience of being 'black' in a school setting, such as those contained in subsequent paragraphs and sections.

The participants in this research whilst having idiosyncratic experiences also had what could be considered shared experiences. Two participants, Candace and Malik, reflected experiences of feeling cared for and valued at school and they expressed a sense of belonging. Candace highlighted the need for the 'caring' ethos to permeate all strands of the school community and for pupils to be provided with the skills to identify and report the possible support needs of their peers. Candace felt it was important for staff to develop an understanding of behaviours which may indicate young people were having a difficult time in school and for things to be in place so that identified young people could be approached and offered support. Malik expressed a perception that teachers care for pupils and that they were there to help them both academically and in relation to social and emotional needs. He reflected in his account on the importance of teachers

setting aside other duties to help him when he was hurt and in some ways this suggests wider implications for the educational system as whole, as well as school leadership, in relation to being mindful of the pressures placed on teachers and the competing agendas of caring for children and meeting targets.

For Makeda and Shaka, there was a sense of being 'othered', of not fully fitting in and of not feeling comfortable in the school environment. The sense of belonging, for all participants, reflected the approach taken by the school, *its ethos*, to addressing the issue of race and 'racialized' experiences as well as the general approach towards pupils. There are implications for schools here in that they may need to re-examine their whole school ethos and approach with serious consideration given to the ways in which this may or may not be promoting a sense of belonging for all pupils and more specifically in this case for pupils of African-Caribbean descent.

6.1.2 Developing Understanding

The research results suggest that there is a need in some schools to develop an understanding of the cultural and 'racial' experiences/dynamics at play within the school environment. This has implications for how 'diversity' training is delivered in some schools and what the focus of that training is. This calls for moving examinations of culture and 'race' away from 'Saris, Somosas and Steel-bands syndrome' (Donald and Rattansi, 1992, p2) towards some open and honest conversations about what attitudes exist in the school setting around what it means to be 'black', as well as what it means to be 'white' in both society and the school setting and what impact these attitudes have within the school environment. As such this calls for 'white' staff to both interrogate and challenge the cultural and social attitudes of 'whiteness' and 'Britishness' and the possible continued impact of the socio-political and eco-historical relationship played out between these two aspects and 'black' populations globally.

The research also suggests that there is a need for training in relation to what promotes and hinders a sense of belonging and within this a focus on developing

an understanding of the potential impact of 'racial' isolation. This may benefit in being applied to the staff team also. There was a sense expressed by Shaka that the 'black' member of staff at his school was also struggling with difficulties of isolation and fitting in and as such was not available to the 'black' students in the way they wished of him.

6.1.3 Diversity

The study's findings suggest that benefit was gained by the young people in having diversity in the school population, both in terms of peers and staff. I would propose therefore that it is important for schools to consider the levels of diversity within their schools and what this may mean for staff and pupil wellbeing. In consultation with the 'minority' pupils in the school, it may be beneficial to identify ways in which processes can be put in place to promote cross-year relationship building and access to staff members with whom pupils feel more comfortable talking with, where levels of overall diversity are low.

School's should be reminded however that, as stated by Verma (1999), 'ethnicity, class and gender issues are not minority issues. They are closely bound up with the majority of our population and are therefore a mainstream issue in schools, higher education institutions and in the professional services that support them' (p15). As such, addressing these issues is not the responsibility of 'black' staff but rather it must become integral to the entire ethos of the organisation.

The points on understanding and diversity were reflective of the views of Makeda who expressed the need for staff training in relation to understanding the experience of 'minoritised' children and ways to adapt practice to minimise negative impact. Makeda also felt that conscious attempts to increase diversity were necessary and that this increase would be beneficial to the school community as a whole. Shaka also suggested adaptions to teacher training were necessary to facilitate better understanding of the experience of 'black' pupils and

posited that in particular there was the need for teachers to be exposed to higher levels of diversity (both in terms of population and experience) prior to entering the classroom and throughout their time in the profession.

In relation to raising diversity I would however urge schools to be mindful of what Jones (1991) states as the issue of racial conflict being '…diluted into an issue of bureaucratic counting, as if cultural differences would dissolve once a certain institutional number was reached.'(p446). As such 'the problem' is not solved by diversity alone but by how diversity is embraced, valued and located within a wider commitment to challenging oppressive practices.

6.2 Implications for Educational Psychologists

In relation to implications for the profession resulting from the research findings, I would argue that there appears to be the need for these to be multi-layered. By this I mean that we have to consider the ways in which we as a profession can utilise our skills and knowledge to support schools in addressing areas for development, however we must also turn the gaze inward and interrogate how we are going to address the part we play in systems around children and young people.

As a psychology profession we are well placed to draw on our relationships both with schools and teacher training providers to offer training and support in relation to issues of belonging, social and emotional wellbeing, resilience, 'Resistance', developing positive school cultures and managing change within school systems.

However, I question if we are as well placed to offer relevant training and support in matters of 'racism' and diversity and the above mentioned domains as they pertain to members of 'minoritised' groups in our society. I would invite us to hold a mirror up to ourselves and explore what is our knowledge in relation to the presence and impact of racism/inequality, and how well we are doing as a profession in relation to this (see appendix A11 for questions related to this). Perhaps the biggest question we need to ask of ourselves, if what we see reflected in the mirror is that we are still lacking is why? Particularly in light of

the fact that 32 years ago this issue was raised in the first volume of Educational Psychology in Practice (Desforges, Goodwin and Kerr, 1985) and again nearly 20 years ago in the special edition of Educational and Child Psychology entitled 'Challenging racism and inequality in education and child psychology'. In that edition, Bolton and M'gadzah (1999) suggested that there was the need for TEP/EP equality training to place a greater focus on strategies for challenging inequality, whilst Rollock (1999) noted the importance of awareness gained in this area not being 'abandoned at the classroom door' (p34). Guidelines were called for to support Educational Psychology Services (EPSs), individual EPs, and schools with these issues as well as clear guidelines for training courses (ibid). Furthermore, a means for measuring the outcomes of the professions/EPS efforts was noted as being necessary (Bolton and M'gadzah, 1999). Perhaps the biggest implication for the profession then is not in relation to what we need to do with schools, but rather what we need to do to ensure that in another 30 years what we see reflected back at us is something infinitely different.

6.3 Implications for further research

The above points raise interesting implications for future research as it pertains to EPs. For example, it may be of interest to explore the experiences of 'black' or other 'ethnic minority' T/EPs in the profession as well as exploring the experience of 'black' clients in relation to the profession. It may also be of interest to explore the ways in which practices within the profession support or hinder equality and social justice.

The findings from this research also suggest other avenues for further exploration, such as one in which the question of 'belonging' forms a central part of the research question and is more explicitly explored.

7.0 Methodological considerations of current research.

The current research aimed to offer an in-depth exploration of the experience of school for young people of African-Caribbean descent and in doing so hoped to provide a space where individual experiences could be voiced, acknowledged and archived; collective experiences could be reflected upon; and success, resilience, Resistance and agency could be explored. The ontological and epistemological groundings of the research relate to Critical Realism and phenomenology and as such the research was concerned with the subjective experiences of individuals. The research was not concerned with gaining an accurate reflection of a pre-determined 'reality' but instead sough to gain an in-depth knowledge of the 'experiencing' of the participants' reality in relation to the phenomenon. Given these aims and the subsequent results it is felt that IPA was an appropriate methodology to have used.

Although this was a small scale study, the sample size of 4 participants was an appropriate one for an IPA study. Homogeneity was demonstrated in the sample in the sense that participants were all of African-Caribbean descent and had experience of the phenomenon of interest, however differences also existed such as in gender (2 males, 2 females) and attendance at 4 separate schools. Given the sample size it could be argued that generalisation of the findings cannot be made beyond these participants. However, neither 'generalizability' nor reliability are the driving force of IPA research. As noted previously, the idea that it *should be possible* to replicate findings in different contexts, to different people at different times is counter-intuitive to most qualitative research, which instead is concerned with the impact of context and idiosyncratic differences. The purpose of the current research was to shine a spotlight on to a particular phenomenon, from which it was hoped insights may be gained into similar contexts rather than producing something that was necessarily generalizable from a small sample to a large one. Nonetheless, Denscombe (2009) posits that the question of generalisation should not necessarily be one of actual numbers making the same point but of how

reasonable it is to suggest, placed in the same circumstances, others would make the same points. Despite the different genders and schools a high percentage of concurrence was expressed between the participants in this current research and those experiencing this phenomenon in previous research. As such, it may be reasonable to suggest then, if one were so inclined, that other young people reflecting on this phenomenon would express similar 'experiencing' in similar contexts.

Willig (2008) notes that IPA requires participants to be able to articulate and express their experiences in a relatively sophisticated manner, which may serve as a limiting factor of IPA research. I found interviewing a particular shy participant difficult. I felt uncomfortable in their shyness and because of this I felt my questions were becoming more and more closed. Although on reflection I was drawing on the additional questions in the interview schedule which had to some extent been pre-prepared to support this situation, I felt that in needing to draw on them, I was doing a bad job of interviewing, in other words in that moment I felt that I was failing as a researcher and doing the participant a disservice in not being better able at opening up the talking space and drawing out their free flowing voice. On reflection I realise it was not within my power to change that participant's personal characteristics and that people have different approaches to sharing their stories, for example some people may talk a lot but the data not be rich and others may say few words that prove to be very potent and insightful. Ultimately however, I concluded that being shy shouldn't prevent the young person from being offered the opportunity of being heard and that adapting one's questions or questioning style is the sign of a good researcher rather than a poor one.

In IPA the researcher is very much a tool of the research in that it is they who do the interviewing, transcribing, interpreting and analysing and as such their skill in these areas, as well as personal characteristics, contribute to the strengths and limitations of the research. I feel that my insider status as a person of African-Caribbean descent contributed to the rich data some of the participants shared with me as it contributed to them feeling comfortable with me. A number of the participants noted they felt there was a shared understanding and sense of

'kindredness' between themselves and other people of the same heritage, which meant they felt better able to be open and honest about certain experiences. However, I am aware that my insider status, of what is a relatively small population in the city in which the research was carried out, may also have skewed what was shared with me because the young people may have felt restricted in what they said or felt there was an expectation. I tried to counteract this during the interviews by emphasising that my interest was in their experience and views and offering reassurance that there was no right or wrong answers. Given the variety in experience shared and the varying degrees of emphasis placed on certain themes, such as racism, I feel this reflects that the views shared were not overly negatively influenced by my status.

As a tool of the research it is important to reflect on the way in which my subjective interpretation of participant's account could potentially have influenced the findings. As a researcher new to IPA it was initially challenging to find the balance between drawing on my knowledge and experience of the phenomenon to imagine how an event may have been experienced by a participant and to interpret what might be the significance of an experience for them whilst not allowing that knowledge and experience to colour the interpretation. This was addressed through reflexivity, a commitment to giving participants a voice and a concerted effort to ensure supremacy of the participants' 'experiencing'. This was aided by me continuing to ask 'what is the significance of this to the participant?'. During the interpretation process I also sought support from my research supervisor, a middle aged, 'white' male, to review samples of participants' accounts and my interpretations, to ensure that the conclusions I was drawing could reasonably be seen to come from the young people's accounts and not mine.

8.0 Conclusion

This research took an Interpretative Phenomenological approach in its exploration of the experience of school for young people of African-Caribbean descent. This research was particularly interested in the participants' conceptions of personal success as well as the ways in which resilience, resistance and agency could be seen through their accounts. The participants were interviewed using a semi-structured format and data generated from the interviews were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Three Master themes emerged from the young people's accounts; Wanting to succeed; Fitting in; and Transcending challenge.

This research found that all the young people valued learning, although they demonstrated differing significance that learning held for them. For example, some placed greater value than others on the role of achievement in learning as a means to prove doubters wrong. The young people made distinctions between schooling and education, sometimes being critical of schooling whilst continuing to value education. This research found that conceptions of 'Success' were present in the participants' accounts relating to personal ownership of effort, overcoming challenge, achieving beyond expectations and aspiring to reach full potential. The young people's accounts had a distinctively positive orientation in relation to the concept of personal success, even in their descriptions of negative experiences there did not appear to be a concept of personal failure attached to them, rather these experiences were often referred to in order to demonstrate a sense of 'success' related to their overcoming. The participants demonstrated both a desire to achieve and progress, as well as self-belief in their ability to do so and the desire to succeed and do well was found to be consistently present across each of the participants' accounts.

The young people experienced differing levels of negative experiences, which appeared interlinked between how they experienced their 'blackness' in their school setting, the emotional experiences they had in school and the level to

which they experienced a sense of belonging. Those young people attending diverse schools experienced a greater sense of belonging, whilst those attending schools in which there was very little diversity experienced school as an uncomfortable place, wherein they experienced a sense of being 'othered' and of being treated unfairly. This research found that despite facing challenges, agency, resilience and Resistance were discernible in the young people's accounts and emerged through expressions of positive self-concept, aspiration, self-determination, challenging negative expectations, growing out of experience, application of coping strategies, goal orientation and demonstrations of autonomy.

By exploring the school experiences of young people of African-Caribbean descent using IPA this research has been able to contribute detailed analysis from a distinctly psychological domain to the existing body of research and knowledge. This research has provided a space where individual 'black' experiences can be voiced, acknowledged and archived; a means by which these experiences can be reflected upon; and a method through which conceptions of success, resilience, Resistance and agency can be explored. Through carrying out this research it is hoped that greater understanding of how this generation of young people of African-Caribbean descent may be experiencing school has been gained.

9.0 References

Aaltonen, S. (2013). 'Trying to push things through': forms and bounds of agency in transitions of school-age young people, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16:3, 375-390.

Abdi, M. (2015). Performing blackness: Disrupting race in the classroom, *Educational & Child Psychology*, 32:2, 57-66.

Aldwin, C.M. (2008). 'Culture, Coping, and Resilience to Stress', Retrieved from: http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt

Allen, K.A. & Bowles, T. (2012). Belonging as a Guiding Principle in the Education of Adolescents, *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*. 12, 108-119.

Allen, Q. (2013). Balancing school and cool: tactics of resistance and accommodation among black middle-class males, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16:2, 203-224.

Anderman, A. (2002). School Effects on Psychological Outcomes During Adolescence, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94:4, 795–809.

Andreouli, E, Greenland, K & Howarth, C. (2016). 'I don't think racism is that bad any more': Exploring the 'end of racism' discourse among students in English schools, *European Journal of Social Psychology,* 46 171–184.

Archer, L.,DeWitt, J. & Wong, B. (2014). Spheres of influence: what shapes young people's aspirations at age 12/13 and what are the implications for education policy?, *Journal of Education Policy*, 29:1, 58-85.

Archer. L. & Francis, B. (2005). Constructions of racism by British Chinese pupils and parents, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8:4, 387-407.

Arshad, R., Almeida Diniz, F., Kelly,E., O'Hara, P., Sharp, R. & Rana Syed, R. (2004). Minority ethnic pupils' experiences of school in Scotland (MEPESS) for the Scottish Executive Education Department, Edinburgh, Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES).

Ashworth, P. (2015). *Conceptual foundations of qualitative psychology* in Smith, J (ed.) (2015) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London, Sage.

Barn, R. (2001). *Black youth on the margins: A research review*, Joseph Rowntree Foundations. York.

Baumeister, R. and Leary, M. (1995). The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation, *Psychological Bulletin*, 117:3, 497-529.

Beaman, R., Wheldall, K. and Kemp, C. (2006). 'Differential teacher attention to boys and girls in the classroom', *Educational Review*, 58: 3, 339 — 366

Bhui, K, Stansfeld, S.,McKenzie, K., Karlsen, S., Nazroo, J. & Weich, S. (2005). Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Common Mental Disorders Among Workers: Findings From the EMPIRIC Study of Ethnic Minority Groups in the United Kingdom,
American Journal of Public Health, 95:3, 496-501.

Biggart, A., O'Hare, L. & Connolly, P. (2013). A need to belong? The prevalence of experiences of belonging and exclusion in school among minority ethnic children living in the 'White hinterlands', *Irish Educational Studies*, 32:2, 179-195.

Blair, M. (2001). 'Why Pick On Me: School Exclusions and Black Youth', Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books Ltd.

Blair, M. (2008). '"Whiteness" as institutionalized racism as conspiracy: understanding the paradigm', *Educational Review*, 60: 3, 249-.251

Bolton, T. & M'gadzah, S.H. (1999). Challenging inequality in educational psychology practice: perceptions of educational psychologists in training and current practice in London educational psychology services, *Educational and Child Psychology*, 16:13, 101-126.

Booker, K. (2006). School Belonging and the African American Adolescent: What do We Know and Where Should We Go?, *The High School Journal*, 89:4,1-7.

Booker, K. (2007). Likeness, Comfort, and Tolerance: Examining African American Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging, *The Urban Review*, 39:3

Booker, R., Hart, M., Moreland, D. and Powell, J. (1989). Struggling towards better practice: an Educational Psychology Service and anti-racism. Educational Psychology in practice, 5:3, 123-129.

Boyden, J. (2003) 'Children under Fire: Challenging Assumptions about Children's Resilience.' Children, Youth and Environments 13:1, 1-29.

Bottrell, D. (2007). Resistance, Resilience and Social Identities: Reframing 'Problem Youth' and the Problem of Schooling, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10:5, 597-616.

Bottrell, D. (2009). Understanding 'Marginal' Perspectives Towards a Social Theory of Resilience. *Qualitative Social Work.* 8:3. 21–339.

British Educational Research Association (2011). *Codes of conduct for research with human subjects*, London, BERA

British Psychological Society (2009). *Code of ethics and conduct: Guidance published by the ethics committee of the British Psychological Society*, Leicester, BPS.

British Psychological Society (2014). *Code of human research ethics*, Leicester, BPS

Brooks, J. (2006). 'Strengthening Resilience in Children and Youths: Maximizing Opportunities through the Schools', *Children & Schools*, 28:2.

Brooks, K. and Grant, D. (2001). 'Educational Psychology, Equal Opportunities and Exclusions: Towards a New Framework', in Majors, R.(Ed), (2001), 'Educating our Black Children: Radical and Critical Approaches', London, Routledge Falmer.

Burgess, S., Wilson, D. & Lupton, R. (2005). Parallel lives? Ethnic segregation in schools and neighbourhoods, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics.

Cartmell, H. & Bond, C. (2015). What does belonging mean for young people who are International New Arrivals?, *Educational & Child Psychology*, 32:2, 89-101.

Case, A. & Hunter, C. (2012). Counterspaces: A Unit of Analysis for Understanding the Role of Settings in Marginalized Individuals' Adaptive Responses to Oppression, *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 50, 257–270.

Cefai, C. (2004). Pupil resilience in the classroom, *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 9:3, 149-170.

Cefai, C. (2007). Resilience for all: a study of classrooms as protective contexts, *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 12:2, 119-134.

Charlton, J. (1998). *Nothing about us without us: Disability, oppression and empowerment.* Berkley, University of California Press.

Clauss-Ehlers, C.S. (2008). 'Sociocultural factors, resilience, and coping: Support for a culturally sensitive measure of resilience', *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29, 197–212.

Cline, T., de Abreu, G., Fihosy, C., Gray, H., Lambert, H. & Neale, J. (2002). Minority Ethnic Children in mainly white schools, Research Report No. 365, DfES/University of Luton.

Coard, B. (1971), *'How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System'*, London, New Beacon Books Ltd.

Cohn, M.A., Fredrickson, B.L., Brown. S.L., Mikels, J.A and Conway, A.M. (2009). 'Happiness Unpacked: Positive Emotions Increase Life Satisfaction by Building Resilience', *Emotion*, 9:3, 361–368.

Cole, M. (2004). 'Brutal and stinking' and 'difficult to handle': the historical and contemporary manifestations of racialisation, institutional racism, and schooling in Britain, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7:1, 35-56.

Cooper, P. (2006). 'Supporting Minority Ethnic Children and Adolescents With Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Difficulties in the United Kingdom', *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 50: 2, 21 – 28.

DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government). (2009). 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: A Third Progress Report on the Governments Strategy for Race Equality and Community Cohesion', vol 2: Race Equality in Public Services- Statistical Report, London, DCLG.

DfE (Department for Education). (2016). 'Statistical First Release: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions From Schools and Exclusion Appeals in England, 2014/15, London, DfE, accessed from

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2014-to-2015.

DfE (Department for Education). (2017). 'Statistical First Release: GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England, 2015/16', London, DfE accessed from https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4

Denscombe, M.. (2009). *Ground Rules for Social Research: Guidelines for Good Practice*, (2nd Ed), Berkshire, Open University Press.

Deutsch, M. (2006). A Framework for Thinking About Oppression and Its Change, *Social Justice Research*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 7-41.

Donald, J. & Rattansi, A. (Eds.), *'Race', culture and difference*. London, Sage.

Dubois, W.E.B. (1903/1994). *The souls of black folk*, reprint New York, Dover publications.

Evans, J. (2010). *'Not Present and Correct: Understanding and preventing School Exclusions',* Essex, Barnardos.

Faircloth, B.S. & Hamm, J.V. (2005). Sense of Belonging Among High School Students Representing 4 Ethnic Groups, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34:4, 293–309.

Fernández, L. (2002). Telling Stories About School: Using Critical Race and Latino Critical Theories to Document Latina/Latino Education and Resistance. *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 8:1, 45-65.

Finlay, L. (2014). Engaging Phenomenological Analysis, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11, 2, 121-141.

Frehill, N. & Dunsmuir, S. (2015). The influence of sense of school belonging on Traveller students' secondary school completion, *Educational & Child Psychology*, 32:2, 10-21.

Frost, N. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in psychology: Combining core approaches,* Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Frostick, C., Phillips, G., Renton, A. and Moore, D. (2016). The Educational and Employment Aspirations of Adolescents from Areas of High Deprivation in London, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45, 1126–1140.

Frydenberg, E. (2008). *Adolescent coping: Advances in theory, research and practice.* Sussex: Routledge.

Fuller, M. (1980). *Black girls in a London comprehensive school.* In Deem, R. (Ed.) *Schooling for women's work.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gadamer, H. (1990/1960). *Truth and Method,* New York, Crossroads.

Gautler, H. & Green, R. (2105). Promoting the inclusion of migrant children in a UK school, *Educational & Child Psychology*, 32:2, 102-114.

Gillborn, D., (2005). 'Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Education Reform', *Journal of Education Policy*, 20: 4, 485 -505.

Gillborn, D. (2006). Critical Race Theory and Education: Racism and antiracism in educational theory and praxis, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 27:1, 11-32.

Gillborn, D. (2008a). 'Coincidence or conspiracy? Whiteness, policy and the persistence of the Black/White achievement gap', *Educational Review*, 60: 3, 229 — 248.

Gillborn, D. (2008b). *Racism and education: coincidence or conspiracy?* Abingdon, Routledge.

Gillborn, D. (2009). 'Burning Down the House? Refuting the Myths and Recognising the Promise of Critical Race Theory' in Pilkington, A., Housey, S. and Hylton, K.(Eds.). (2009). *'Race(ing) Forward: Transitions in Theorising Race in Education'*, Birmingham, The Higher Education Academy.

Gillborn, D. (2010). 'Reform, racism and the centrality of whiteness: assessment, ability and the 'new eugenics'', *Irish Educational Studies*, 29: 3, 231 – 252.

Giroux, H. (1983). Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis. *Harvard Educational Review.* 53:3, 257-293.

Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and Educational Correlates, *Psychology in schools*, 30, 79-90.

Gordon, J. & Patterson, J.A. (2013). Response to Tracy's Under the "Big Tent": Establishing Universal Criteria for Evaluating Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19:9, 689–695.

Gosai, N. (2009). Perspectives on the Educational Experiences of African/Caribbean Boys. Thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Education.

Gosai, N. (2011). *Perspectives on the Educational Experiences of African/Caribbean Boys.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Graham, M. and Robinson, G. (2004). "The Silent Catastrophe": Institutional Racism in the British Educational System and the Underachievement of Black Boys, *Journal of Black Studies*, 34:5, 653-671.

Grant, C. A. (2011). 'Escaping Devil's Island: Confronting Racism, Learning History', *Race Ethnicity and Education,* 14: 1, 33 -49.

Grant, D. & Brooks, K. (1998). Black Exclusion from School The way ahead, *Educational Psychology in Practice: theory, research and practice in educational psychology,* 14:1, 26-31.

Gu, Q. and Day, C. (2007). Teachers resilience: A necessary condition for effectiveness, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23:8, 1302-1316.

Gummadam,P., Pittman, L. & Ioffe. M. (2016). School Belonging, Ethnic Identity, and Psychological Adjustment Among Ethnic Minority College Students, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 84:2, 289-306.

Harris, R and Parsons, C. (2001). *Black exclusions in a moral vacuum*, in: Majors, R., (Ed.), *Educating our Black Children. New directions and radical approaches,* London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Heidegger, M. (1927/2008). *'Sein und Zeit' ('Being and Time').* Trans. Macquarrie, J., & Robinson, E. New York: Blackwell publishing.

Health and Care Professions Council (2012). *Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.* London, HCPC.

Hidalgo, N. (2011). Uneven youth resistance across uneven school contexts, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24:5, 601-606.

Hopkins, P., Botterill, K., Sanghera, G. & Arshad, R., (2015). Faith, ethnicity and place: young people's everyday geopolitics in Scotland, Newcastle University, https://research.ncl.ac.uk/youngpeople/

Howard, S. and Johnson, B. (2004). 'Resilient Teachers Resisting Burnout', *Social Psychology of Education,* 7, 399-420.

Howarth, C. (2004). Re-presentation and resistance in the context of school exclusion: reasons to be critical. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 14 (5). pp. 356-377

Howitt, D. & Cramer, D. (2014). *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology.* Harlow. Pearson.

Husserl, E., (1970*). Logical Investigations 2 vols*, Trans. Findlay, J.N. New York: Humanities Press.

Jones, J. (1991). 'The concept of race in social psychology: From color to culture' in Jones, R.L. (Ed.) (1991). *Black Psychology*, Berkley, Cobb and Henry Publishers.

Juvonen, J., Nishina, A., & Graham, S. (2006). Ethnic diversity and perceptions of safety in urban middle schools. *Psychological Science,* 17:5, 393–400.

Karlsen, S., Nazroo, J., McKenzie, K., Bhui, K. & Weich, S. (2005). Racism psychosis and common mental disorder among ethnic minority groups in England, *Psychological Medicine*, 35, 1795–1803.

Kia-Keating, M. and Heidi Ellis, B. (2007). Belonging and Connection to School in Resettlement: Young Refugees, School Belonging, and Psychosocial Adjustment,
Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 12:1, 29–43.

Kogan, S. M., Yu, T., Allen, K. A., & Brody, G. H. (2015). Racial Microstressors, Racial Self-Concept, and Depressive Symptoms Among Male African Americans During the Transition to Adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 4:4, 898–909.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). 'Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11: 1, 7- 24.

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological Psychology: Theory, research and method*, Harlow, Pearson.

Lanier, Y., Sommers, M., Fletcher, J.,Sutton, M. & Roberts. D. (2016). Examining Racial Discrimination Frequency, Racial Discrimination Stress, and Psychological Well- Being Among Black Early Adolescents, *Journal of Black Psychology,* 1–11, 1

Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 102-120.

Law, I., Finney, S. & Swann, S. (2014). Searching for autonomy: young black men, schooling and aspirations, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17:4, 569-590.

Lemay, R., & Ghazal, H. (2001). Resilience and positive psychology : Finding hope*. Child & Family, 5*:1, 10-21.

Lipsitz, G. (2006). *Possesive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics* (Revised and Extended Edition), Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Lindsay, G., Pather, S. and Strand, S. (2006). *Special Educational Needs And Ethnicity: Issues of Over and Under Representation*, DfES.

Lopez, I. (2006). *'White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race'*, New York, NYU Press.

Luthar, S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71:3, 543–562.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1988). *Young, Gifted and Black: Student- Teacher Relations in the Schooling of Black Youth*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Madsen,K., Trab Damsgaardm, M.,Rubin, M., Smith Jervelund, S., Lasgaard, M., Walsh, S.,Stevens, G., and Holstein, B. (2016). Loneliness and Ethnic Composition of the School Class: A Nationally Random Sample of Adolescents, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45:1350–1365.

Majors, R., Gillborn, D. and Sewell, T. (2001). 'The Exclusions of Black Children: Implications for a Racialised Perspectives', in Majors, R. (Ed.), (2001), *'Educating our Black Children'*, London, Routledge Falmer.

Mansfield, C. & Diamond, L. (2015). Does Stress-Related Growth Really Matter for Adolescents' Day-to-Day Adaptive Functioning?, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 1–19

McFarland, D.A. (2001). Student Resistance: How the Formal and Informal Organization of Classrooms Facilitate Everyday Forms of Student Defiance. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107:3, 612-678.

McKown, C. and Weinstein, R. (2008). 'Teacher expectations, classroom context, and the achievement gap', *Journal of School Psychology*. 46, 235–261.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge.

Merten, D. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*, London, Sage.

Milner, H.R. (2007). Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen, *Educational Researcher*, 36:7, 388–400.

Mirza,H.S. (1992). *Young, female and black.* London: Routledge.

Monks, C.,Ortega-Ruiz, R. & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, A. (2008). Peer victimization in multicultural schools in Spain and England, *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5:4, 507-535.

Munford, R. and Sanders, J. (2015). Young people's search for agency: Making sense of their experiences and taking control*, Qualitative Social Work*, 14:5, 616–633.

Nicolas, G., Helms, J., Jernigan, M., Sass, T., Skrzypek, A. & DeSilva, A. (2008). A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Strengths of Black Youths, *Journal of Black Psychology,* 34:3, 261-280.

Nolan, K. (2011). Oppositional behavior in urban schooling: toward a theory of resistance for new times*, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24:5, 559-572.

Orbe, M. (2000). Centralizing diverse racial/ethnic voices in scholarly research: the value of phenomenological inquiry, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 603-621.

Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' Need for Belonging in the School Community, *Review of Educational Research*, 70:3, 323-367.

Parsons, C. (2008). 'Race relations legislation, ethnicity and disproportionality in school exclusions in England', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38: 3, 401-419.

Parsons, C. (2009). 'Explaining sustained inequalities in ethnic minority school exclusions in England—passive racism in a neoliberal grip', *Oxford Review of Education*, 35: 2, 249 -265.

Parsons,C., Godfrey,R., Annan, G., Cornwall, J., Dussart, M., Hepburn, S., Howlett, K. and Wennerstrom, V. (2004) *'Minority Ethnic Exclusions and the Race Relations(Amendment) Act 2000','*Nottingham, DfES.

Payne, Y.A. & Brown, T.M. (2010). The Educational Experiences of Street- Life- Oriented Black Boys: How Black Boys Use Street Life as a Site of Resilience in High School. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 26:3, 316–338.

Pittman, L. & Richmond, A. (2007). Academic and Psychological Functioning in Late Adolescence: The Importance of School Belonging, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 75:4, 270-290.

Portnoi, L.M & Kwong, T.M. (2015). Employing Resistance and Resilience in Pursuing K-12 Schooling and Higher Education: Lived Experiences of Successful Female First-Generation Students of Color. *Urban Education*, 1–29.

Priest, N., Perry, R. and Ferdinand, A. (2014). Experiences of Racism, Racial/Ethnic Attitudes, Motivated Fairness and Mental Health Outcomes Among Primary and Secondary School Students*, Journal of Youth and Adolescents*, 43, 1672-1687.

Raby, R. (2005). What is Resistance? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8:2, 151-171.

Reynolds, G. (2008). *The Impacts and Experiences of Migrant Children in UK Secondary Schools,* Working Paper No 47, University of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Migration Research.

Rhamie, J. (2007). *Eagles Who Soar: How Black Learners Find the Path to Success*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

Rhamie, J. (2012). Achievement and underachievement: the experiences of African Caribbeans, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15:5, 683-704.

Richards, G. (1997). *'Race', racism and psychology: Towards a reflexive history*, London, Routledge.

Robinson, G. (2001). *The needs and aspirations of young Black men aged 12-16 years old in Southwark*, London. Unpublished report, From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation (FBMF).

Rogers. L. & Way, N. (2016). "I Have Goals to Prove All Those People Wrong and Not Fit Into Any One of Those Boxes": Paths of Resistance to Stereotypes Among Black Adolescent Males*, Journal of Adolescent Research*, 31:3, 263–298.

Rollock, N. (1999), Racism, inequality and African-Caribbean males: a case of history revisited, *Educational and Child Psychology*, 16:13, 30-36

Rubie-Davies, C., Hattie, J, and Hamilton, R. (2006). 'Expecting the best for students: Teacher expectations and academic outcomes', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 429–444.

Sartre, J-P. (1956). *Being and nothingness*, New York, Washington Square Post.

Scott, C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance, New Haven,* Yale University Press.

Scott, C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Seaton, E. K., & Yip, T. (2009). School and neighborhood contexts, perceptions of racial discrimination, and psychological well-being among African American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence,* 38(2), 153–163.

Sheldon, K. and Houser-Marko, L., (2001), Self-concordance, Goal Attainment and the Pursuit of Happiness, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80:1, 152-165

Shepherd, C., Reynolds, F. & Moran, J. (2010). 'They're battle scars, I wear them well': a phenomenological exploration of young women's experiences of building resilience following adversity in adolescence, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13:3, 273-290

Shochet , I., Smith, C., Furlong, M. & Homel, R. (2011). A Prospective Study Investigating the Impact of School Belonging Factors on Negative Affect in Adolescents, *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 40:4, 586-595.

Singh, K., Chang, M. & Dika, S. (2010). Ethnicity, self-concept, and school belonging: effects on school engagement, *Educational research for policy and practice*, 9:3, 59–175.

Smith, J., (2011). Evaluating the contribution of interpretative phenomenological analysis, *Health Psychology Review,* 5,1, 9-27.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. London. Sage.

Smith, J. and Osborn, M. (2015). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*, in Smith, J (ed.) (2015) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London, Sage.

Solorzano, D. & Delgado-Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through Critical Race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context. *Urban Education*, 36:3, 308-342.

St Clair, R. & Benjamin, R. (2011). Performing desires: the dilemma of aspirations and educational attainment, *British Educational Research Journal,* 37:3, 501-517.

Stanovich, K. (1986). 'Matthew Effects in Reading: Some Consequences of Individual Differences in the Acquisitions of Literacy', *Reading Research Quarterly*, XXI/4.

Strand, S. (2012). The White British-Black Caribbean achievement gap: Tests, tiers and teacher expectations, *British Educational Research Journal*, 38: 75–101.

Strand, S. & Winston, J. (2008). Educational aspirations in inner city schools, *Educational Studies*, 34:4, 249-267.

Sullivan, C. (2010). *Theory and method in qualitative research*. In Forrester, M. (Ed.) (2010), *Doing qualitative research in psychology: A practical guide*, London, Sage.

Thomas, N. and O'Kane, C. (1998),.The Ethics of Participatory Research With Children, *Children and Society*,12, 336-348.

Tiet, Q.Q., Huizinga, D. and Byrnes, H.F. (2010). Predictors of Resilience Among Inner City Youths', *Children and Family Studies*,19, 360–378.

Tikly, L., Osler, A. and Hill, J. (2005). 'The ethnic minority achievement grant: a critical analysis', *Journal of Education Policy*, 20: 3, 283-312.

Tillery, A. D, Varjas, K., Roach, A.T., Kuperminc, G.P. & Meyers, J. (2013). The Importance of Adult Connections in Adolescents' Sense of School Belonging: Implications for Schools and Practitioners, *Journal of School Violence*, 12:2, 134-155.

Tillman, J. (2002). Culturally Sensitive Research Approaches: An African-American Perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 31:9, 3–12.

Tinson, J., (2009). Conducting Research With Children and Adolescents: Design, Methods and Empirical Cases, Mesa, Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.

Tracy, S. (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. Qualitative Inquiry, 16, 10, 837-851.

Tuck, E. & Yang , W. (2011). Youth resistance revisited: new theories of youth negotiations of educational injustices, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24:5, 521-530.

Tummala-Narra, P. & Sathasivam-Rueckert. N. (2016). The Experience of Ethnic and Racial Group Membership Among Immigrant-Origin Adolescents, *Journal of Adolescent Research,* 31:3, 299–342

Ungar, M. (2006). Nurturing Hidden Resilience in At-Risk Youth in Different Cultures. *Journal of Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,* 15:2 53-58.

Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across Cultures, *British Journal of Social Work. 38,* 218–235.

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy,* Ontario, The Althouse Press.

Vaught, S. and Castagno, A. (2008). '"I don't think I'm a racist": Critical Race Theory, Teacher Attitudes, and Structural Racism', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11: 2, 95 -113.

Verma, G.K. (1999). Inequality and education: implications for the psychologist *Educational and Child Psychology*, 16:13, 6-16

Vinthagen, S. and Johansson, A., (2013). "Everyday Resistance":Exploration of a Concept and its Theories, *Resistance Studies*, 1, 1-46.

Wade, A. (1997). Small acts of living: everyday resistance to violence and other forms of oppression. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 19:1, 23-39.

Warren, S. (2005). Resilience and refusal: African-Caribbean young men's agency, school exclusions, and school-based mentoring programmes, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8:3, 243-259.

Wertz, F. (2011), *A phenomenological psychological approach to trauma and resilience* in Wertz, F., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L., Josselson, R., Anderson, R. and Spalden, E. (Ed.) (2011), *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis*, New York, The Gulliford Press.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Wilson, D., Foster, J., Anderson, S., & Mance, G. (2008). Racial Socialization's Moderating Effect Between Poverty Stress and Psychological Symptoms for African American Youth. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 35:1, 102–124.

Wise, T. (2008). *Speaking treason: anti-racist reflections from an angry white male*, Brooklyn, Group West.

Wright, C. (2010). Othering difference: framing identities and representation in black children's schooling in the British context, *Irish Educational Studies*, 29:3, 305-320.

Wright, C., Weekes, D. and McGlaughlin, A. (2000). ''*Race', Class and Gender in Exclusions from School'*, London, Falmer Press.

Wright, C., Standen, P and Patel, T. (2010). *Black Youth Matters: Transitions from school to success*, New York, Routledge.

Yardley, L. (2015). *Demonstrating Validity in Qualitative Psychology* in Smith, J.A. (Ed) (2015) *Qualitative Psychology: a practical guide to research methods.* London, Sage.

Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and Health*, 15, 215 – 228.

Yates, T. and Masten, A. (2004*). Fostering the Future: Resilience Theory and the Practice of Positive Psychology* in Linley, P. A. and Joseph, S (ed). *Positive Psychology in Practice*, New Jersey, Wiley and Sons.

Zine, J. (2000). Redefining Resistance: Towards an Islamic subculture in schools, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 3:3, 293-316.

Zinga, D. & Gordon, M. (2016). 'Racism under the radar': Student perceptions of school experiences in a multicultural context, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19:5, 1088-1116.

Appendices

A1: Milner's (2007) 'Framework of Researcher Racial and Cultural Positionality' (p394).

Researching the self
What is my racial and cultural heritage? How do I know? • In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my research, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know? • How do I negotiate and balance my racial and cultural selves in society and in my research? How do I know? • What do I believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do I attend to my own convictions and beliefs about race and culture in my research? Why? How do I know? • What is the historical landscape of my racial and cultural identity and heritage? How do I know? • What are and have been the contextual nuances and realities that help shape my racial and cultural ways of knowing, both past and present? How do I know? • What racialized and cultural experiences have shaped my research decisions, practices, approaches, epistemologies, and agendas?
Researching the Self in Relation to Others A second feature of the framework is for researchers to reflect about themselves in relation to others—in this case, the communities and people involved in their research studies—and to acknowledge the multiple roles, identities, and positions that researchers and research participants bring to the research process
What are the cultural and racial heritage and the historical landscape of the participants in the study? How do I know? • In what ways do my research participants' racial and cultural backgrounds influence how they experience the world? How do I know? • What do my participants believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do they and I attend to the tensions inherent in my and their convictions and beliefs about race and culture in the research process? Why? How do I know?

• How do I negotiate and balance my own interests and research agendas with those of my research participants, which may be inconsistent with or diverge from mine? How do I know?

• What are and have been some social, political, historical, and contextual nuances and realities that have shaped my research participants' racial and cultural ways or systems of knowing, both past and present? How consistent and inconsistent are these realities with mine? How do I know?

Shifting From Self to System

Shifting the process of inquiry from the more personalized level to consider policy, institutional, systemic, and collective issues is important in this framework. In the practice of research, researchers take into consideration, for example, how history and politics shape their racialized and cultural systems of knowing and those of the research participants

What is the contextual nature of race, racism, and culture in this study? In other words, what do race, racism, and culture mean in the community under study and in the broader community? How do I know?

• What is known socially, institutionally, and historically about the community and people under study? In other words, what does the research literature reveal about the community and people under study? And in particular, what do people from the indigenous racial and cultural group write about the community and people under study? Why? How do I know?

• What systemic and organizational barriers and structures shape the community and people's experiences, locally and more broadly? How do I know?

A2: A table showing Yardley's (2000, p219) 'Characteristics of good (qualitative) research' and how the current research meets these.

Criteria	How research meets each criterion
Sensitivity to context	
Theoretical; relevant literature; empirical data; sociocultural setting; participants' perspectives; ethical issues.	• The literature review demonstrates the relevant literature that was drawn upon to support my understanding of the context within which the phenomenon sits. • Given my own background as a researcher of African-Caribbean descent I was aware of some of the issues and concerns the participants may raise and prepared for this beforehand • Use of semi-structured interviews allowed the conversation to be influenced by the participants' perspective. Allowed me to respond sensitively to participants responses. • Use of IPA allowed for the young people's views to be centred. • Interviews took place at a time and place which suited the participants and in which they felt they would be most comfortable. • Drew on Rogerian skills to build rapport and support the young person in feeling comfortable. • Ensured that Ethics were adhered to (as noted in section 3.7.1) • Participants' perspectives have been drawn upon to furnish and authenticate implications for practice.
Commitment and rigour	
In-depth engagement with topic; methodological competence skill;	• Appropriate sample size that was appropriate for the phenomenon to be explored

thorough data collection; depth/breadth of analysis.	- Interview were completed, the questions were found to be appropriate and tweaked if necessary - Interviews were transcribed by me which allowed me to fully immerse myself in the data and supported an in-depth analysis. - I followed a known and trusted method specifically generated for analysing data in an IPA manner.
Transparency and coherence	
Clarity and power of description/argument; transparent methods and data presentation; fit between theory and method: reflexivity.	- In my discussion I have drawn on the literature to make links across the body of work and support findings - I have been transparent and reflexive about my positionality in relation to the phenomenon to be explored and my approach. - Sought the support of my supervisor who has a different background to me to ensure the conclusions drawn were reflective of the accounts. - Been clear about the process followed, providing quotes, quotation markers and examples of the analysis process.
Impact and importance	
Theoretical (enriching understanding); socio-cultural; practical (for community, policy makers, health workers).	- I have provided implications for both schools and the EP profession to consider. - I have provided a framework which the profession can draw upon to support them in exploring and augmenting their practice.

A2.1: Tracy's 'Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research' (2010, p840)

Worthy topic The topic of the research is: • Relevant • Timely • Significant • Interesting
Rich rigour: • The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex • Theoretical constructs • Data and time in the field • Sample(s) • Context(s) • Data collection and analysis processes
Sincerity The study is characterized by: • Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) • Transparency about the methods and challenges
Credibility The research is marked by: • Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallization • Multivocality • Member reflections
Resonance The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through: • Aesthetic, evocative representation • Naturalistic generalizations • Transferable findings

Significant contribution

The research provides a significant contribution:

- Conceptually/theoretically
- Practically
- Morally
- Methodologically
- Heuristically

Ethical

The research considers:

- Procedural ethics (such as human subjects)
- Situational and culturally specific ethics
- Relational ethics
- Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)

Meaningful coherence

The study:

- Achieves what it purports to be about
- Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals
- Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other

A3: Smith's (2011, p17) IPA quality evaluation guide

> **Acceptable**
>
> The paper meets the following four criteria:
>
> - Clearly subscribes to the theoretical principles of IPA: it is phenomenological,
>
> hermeneutic and idiographic. (Yes)
>
> - Sufficiently transparent so reader can see what was done. (Yes)
> - Coherent, plausible and interesting analysis. (Yes)
> - Sufficient sampling from corpus to show density of evidence for each theme: (yes)
>
> N=1-3: extracts from every participant for each theme
>
> N=4-8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme (Yes)
>
> N=8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme_measure of prevalence of themes, or extracts from half the sample for each theme.
>
> *Caveats*
>
> Compensation: Evidence base and interest factors considered together so that, e.g., a paper with particularly interesting data may gain compensation for a less than ideal evidence base.

A4: Tillman's (2002, p6) framework for culturally sensitive research approaches and reflections on how it is felt this applies to the current research.

Framework for culturally sensitive research approaches
Culturally Congruent Research Methods Culturally sensitive research approaches use qualitative methods such as interviews (individual, group, life history), observation, and participant observation. These and other qualitative methods are used to investigate and capture holistic contextualized pictures of the social, political, economic, and educational factors that affect the everyday existence of 'black' people, particularly in educational settings. *Current research was qualitative in nature and used semi-structured interviews to capture factors which affected the participants in their educational settings.* *Phenomenological research offers a methodological framework which provides a space for people to speak for themselves, for the participant's own point of view to be captured and provides space for participation in research in meaningful ways.*
Culturally Specific Knowledge Culturally sensitive research approaches use the particular and unique self-defined ('black' self-representation) experiences of 'black' people. *Current research provided space for the participants to determine if and how they identified experiences in relation to 'blackness'.*
Cultural Resistance to Theoretical Dominance Culturally sensitive research approaches attempt to reveal, understand, and respond to unequal power relations that may minimize, marginalize, subjugate, or exclude the multiple realities and knowledge bases of 'black' people. Research privilege is questioned, as well as claims of neutrality and objectivity in educational research. *Current research explores and takes into consideration issues of epistemology and ontology which may contribute to marginalisation, cultural bias in research (e.g in relation to resilience), impact of validity, reliability and research criteria.* *Voices of the participants are drawn on to support implications for practice.*
Culturally Sensitive Data Interpretations Culturally sensitive research approaches for 'black' people- position experiential knowledge as legitimate, appropriate, and necessary for

analysing, understanding, and reporting data. The cultural standpoints of 'black' people provide analyses of their particular experiences in society.

Critical Realism stance of the research recognises and values participants experiencing of their own reality.

Current research sought to shine a spotlight on a particular phenomenon, positioning the knowledge and experience of those experiencing the phenomenon at the heart of the research.

Culturally Informed Theory and Practice

Researchers rely on participants' perspectives and cultural understandings of the phenomena under study to establish connections between espoused theory and reality. Researchers use culturally informed knowledge to propose educational change and work to build meaningful, productive relationships with the non-academic community.

Use of qualitative approach and IPA allowed for in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and cross references were made between these and literature contained in the literature review as part of the discussion section.

Provision of framework to support the profession and EPSs in their thinking, and actions, related inequality and practice.

A5: Ethics approval letter

School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD
tel: +44 (0)115 846 7403 or (0)115 951 4344

SJ/wb

Ref: 841R

Friday, 13 May 2016

Dear Maria Abijah-Liburd & Neil Ryrie,

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'.

That proposal has now been reviewed and we are pleased to tell you it has met with the Committee's approval.

However:

Please note the following comments from our reviewers;

Thank you for addressing the concerns raised. I have a few additional remarks based on the interview guide. The applications states that the research "seeks to identify and highlight the processes through which pupils of African-Caribbean descent enact Resistance, agency and resilience in the English school system" (p. 5). For me, this raises the question what is meant by the terms "enact", "resistance", "agency", and "resilience". How are they conceptually and operationally defined in the context of this research project? Also, the sentence mentions the term "processes". Why

processes? One of my teachers used to say "there are structures, and there are processes". So, why the focus on processes? Why not structures? (For example, personality variables.) I completely appreciate that it is not possible to explain a research project in all its detail in an ethics application, but I had real difficulties to see how these aims are reflected in the interview guide. Where is the "strengths focus"? How will resistance, agency, and resilience be addressed? And to make the analysis more meaningful, would it not be necessary to have a control group of participants who did not "overcome these adversities" (p. 5)?

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Yours sincerely

Professor Stephen Jackson

Chair, Ethics Committee

A6: Access letter

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

Tel: 07930581415

Neil Ryrie (Supervisor)

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

Tel: 0115 846 7303

Dear

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologists and doctoral student with the University of Nottingham and I am researching the experiences of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in mainstream secondary schools in the U.K.

The research seeks to provide a space in which young people's experiences of school can be voiced, acknowledged and recorded. The research is particularly interested in how young people define their successes and strengths for themselves within their schooling experience and how this can be positively highlighted and explored. It is hoped that the information from this research will help suggest ways in which other young people can successfully navigate the schooling system, as well as ways in which schools and Educational Psychologists may support this process

I am contacting you to seek your assistance in accessing parents and young people (aged 14-18 and currently in mainstream secondary education) who may wish to participate in this research.

In brief, participation would involve the young person taking part in a 1-1 interview with me (I have enhanced DBS clearance for working with children and young people). They will need to be interviewed once only. The interview will take place in a location where the young person feels comfortable talking. This could be at your location or their home, the university, my place of work or at another location (the location will be in agreement with parents if they are under 16). If they wish, the young person can have a parent or other trusted person in the room with them during the interview. For young people not wishing to take up this option, a parent or trusted person will be asked to remain nearby whilst the interview takes place and will be asked to make occasional visible checks to ensure the participant is comfortable. To facilitate this, the interview will only take place in a location where there is a room with a window panelled door available, where the door is able to be left open or where visible contact is able to be maintained across an open space (such as where the room has an internal window panel or the interview takes place in an open plan area). The interviews can be held at a time that suits the young person and the interview will take no more than 1 hour (with additional time available afterwards should the child wish to discuss topics raised further). The interview will be recorded and all information gathered will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. Any distribution of the research will ensure participant anonymity at all times.

The assistance I am seeking from you is to be given the opportunity to attend your organisation and speak with the young people and their parents/or give them letters to invite them to participate. Or alternatively for you to distribute letters to the addresses of parents (I would prepare the letters and cover the cost of postage).

In order to support you in deciding whether you feel able to help me with this request I would very much welcome the opportunity to come and speak with you and discuss the purpose of my research further. I will contact you shortly by phone to arrange this. My email is provided at the bottom of this letter, please feel free to contact me if you have any queries in the meantime.

Thank you for your time in considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

My email: lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

A6.1: Parent information letter

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

Tel: 07930581415

lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Neil Ryrie (Supervisor)

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

Tel: 0115 846 7303

Dear

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologists with the University of Nottingham. As part of my training I am researching the experiences of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in mainstream secondary schools in the U.K.

The research is particularly interested in how young people define their successes and strengths within their schooling experience for themselves, and how this can be positively highlighted and explored. It is hoped that the information from this research will help suggest ways in which other young people can successfully navigate the schooling system, as well as ways in which schools and Educational Psychologists may support this process.

I am contacting you to ask your permission for me to invite your child to take part in this research.

If your child participates, it will involve being interviewed by me, Maria Abijah-Liburd, on a 1-1 basis. I have full enhanced DBS clearance. During the interview they will be asked questions about their experiences in school and what they feel has supported and challenged them. They will need to be interviewed once only and the interview will be recorded. All information gathered will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. Your child's participation in the research will be kept confidential and any distribution of the research will ensure their anonymity at all times, meaning that no one will be able to identify your child in the research.

The interview will take place in a location where your child feels comfortable talking. This could be at your home, at the university, at my place of work or at another location. The location will be in agreement with you. If they wish, your child can have a parent or other trusted person in the room with them during the interview. For young people not wishing to take up this option, a parent or trusted person will be asked to remain nearby whilst the interview takes place and will be asked to make occasional visible checks to ensure the participant is comfortable. To facilitate this, the interview will only take place in a location where there is a room with a window panelled door available, where the door is able to be left open or where visible contact is able to be maintained across an open space (such as where the room has an internal window panel or the interview takes place in an open plan area). The interview will be held at a time that suits you and your child and the interview will take no more than 1 hour.

It is hoped that participation in this research will be a positive experience for your child. However during the interview they may raise sensitive and personal topics, such as past experiences with discrimination, which may produce feelings of distress or anger for them. There will be additional time made available following the interview to talk through any feelings that may have arisen for them during the interview. Therefore their total participation time will be around 1 ½ hours.

Should you agree for your child to participate in this research participation is completely voluntary and you or your child can withdraw at any stage, up until the interview has been transcribed and anonymised, without there being any consequences to this.

Thank you for considering my request. Please let me know if you need any more information or would like to discuss this research further.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

My email: lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

A6.2: Parent information sheet

<table>
<tr><td>School of Psychology

Information Sheet</td><td>The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA</td></tr>
</table>

*Title of Project***:** 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'
Ethics Approval Number: 841R
Researcher: Maria Abijah-Liburd
Supervisor: Neil Ryrie

Contact Details:

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

Tel: 07930581415

lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Neil Ryrie (Supervisor)

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

Tel: 0115 846 7303

This is an invitation for your child to take part in a research study on the experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in school.

Before you decide if you wish your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why

the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If your child participates, it would involve being interviewed by me, Maria Abijah-Liburd, on a 1-1 basis. I have full enhanced DBS clearance. The interview will take place in a location where your child feels comfortable talking. This could be at your home, at the university, at my place of work or at another location, whichever is most preferable to your child. The interviews can be held at a time that suits your child and will take no more than 1 hour. If they wish, your child can have a parent or other trusted person in the room with them during the interview. For young people not wishing to take up this option, a parent or trusted person will be asked to remain nearby whilst the interview takes place and will be asked to make occasional visible checks to ensure the participant is comfortable.

In order to support the research process the interview will be recorded. All information gathered will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. When my research is written up, all those who took part will be made anonymous.

This research seeks to provide an opportunity for your child to tell their story about their experiences of school and it is hoped that the opportunity to have their voice heard will provide them with a positive experience. However during the interview sensitive and personal topics may be raised, such as past experiences with discrimination, which may produce feelings of distress or anger for your child. Time will be made available following the interview to talk through any feelings should they have arisen.

 The whole procedure will last 1 hour or less, plus additional time to talk through issues raised if needed.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before or during the study. All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you agree for your child to take part in this study please fill in the consent form included with this letter and return to me at the address below:
Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me. I can also be contacted after your participation on the contact details given below.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:
Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

A6.3: Young people's information letter

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

Tel: 07930581415

lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Neil Ryrie (Supervisor)

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

Tel: 0115 846 7303

Dear

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologists and student with the University of Nottingham and I am researching the experiences of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in mainstream secondary schools in the U.K.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research. Please read the information below to help you decide if you wish to take part.

Why am I doing this research?

This research is interested in hearing the experiences of young people in school. It is particularly interested in how young people define their successes and strengths, and how these can be positively highlighted and explored. It is hoped that the information from this research will help suggest ways in which other young people can successfully navigate the schooling system, as well as ways in which schools and Educational Psychologists may support this process.

What will your participation involve?

Participation in the research will involve being interviewed by me, Maria Abijah-Liburd, on a 1-1 basis. During the interview you will be asked questions about your experiences in school and what you feel has supported/ challenged you. You will need to be interviewed once only and the interview will be recorded.

This research seeks to provide an opportunity for you tell your story about your experiences of school and it is hoped that the opportunity to have your voice heard will provide you with a positive experience. However during the interview you may raise topics, such as past experiences with discrimination, which may produce feelings of distress or anger for you. There will be additional time made available following the interview to talk through any feelings that may have arisen during the interview.

Where will the interview take place?

The interview will take place in a location where you feel comfortable talking. This could be at your home, at the university, at my place of work or at another location (the location will be in agreement with your parents if you are under 16). If you wish, you can have a parent or other trusted person in the room with you during the interview. If you don't want to take up this option, a parent or trusted person will be asked to remain nearby whilst the interview takes place and will be asked to make occasional visible checks to ensure you are comfortable. To help with this, the interview will only take place in a location where there is a room with a window panelled door available, where the door is able to be left open or where visible contact is able to be maintained across an open space (such as where the room has an internal window panel or the interview takes place in an open plan area). You will also be free to access your parent or the trusted person at any point during the interview.

How long will participation take?

Your participation will take 1-1 ½ hours.

What happens to the information following the interview?

All information gathered will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. Your participation in the research will be kept confidential and any distribution of the research will ensure your anonymity at all times, meaning that no one will be able to identify you from the research.

Do you have to participate?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part and then change your mind you are completely free to withdraw without there being any consequence for you. This can happen at any stage of your involvement up until your interview has been transcribed and annonymised.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request. Please ask should you want any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

My email: lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:
Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

A6.4: Young people's information sheet

School of Psychology	The University of Nottingham
	UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'
Ethics Approval Number: 841R
Researcher: Maria Abijah-Liburd
Supervisors: Neil Ryrie

Contact Details:
Maria Abijah-Liburd (Researcher)

Community Educational Psychology Service

Glenbrook Management Centre
Wigman Road
Bilborough
Nottingham
NG8 4PD

Tel: 07930581415

lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Neil Ryrie (Supervisor)

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

Tel: 0115 846 7303

This is an invitation to take part in a research study on the experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent in school.

Before you decide if you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you participate, it would involve being interviewed by me, Maria Abijah-Liburd, on a 1-1 basis. The interview will take place in a location where you feel comfortable talking. This could be at your home, at the university, at my place of work or at another location, whichever is most preferable to you. The interviews can be held at a time that suits you and will take no more than 1 hour. If you wish, you can have a parent or other trusted person in the room with you during the interview. If you do not wish to take up this option, a parent or trusted person will be asked to remain nearby whilst the interview takes place and will be asked to make occasional visible checks to ensure you are comfortable. To facilitate this, the interview will only take place in a location where there is a room with a window panelled door available, where the door is able to be left open or where visible contact is able to be maintained across an open space (such as where the room has an internal window panel or the interview takes place in an open plan area). In order to support the research process the interview will be recorded. All information gathered will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. When my research is written up, all those who took part will be made anonymous.

This research seeks to provide an opportunity for you tell your story about your experiences of school and it is hoped that the opportunity to have your voice heard will provide you with a positive experience. However during the interview you may raise sensitive and personal topics, such as past experiences with discrimination, which may produce feelings of distress or anger for you. Time will be made available following the interview to talk through any feelings should they have arisen.

The whole procedure will last 1 hour or less, plus additional time to talk through issues raised if needed.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before or during the study without prejudice or detriment. All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you choose to take part in this study please fill in the consent form included with this letter and return to me at the address below.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to ask. I can also be contacted after your participation at the above address.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

<div align="center">

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)
stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

</div>

A7: Parent consent form

<table>
<tr><td>**School of Psychology**

Consent Form</td><td>The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA</td></tr>
</table>

Title of Project: 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'

Ethics Approval Number: 841R
Researcher(s): Maria Abijah-Liburd, lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Neil Ryrie, lpanr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?   YES/NO

- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?   YES/NO

- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily?   YES/NO

- Do you understand that you are /your child is free to withdraw from the study? (at any time and without giving a reason).   YES/NO

- I give permission for my child's data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that their anonymity is completely protected.   YES/NO

- Do you agree for your child to take part in the study?   YES/NO

 "This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree for my child to take part. I understand that I am/they are free to withdraw at any time."

Signature of the Participant: Date:

Name (in block capitals)

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she has agreed for their child to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date:

A7.1: Participant consent form

<table>
<tr><td>School of Psychology

Consent Form</td><td>The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA</td></tr>
</table>

Title of Project: 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'

Ethics Approval Number: 841R

Researcher(s): Maria Abijah-Liburd, lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Neil Ryrie, lpanr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?   YES/NO

- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study?   YES/NO

- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily?   YES/NO

- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study?   YES/NO
(at any time and without giving a reason)

- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected.   YES/NO

- Do you agree to take part in the study?   YES/NO

 "This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time."

Signature of the Participant: Date:

Name (in block capitals)

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date:

The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Parent Debriefing Letter

Title of Research: 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'

Ethics Approval Number: 841R

Researcher(s): Maria Abijah-Liburd, lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Neil Ryrie, lpanr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Dear

Thank you for giving permission for your child to participate in this research. It is important that the voices and experiences of young people have the opportunity to be heard.

The aims of this research were to gather information about what young people of African-Caribbean descent feel are their experiences in mainstream schooling with particular focus on how young people define their successes and strengths within this experience for themselves. It is hoped that the information from this research will help suggest ways in which other young people can successfully navigate the schooling system, as well as ways in which schools and Educational Psychologists may support this process.

All the information gathered from your child will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. Their participation in the research will be kept confidential and any distribution of the research will ensure their anonymity at all times, meaning that no one will be able to identify them from the research.

If you want to withdraw your child's data from my research this can now only be done up until I have transcribed and anonymised the interview. If you would like to withdraw their data then this can be arranged by contacting me by (Date), which is within X days.

If you think of any questions you would like to ask once I have gone then please do not hesitate to contact me on the contact details provided.

I hope that participating in this research has been a positive experience for your child. However, should they have felt upset or distressed by any of the issues raised during their interview, and do not feel this was able to be resolved during the time made available following the interview, please let me know. As a researcher I am able to make suggestions regarding where your child may seek further support such as that they:

Talk with you about the issues that they feel upset about.

Talk with the pastoral support and/or counsellors at their school.

Seek support from external counsellors such as those available through:

Base 51: http://www.base51.org.uk/support/counselling/

info@base51.org.uk   Tel: (0115) 952 5040

CASY: (Counselling and Support for Young People) http://www.casy.org.uk/

 office@casy.org.uk   Tel: 01636 704 620

Kooth Online Counselling and Support: https://www.kooth.com/

Get Connected: https://www.getconnected.org.uk Tel: 0808 808 4994

Childline: http://www.childline.org.uk Tel: 0800 111

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact: Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee) at stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Maria Abijah-Liburd (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

A8.1: Participant debriefing letter

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Participant Debriefing Letter

Title of Research: 'An exploration of the schooling experience of pupils of African-Caribbean descent'

Ethics Approval Number: 841R

Researcher(s): Maria Abijah-Liburd, lpxma@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor(s): Neil Ryrie, lpanr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Dear

Thank you for your participation in this research. It is important that the voices and experiences of young people have the opportunity to be heard.

The aims of this research were to gather information about what young people of African-Caribbean descent feel are their experiences in mainstream schooling with particular focus on how young people define their successes and strengths within this experience for themselves. It is hoped that the information from this research will help suggest ways in which other young people can successfully navigate the schooling system, as well as ways in which schools and Educational Psychologists may support this process.

All the information gathered from you will be stored securely and used for research purposes only. Your participation in the research will be kept confidential and any distribution of the research will ensure your anonymity at all times, meaning that no one will be able to identify you from the research.

If you want to withdraw your data from my research this can now only be done up until I have transcribed and anonymised the interview. If you would like to withdraw your data then this can be arranged by contacting me by (Date), which is within X days.

If you think of any questions you would like to ask once I have gone then you can contact me on the contact details provided.

I hope that participating in this research has been a positive experience for you. However, should you have felt upset or distressed by any of the issues raised during your interview, and do not feel this was able to be resolved during the time made available following the interview, please let me know. As a researcher I am able to make suggestions regarding where you may seek further support such as that you:

Talk with your parents about the issues that you feel upset about.

Talk with the pastoral support and/or counsellors at your school.

Seek support from external counsellors such as those available through:

Base 51: http://www.base51.org.uk/support/counselling/

info@base51.org.uk   Tel: (0115) 952 5040

CASY: (Counselling and Support for Young People) http://www.casy.org.uk/

 office@casy.org.uk   Tel: 01636 704 620

Kooth Online Counselling and Support: https://www.kooth.com/

Get Connected: https://www.getconnected.org.uk Tel: 0808 808 4994

Childline: http://www.childline.org.uk Tel: 0800 111

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact: Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee) at stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Thanks again for your participation

Yours sincerely,

Maria Abijah-Liburd

(Trainee Educational Psychologist)

A9: Semi-structured interview schedule

Interview Guide

Questions in bold are the initial questions from which it is hoped to gain the views of the young people, these are accompanied by prompts. The additional questions in each section seek to further explore themes related to the research questions. This remains a guide for a semi –structured interview process however and therefore how, when or if questions are introduced in the interview will be in response to the direction taken by participants.

Intro

-Tell me a bit about yourself, What sort of things do you like doing?
-What do you feel you are good at?
-What would you/your parents/best friends say are your top 3 strengths?
-What do you think has been your 'greatest achievement' so far?

1.0 Tell me about your views of school? (What do you most like/dislike about school? What do you think about school? What do you think about education?)

1.1 Are schooling and education different? – (If so in what ways? How important do you feel school is to you? How important do you feel education is to you?)

1.2 Do you think children of African-Caribbean descent view school and education differently from other groups? (In what ways? What sort of experiences have led to you thinking that?)

1.3 Do you think children of African-Caribbean descent experience school and education differently from other groups? (In what ways? What sort of experiences have led to you thinking that?)

2.0 What does 'success' mean for you in relation to school/ education?
(What would you call doing well? How do you define doing well for yourself? Are qualifications important? What other things mean for you that you are doing well in school?)

2.1 By your definition, do you consider yourself to have been successful in school?

2.2 To what extent do you feel you have control over how you define your own success?

2.3 Do you have personal goals and aspirations? What are these? What/who has influenced you in deciding what you want to achieve? What/who will help you to achieve this? What/who might be a barrier to you achieving this?

3.0 What kinds of things about being in your school are most challenging for you? (What makes it difficult to do well in school? What kind of barriers do you face to doing well at school?)

3.1 To what extent do you feel you are treated fairly in your school? To what extent do you feel equal to others in your school? Do you think that all pupils are treated the same in your school? What happens that makes you feel this way? e.g are sanctions given out fairly? Can you tell me of a time when you felt you/ others might have been treated unfairly in your school? Why did you think this was/ why might this be?)

3.2 Are there ways in which pupils of African-Caribbean descent are treated differently in your school? Do stereotypes come in to play? Do you think racism exists in your school? (if yes- How would you define/describe this? What makes you think this? How does this affect you? How do you choose to deal with this?)

4.0 What do you do if you face challenges in your school? (How do you cope with challenges? What helps you do that? How does this help you succeed? What are the consequences of this way of coping? How do you draw on your strengths?**)**

4.1 Can you share a particular story about how you have successfully managed to overcome challenges in school? In what ways do you see your way of overcoming challenges as being 'successful'?

4.2 What might help people be successful even though challenges exist?

4.3 How could staff/EPs in particular better support success in school?

5.0 Would you like to add anything else?

A10: An example of the IPA process followed using Makeda's account as the model.

A10.1 Makeda's transcript, initial noting and emergent themes (steps 1-4).

Emergent themes (IPA step 4)	Makeda's transcript (2:66-99) (IPA steps 1&2)	Initial noting (IPA step 3)
Impact on future self Personal development emerging from negative Social relationships Positive Diversity positive Impact om emotional welbeing	p1: mmm...yeah...I think it definitely shaped who I am and it made me a tougher person, school, I think that's maybe one positive that came out of it. And of course you always did those you know occasional teachers that were really good and stuff, like especially in primary school, where ,you know, it was more diverse again...erm...we had this teacher that used to run this class on positivity and coz I was.. I was...towards the end of my school I was becoming a bit more withdrawn and ...erm...you know, whenever they kind of noticed that they would put you in this class of positivity and stuff and that was a very (laughs) diverse class and you'd just be doing things that were just fun and it just kind of made you feel more confident and ...erm.. you know just teachers like that they kind of make me see why school is important and stuff. But then you know, you get back to those teachers that obviously have their main agenda... to just get the grades and stuff, they don't really care about the psychological side or don't even notice that, you know, you are	-Long term impact (experiences during school have ability to shape person) -Negative experience reframed as positive -Links between positive experiences, diversity and good teachers -Impact of coping in challenging environment "becoming a bit more withdrawn" -Helps to view schooling positively (feel

187

	the only black student so, you know, even in English classes when you'd be doing books such as Mice and Men and the N-word would come out and everyone would turn to you and you'd be like 'Uagh...again? really?' or History class when you were doing slavery and it's just the most awkward thing ever...erm...yeah it's just...th..though, school has its positives and you know I do believe that, you know, you need school (laughs)..but erm I think there needs to be more attention paid to, you know, black students when they are in the minority.	understood? Noticed? Valued?)
School agenda impacts on care/welfare		-(school system impacting on student welfare)

-View on individual teachers as not caring about/not noticing need

-Sense of isolation/otherness |
| Psychological impact- isolation | | Felt represented whole 'race'? by class? By self?

-Awkward-being only 'black' student, sensitive subject matter |
| Otherness | | |
| Identifying with sense of 'racial' self/ identity | | -Lack of understanding from school about what this experience is like |
| Lack of cultural sensitivity | | -Sees school as having purpose and positive aspect

-School is necessary |
| School as positive | | -Needs of African-Caribbean students neglected. |

Devalued/invisible self		

Perceiving what makes the school environment positive	Key words
Diversity of environment viewed as positive	9:356 cushioned by loads of different diversity
Need for change in school environment through improved understanding.	16:690 how to handle those situations

Education viewed more positively than schooling	
Views on school as being concerned with targets	4:140 less about education more about targets
Pupils' needs coming secondary to hitting targets	2:84 teacher's agenda
School agenda (teacher targets) influencing care	2:86 don't really care
Education more useful than schooling	3:131 not what stays in
Caring teachers facilitate education	4:136 comes from teachers that care

Changing identity experienced as negative	
Reduction of 'self'-becoming 'minoritised'	1:29 weird shift
Became introverted	2:76 withdrawn
Transitioning sense of identity	8:314 before, very confident
Devalued/ invisible self	2:87 don't even notice
Loss of self	8:313 reflecting on old self

Finding ways to 'cope' with experience of schooling	
Application of coping strategies (Agency)	8:346 stood up for self
Challenging negative expectations of 'Black' students	13:568 better than you thought

Growing in the face of adversity	
Impact on future self	8:352 made more aware
Progress/developing self	11: 469 now…I'd call it out straight away
Positive personal development emerging from negatives	9:359 stronger as a person
Success means overcoming	12:504 better, stronger person
Overcoming challenges	13:554 I actually overcame

Positive future	
Aspiration	14:574 aspiring to uni
Progressing/developing self	9:371 developing skills
Hopeful	16:684

Feeling she doesn't belong	
Sense of 'otherness'	2:54 hair, skin insulted
Difficulty finding place/fitting in	9:396 not the same
Sense of isolation/ being isolated	11:476 being alone
Shared experiences of 'difference'	10:401 way others act

Encountering 'blackness'	
Becoming 'black' in relation to shifting context	1:32 transition
Identifying with sense of 'racial' self/ identity	1.22 one of few
Experience of racism	8:335 couldn't be around
'Black' students viewed negatively by others	4:146 trouble makers
'Black' students treated differently to 'white'	4:155 singled out
Incredulity at experience	10: 440 how did that happen?

Feeling understood is important	
Normalised nature of racism (difference in understanding)	1:38 oblivious

Lack of cultural sensitivity from staff and peers	4:175, Imbalance, neglected
Sense of not being understood by 'White' others	11:483 different world view
Shared understanding scaffolds positive relationships w/ 'White' people	15:646 conscious to issues
Shared understanding/experience with other 'Black' People	4:167, 6:253, 9:397, 10:403, 12:493, 15:619

Experiencing helplessness	
Powerlessness in status	1:40 in significant minority
Concerns and views not validated	11:481 no back up
Acceptance of 'everydayness' of racism	10:407 the way it is

Unwanted psychological feelings	
Hurt	5:209 treatment from others
Upset	10:437 different
Struggling to cope	10:419 bad day
Enraged	11:460 treated badly
Experiencing anxiety	3:116 transition as nerve wracking

Feeling vulnerable in the school setting	
Feeling unsafe in school environment	11:476- insecurity at being on own
Uncomfortableness	5:194 exposed to difficult situation
Impact on emotional wellbeing	6:243 major effect on mental health

Positive psychological impact of challenging negative view	
Improved affect	14:595 'that for me felt better than anything
Great moment	14:591
Happy	15:656 feeling

A10:3 Super-ordinate themes (italics) drawn from comparing and grouping participants' sub-ordinate themes (steps 6&7).

Makeda

Valuing learning   Education viewed more positively than schooling
Sense of racialized identity   Changing identity experienced as negative   Encountering 'blackness' as negative
Belonging   Feeling she doesn't belong   Feeling understood is important   Perceiving what makes the school environment positive
The emotional experience of schooling   Feeling vulnerable in the school setting   Experiencing helplessness   Unwanted psychological feelings
Overcoming experiences   Growing in the face of adversity   Positive psychological impact of challenging negative view   Finding ways to 'cope' with experience of schooling
Aspiring for the future   Positive future

Shaka

Valuing learning   Valuing education and learning
Sense of racialized identity   'Blackness' imposed as negative entity   Being on the 'inside' and 'outside' though racialized identity

Belonging
School is not a place of belonging
Not feeling at one with the system
Schooling as something to be endured

Emotional experience of schooling
Unwanted psychological feelings
Experiencing negative affect beyond school

Overcoming experiences
Finding ways to cope

Aspiring for the future
Becoming me has been a positive experience
Aspiring and achieving beyond expectations

Malik

Valuing learning
Valuing schooling and education

Sense of racialized identity
Experiencing 'blackness' in relation to self and others

Belonging
Experiencing 'sameness' through presence of diversity
Having sense of being valued and cared for
Sense of 'belonging' reinforced through sharing values and experiences

Overcoming experiences
Growing from challenge, faltering under pressure
Benefitting from social support and guidance

Aspiring for the future
Experiencing a positive sense of achievement and aspiring for the future
Development of sense of self has been a positive one
What it takes to succeed

Viewing success as important but relative

Candace

Valuing learning
Valuing learning and education
'Schooling' as system is focussed on targets

Sense of racialized identity
Having 'blackness' imposed

Belonging
Feeling included and protected
Feeling valued and cared for
Friendships as the most important things

Overcoming experiences
Reframing experiences
Actioning agency to transform self
Growing beyond negative experiences

Emotional experience of schooling
Development of sense of self negatively impacted

Aspiring for the future
Aspiring and achieving

A10:4 Master themes (italics) for the participants and the superordinate themes that they are drawn from (step 8).

Wanting to succeed	
Valuing learning	Makeda
	Shaka
	Candace
	Malik
Aspiring for the future	Malik
	Candace
	Shaka
	Makeda
Fitting in	
Sense of 'racialized' identity	Makeda
	Candace
	Shaka
	Malik
Belonging	Shaka
	Candace
	Malik
	Makeda
Emotional experience of schooling	Makeda
	Shaka
	Candace
	Malik
Transcending challenge	
Overcoming	Shaka
	Malik
	Makeda
	Candace

A11: Questions to explore EP practice related to 'race', racism, diversity and equality.

The following table provides a list of questions that individual EP services and the EP profession as a whole might find useful to ask themselves in order to support them in exploring issues of 'race', racism, diversity and equality. It may also be useful as an audit tool to identify gaps in practice and monitor what areas might benefit from additional resources.

The questions in this table are taken from Desforges, Goodwin and Kerr (1985), Williams, Weerasinghe and Hobbs (2015) and questions I have generated as a result of the Implications section (see tables below).

As a profession:
How authentic are we in our commitment as a profession to equality and diversity?
Are we making progress? How are we measuring this? How are we monitoring our impact and outcomes in relation to equality?
Where is the research that reflects the wider determinants of educational and psychological outcomes to include ethnicity, 'race' and culture?
Where is the evidence that services are integrating and mainstreaming the equalities agenda at both a local and national level?
As a service:
Do all of our staff see racism as relevant to them as professionals working in a multi-racial society, or do they think it is of importance only to those working with minority ethnic clients?
Is there evidence that our professional practice and continuing professional development around recruitment, supervision, management and leadership have integrated diversity, 'race' and culture into their frameworks?
In what ways do we understand and support the experience of 'minoritised' staff and students in our EPS's and training courses?
Does the make-up of our senior leadership teams match the populations we serve?
Does the ethnic composition of clerical and professional staff employed reflect that of the community we serve?

Have we had open and honest discussions with 'minoritised' communities about their wants and needs? Are we getting it right with 'minoritised' groups? What is their experience of 'us' like?
Have we thought seriously about the particular needs of different ethnic minority groups and considered what knowledge, skills and resources we require to meet those needs better?
What steps has our service taken to improve its service delivery to minority clients? How does our service involve (or discourage) ethnic minority community groups to help us improve service delivery?
Are we interrogating what assumptions and power dynamics may be at play during interactions between those of us who are from the majority population and 'minoritised' clients?
Who sets priorities, allocate time and resources in our service? In what ways might their judgements result in unintentional racism?
Is there evidence that diversity and cultural competence is embedded in EP practice beyond bilingual assessments to include our framing of the consultation model, educational outcomes, mental health outcomes, parenting practices, developmental histories and resilience, and thereby guide our formulation, assessment and intervention practice?
How do our methods of assessment (e.g. psychometric, observational etc.) discriminate against people from ethnic minority groups?
How do we ensure that clients who are not fluent in English are given the opportunity to discuss our proposals or reports in the language they choose or to receive them in a written form in an appropriate language? Do we exploit individuals if you use them as interpreters/translators?
What steps is our training/CPD officer taking to include, or increase an awareness of equality sessions amongst our staff?
Has the service had training related to 'racism', equality and cultural awareness? In the last 6 months? Year? 5 years? Ever?. Did this training explore privilege, assumptions and culture of majority population and 'whiteness'?

Where the questions were drawn from

My reflections following the research

How authentic are we in our commitment as a profession to equality and diversity?
Are we making progress? How are we measuring this? How are we monitoring our impact and outcomes in relation to equality?
Are we interrogating what assumptions and power dynamics may be at play during interactions between those of us who are from the majority population and 'minoritised' clients?
Have we had open and honest discussions with 'minoritised' communities about their wants and needs? Are we getting it right with 'minoritised' groups? What is their experience of 'us' like?
Has the service had training related to 'racism', equality and cultural awareness? In the last 6 months? Year? 5 years? Ever?). Did this training explore privilege, assumptions and culture of majority population and 'whiteness'?
Does the make-up of our staff teams and senior leadership teams match the populations we serve?
In what ways do we understand and support the experience of 'minoritised' staff and students in our EPS's and training courses?

Williams, Weerasinghe and Hobbs (2015, p7)

Where is the evidence that services are integrating and mainstreaming the equalities agenda at both a local and national level?
Where is the research that reflects the wider determinants of educational and psychological outcomes to include ethnicity, 'race' and culture?
Where is the evidence that diversity and cultural competence is embedded in EP practice beyond bilingual assessments to include our framing of the consultation model, educational outcomes, mental health outcomes, parenting practices, developmental histories and resilience, and thereby guide our formulation, assessment and intervention practice?
Where is the evidence that professional practice and continuing professional development around recruitment, supervision, management and leadership have integrated diversity, 'race' and culture into their frameworks?

Desforges, Goodwin and Kerr (1985, p12)

Is the reception and waiting a place that all clients, including those from minority ethnic groups, find welcoming and comfortable? Is your office easy to reach by public transport?
How approachable and welcoming of the reception staff?
Does the racial composition of clerical and professional staff employed reflect that of the community you serve?
Have you thought seriously about the particular needs of different ethnic minority groups and considered what knowledge, skills and resources you require to meet those needs better?
What steps has your service taken to improve its service delivery to minority clients? How does your service involve (or discourage) ethnicity minority community groups to help you improve service delivery?
Who sets priorities, allocate time and resources in your service? Do their judgements result in unintentional racism?
How do your methods of assessment (psychometric and observational) discriminate against people from minority ethnic groups?
How do you ensure that clients who are not fluent in English are given the opportunity to discuss your proposals or reports in the language they choose or to receive them in a written form an inappropriate language? Do you exploit individuals if you use them as interpreters/translators?
Do all of your staff see racism as relevant to them as professionals working in a multi-racial society, or do they think it is of importance only to those working with minority ethnic clients?
What steps is your training officer taking to increase an awareness of the sessions amongst your staff?