The Role and Place of Mid-day Supervisors in Primary Schools

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Abstract

This study focused on a group of staff who undertake an occupational role in almost every primary school in the United Kingdom: mid-day supervisors.

Despite mid-day supervisors being present in most primary schools for a proportion of each day, little is known about the functions of their role or about those who undertake it. No previous research has focused solely on this role within primary schools, nor included mid-day supervisors themselves as sole participants. This thesis therefore makes a contribution to knowledge by exploring the functions of the mid-day supervisors' role, the place of this role within primary school communities and the experience of undertaking the role from the perspective of mid-day supervisors themselves.

The study took place within three primary schools in the East Midlands. At each school, I worked alongside the mid-day supervisors, taking on the role myself, for fifteen consecutive days. During this participatory stage, I made field notes to record my own experience, informal observations and, most often, conversations between myself and the mid-day supervisors I worked alongside. This provided an insight into not only the experience of undertaking the role myself, but of the mid-day supervisors' experience of doing so at the school. This data was supplemented by interviews with some mid-day supervisors at each school, allowing further exploration of their past and current experience undertaking the role.

This study finds that the role of the mid-day supervisor within each school was either marginalised from or legitimised within the school community (Wenger, 1998) through organisational positioning, influences within the wider community and interactions with those undertaking different roles. The study draws on various theories of role (Linton, 1936; Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973; Biddle, 1986) to highlight the impact this had on the obligatory, optional and forbidden aspects of how the role was enacted and the functions that mid-day supervisors performed in each school.

The experience of occupying the role of a primary-school mid-day supervisor was heavily influenced by factors that either minimised or contributed to role strain, such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. Where these factors were minimal, the experience of being a mid-day supervisor was generally a positive one. Where these factors were significant, this led to a negative experience of being a mid-day supervisor for those who occupied the role and resulted in frustration and job dissatisfaction.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1: The Rationale for the Study

This thesis explores the role and place of a group of staff who are present in almost all primary schools: mid-day supervisors. The role of the mid-day supervisor is one of central importance to a time of the school day, lunchtime, that exists in almost every primary school. At lunchtime, whilst others temporarily relinquish their duties, mid-day supervisors become the front-line school staff. Despite this, little is known about the role of the mid-day supervisor and the nature of the work that this group of school staff undertake. Similarly, there is little understanding of who these people are and their motivations for undertaking the role, nor of how the mid-day supervisors perceive themselves and the job that they do. This thesis aims to offer a contribution to knowledge by exploring this under-researched role from the perspective of the often-unheard mid-day supervisors who fulfil it.

My interest in school lunchtimes developed during my time leading pupil behaviour in three schools over a period of ten years, during my master's study and whilst supporting schools in challenging situations where pupil behaviour was causing concern. Within the three schools where I worked as a teacher, I held the role of 'lead behaviour practitioner'. This involved working to improve pupil behaviour through establishing systems and procedures, working directly with 'challenging' pupils and their families and developing the behaviour management skills of staff. In all three schools, lunchtimes were often cited by teachers as the time of day when pupil behaviour would deteriorate and this would often impact negatively on afternoon lessons. Concerns were also frequently raised about the way in which mid-day supervisors managed the behaviour of the pupils, and particularly the way in which mid-day supervisors would escalate rather than de-escalate challenging pupil behaviour when responding to incidents.

For this reason, as part of my role as a lead behaviour practitioner one of my priorities was to improve pupil behaviour at lunchtime. Initially, this involved introducing a system of rewards and sanctions that were implemented during lunchtime, which seemed to improve pupil behaviour and provided the basis for my master's dissertation. In addition to this, I worked alongside the mid-day supervisors in an attempt to enhance their behaviour management skills. This involved leading sessions for mid-day supervisors with an emphasis

on how to build positive relationships with pupils, respond appropriately to low-level poor behaviour and de-escalate more serious incidents. However, this did not seem to impact on how the mid-day supervisors approached the way in which they managed the behaviour of pupils, which continued to focus on negative behaviour and was generally confrontational. As such, I perceived my efforts to improve the behaviour management and working practices of mid-day supervisors to have failed.

A comment made by one of the mid-day supervisors during one of these sessions gave some indication as to why this might be. She felt that as a teacher, I did not understand the role of the mid-day supervisor and therefore the difficulties they faced. As a result, I was trying to train the mid-day supervisors to use strategies and techniques that worked for teachers within the confines of the classroom, but did not take account of the very different environment that existed at school lunchtime, or the differences between the role of a teacher and a mid-day supervisor.

Whilst my experience in three schools could be considered to be narrow, it does raise the potential there may be a lack of understanding surrounding the role of mid-day supervisors in primary school. This is both in relation to the role itself and also the way in which the role is 'placed' within the school and the perspectives that mid-day supervisors themselves hold in relation to the role they undertake. This research aims to gain an understanding of the role of mid-day supervisors in primary schools from those who undertake it.

More widely, therefore, research focused on the role and place of mid-day supervisors in primary schools might allow schools to make best use of this group of staff and support those who undertake the role to do so successfully. Developing an understanding of the requirements of the role and the challenges faced those who undertake it will allow schools to offer more appropriate induction and ongoing training for mid-day supervisors and consider how to reduce the challenges that are faced by this group of school staff. The research might also allow schools to consider the way in which they recruit mid-day supervisors and position this role within the wider staffing structure of the school.

1.2: School Lunchtimes – Background Context

In almost every school in the United Kingdom, a period of time is set aside within the day for 'lunchtime' (or 'dinnertime', depending on the location of the school). Generally, lunchtime

occurs at the mid-point of the school day and is the longest period of the school day not focused on the curriculum or spent in lessons.

In most schools, lunchtimes consist of two activities undertaken by pupils in two contrasting environmental spaces. Firstly, pupils will spend a proportion of the school lunchtime eating. This often takes place indoors. In primary schools, eating usually takes place in a space also used for other activities, such as a hall that is used for physical education and collective worship activities. In secondary schools, eating usually takes place in a specifically-designed cafeteria. However, it must be noted that there are many differences between individual schools. For example, some schools allow pupils to eat outside or in classrooms at a time of their choosing within lunchtime, whilst at other schools pupils can only eat in a specific place at a certain time within the lunch period.

Secondly, pupils will spend a proportion of lunchtime participating in self-chosen activities. In primary schools, this is often spent outside the building in a specific area, usually the school playground. Similarly, in secondary schools pupils generally spend this time outside the school building, although some schools have indoor spaces in which pupils can also spend this time. Again, however, there are differences between individual schools. For example, some secondary schools only allow time for the eating element of lunchtime and have removed self-chosen time (Baines & Blatchford, 2019), whilst some schools allow pupils to leave the school site over the lunch period.

There are also general differences in lunchtimes in terms of eating between primary and secondary schools. In primary schools, pupils will either eat meals prepared or delivered to the school (often referred to as 'school dinners' or 'school lunches') or bring their own food to consume at lunchtime (often referred to as 'packed dinners' or 'packed lunches'). Generally, parents will communicate with the school as to which 'type' of meal their child will eat and this will remain the case each day, although many schools will allow children to eat school-provided meals on certain days of the week and bring their own food on the others. In secondary schools, pupils can usually choose the type of school meal they consume on a day-to-day basis, as most schools take a 'cafeteria style' approach to providing meals for pupils whereby food is simply purchased on the day if required.

1.3: Lunchtimes in United Kingdom Education Policy

Whilst school lunchtimes have been very rarely considered in government policy, the issue of free schools meals has been a focus of legislation. Almost as soon as compulsory education for children aged five to ten years old was introduced in the late 1800s, concerns were raised that a significant number of pupils were malnourished and underfed (Lalli, 2021). As a result, legislation was passed allowing local authorities to fund school meals through the use of local taxation. However, it was not compulsory to do so and by the early 1900s only 113 of the 328 local authorities had introduced any form of provision for providing free meals in schools.

Due to ongoing concerns regarding childhood nutrition and the economic climate created as a result of the Second World War, legislation was introduced in 1944 that compelled all local authorities to provide a free mid-day meal for all pupils. However, this proved costly and in 1949, whilst local authorities were still compelled to provide school meals, legislation was passed allowing them to charge for these. The legislation did still compel local authorities to provide free meals for "disadvantaged children" (Smith, 1997). However, local authorities were able to devise their own criteria as to what constituted 'disadvantage'. It was not until the 1980 Education Act that the government set a national criterion for the entitlement to free school meals. This criterion ruled that children whose parents received specific benefits, such as income support, were eligible. This means-tested approach to free school meals for pupils in key stage two, key stage three and key stage four (aged seven to sixteen) continues to the time of this research, although the criteria for eligibility have changed numerous times to reflect alterations to the welfare system.

The most recent change to government policy concerning school lunchtimes was the introduction of Universal Free School Meals in 2014. This legislation entitled all children in the first three years of compulsory education (reception and key stage one) to free school meals. This led to a rapid increase in the take-up of school meals from 38% in 2013 to 80% in 2015 (Sellen & Huder, 2018).

Whilst the school meal itself is not the focus of this research, changes in government policy in this area have influenced the wider context of school lunchtimes in terms of the number of children accessing meals provided by the school and those bringing their own food from

home to eat at lunchtime. As a result, these changes have also influenced the structure of lunchtime in some schools, with 'staggered' lunchtimes now becoming more commonplace (Baines & Blatchford, 2019). Additionally, to meet the demands of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), staff involved in the running of school lunchtimes may have had to adapt their working practices and duties.

1.4: Staffing during School Lunchtimes

At lunchtimes pupils are almost always supervised by ancillary staff, usually referred to as mid-day supervisors, who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the lunchtime period.

The role of the mid-day supervisor was established in the late 1980s. Up until this point, teachers held the responsibility for supervising children during the lunchtime period. Whist the 1960 Conditions of Service for Teachers introduced statutory 'breaks' for teachers, these were not a set length or at a set time. As such, supervising pupils over lunchtime remained the responsibility of teaching staff.

During the mid-1980s, long-running industrial action by teaching staff saw many teachers 'work to rule'. One of the areas of contestation was the supervision of children during school lunchtimes. On the resolution of the ongoing industrial action, the 1987 Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Employment Act removed responsibility for the supervision of pupils from teaching staff and, for the first time, introduced the separate role of a mid-day supervisor, referred to as midday assistants, lunchtime supervisors and lunchtime assistants. However, the more commonly used term within schools is that of 'dinner lady', reflecting the almost exclusively female composition of the workforce (Pike, 2010).

At the time of writing, on average mid-day supervisors work for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes per day at a pay rate of between £7.83 and £9.50 per hour, but only 'senior' mid-day supervisors are likely to earn more than £7.38 per hour (National Careers Service, 2019). Therefore, the vast majority of mid-day supervisors are paid the National Minimum Wage and their salary falls below the National Living Wage of £8.21 per hour. General duties include supervising pupils on the playground, supporting children to eat lunch by

ensuring this is done on time in a safe and hygienic setting and encouraging appropriate behaviour from pupils (UNISON, 2021).

1.5: The Aims of the Research

There is limited research that focuses on this group of school staff. Research that does exist relating to mid-day supervisors tends to be about their performance, evaluating their effectiveness rather than seeking to understand their working practices. As such, there is a lack of knowledge, beyond those who undertake it, as to what the role of the mid-day supervisor entails and the nature of their work. Because almost no research has involved mid-day supervisors as participants and gathered their views and perspectives on why they undertake the role, there is also a lack of understanding as to the motivations and reasons of these staff for becoming and continuing to be mid-day supervisors. Similarly, research has not explored the challenges and constraints faced by those who undertake the role of a mid-day supervisor. There has also been very little consideration given to the way in which the role is positioned within the school community, nor how the relationships and interactions between mid-day supervisors and those who hold other positions influence the role and its place within the school.

The overarching research question for this project is:

- What is the role and place of mid-day supervisors within primary schools?

Within this over-arching research question, the following sub-questions were considered to further explore the role of the mid-day supervisor and consider their place within primary schools:

- What motivates primary-school mid-day supervisors to undertake this role?
- What is the nature of the work undertaken by primary-school mid-day supervisors?
- How is the role of mid-day supervisors positioned within primary schools?
- What factors might impact upon the way in which mid-day supervisors undertake their role within the school and their experience of doing so?

These research questions are aimed at gathering knowledge and understanding about the role of mid-day supervisors in primary schools – knowledge and understanding that I lacked when working with this group of school staff, and that is also absent from literature.

1.6: Outline of the Thesis

Following this introduction, in Chapter Two I review literature relating to school lunchtimes. Initially, this focuses on broad recreational times within the school day, before considering literature about this specific time of the school day. Finally, the literature review explores the limited literature that exists relating to school mid-day supervisors.

In Chapter Three, I discuss my methodological choice to undertake an ethnographic approach to my three case studies and the reasons I felt this was an appropriate way in which to collect data to answer the research questions. Within this section, I outline how the data-collection methods I used aligned with the methodological approach of ethnography and allowed me to collect relevant data to answer the research questions of the study. I also discuss the choice of written portraiture to present the findings of the study and how these portraits provide a vehicle for analysis. Finally, this chapter explores the ethical issues considered both prior to and during the research process.

In Chapter Four, I present my findings through the use of three written portraits. These provide an account of the background and experiences of mid-day supervisors in three different schools. The portraits focus on the reasons why the mid-day supervisors were attracted to the role and continue to undertake it, the nature of their day-to-day work, the way in which the mid-day supervisors perceived themselves to be part of a community and their relationships with pupils and other staff.

In Chapter Five, I analyse the three portraits through different elements of role theory. Biddle's concept of organisational, structural and interactionist role theory (Biddle, 1986) and Wenger's concept of role legitimisation and marginalisation (Wenger, 1998) are used to explore the positioning of the role within and beyond the school community. The concept that every role has normative expectations of obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973) is used to explore how the role was enacted within each school context. Finally, the concepts of role conflict (Matthews & Crow, 2003; Hindin, 2011; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004), role overload (Turner, 2011), role ambiguity (Karkolla,

Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) and role strain (Goode, 1960; Turner, 2011) are used to consider the factors that can impact upon the ability of mid-day supervisors to fulfil the role effectively and their experience of undertaking the role.

In Chapter Six I conclude the research by returning to the research question posed and outlining how this study has contributed to knowledge in this area. I consider how the knowledge gained through this study might be disseminated, as well as making recommendations that schools can consider to harness the knowledge and skills of mid-day supervisors.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1: Outline of the Literature Review Chapter

This review explores literature concerning school breaktimes and lunchtimes. In Section 2.2, the focus is on literature that does not distinguish between the different breaktimes that occur in the school day, but offers insights into pupils' experiences of these times. In Section 2.3, the review moves on to explore literature with a focus on school lunchtimes, outlining how this has changed over time and the concerns that are held about this specific time of the school day. Within this section I highlight research about interventions that may enhance pupils' experiences of lunchtime itself and also influence learning in lessons that occur after lunchtime. Section 2.5 of the review continues to explore literature concerning school lunchtimes, but with a specific focus on the role of mid-day supervisors. Section 2.4 explores theories of role, considering how these theories might support develop knowledge and understanding of the role held by mid-day supervisors and their place within school communities. Finally, section 2.6 offers a summary of the key themes to emerge from the literature review and identifies the gaps in literature that this study aims to add to as a contribution to knowledge

2.2: School Breaktimes

Owing to the proportion of time spent in the outdoor area during school breaktimes and lunchtimes, literature concerning this environmental space is relevant when considering this time of the school day. Mulryan-Kyne (2014) provides a research-based commentary with a focus on the recreational experience of pupils and staff, outlining the importance of this time within the school day and the potential challenges and difficulties it can pose. Particularly evident in this commentary is the role of recreational time in developing pupils' social skills (p379-380), the problems of 'poor pupil behaviour' during breaktimes and the impact of this on following lessons (p381-382) and concerns over the quality of mid-day supervision during lunchtimes and the training of supervisory staff (p382; p388). Although not empirical research, Mulryan-Kyne's (2014) commentary therefore provides themes that can be explored in greater depth within further literature.

A study by Darmody, Smyth & Doherty (2010) gathered qualitative data using focus groups of pupils and found that when asked to draw their favourite place in school, many of the

ninety pupils involved depicted the school recreational area and discussed social activities such as playing with friends. Although this study involved a large number of participants across six schools, only children between the ages of nine and eleven were included in the focus groups, and therefore these findings may not be reflected in younger and older pupils. However, Thomson's (2007) ethnographic research in three primary schools with children between the ages of four and eleven supports the view that children value the social opportunities offered by the outdoor recreational area and a national study by Blatchford & Baines (2006) found that children in both primary and secondary schools identified the opportunity to be with friends as the aspect they liked most about breaktimes. This opportunity to develop social skills and its importance is also highlighted by older research (Harper & Huie, 1985; Pellegrini & Davis, 1993; Pellegrini & Bjorklund, 1996). However, because of significant changes in the way in which children now socialise due to the rise of social media (which many pupils can access at breaktimes on mobile devices, particularly in secondary school) this research may not relate to the current social climate amongst pupils.

In addition to the social benefits during breaktime itself, the occurrence of breaktimes within the school day may impact on the behaviour of pupils in lessons. Jarrett et al (1998) studied the impact of introducing a recess period to two classes of American fourth grade (age 9-10) children (25-30 pupils per class) in a school implementing a policy of 'uninterrupted instruction', which had previously not allowed for breaktimes as part of the school day. Breaktimes were given to children with no notice on one randomised school day per week, and classroom observations made during the same time-period on both 'recess' and 'non-recess' days using a coded system to record the behaviour exhibited by individual pupils. Results showed that there was an increase in on-task time and reduced 'fidgeting' in the time period following a recess on days when this occurred. However, it should be noted that the introduction of recess during this research did not become a part of the normal routine for the participants, and it is therefore unknown whether this impact would have been sustained over a longer time period once breaktimes had become embedded in the daily life of the pupils. Although this research was only conducted with children in two classes of children the same age, Leff, Power, Costigan & Manz (2003), whose research included both primary and secondary pupils, also suggest that the findings

of their research show that skills learnt on the playground support learning in the classroom due to an increase in concentration and energy levels.

Whilst Jarrett et al (1998) maintained a focus on the experience of pupils during breaktimes in one school, Barros et al (2009) examined the relationship between school recess and group classroom behaviour in a large nationally representative sample of 11,624 American pupils, using publicly available data from the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999*. The researchers used the data collected from this cohort of pupils at the end of third-grade (aged eight and nine) and extracted information relating to the frequency of recess offered to pupils, which was provided by the results of three responses from the teachers' questionnaire used as part of the national data collection. This allowed the researchers to identify the number of days per week pupils were given recess in the participating schools, how many times per day pupils were given recess and the total amount of time children spent in recess. This information was then used alongside the results of a separate response from the questionnaire, which required teachers to rate the behaviour of their class on a scale of 1 to 5 with given criteria for each rating. Through their analysis of the data from these responses in the teachers' questionnaire, Barros et al (2009) were able to demonstrate that in schools where at least one period of recess occurred, teachers rated pupil behaviour more highly than in schools where recess did not occur.

However, Barros et al (2009) found no significant pattern when analysing the number of recess periods per day nor the total amount of recess time given to pupils and the behaviour rating provided by teachers. Therefore, the study could only conclude that a period of recess is associated with better pupil behaviour, but could not identify any optimum frequency or total time of recess that may lead to improvement in group classroom behaviour. This may be due to the design of the questions relating to recess, in that no definition was offered to teachers as to what constitutes a recess period. This allowed teachers to apply different definitions when completing this part of the questionnaire. In this case, some teachers may have considered the school lunch period as recess whilst some may not have done. This potentially significant difference in the way in which respondents to the questionnaire defined recess, with some including lunchtime and some not, may have significantly impacted on the reliability of the data that was gathered regarding the

frequency and total time of recess given to pupils per day. The generalisability of the research is also compromised as, despite relating to a large number of pupils, the data is only relevant to a narrow age band and cannot claim to reflect other age groups.

2.3: School Lunchtimes

Changes and constants surrounding school lunchtimes are illustrated in three linked studies by Blatchford & Sumpner (1998), Blatchford & Baines (2006) and Baines & Blatchford (2019), all of which were undertaken in England. However, it should be noted that in each study, schools responded anonymously. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the proportion of schools that participated in all three studies, two of the three studies or one of the three studies. As such, making comparisons over time is done with the caveat that similarities and differences between the three studies could be impacted by the similarities and differences between schools rather than changes in school lunchtimes more generally.

These studies identified a significant change to school lunchtimes in terms of the length of time schools allocate for lunchtime. Blatchford & Sumpner (1998) indicated that a "reduction in the lunchbreak" (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998: 79) had already begun in the years prior to 1998, with 38% of primary schools and 35% of secondary school involved in the study reporting that lunchbreaks had been shortened. This trend continued and Blatchford & Baines (2006) reported "the length of the lunchbreak has been further reduced" (Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 3) between 1998 and 2006. Similarly, in 2019 Baines & Blatchford found that the "trend for shorter lunchtime breaks at all key stages" (Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 37) had continued.

Blatchford & Sumpner (1998), Blatchford & Baines (2006) and Baines & Blatchford (2019) also explored the reasons behind the shortening of the school lunch break and found two common justifications across the three studies. Firstly, schools identified the ever-increasing demands and extent of the school curriculum which led to a need for more teaching time (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998: 85; Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 1; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 36) and therefore time was taken from lunchtime to achieve this. Secondly, schools indicated that they experienced what they considered to be problems regarding pupil behaviour over lunchtime and in response, shortened this time of the school

day to lessen the opportunity for this to occur (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998: 85; Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 1; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 36).

Another change, particularly between 1998 and 2006, were the activities that children had the opportunity to undertake during lunchtime. In 1998, lunchtime activities were mostly child-led, with pupils spending time as they wished, usually on the school playground (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998). By 2006, 87% of schools offered organised activities at lunchtimes such as team sports, music and computing clubs (Blatchford & Baines, 2006). This increased by a further 3% between 2006 and 2019, however the focus of these activities had moved more towards ones focused on curriculum subjects (Baines & Blatchford, 2019). Whilst the use of mobile devices at lunchtime was not considered by Blatchford & Sumpner (1998) or Blatchford & Baines (2006), Baines & Blatchford (2019) found that 42% of secondary schools allowed pupils to use these during lunchtimes. Although it is not possible to make a direct comparison, it is arguable that this has also been a significant change in the activities undertaken by pupils at lunchtime given that these devices were not even mentioned by staff or pupils in the previous studies.

Whilst Blatchford & Sumpner (1998) did not gather the views of pupils, they did form part of the studies by Blatchford & Baines (2006) and Baines & Blatchford (2019). Both studies found that pupils overwhelmingly enjoyed lunchtimes and indeed enjoyed lunchtimes more than other breaktimes (Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 16; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 9). In both studies, the majority of pupils indicated that they felt lunchtime was too short and it should be increased (Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 17; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 68).

Blatchford & Sumpner (1998), Blatchford & Baines (2006) and Baines & Blatchford (2019) all highlighted two common areas of concern. Firstly, all three studies identified what schools considered to be the poor behaviour of some children as a problematic aspect of lunchtime for both staff and pupils (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998: 90; Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 4; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 9). This is discussed in more depth later in this section of the literature review. Secondly, all three studies identified concerns about the quality of supervision during lunchtimes and the training offered to school staff responsible for this (Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998: 87; Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 6; Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 13). This is also discussed in more depth in section three of this literature review.

2.3.1: The benefits of school lunchtimes

One of the potential benefits of school lunchtimes is the opportunity they provide for pupils to develop social and interaction skills with their peers. Darmody, Smyth & Doherty (2010) highlight that many pupils consider spending time on the recreational area playing with friends at lunchtime as their favourite place and time in school. Thomson (2007) supports the view that children value the social opportunities offered by the outdoor recreational area and a national study by Blatchford & Baines (2006) found that children in both primary and secondary schools identified the opportunity to be with friends as the aspect they liked most about lunchtimes. This opportunity for social interaction allows children to learn skills for adult life such as co-operation and turn-taking and developing an understanding of social 'norms' (Brewer & Swain, 2000). Lunchtime also gives pupils the opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills in the eating area (Pike, 2010) and other 'life skills' such as table manners and how to cut up food properly (Dorrer, McIntosh, Punch & Emond, 2010).

In addition to the social benefits, school lunchtimes can provide significant benefits in terms of pupils' physical health and well-being (Mulryan-Kyne, 2014). Rigers, Stratton & Fairclough (2006) suggest that boys can acquire as much as 40% of their recommended daily exercise at these times and girls can acquire 30% during time spent on the playing area during school lunchtimes. In the light of ongoing concerns about childhood obesity and inactivity and the long-term health implications of this (Reilly, 2007), the school lunchtime therefore provides an opportunity to engage in physical activities that are vital to children's physical health. This is becoming increasingly important as physical activity away from school declines (Green, Riley & Hargrove, 2012), perhaps due to perceived safety fears in relation to unsupervised outdoor play (Marron, 2008) and the increase in children using electronic devices for entertainment rather than engaging in physical activity (Kernan and Devine, 2010)

It is also argued that positive school lunchtimes have an academic benefit for pupils. Pellegrini & Bjorklund (2000) identify the social interaction that takes place between children on the playground at lunchtime as important for children's cognitive development and adjustment to school, particularly in the early years of education. Action research

undertaken by Golley et al (2010) identified that making improvements to school lunchtimes resulted in "an increase in levels of alertness (concentration/engagement) among pupils in the hour after lunch" (Golley et al, 2010: 1286). Similarly, Story et al (2011) found that making improvements to the lunchtime environment "has the potential to improve learning-related behaviours of pupils in the post-lunch period" (Storey et al, 2011; 35).

Whilst the benefits outlined above highlight the positive potential of school lunchtimes, it is also the case that school lunchtimes can be a time when bullying, physical and verbal aggression can be experienced, causing anxiety and distress (Olweus & Mortimore, 1993; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Thomson, 2007). Pupils can become frustrated by limited space, high activity levels and increased noise, therefore perceiving lunchtime as a stressful part of the school day (Blatchford, 1998). As a result, pupils can find it difficult to concentrate on work after lunchtime; their self-esteem may be adversely affected and grievances which stem from lunchtime may be carried into the classroom or even taken home (Brewer & Swain, 2000).

Lunchtime therefore has the potential to offer significant benefits to pupils in terms of the development of their physical, social and cognitive skills (Hyndman et al, 2014; p111). However, it also has the potential to cause social conflict, frustration, anxiety and damage academic progress. Given this, it is important that research gains an understanding of how schools can offer positive rather than negative lunchtime experiences so that pupils can reap the social, physical and academic benefits that this important time of the school day has to offer. This research argues that mid-day supervisors, who are responsible for the supervision and management of pupils during this time of the school day, are integral to achieving positive school lunchtimes. Literature relating to this specific group of staff is further considered in section four of this literature review.

2.3.2: Concerns about pupils' behaviour during school lunchtimes

Concerns about what was considered to be poor pupil behaviour at lunchtimes were first raised in the Elton Report (1989) which identified that "the supervision of pupils at lunchtime is the biggest single behaviour-related problem that they [schools] face" and that "this time of day is a source of difficulty even in the best ordered schools" (Elton, 1989;

122). Elton also raised concerns about the poor quality of mid-day supervisors, advising that lunchtime supervision is best undertaken by teachers, as midday supervisors "may actually provoke a certain amount of bad behaviour unintentionally while trying to maintain order" as they "do not have the same status as teachers, nor in general are they likely to have been trained in group management skills" (Elton, 1989; 123). Similar concerns about the perceived problem of pupils' behaviour and the quality of supervision at lunchtimes have continued to be raised by school staff (Blatchford, 1998; Aviani, 2006; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; van Daalen, 2007; Mulryan-Kyne, 2014; Baines & Blatchford, 2019).

However, it is important to note the complexity of defining and labelling pupil behaviour even within one project, let alone across a number of different studies undertaken independently of each other over a significant period of time. For example, Elton (1989) provided no definition of the specific behaviours he attributed to being 'bad' or 'problematic'. Similarly, Blatchford & Baines (2006) and Baines & Blatchford (2019) identified the 'poor behaviour of some children' as a concern for both school staff and pupils, but did not provide guidance as to how this was defined by the participants whose responses formed the basis of their claim. Indeed, given the wide range of participants, both school staff and pupils, it is likely that the perceived 'quality' of pupils' behaviour was very much subjective in terms of the individual participants and their own school contexts.

Prior to the Elton Report (1989), Jefferies & Imich (1987) had identified what was considered to be the poor behaviour of pupils during lunchtime as a concern. They conducted an action research project in one junior (age 7-11) school, introducing a specific system of sanctions that was implemented by mid-day supervisors. Interviews with the head teacher of the school and the mid-day supervisors prior to the introduction of the system raised serious issues concerning pupil behaviour towards mid-day supervisors. These included non-compliance, rudeness and insolence. A period of observation within the eating area and the recreational area supported these concerns. A staged sanctions system was then implemented, ranging from a 'time out' punishment for minor offences to a 'red card', which resulted in a lunchtime exclusion. Interviews conducted with the mid-day supervisors, head teacher and pupils six weeks after the introduction of the sanctions system suggested this had a positive impact on pupil behaviour and that very few of the

more serious sanctions had been issued. This continued to be the case when interviews were conducted with these participants a year later.

Similar to Jefferies & Imich (1987), Roderick, Pitchford & Miller (1997) also conducted an small-scale action research project in one infant (age 5-7) school where poor pupil behaviour at lunchtime was identified by staff as a concern. On this occasion, these concerns were mostly focused on the aggressive playground behaviour of pupils such as kicking and hitting. Over a period of two weeks the researchers recorded the number of kicks and hits made by children on the playground to form a baseline from which to evaluate the potential impact of the intervention, which on this occasion was the introduction of a reward system for pupils who displayed appropriate behaviour. This reward system took the form of a raffle, whereby children were rewarded with raffle-tickets for displaying appropriate behaviour. These would then be entered into a draw and the winner awarded a prize, in this case a large tub of Lego. During the intervention period, the researchers continued to observe the number of kicks and strikes made by children on the playground. The results of these observations showed a 75% reduction in the average number of kicks per day (49 to 12) and a 47% decrease in the average number of hits (17 to 9) per day, leading the researchers to conclude that the reward system was successful in improving this aspect of pupils' behaviour.

Toplis & Hadwin (2009) conducted similar action research, this time with a focus on a small number of pupils who were identified by school staff as displaying what they considered to be problematic behaviour at lunchtime. This study explored the impact of introducing social stories as an intervention for five year-two (age 6-7) children. Social stories were originally designed to help individuals with autism to understand social situations and are aimed at changing specific targeted behaviour. In this case, although the children were not autistic, it was hypothesised that similar social stories could also change a specific aspect of behaviour exhibited by the participating children at lunchtime. Discussions with staff identified the target behaviour related to entering and leaving the dining hall appropriately and therefore the social stories used were focused on this specific behaviour.

The results of these observations suggested that social stories were an effective intervention for improving the targeted behaviour at lunchtime for three of the five pupils involved. These pupils showed a higher frequency of independently performing the desired

behaviour during the time that social stories were implemented (phases 2 and 4) than before the intervention or when the social stories were withdrawn (phases 1 and 3). However, there was little or no effect on the targeted behaviour of the other two children involved in the project. Therefore, Toplis & Hadwin (2009) concluded that social stories "are effective with some children who demonstrate difficult lunchtime behaviours" (Toplis & Hadwin, 2009: 65)

Whilst the previous studies regarding school lunchtimes focused on the behaviour of pupils during this time of the school day, Golley et al (2010) sought to explore the impact of making changes to primary school lunchtimes on pupil behaviour in the lesson immediately following this period of the school day. This action research project involved nine English primary schools and consisted of a 12-week intervention in six schools, with the remaining three schools used as a 'control' during the research period. In all nine schools, changes were made to school food provision (such as menu changes) and food promotion (such as displaying visually appealing menus and offering incentives for healthy eating) for six weeks. Following this, changes were made to the dining room environment (such as furniture arrangement, decoration, systems and routines) over a further period of six weeks. Observations were conducted in the participating schools prior to the intervention period and again at the end of the intervention period, including in the three control schools. From these observations, Golley et al (2010) found that the twelve-week intervention led to "an increase in levels of alertness (concentration/engagement) among pupils in the hour after lunch" (Golley et al, 2010: 1286) and concluded that a dining room intervention that changed both food provision and environment had a positive impact on pupils' alertness following lunchtime.

A study linked to Golley et al (2010) was conducted by Storey et al (2011) and involved four of the same researchers (Baines, Nelson, Pearce & Wood). However, the intervention in this study took place in twelve English secondary schools. As in Golley's (2010) research, interventions were introduced during the school lunchtime, in this case over a time period of 15 weeks in seven of the schools, with the remaining six schools acting as the 'control' schools during the research period. Observations were conducted that suggested pupils in the intervention schools were 18% more likely to be on-task than pupils in the control

schools, leading Storey et al (2011) to conclude that "modifying food provision and dining environments has the potential to improve learning-related behaviours of secondary school pupils in the post-lunch period" (Storey et al, 2011; 35).

Blatchford & Baines (2006) conducted a national survey of breaktimes in primary and secondary schools that formed the basis of a report published by the Nuffield Foundation. This was a large-scale study using two questionnaires that produced quantitative data relating to breaktimes, which included some specific questions about the lunchtime period. The 'school breaktime questionnaire' was sent to head teachers across a random sample of 18% of all schools in England and Wales. Of the 4,112 schools approached, 1,566 questionnaires were returned, representing 7% of schools nationally. The 'pupil breaktime questionnaire' was then sent to 23 of the schools that had returned the 'school breaktime questionnaire' to be completed by pupils. This questionnaire received 1344 responses (808 from secondary school pupils, 536 from primary school pupils). Given the large scale of this project and the efforts of the researchers to ensure representation by considering regional areas and each school's main background characteristics, the results of this research are significant when exploring the perceptions held by schools and pupils about school lunchtimes.

The findings from both questionnaires still very much aligned with the concerns identified by Elton (1989) regarding school lunchtimes, with 70% of primary schools and 74% of secondary schools identifying what they felt was pupil's poor behaviour as the main concern surrounding lunchtimes. This issue was also the most frequent concern of pupils, with 44% of pupils indicating this was their main concern regarding school lunchtimes. The 'school breaktime questionnaire' also identified the quality of supervision at lunchtime as a significant concern, with 22% of primary schools and 36% of secondary schools highlighting this as a challenge at lunchtime. However, most pupils did not consider supervision to be an issue during lunchtime, with 64% of children indicating that this was not something they felt needed to improve and a quarter of pupils stating they felt that there were already too many adults supervising them.

Baines & Blatchford conducted a follow-up national survey to their 2006 study in 2019. As before, a 'school breaktime questionnaire' was sent to school head teachers. Of the 4,301 schools approached, 1,113 questionnaires were returned. The 'pupil breaktime

questionnaire' was then sent to 52 of the schools that had returned the 'school breaktime questionnaire' to be completed by pupils. This questionnaire received 1,669 responses (978 from secondary school pupils, 691 from primary school pupils). As with the 2006 research, the large scale of this project and the efforts of the researchers to ensure representation by considering regional areas and each school's main background characteristics, the results of this research are significant when exploring the perceptions held by school staff and pupils about school lunchtimes. For the 2019 research, Baines & Blatchford also made a deliberate attempt to ensure that the sample of primary and secondary schools was comparable to those used in the previous study. However, again it should be noted that schools responded anonymously and therefore it is not possible to determine the proportion of schools that participated in both the 2006 and 2019 projects and the comparisons made between the findings should be considered in the light of this.

The findings from both 2019 questionnaires continued to align with the concerns identified by Elton (1989), that were also highlighted in Blatchford & Baines' previous 2006 study. 64% of both primary schools and secondary schools identified what they considered to be the poor behaviour of some pupils as the main concern surrounding lunchtimes (Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 60). However, whilst this was still the biggest issue indicated by schools, it is a noticeable reduction on the 2006 study when 70% of primary schools and 74% of secondary schools identified pupil behaviour as the main concern. The behaviour of some children also continued to be the most frequent concern for pupils, with 40% of those who completed the 'pupil breaktime questionnaire' indicating this was their main concern (Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 67). Again, however, this did show reduction from 44% to 40% between 2006 and 2019. Taking both the changes in the 'school breaktime questionnaire' and the 'pupil breaktime questionnaire' regarding pupil behaviour into consideration, it could be argued that there had been an improvement in pupils' behaviour at lunchtime between 2006 and 2019. This is further supported by the 49% of primary schools and 34% of secondary schools that indicated they believed pupil behaviour over lunchtime had improved over the five years prior to the study (Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 61).

The 2019 'school breaktime questionnaire' also identified that the quality of supervision at lunchtime continued to be the second highest concern for schools, as it was in 2006, with

23% of primary schools and 31% of secondary schools highlighting this as a challenge. However, as in 2006, pupils did not consider supervision to be a concern at lunchtime.

It seems, therefore, that in 2006 and 2019, school staff and pupils continued to hold concerns about what they considered to be the poor behaviour of some pupils at lunchtime, potentially influenced by the nature of this time of day being less structured. Additionally, schools continued to have concerns regarding the quality of supervision offered by mid-day supervisors, although these were not shared by pupils.

However, this research did not gather the views of mid-day supervisors, which could have provided further information about lunchtimes and the significant role they play during this time. Nor did the research explore any potential links between the perceived poor behaviour of pupils and the quality of supervision provided by mid-day supervisors.

2.4: Mid-day Supervisors

Moore et al (2010) highlight the role of the mid-day supervisor as being one that appears to be 'separate' from the school as a whole, with mid-day supervisors arriving and leaving promptly and unnoticed at the beginning and end of lunchtime, and rarely interacting with anyone apart from pupils and each other. As a result, Moore et al (2010) concluded that mid-day supervisors appeared "marginalised from the main body of the school" (Moore et al, 2010: 409).

As previously outlined, concerns about the quality of supervision provided by mid-day supervisors raised initially by Elton (1989) continue to be a theme within literature regarding school lunchtimes. This section therefore focuses on literature concerning mid-day supervision and the role of mid-day supervisors during school lunchtimes and the impact that mid-day supervisors have on this period of the school day.

The concern expressed by teachers about the quality of mid-day supervision could be a result of conflicting views of school staff regarding the purpose of school lunchtimes. Pike (2010) highlights this difference of views and suggests that teachers hold high regard for the opportunity lunchtime provides for children to practise speaking, listening and social skills that have been learned in classrooms in the dining hall and on the playground. Teachers also emphasise the educational 'life skills' that can be taught at lunchtimes (such as how to

cut up food, zip up coats and tie shoelaces) and express frustration that rather than preparing children for the future, mid-day supervisors sometimes intervene and do things for children. Conversely, Pike (2010) comments that mid-day supervisors prioritise the safeguarding and physical well-being of pupils and ensuring that children's have consumed their lunch. The temptation to do things for children stems from the practical constraints of supervising a large number of children and the pressure to ensure that all children have finished eating before the end of lunchtime (Pike, 2010). This difference of views on the purpose of lunchtimes and the tension between teachers' emphasis on preparing children for the future as opposed to the mid-day supervisors' emphasis on pupils' safety and immediate well-being (Thomson, 2007) may go some way to explaining the concerns raised by teachers about the effectiveness of mid-day supervision.

It is important to note that the literature referred to so far in this section does not seem to draw a distinction between the concept of mid-day supervision and the mid-day supervisors who enact this. Often, the literature seems to assume that the concerns held about the quality of mid-day supervision directly relate to those undertaking it. However, these could equally be related to other aspects of school lunchtime, such as the whole-school approach to this time of the school day or the resources and activities available for pupils. Alternatively, the concerns may relate to the actual role of the mid-day supervisor, rather than those who inhabit it. As such, it there is the potential that the literature relating to mid-day supervisors unfairly portrays this group of school staff negatively, as the concerns raised about lunchtime supervision may not be about mid-day supervisors but about mid-day supervision more generally.

In terms of managing the behaviour of pupils, Pike (2010) suggests that mid-day supervisors lack the hierarchical status required within schools, that pupils are fully cognisant of the limits of their authority and that this gives mid-day supervisors less power and authority, which compromises their ability to manage the behaviour of pupils. Pike & Kelly (2014) argue that this is often communicated to pupils through the limited rewards and sanctions mid-day supervisors have at their disposal. Indeed, the notion of mid-day supervisors being labelled as 'just a dinner lady' by pupils, parents and other staff is highlighted by Blatchford & Sharp (1994), Phillips (1994) and Pike (2010). As a result, it is suggested that mid-day supervisors adopt less authoritative strategies than other school staff to gain the

compliance of pupils during lunchtimes, relying more on cajoling, persuasion, encouragement and negotiation with pupils (Thomson, 2005; van Daalen, 2007; Metcalfe et al, 2011;). This approach to managing behaviour could, perhaps unfairly, be contributing to the concerns teachers hold about the quality of mid-day supervisors.

Pike (2010) explored the relationships between pupils and mid-day supervisors at four English primary schools, with a particular focus on the way in which schools and mid-day supervisors seek to manage pupil behaviour. Her work explores the dynamics of power that exist between the mid-day supervisors and the pupils. Pike (2010) notes the "highly regimented" environment in the school dining hall, with a myriad of instructions as to "where pupils could sit, how they should sit, how they should eat, what they should eat and when they could leave, how they should leave and so on" (Pike, 2010; 278). The aim of this was to create a tightly rule-bound social space that restricted the opportunity for pupils to resist the power mid-day supervisors were aiming to exercise (Pike, 2010).

However, despite this highly structured environment, Pike (2010) suggests that mid-day supervisors use less authoritative strategies to direct pupil behaviour and as a result, this leads to more opportunities for pupils to resist the authority that mid-day supervisors attempt to exert. Pike (2010) highlights that pupils attempt to achieve this by avoiding, ignoring or confronting mid-day supervisors. For example, pupils were observed using the peripheries of the dining room to avoid the surveillance of mid-day supervisors in an attempt to deposit unwanted food and return to the recreational area without permission. Pupils would frequently ignore the instructions of mid-day supervisors, particularly in terms of seating arrangements. Although direct confrontation was rare and not observed during Pike's fieldwork, interviews conducted with mid-day supervisors as part of the research did provide examples of this, such as physical attacks and verbal abuse.

Similarly, some of the work of Thomson (2007) explores the relationships and interactions between pupils and mid-day supervisors in three English primary schools. Like Pike (2010), Thomson (2007) highlights the "inordinate number of rules" that are imposed on pupils during school lunchtimes and that whilst mid-day supervisors attempt to manage the pupils' behaviour by "limiting children's ownership, occupation and use of the playground" (Thomson, 2007; 493), pupils respond by "attempting to resist or subvert the rules"

(Thomson, 2007; 498). This ongoing power dynamic is also evident in Metcalfe et al's (2011) ethnographic research, which focuses on food rather than social interactions, but does highlight school dining-halls as an environment in which there are "countless processes of domination and resistance" (Metcalfe et al, 2011 387) between pupils and mid-day supervisors.

Although the research conducted by Thomson (2007), Pike (2010) and Metcalfe et al (2011) gives an insight into school lunchtimes and children's relationships with mid-day supervisors, these studies have limitations in terms of generalisability as they were all undertaken in a very small number of schools. Thomson's work (2007) is based on data gathered in three primary schools and she acknowledges that it cannot be claimed that her findings are representative of other primary schools (Thomson, 2007: 489). Similarly, Pike's (2010) findings are based on data gathered in four primary schools, and likewise cannot be claimed to be representative of other primary schools. Metcalfe et al's (2011) study was undertaken in a single school and therefore suffers the same limitation, but to an even greater extent. However, when considered as a body of literature, it is evident that in these schools, mid-day supervisors attempt to manage pupils' behaviour through the use of a highly regulated environment. The result is an ongoing 'power struggle' between the mid-day supervisors who attempt to enforce the rules and the pupils who attempt to resist them.

A recurring theme through the literature concerning school lunchtimes is the lack of training undertaken by mid-day supervisors in order to improve working practices. The Elton Report (1989) recommended that schools should "ensure that midday supervisors are given adequate training in the management of pupils' behaviour" (Elton, 1989: 123). Sharp (1994) claims that this resulted in an upsurge of training programmes for mid-day supervisors (Sharp, 1994), often then led by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Sharp's assertion is based on her study into the extent of provision for training lunchtime supervisors throughout the United Kingdom. She wrote to LEAs requesting information on this provision. Of the LEAs who responded to this survey, a quarter indicated that there was no provision for the training and development of mid-day supervisors offered by the LEA or, to their knowledge, by any of the schools within their region. Half of LEAs reported that training was delivered in partnership with schools, most often with the LEA developing

training materials and resources that were then used to deliver in-school training to mid-day supervisors. Of the remaining LEAs, 13% delivered courses that mid-day supervisors could attend, often funded by the LEA due to finances made available in response to the Elton Report or local prioritisation (Sharp, 1994). The other 12% of LEAs stated that training for mid-day supervisors was organised and delivered by schools or clusters of schools but supported by the LEA through funding or the involvement of LEA staff such as school advisors and educational psychologists.

However, Sharp's survey has significant limitations. Firstly, only 52% of LEAs responded and therefore the data obtained does not provide a complete picture of the training available for lunchtime supervisors. It is also possible that some of the LEAs did not respond because they did not wish to highlight the lack of training available in their region, which may skew the outcomes of the data in favour of LEAs where training was offered. In addition to this, Sharp's survey only considers the availability of training for mid-day supervisors and not the uptake of this. It is possible that whilst training was available, few mid-day supervisors participated in this and the impact of this provision may have therefore been limited. This is also suggested by Bailey (1994) and Imich & Jefferies (1994), both writing in the same year as Sharp. Both highlight the lack of mid-day supervisors undertaking developmental training, particularly in behaviour management.

Even if Sharp's results are representative of the training offered to mid-day supervisors in 1994, due to the significant rise in the number of academy schools and the resulting diminished resources and funding available to LEAs, it is likely that any provision for the training of lunchtime supervisors is now radically different than at the time of Sharp's study. However, even in more recent years, the lack of training provided to mid-day supervisors has continued to emerge as a theme in studies already discussed in this literature review, such as the one by Blatchford & Baines (2006) who comment that there is a "reliance on ad-hoc, informal arrangements" (Blatchford & Baines, 2006: 8) and that, unlike the findings of Sharp in 1994, by 2006 only a minority of schools offered formal training. This issue was also identified by Pike (2010), who found that in all four schools where she conducted research, no training was offered to mid-day supervisors. Mosely (2015) also states that the majority of mid-day supervisors continue to have no training in the role they are required to fulfil. Most recently, Baines & Blatchford (2019) found that training for mid-day supervisors

takes place on “an informal ‘as and when’ basis” (Baines & Blatchford, 2019: 50) and the level of formal training has declined since a previous study by the same authors in 2006.

2.5: Theories of Role

This section of the literature review explores theories of role. As the role of the mid-day supervisor exists as an employment position within a school organisation and also as an occupation within society, considering the role of a mid-day supervisor in light of these theories provides a framework through which the positioning and enactment of the role can be explored.

2.5.1: Organisational, Structural and Interactionist Role Theory

Role theory is designed to explain how individuals who occupy a particular position, such as that of a mid-day supervisor, are expected to behave (Cottrell & James, 2016; Hindin, 2011). Every role, both organizational and societal, has certain expectations that are applied to an incumbent of that position (Gross et al, 1958). Both those inhabiting the role and those interacting with the role hold beliefs and attitudes about what should and should not be done by those who undertake it (Kahn et al, 1964). Similarly, Linton’s (1936) work on role theory argues that for every position that can be occupied within an organization or within society, there is an attached role, and that every role has an attached collection of rights and duties. Newcomb (1950) and Dahrendorf (1973) refine this further and propose that every role consists of *obligatory*, *optional* and *forbidden* behaviours for those who occupy it. These attitudes, beliefs and expectations are generated and reinforced through the positioning of the role within an organization and/or within wider society, as well as interactions with individuals and groups occupying other roles (Turner, 2011).

Through the concept of *organisational role theory*, Biddle (1986) identifies that an employment position, such as that of a school mid-day supervisor, is associated with normative expectations of any individual undertaking the role. Alongside these expectations, organisational constraints are placed on the role, often through the use of a hierarchical system with clear role boundaries to ensure that anyone occupying a particular role undertakes this in accordance with the normative expectations of the organisation (Turner, 2011). In terms of this study, considering the organisational element of role theory will highlight how the role of the mid-day supervisor is positioned within the school as an

organisation, and therefore how this positioning influences the way in which the role is enacted by those who occupy it.

Biddle (1986) also highlights the influence of *structural* role theory, arguing that a role can hold a position in wider society, and this societal positioning can also bring normative expectations that influence how the role is enacted. Turner (2011) highlights how occupational roles also carry expectations within wider society beyond the workplace, influencing how the role is enacted within the workplace and also the behaviour of those who inhabit the role even when they are not undertaking it at the time. Alongside the consideration of the organisational element of role theory, considering the role of a mid-day supervisor through the concept of structural role theory will allow an exploration of how the role's positioning beyond the school, such as within the local community, might influence the way in which it is enacted. This is particularly relevant for this study, as mid-day supervisors are often drawn from the immediate community surrounding the school (Pike, 2010) and perceptions of this role beyond the school may well influence the way in which it is enacted within the school.

However, Turner (2011) describes these organizational and structural elements of role theory as "overly deterministic and static" (Turner, 2011; p233), arguing that interaction between individuals and groups, both inhabiting the same and different roles, influences the way in which a role is enacted. Biddle (1986) acknowledges this with the concept of *interactionist* role theory, in that a role's position and the expectations that are attached to it can be reinforced or altered through interaction, rather than be wholly dictated by an organisational or social position. In the case of the role of a mid-day supervisor, interactions occur in school between mid-day supervisors themselves and with those undertaking other roles, such as teachers and teaching assistants. Considering how these interactions either reinforce or alter the positioning of the role will develop an understanding of how they contribute to the positioning of mid-day supervisors in different school contexts.

The concepts of *organisational, structural* and *interactionist* role theory can therefore be used as a framework to explore how the role of a primary school mid-day supervisor might be positioned through organisational factors, structural factors and the interactions between mid-day supervisors themselves and with others. These elements of role theory

can then be used to explain the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours that form the enactment of the role by the mid-day supervisors in different school contexts.

2.5.2: Role Legitimisation and Marginalisation

Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998; 2011) identify that some roles within an organisation such as a school are not fully participatory, but can be occasional, peripheral, or transactional. These part-participatory roles are often those that are enacted at specific times, resulting in the limited participation of those who in occupy the role within the organisation. The role of the mid-day supervisor is an example of such a role, as it is only enacted for a short period of time during the school day. Wenger (1998) highlights that when part-participatory roles exist, these can either become legitimised or marginalised, and that is very much dependent on how those who hold fully-participatory roles perceive those who hold part-participatory roles.

In the case of legitimate participation (Wenger, 1998), a role's part-participation in the community is deemed by others to be unproblematic, and the participation that does occur is perceived by others to be valuable within the community. When a role becomes legitimized, often there will be elements of shared activity, practice and knowledge between those who inhabit the part-participatory role and those who occupy full-participatory roles within the community. Positive interactions between individuals in part-participatory and full-participatory roles occur regularly, creating positive role relationships and a sense of belonging for those in the part-participatory role.

In the case of marginalised participation, the role's part-participation in the community is deemed by others to be problematic, and the participation that does occur is perceived by other to have little value within the community. When a role becomes marginalised, there will be a lack of shared activity and practice between those who inhabit the part-participatory role and those who occupy full-participatory roles within the community. Often, knowledge will be withheld from those in part-participatory roles and there will be an absence of interaction or negative interactions between those in part-participatory roles and those in full-participatory roles, creating negative role relationships and a sense of separateness for those in the part-participatory role.

In the case of this study, considering how the part-participatory role of mid-day supervisors is legitimized or marginalised within different school contexts will support an understanding of the positioning of the role within these organizations and the way in which it is perceived by both those who undertake it and others within the community.

Role marginalization might therefore be a significant challenge for mid-day supervisors in primary schools, but there are also other sources of challenge for those undertaking the role.

2.5.3: Role Conflict and Role Strain

Whilst there are normative expectations of a role in terms of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of those who undertake it (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Biddle, 1986; Dahrendorf, 1973; Gross, 1958; Hindin,2011; Horrocks & Jackson, 1972; Kahn et al, 1964; Linton, 1936; Newcomb, 1950) role conflict can occur when the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of an individual who undertakes the role are in conflict with normative organisational or societal expectations of the role.

Shivers-Blackwell (2004) highlights role conflict as a concept that occurs when there are differences between the individual's conception of their job and how it should be enacted and the organisational conception of this, whilst Matthews & Crow (2003) highlight that role conflict can occur when there are different co-existing expectations of a role. This is relevant to the role of the school mid-day supervisor, as there may be potential role conflict between individual mid-day supervisors who undertake the role, and also between mid-day supervisors collectively, and those undertaking other roles in the school, such as school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. Turner (2011) defines this type of role conflict as 'intra-role conflict' and highlights how this is often influenced by the organisational hierarchy, whereby the expectations of the role that are held by those more highly placed in the hierarchy are given precedence, even when these conflict with the expectations of the role held by those who actually undertake it. As a result, when limited time or resources preclude equal attention to all aspects of a role, it is the expectations of those positioned higher in the hierarchy that are prioritised, often to the detriment of other aspects of the role that may be perceived to be equally or more valuable by those who undertake it (Turner, 1978).

Another aspect of role conflict that can occur is that of a conflict between different roles occupied by an individual. All individuals hold a diverse range of roles and, at times, the different expectations of these may result in conflict or incompatibility with each other (Hindin, 2011). Through the use of the term 'inter-role conflict', Turner (2011) highlights that people can undertake different roles that require contradictory kinds of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. In the case of mid-day supervisors, those who undertake the role may also undertake different roles within the school community, for example as a parent or other relative or family friend of the pupils that they interact with in their role as a mid-day supervisor. They may also undertake different roles beyond the school, such as other occupational roles or roles within the local community that involve interaction with pupils and parents from the school. The expectations of undertaking these different roles may conflict with the expectations of undertaking the role as a mid-day supervisor.

Turner (2011) highlights that both intra-role and inter-role conflict can lead to 'role strain' (Goode, 1960), whereby the enactment of the role involves "anxiety, tension and frustration" (Turner, 2011; p249) for those who undertake it. The occurrence, intensity or absence of role strain felt by individuals undertaking a role influences the way in which they enact their role, and their own perceptions of the role that they hold (Goode, 1960).

However, role strain can also be an outcome of other factors aside from role conflict, such as the incumbent's self-perceived incapability to fulfil the role, a lack of sufficient training or a lack of experience undertaking the role (Goode, 1960). 'Role overload' can also lead to role strain, when the requirements of the role exceed the time, energy or resources of the individual who is undertaking it (Turner, 2011). Role strain can also be the outcome of 'role ambiguity' (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019), whereby the incumbent of the role is uncertain as to the functions that they are supposed to perform whist undertaking it, or a lack of 'role clarity' (Papastylianou, Kaila & Polychronopoulos, 2008) whereby the purpose of the role is unclear to those who undertake it.

Prior studies suggest that role strain in organisations has a negative impact on those who experience it, such as job dissatisfaction, anxiety, damage to well-being, lower commitment to the role and lower performance of the role (House & Rizzo, 1972; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Therefore, organisations should minimise role strain to promote both the well-being

and the effectiveness of those who occupy the role and therefore benefit the organisation where the role is performed (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

Given that mid-day supervisors hold a specific occupational role in schools, consideration of different elements of role conflict and role strain provides a lens through which to explore factors that might intensify role conflict and role strain, but also factors that might reduce role conflict and role strain for those who occupy the role. As a result, this will support an understanding of why the role may be perceived and enacted differently in different school settings, identifying factors that either reduce or enhance role conflict and role strain for those who undertake it.

2.6: Summary of the Literature Review

Within the literature review, three key issues emerged. Firstly, the potential social and physical benefits of breaktimes themselves and the positive impact these may have on the behaviour and learning of pupils in afternoon lessons (Thomson, 2007; Darmody, Smyth & Doherty, 2010; Jarrett et al, 1998; Leff et al, 2003; Barros et al, 2009). Secondly, the concerns held about school lunchtimes, especially in terms of pupils' behaviour (Elton, 1989; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Mulryan-Kyne, 2014; Baines & Blatchford, 2019); Thirdly, concerns about the quality of mid-day supervisors and their ability to fulfil the role, frequently relating to their capability to manage pupils' behaviour (Thomson, 2005; Thomson 2007; Pike, 2008; Pike 2010; Metcalfe, 2011; Pike & Kelly, 2014). This was commonly linked to a lack of initial and ongoing training offered to mid-day supervisors (Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Pike, 2010; Mosely, 2015; Baines & Blatchford, 2019).

The literature review also outlines theories of role that can be drawn upon to explore the positioning of the role within and beyond the school and enactment of the role by those who occupy it in different school contexts.

Whilst this review has explored literature relating to mid-day supervisors, it should be noted that research relating to this group of school staff is sparse and often small-scale. At the time of writing there are 16,796 primary schools in England and almost five million pupils enrolled at these schools (DfE, 2021). The average primary school has 282 pupils on its roll and the national average class size is 27 pupils (DfE, 2021). In my experience, schools employ approximately one mid-day supervisor per class of pupils, so based on the statistics

available this suggests a workforce of primary-school mid-day supervisors is in the region of 175,000 individuals. Despite this substantial number, very little is known about the role itself, the nature of the work this involves or the challenges of undertaking the role.

Similarly, given the significant number of mid-day supervisors working in primary schools and their 'front-line' role interacting with pupils, it is concerning that such little research has been undertaken on the role they perform in primary schools. Nor has research considered how mid-day supervisors contribute to the development of children, who spend a considerable amount of every school day in their care, or to the wider life of the school. The little research that does consider mid-day supervisors only tends to do so as part of a wider focus on school lunchtimes rather than on developing an understanding of the role and those who fulfil it. By involving mid-day supervisors as the only participants in this research and working alongside them within schools, my aim is to contribute to knowledge and understanding of those who undertake the role, the nature of the work this entails and the place of mid-day supervisors in primary school communities.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1: Outline of the Methodology Chapter

In this chapter, I outline the multiple case study approach adopted for this research and provide a rationale for and explanation of the ethnographic methods of data collection that were used to answer the research question posed:

- What is the role and place of mid-day supervisors within primary schools?

Within this over-arching research question, the following sub-questions were considered to further explore the role of the mid-day supervisor and consider their place within primary schools:

- What motivates primary-school mid-day supervisors to undertake this role?
- What is the nature of the work undertaken by primary-school mid-day supervisors?
- How is the role of mid-day supervisors positioned within primary schools?
- What factors might impact upon the way in which mid-day supervisors undertake their role within the school and their experience of doing so?

I then consider the ethical considerations taken into account both before and during the research. Finally, this chapter outlines my approach to analysing and presenting my findings.

3.2: Preparing the Study

I made the decision to focus on primary schools because mid-day supervisors, who hold no other role within the school, are almost always employed in these settings. This is not the case in secondary schools, where some of those responsible for the facilitation and supervision of pupils at lunchtime often hold other employment roles within the school (Baines & Blatchford, 2019) and therefore their work as a mid-day supervisor is likely to only be a part of their employment at the school.

Prior to contacting schools, I identified three school catchment areas that I felt would provide variety in terms of the physical location of the school and the demographics of the area served by the school. For practical reasons, I selected: a suburban catchment area close to my place of work; a rural catchment area between my home and place of work and;

an inner-city catchment area close to my home. Each catchment area was part of a different Local Authority, therefore giving variety in terms of location and also authority-wide policies that might impact upon each school. The specific catchment areas were also selected so that I could maintain my work commitments during the research period, but also allow the opportunity to write my field notes for each day soon after my time in school.

I then identified one primary school from each catchment area, ensuring a variety of school sizes and avoiding any school where I was known in my previous role as a teacher, or my current role working in initial teacher education. I e-mailed the head teachers of these three schools, provided an overview of the project and asked them to respond should they be willing to discuss this further. Two of the three head teachers replied and asked me to attend a meeting with them in school to discuss the research in more detail, before agreeing to allow the research to be undertaken in the school. For the purposes of the research, the suburban school became known as Kirkley Road Primary School and the rural school as Brecks Drive Primary School (see table below).

No response was received from the third school. Therefore, I emailed the head teacher of another school within the identified catchment area, again ensuring this was as different in terms of size to the other two schools. On this occasion, I received a reply from the head teacher inviting me to meet in school, before she also agreed to allow the research to be undertaken in the school. For the purposes of the research, this inner-city school became known as Gleneagles Park Primary School.

Table 1 below outlines the three schools where the research was undertaken:

Table 1: Key school information

School	Description
Kirkley Road Primary School	Primary (age 3-11) school; number on roll approximately 300. Suburban estate, comprising mostly of social housing. Very large majority of pupils from a white, British background and a very low proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. High proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals.
Brecks Drive Primary School	Primary (age 3-11) school; number on roll approximately 70. Rural location, with no pupils living in the catchment area. Average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. Low proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals.
Gleneagles Park Primary School	Primary (age 3-11) school; number on roll approximately 450. Inner-city location. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language. Average proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

I felt that selecting schools with different demographics and characteristics was also important because the research questions that were posed sought to understand the positioning and enactment of the role in different contexts. Undertaking data collection in schools that were different to each other allowed me to explore the similarities and differences between the role in different contexts and therefore identify issues that were common within the different schools (and therefore more likely to be relevant to the role generally) and those that were only apparent in one school (and therefore more likely to be relevant to the specific school or schools with similar characteristics).

Prior to entering the field, I also met with the mid-day supervisors at each school to outline the aims of the research and answer any questions they might wish to ask. I also gave all the mid-day supervisors a written information sheet about the study to keep so they were able to make an informed decision as to their own participation. The mid-day supervisors were also given a consent form to complete if they were willing to participate in the study by allowing me to record observations and interactions involving them during the course of their work. All of the mid-day supervisors in the three schools consented to participation in the research; twelve at Kirkley Road, three at Brecks Drive and eleven at Gleneagles Park. The research information sheet and a template of the consent form for this phase of the research can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

I also approached some of the mid-day supervisors in each school to take part in an individual interview during which I would explore their perspectives about the role. Those who verbally agreed were given a further written information sheet about their participation in the interview, so that they could further consider their participation in this aspect of the research. Similarly, a consent form was completed by all the mid-day supervisors who agreed to be interviewed; three at Kirkley Road, two at Brecks Drive and three at Gleneagles Park. The research information sheet and a template of the consent form for this phase of the research can be found in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 respectively. The interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5 and transcription of one of the interviews can also be found in Appendix 6.

3.3: Multiple Case Study Design

Yin (2012) outlines the benefit of case studies, which provide examples of real people in real situations and allows the deep penetration of a context that may not be achievable through other methodological approaches. I judged this to be appropriate to my study, as I aimed to gain an understanding of real people (the mid-day supervisors) within a real situation (the primary school in which they worked). I therefore chose a multi-sited case study design because it allowed me to explore the role and place of the mid-day supervisors in different locations and spent fifteen lunchtimes in each school.

Often, case study research maintains a focus on one specific site and provides an in-depth exploration of a particular context or situation (Thomas, 2011). Given the time available for

data collection, I could have chosen to maintain a focus on one research site for forty-five lunchtimes, rather than spend fifteen lunchtimes in each of the three separate sites. There were two reasons for making the decision not to do this and instead spend time within three schools, thus adopting a multiple-case design in my study (Yin, 2014).

Firstly, I felt that using a single-case design would compromise the generalisability of the study (Newby, 2014). Whilst a single-case design may be appropriate to explore an extreme or unique context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011), my research involved mainstream primary schools and there were no obvious reasons to suspect these were significantly different from each other, or to primary schools across the country. My research questions were aimed at developing an understanding of the role and place of primary-school mid-day supervisors, and a single-case design would have been limited by exploring this in only one context (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Through the use of a multiple-case design, I was able to highlight the similarities and differences in terms of the role and place of mid-day supervisors in different schools. I could therefore better determine commonalities that are likely to be mirrored on a wider basis within primary schools, increasing the potential generalisability of the findings and going some way towards avoiding the common criticism that a single-case design attracts in this respect (Hammersley, 2008).

Secondly, I felt that since lunchtimes in individual schools tend to be similar on a day-to-day basis, there was the potential that 'saturation point' (Pole & Morrison, 2003) in terms of data collection would be reached well before I had spent forty-five lunchtimes in the same school. However, it must be noted that this may not have happened and was a decision based on my own experience of school lunchtimes as a teacher rather than a researcher.

3.4: The Ontological and Epistemological Stance

As it is the mid-day supervisors who experience the employment role that they occupy, ontologically it is mid-day supervisors themselves who can articulate the reality of their role and the way in which it is positioned and enacted. It is also the mid-day supervisors who are best able to highlight factors that impact on their experience of undertaking the role, such as the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours expected of them (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973), the legitimisation and marginalisation of their role (Wenger, 1998) and elements of role strain that they experience (Turner, 2011). Therefore, epistemologically it

is key that this research captures the perspectives of those undertaking the role so that their experience can be reflected as genuinely as possible.

Given that this research focuses on a group of staff who hold a permanently part-participatory role within the organisational community of the school, the use of role theory as a tool for analysis allows for an exploration of how this part-participation impacts on the positioning and enactment of the role within and beyond the school. This combination of role theory and the concept of part-participation brings together two key aspects of the role under scrutiny; mid-day supervisors hold a part-participatory employment role within the school, but this employment role often exists simultaneously with other roles that they might occupy, such as familial or social roles that intersect with their employment at the school itself or within communities beyond the school. For example, mid-day supervisors are often related to pupils within the school where they work and therefore hold more than one role with some pupils. Similarly, mid-day supervisors are often parents of pupils within the school, and therefore hold different role relationships with other staff, as they are both parents and work colleagues.

3.5: Adopting an Ethnographic Approach

Within each case study, I adopted ethnographic approaches to data collection (Mills & Morton, 2013). Firstly, I became fully participant and assumed the role of a mid-day supervisor. One purpose of this was to develop a personal 'lived' understanding of what the role entailed in each setting. By working in-role alongside the school's mid-day supervisors, I was also able to observe their working practices and interactions, both with each other and with others in the school, such as staff and pupils. Sharing in the work of the mid-day supervisors also positioned me in a way that offered regular opportunities to collect data through my own day-to-day observations and interactions with them. I was also able to approach and interview a sample of mid-day supervisors from each school to explore their perceptions of their role and place within the school community.

Previous research projects focused on social times in schools, such as breaktimes and lunchtimes, have successfully adopted ethnographic approaches (Willett, 2011; Marsh, 2012; Mercader, Weber & Durif-Varembont, 2015). Pole & Morrison (2003) define an ethnographic approach as:

> An approach to social research based on the first-hand experience of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experiences of those who inhabit that location.
> (Pole & Morrison, 2003: 16)

Due to the focus of my research questions being on a time in school that is dominated by social interaction within a discrete location, I considered ethnographic approaches to be an appropriate means of data collection. Grieg, Taylor & Mackay (2013) state that ethnographic approaches are particularly suitable for collecting data in informal and unstructured settings, which matched the situation of the time of the school day in which the study was being conducted. The potential of ethnographic approaches to provide a unique insight into educational worlds (Mills & Morton, 2013) and the ability to provide a comprehensive description of the social interaction within a location or event (Pole & Morrison, 2003), such as a school lunchtime, also made this approach to data collection suitable for this research. I felt that the opportunity that ethnographic approaches provided to portray insiders' perspectives (Mills & Morton, 2013) further justified this use of these approaches for this study.

Whilst ethnographic approaches to data collection were used, this cannot be considered to be a 'pure' ethnography (Hammersley, 2006) for a number of reasons. Firstly, the study was undertaken in different and independent contexts and therefore moved away from the ethnographic principle of studying one context in depth (Pole & Morrison, 2013). Secondly, whilst I was undertaking the role of a mid-day supervisor, my previous experience working in schools inherently meant that I could not fully and genuinely experience becoming a mid-day supervisor as I was accustomed to working within schools, unlike most mid-day supervisors who do not have this experience. Finally, the mid-day supervisors I worked alongside did not perceive me to be fully-participant in the role and were aware that my time working in the school was very limited. As a result, I was often 'paired up' with other mid-day supervisors rather than allocated my own duties, and therefore could not fully experience the reality of the undertaking the role as a mid-day supervisor.

The question of whether ethnographic approaches sit within a paradigm of their own, or whether they are part of a wider philosophical framework is often contested (Mills & Morton, 2013). Epistemologically, the nature of knowledge yielded by research employing ethnographic approaches is very much an exploratory account of the social life within the selected setting, with an emphasis on the portrayal of insiders' perspectives.

The aim of ethnographic data collection is not to provide a distanced and objective account of the action within a setting, in this case the school lunchtime. Rather, the purpose is to provide subjective understanding (Mills & Morton, 2013) that accepts the different realities of the people involved and uses the experiences of these people to construct and analyse the social world. It also has to be taken into consideration that the perception of the researcher adds an unavoidable layer of subjectivity to the research (Mercader, Weber & Durif-Varembont, 2015). Throughout the research it was therefore important that I was able to analyse my own emotions and thought-processes, in order to be appropriately reflexive during the research process.

During the research, two incidents reinforced this need for reflexivity. The first incident involved pupils arriving late for lunchtime because they had been undertaking Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs). The pupils' lateness was clearly a source of annoyance and frustration to the mid-day supervisors, directed against the school staff. However, my overwhelming feeling, having worked as a teacher and experienced the high-stakes of these tests and the anxiety they can cause, was of understanding and sympathy. The second incident involved intervening in a physical fight between two children, where my training and experience of working with violent pupils meant I was able to respond to this situation more confidently than I suspect would be the case for other mid-day supervisors. These examples served to illustrate the importance of understanding how my own prior experience had the potential to influence both my thoughts and actions whilst undertaking the research.

Given the contested, varied and wide nature of ethnographic approaches, it is no surprise that these have been adapted and developed, which has resulted in debates around what is and what is not an ethnographic approach. One such debate surrounds the level to which the researcher becomes a participant in the research. This can range from becoming a complete participant who is, or appears to be, a full member of the group being studied to a

complete observer who, whilst still aiming to understand the perceptions of the group involved, never becomes, or appears to be, a member of the group being studied (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Most studies employing ethnographic approaches take neither of these extreme positions, but rather fall somewhere between the two. Indeed, even within individual studies, the researcher may vary the extent of their participation depending on the aim of the method being used at the time. This is certainly true in the case of my research, as some time was spent being fully-participant in the role of a mid-day supervisor, whereas data was also gathered through interviews with mid-day supervisors whilst not undertaking the role. Mills & Morton (2013) support the view that it is the epistemological underpinnings and intentions of the approach to data collection that are paramount in terms defining these as ethnographic, rather than the extent to which the researcher is participant in the context of the study.

Wellington (2000) argues that only approaches that collect data naturally can be deemed to be ethnographic. Therefore, creating unnatural situations such as formal interviews cannot be considered to be an ethnographic approach to generating data. However, Walford (2008) contests this view by stating that many different types of data collection can be considered to be ethnographic in approach, provided that the intention is to collect data relating to those who are being studied or the setting that is being explored. Similarly, Pole & Morrison (2003) argue that the key to maintaining the epistemological principles of ethnographic data collection is the intent and manner in which these methods are employed and the way in which the data collected from these methods is analysed to provide a picture of the wider context in which social actions take place.

Finally, there is debate surrounding the length of time that is required to be able to accurately discern the complexities of social life in specific environments and therefore undertake an ethnographic approach to research. Traditionally, this period has been perceived as lengthy and time-consuming (Wolcott, 1995) and therefore a barrier to a successful research. However, Jeffrey & Troman (2004) argue that “an ideal length of time to be spent in the field is difficult to establish” (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004: 536). They go further to define three ‘time modes’ that can structure research that takes an ethnographic approach to data collection:

Compressed time mode – involves a short period of intense data-collection, in which the researcher inhabits a research site almost permanently for anything from a few days to a month;

Selective intermittent time mode – involves a longer period of data-collection (three months to two years), but visits to the research site are less frequent, flexible and can be determined as the research progresses; or

Recurrent time mode – the period spent doing research is similar to the selective intermittent time mode, but visits to the research site are regular and the time between visits is consistent.

This study was conducted in three schools using the compressed time mode (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). I spent fifteen consecutive days in each of the three schools, becoming fully participant in the life of the school lunchtime in the role of a mid-day supervisor.

Whilst I had originally perceived that the main benefit to becoming fully-participant in the role of a mid-day supervisor would be to allow me to understand the 'lived experience' of undertaking the role, my views on this changed during the research process. The mid-day supervisors I worked alongside were very enthusiastic participants in the project and actively sought to talk to me about their experiences and perspectives. As such, I was holding many more conversations with the mid-day supervisors in my 'assumed role' than I would have been as a 'genuine' mid-day supervisor. This resulted in some of the duties I would have undertaken individually, such as the supervision of pupils on the playground, being undertaken jointly with other mid-day supervisors who were keen to speak to me. I believe that this was a significant benefit to my ethnographic approach. Being fully-participant, I took a position that gave me the opportunity to interact with the mid-day supervisors in a way that other approaches would not have allowed. It is fair to assume that the mid-day supervisors said different things to me than they would have done to someone not 'sharing' in their work (Puttick, 2017). Another barrier to understanding the 'lived experience' of mid-day supervisors was my own positionality as a researcher, but also previously as a teacher. My experience working with large groups of pupils within a school context and my formal training in areas such as behaviour management made it difficult to

experience a genuine 'lived experience' as a mid-day supervisor, as those who occupy the role often do not have the equivalent training and experience.

This is not to say, however, that I was unable to portray some of the 'lived experience' of being a mid-day supervisor. Only the head teacher and the other mid-day supervisors were aware that my role was an assumed one, and as such my time in each school gave me insights into how it felt to interact with pupils and other staff in the mid-day supervisor role. Additionally, I was faced with challenges that I would not have experienced had I not been fully-participant in the role. This allowed me to experience some of the emotions that derived from being in the role of a mid-day supervisor in the specific circumstances that would sometimes occur at lunchtime.

3.6: Methods

This research used two primary methods of data collection. After each lunchtime, field notes were written to capture my observations and the experiences of my time in school. Additionally, ethnographic interviews were conducted with a sample of mid-day supervisors from each of the school involved in the research.

3.6.1: Field Notes

Although there is debate surrounding the extent to which different methods can be considered as ethnographic, there is consensus that use of field notes should be the core method when a study adopts an ethnographic approach to data collection (Pole & Morrison, 2003; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Creese et al, 2008; Walford, 2009; Madden, 2010; Murchison, 2010; Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Mills & Morton, 2013; Delamont, 2014; Campbell & Lassiter, 2015).

Field notes can be broadly split into two key categories. Firstly, field notes can be taken "in the hurly-burly of active fieldwork" (Madden, 2010: 123). These are sometimes referred to as "scratch notes" (Sanjek, 1990), "scribbles" (Delamont, 2008) or "surreptitious jottings" (Mills & Morton, 2013) which often make use of mnemonics, personal short-hand, drawings and codes to record events. Secondly, field notes can be composed away from the field to 'write up' and expand on the 'scratch notes' already made (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Campbell & Lassiter, 2015), resulting in 'consolidated, end-of-day' field notes (Madden,

2010). Alternatively, these out-of-field notes may be composed from memory (Mills & Morton, 2013) and aim to record the events that occurred in the field which the researcher feels are relevant. Often, these take on a more reflective and analytical tone (Madden, 2010).

Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) suggest making field notes in copious detail to ensure the "preservation of concreteness" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 145). Mills & Morton (2013) advocate an initial 'broad sweep' approach to note making, gradually focusing on issues and themes as these emerge through the study. Murchison (2010) highlights the importance of including 'sensory experiences' within field notes. This is supported by Campbell and Lassiter (2015) who also emphasise the importance of the researcher recording their own experiences and emotions.

When collecting data using field notes, it is also important consider what is recorded, as the field notes of one researcher cannot record everything that takes place (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Murchison, 2010). This was particularly relevant to my study, owing to the distinctly separate 'eating area' and 'playing area' that is occupied by pupils and mid-day supervisors at lunchtimes. Put simply, I could not be in both areas at the same time and as a result, my field notes could only record my experiences and observations of the area where I was present. During the research process, I made efforts to ensure that I spent time in both 'areas' during my time at each school, but nevertheless there may be actions and interactions that I did not witness and were therefore not recorded and analysed.

As this study involved becoming fully-participant in the role of a mid-day supervisor, I decided that making notes 'in the field' was impractical and might also have compromised my assumed role. The work of a mid-day supervisor in a primary school is generally one of constant activity such as cleaning tables, zipping-up coats, tying shoelaces, holding play equipment and administering minor first-aid as well as supervising children. Being an active a full participant in the field left very little time for writing (Atkins & Wallace, 2012), particularly as the work required frequent movement or use of the hands (Murchison, 2010). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, making notes is not generally seen as 'normal' for mid-day supervisors. Although writing may be seen as an unremarkable activity in a school, this does not generally take place at lunchtime by mid-day supervisors. In my

view, this would have influenced the 'natural' participation of the pupils, mid-day supervisors and myself as the fully-participant researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), which would have compromised a key epistemological principle of my ethnographic approach. It was also possible that pupils and mid-day supervisors would perceive note-taking as inappropriate or threatening and perhaps even create suspicion about what I was writing, which again would lead to unnatural 'reactive' behaviour (Madden, 2010) and therefore put at risk the principles of the ethnographic approach to data collection.

For these reasons, when undertaking the role of the mid-day supervisor, I created field notes written from memory, as advocated by Mills & Morton (2013). These field notes were written shortly after my time in the field, and always within an hour of leaving the school because it was important that they were written before my memory became "clouded by other events and the passage of time" (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). As my aim was to portray the 'lived' experience of a mid-day supervisor, these field notes documented not only the events that occurred, but also my own thoughts, opinions, emotions and reflections.

As the research progressed, however, I noticed that whilst my field notes did contain some of my own thoughts and emotions, they were predominantly constructed of two 'types' of information. Firstly, I often recorded incidents and interactions I had observed that day. Secondly, and even more frequently, my field notes recorded information that I had been told by mid-day supervisors during my time working alongside them. As outlined in the methodology section, many of the mid-day supervisors I worked alongside were very keen to speak to me about their role and give their perspectives. As a consequence much of my time in school was spent interacting with them and as a result of this, my field notes became weighted towards these conversations and the content of them.

3.6.2: Ethnographic Interviews

In addition to the use of field notes, during my time within each school I conducted ethnographic interviews with mid-day supervisors. Interviews are considered a cornerstone of an ethnographic approach to research (Heyl, 2007) and remain one of the most important ways of knowing others and gaining the perspectives of participants (Madden, 2010).

Before undertaking any interviews I considered what makes an interview ethnographic and therefore in keeping with the underlying epistemology of my approach to data collection. Firstly, ethnographic interviews were undertaken in the context of a wider study (Forsey, 2008) and intertwined with other channels of fieldwork (Campbell & Lassiter, 2015). The focus of the interviews was on themes that had emerged through participant-observation, and in the case of my research the experience of full participation gained when undertaking the role as a mid-day supervisor. However, there was potential for interviews to create new themes and topics, guiding the focus of the research and raising new issues for exploration (Murchison, 2010). For this reason, I conducted the ethnographic interviews after initial field notes had been created so that I could ask appropriate questions, but leave time for further participant-observation should new themes emerge.

The aim of the ethnographic interview was to give the participant an opportunity to respond to questions and give their perspective on issues on his or her own terms (Pole & Morrison, 2003). To this end, the interviews I conducted with mid-day supervisors were designed in such a way as to allow this to happen as successfully as possible. Firstly, I structured each interview using a loose interview schedule which allowed for some variation and change in the process (Murchison, 2010), but which focused on the key themes that had emerged or incidents that had that had occurred in the research so far. This "interview guide approach" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011: 413) allowed me to set the broad topics and issues to be discussed, but also gave the opportunity for the participant to move in different directions whilst maintaining the overall shape of the interview (Forsey, 2008).

When conducting the interviews, my questions were open ended as these were more likely to encourage the participant to provide expansive answers and provide the 'deep' data that is at the heart of good ethnographic interviews (Murchison, 2010). Forsey (2008) encourages the use of 'naïve' questions, giving the interviewee an opportunity to share his or her perspectives and experiences in such a way that the knowledge of the interviewer is superfluous to the situation. In this way, I was able to avoid asking questions that suggested a particular answer, ensuring that participants were not influenced when giving responses.

Given that there were only three mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive, I approached all these participants and asked if they were willing to participate in individual interviews. Two of the mid-day supervisors agreed to this and interviews were held on my eleventh and twelfth

day in school. The participants were able to choose the time and location of the interview. Both interviews were conducted before lunchtime in a room at the school often used for meetings. This provided a quiet space, free from interruptions and distractions. One interview was recorded electronically, whilst at the request of the participant the other was written by hand.

At Kirkley Road, I initially identified three mid-day supervisors who I believed would provide variety in terms of the length of time they had held the role and the key stage in which they worked. I chose not to approach mid-day supervisors who had been particularly forthcoming during my time working alongside them, as I believed there was the potential for the interviews to simply elicit the same data. Similarly, I avoided mid-day supervisors who seemed reluctant to talk to me about their role during my time working alongside them as I believed this had the potential to elicit limited data. All three mid-day supervisors who were approached agreed to participate in the interviews. Two of the interviews were held on my twelfth day at the school and one on my fourteenth day in school. Again, I asked the participants to choose the time and location of the interview. Two mid-day supervisors chose to hold the interview at lunchtime itself in the school hall. This posed challenges in terms of noise as pupils would often use this space to move between the dining hall and the playground. On a number of occasions, these interviews were also interrupted by pupils and staff approaching the mid-day supervisor. However, both interviews were electronically recorded and the data was audible and sufficient for transcription. The third interview at Kirkley Road was undertaken after lunchtime in a seating area of the school playground, so was free from noise and distraction. This interview was also recorded electronically.

Similarly, at Gleneagles Park I initially identified three mid-day supervisors who I believed would provide variety in terms of the length of time that they had held the role. At Gleneagles Park, my observations and interactions with the mid-day supervisors prior to the interviews had highlighted the potential influence of the cultural background and community of the midday supervisor on their role, particularly in terms of their relationships with pupils. As such, I approached mid-day supervisors from different cultural backgrounds and communities to be the interview participants. For the same reasons as at Kirkley Road, I chose not to approach mid-day supervisors who had been particularly forthcoming during my time working alongside them or those who seemed reluctant to talk to me about their

role. All three mid-day supervisors who were approached agreed to participate in the interview and these were held on my twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth day at the school. Again, the participants were able to choose the time and location of the interview. Two were conducted after lunchtime in a room within the school and one was conducted before lunchtime in a seating area of the school playground. Both locations provided an environment free from noise and interruption. All the interviews were recorded electronically.

3.7: Data Analysis

At the end of the data-collection period, the data-set consisted of:

- forty-five field notes, one for each day spent in the field, composed immediately after lunchtime and;
- eight ethnographic interviews.

The seven recorded interviews were professionally transcribed. Whilst it is often argued that personal transcription offers the first opportunity to examine the data closely (Hartas, 2010), I felt that this could be achieved equally well by listening to the original recordings. When I received the transcripts, I listened to the original recordings alongside reading each of these and made notes and comments. For example, I filled in some words that the transcriber had marked as inaudible, but I knew because I had conducted the interview. Similarly, I was able to correct some words and phrases that the transcriber had misheard on the electronic recordings.

Having collated the data in the form of my field notes and interview transcriptions, I set about identifying themes using a coding process. Pole & Morrison (2003) advocate for the use of coding data generated through ethnographic approaches, as this can be significant in terms of the quantity of data and also include a significant quality of data that is not related to the research questions posed (Mills & Morton, 2013). To undertake initial coding, I returned to key words and phrases in my research questions (Saldana, 2016), giving a code to data that related to these and highlighting the on-screen text to the colour attributed to each code. This initial coding allowed me to look for patterns in the data (Saldana, 2016) and provided six themes:

- information about the mid-day supervisors themselves;
- the motivation to become and/or continue to be a mid-day supervisor;
- the nature of the role;
- the challenges and/or obstacles of undertaking the role;
- the 'place' of mid-day supervisors with communities; and
- relationships, subdivided into:
    - relationships with pupils;
    - relationships with other staff; and
    - relationships between mid-day supervisors.

Once this process of coding was complete, I created new documents to organise the data into these themes. At this point, I became aware that data relating to the challenges and obstacles of the role almost always related to relationships, so this theme was disregarded and the data re-distributed to the appropriate subcategory within the 'relationships' theme. As a result, this selective coding process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) allowed me to identify information relating to my different research questions and reconstruct this in such a way that I was able to organise and group data that were most relevant to my study (Saldana, 2016).

However, despite these commonalities in terms of themes, each school had its distinctive 'feel' and as such, I felt that the use of written portraiture as a method for presenting findings enabled me to capture this. The themes identified through coding were used to generate a structure for the written portraits, providing subheadings for each school portrait and ensuring a tight focus on presenting findings that focused on the research questions of the study. Some closely-linked themes were combined into the same subheading, for example the information about mid-day supervisors and their motivation to undertake the role, to give five subheadings that could be used to present the findings from each school:

- The mid-day supervisors;
- The Role;
- Relationships with Staff;
- Relationships with Children; and
- Community

An example of coded data, including field notes and an interview transcript, can be found in Appendix 7.

3.8: Written Portraiture

The use of written portraiture as a means of presenting findings was used by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) in her work exploring the characteristics and culture of six American schools. Lawrence-Lightfoot was able to portray "how the inhabitants created the school's culture and how they are shaped by it" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983: 6). This resonated with the aim of my research, to explore the role of the mid-day supervisors within the context of the school lunchtime. Written portraiture allowed me to articulate the daily experiences of life for mid-day supervisors that "conveyed pictures of them" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983:9) vividly, allowing a deeper exploration and explanation of their role and place within schools. Similarly, written portraiture provided the opportunity to capture and then articulate insiders' views and perspectives (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983: 14), which again aligned with the ethnographic aim of this research to explore the 'lived experiences' of mid-day supervisors.

Lawrence-Lightfoot also highlighted the capacity of written portraiture to provide a way of presenting "phenomena about people and places from the 'inside out'" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983: 7), very much reflecting my participatory role within the research process. Written portraits rely on both observations of the context and people who are the focus of the research and also the "voices of the storytellers" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005: 12) to provide an account that accurately portrays the social environment and its occupants who are under scrutiny. As I have already noted, these elements were prominent in my field notes and as such, when considered alongside the interviews with mid-day supervisors, written portraiture provided the opportunity to analyse the data I had collected and maintain this focus. Within the written portraits, I was able to bring the voices of the mid-day supervisors to the fore whilst also including my own observations and experiences.

Whilst it is argued that the use of written portraiture is appropriate for this study, there are also potential limitations of this approach that should be acknowledged. Firstly, as the portrait-writer, my own presence is felt heavily in the written portraits not only in terms of portraying my own experience, but in the decisions I made as to the information from my

field notes and interviews I used to compose these. Inevitably, in each portrait some data was not included and this gives rise to the argument that the level of subjectivity present within written portraiture allows the writer the "uncontested right to situate, center, label, and fix in the tinctured hues of verbal descriptive prose what is professed to be 'real'" (English, 2000: 21). However, researcher influence is unavoidable at the point of data collection, presenting findings and analysing data (Coe et al, 2017), but this should not preclude the use of portraiture when it provides an analytical tool in fitting with the purpose of the research.

Unlike Lawrence-Lightfoot, my data was not collected with the intention that this would be developed into written portraiture. As such, the written portraits are rather more structured than suggested by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) in terms of their composition, as they follow themes identified across all three research sites prior to being written, rather than standing in isolation. The written portraits therefore reflect the data that was generated in each school through the methods outlined, highlighting key issues and significant incidents that related to the research questions that

By doing this, the role and place of the mid-day supervisor, rather than the context of this within each individual school, could be somewhat generalised and also considered using theoretical frameworks.

3.9: Ethical Considerations

According to Troman (1996), the evolving nature of ethnographic approaches mean that it is difficult to provide a clear outline as to what exactly the study will involve or focus upon, leaving 'gatekeepers' such as head teachers uncertain as to the aim and scope of the research and therefore hesitant to allow access (Walford, 2008). It was therefore essential to build a trusting relationship with the head teacher of the school where this research was undertaken to allow and maintain access to the research site. This was particularly the case as my full participation in the role of a member of school staff had the potential to alter the dynamics of staff relationships and impact upon the daily life of the school and its pupils. Once access was granted by the head teacher, it was then important to build relationships with the mid-day supervisors themselves, who as the prospective participants in the research, very much determined the success of the research within each school.

Ethical issues were considered at every stage of this project as "at every phase of ethnographic research there is an ethical backdrop" (Madden, 2010: 33). However, often there were tensions between some of the main ethical tenets of social research and undertaking participatory ethnography (Pole & Morrison, 2003).

The issue of gaining the 'informed consent' of participants involved was one such conflict. Due to the unfolding and changing nature of ethnographic approaches to data collection, at the point of negotiating access the detail of what might be involved and the focus of the study was still somewhat unknown. Therefore, it was difficult to be certain that I had "solicited consent to the research that was 'informed' in the sense of being predictable and explicable before the research itself is carried out" (Atkinson, 2009: 21). For this reason, it was important for me to consider the issue of consent not as a 'one-off' agreement at the beginning of the research, but as an ongoing issue as the project developed. For example, if a mid-day supervisor told me something that I felt might be sensitive or personal, I always verbally confirmed that they were willing for me to make a note of this in my fieldnotes. Further to this, there is the question of how much detail participants should know about the focus of the research. Hammersey & Atkinson (2007) suggest that there are valid reasons why participants may only be provided with limited information, as divulging too much may affect the behaviour of the participants in ways that will invalidate any conclusions drawn from the research. For example, informing the mid-day supervisors involved in my research when I was specifically observing their interactions may have altered their natural behaviour as they interacted with pupils. Again, however, if I observed a sensitive or emotional incident I would always verbally confirm with the participant that they were willing for me to record this in my field notes.

There were also tensions between an ethnographic approach to data collection and the principle that the participants retained the 'right to withdraw' from the research at any point. Most ethnographic projects involve a significant number of participants – in the case of my research a number of mid-day supervisors at three separate schools. This creates a complex issue, as if one member of this group withdrew consent, the research on that site could be brought to a complete halt. However, Atkinson (2009) differentiates the nature of 'participation' and 'participants' and states that the right for an individual to withdraw from a research project is made on the assumption that they are an individual participant rather

than a member of a collectivity. In this case, although participants may have withdrawn from individual activities such as interviews and requested that notes were not made about them, withdrawal from the site where research was taking place was impractical and impossible. This principle was not tested during my research, however, as none of the mid-day supervisors withdrew their consent to participate.

Ethical approval for my research was sought in January 2018 and approved by the university Ethics Committee on 27th February 2018. Communication with the schools involved in the research began in March 2018 and agreement for the research to take place was in place by the end of April 2018. Data collection occurred at Kirkley Road in May 2018, Brecks Drive in June 2018 and Gleneagles Park in July 2018.

3.10: Summary of the Methodology

During the data collection period, my aim was to build trusting relationships with the mid-day supervisors at each school, ensuring that I positioned myself as someone who had a genuine interest in their work and was keen to listen to what they had to tell me about this. By sharing in the work of the mid-day supervisors, I built trust and openness with them that other approaches might not have allowed, enabling me to collect data that may otherwise have remained unexposed. I was then able to use the data generated through my conversations, observations and interviews with the mid-day supervisors, alongside my own experience of undertaking the role, to create a written portrait focused on the role and place of the mid-day supervisors in each school.

Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1: Introduction to the Findings

This section provides written portraits of school lunchtimes at Kirkley Road Primary School, Brecks Drive Primary School and Gleneagles Park Primary School. These are structured using the themes identified from field notes written during my time being fully-participant as a mid-day supervisor at each school and interviews with some of the mid-day supervisors I worked alongside. Each written portrait therefore follows the same structure of subheadings:

- The Mid-Day Supervisors;
- The Role;
- Relationships with other staff;
- Relationships with children;
- Community.

The individual mid-day supervisors at each school are referred to using pseudonyms throughout the written portraits.

4.2: School Portrait – Kirkley Road Primary School

4.2.1: School Context

Kirkley Road Primary School was located on a suburban estate, comprising of mostly social housing. The vast majority of the pupils lived within the school's catchment area and were from a white British background. The school had approximately 300 pupils on roll. There were very few pupils who spoke English as an additional language and a high proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals.

4.2.2: The Mid-Day Supervisors

There were twelve mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road Primary School. Angela, Beryl, Christine, Denise, Elaine and Fiona worked in the foundation and key stage one team. Gloria, Helen, Iris, Janet, Kelly and Lucy worked in the key stage two team. All the mid-day supervisors consented to being involved in the research. Denise, Fiona and Iris were the interview participants.

All the mid-day supervisors either had children who still attended the school, or who previously attended the school and had now moved to secondary education. They all began working as a mid-day supervisor when their child was at the school, in most cases when their child was in the foundation stage or key stage one. Denise, Fiona and Iris all told me that having children at the school was one of the reasons they became a mid-day supervisor. Denise and Fiona told me that the job appealed to them as it allowed them to drop and collect their own children at school and they were not required to work at weekends or during school holidays. Kelly, Gloria, Janet, Angela and Helen also talked about how the job works around caring for their own children. During my last week at the school, Janet left the role. She told me she was leaving because her children were now old enough to walk to and from school, so she could accept another job that required her to be there at 9.00am and/or 3.30pm and her children could care for themselves.

Denise, Fiona and Iris told me that they had deliberately chosen to be a mid-day supervisor at their child's school because it gave them the opportunity to interact with their own child during the day. Fiona and Iris spoke about the *empty nest* when their children began attending school and how difficult this was for them. Becoming a mid-day supervisor

enabled them to have some contact with their own child during the day. This was echoed by Lucy, who said she would probably carry on doing the job if her children were still at the school. Denise and Fiona both stated that the job appealed to them as a reason to *get out of the house* and Iris said she viewed the job as *a good one to do to get back in to the working world* after a number of years caring full-time for her young children. None of the mid-day supervisors mentioned a financial motivation, and indeed Denise and Fiona were keen to point out that they did not need the money they earned and this was not a reason they started or continued to do the job.

Denise and Fiona told me that they initially saw the mid-day supervisor vacancy advertised on school communications to parents, such as newsletters or posters in school. Iris told me that she was approached directly by the head teacher who asked if she would be interested in the job. Similarly, Janet and Beryl had been approached directly by the previous senior mid-day supervisor and asked if they would consider taking the job. None of the mid-day supervisors were required to complete a formal application form. Fiona told me all she did before she was offered the job was *just have a walk around school and a chat with the senior mid-day supervisor*. Lucy, the most recently appointed mid-day supervisor, told me that she had done a two-day 'trial' (without pay) that she felt was like an interview. The school had told her this was so she could decide whether or not she wanted the job. However, she told me it *felt like it was the other way round.*

None of the mid-day supervisors had undertaken the role previously in other schools. Much as I did during my time there, they learnt what to do by observing the established mid-day supervisors and copying them. There was no 'induction' or training given to them as new mid-day supervisors. They were, as Gloria put it, *pushed in at the deep* end and had to *learn on the job*. Lucy did tell me that she *shadowed* another mid-day supervisor for a day before being required to do things independently.

4.2.3: The Role

The working hours of the two teams were slightly different. The key stage one team would arrive in school at approximately 11:15am and leave at 1:15pm. The key stage two team would arrive in school at approximately 11:45am and leave at 1:45pm. On my first day, Beryl told me that this was because the school hall was not large enough for all children to

use at the same time, so the school lunchtimes were staggered. The foundation stage lunchtime began at 11:45am and ended at 1:00pm. Key stage one lunchtime began at 12:00noon and ended at 1:15pm. Lunchtime for pupils in key stage two began at 12:15pm and ended at 1:30pm.

On my fifth day in the school, Angela told me that the mid-day supervisors were only paid for the time they actually supervised the children. For the key stage one mid-day supervisors, this meant they were unpaid between the time they arrived at 11:15am and the time foundation stage lunchtime began at 11:45am. The hot food for lunchtime was delivered by the school's outside catering company at 11:10am, so one mid-day supervisor had to be there at this time to receive the food. Angela told me that if the key stage one mid-day supervisors arrived at 11:45am, the food would still be *piled up on the floor outside* and the eating area would not be set up ready for the children. During the unpaid time prior to 11.45am, the mid-day supervisors prepared for lunchtime by setting out all the tables and organising the food so it could be served to children. Denise told me that this now took longer due to the introduction of universal free school meals as the vast majority of key stage one children now had hot lunches rather than bringing their own 'packed lunch' to school.

Beryl joined the conversation and told me that arriving early to set up the hall *makes life easier*, but Angela quickly pointed out that it would be *impossible* to do the job otherwise as the hall would not be set up and the food would not be prepared at the time it needed to be given to children. I asked if the school were aware of this. Christine told me they were, but that *they don't seem to care* and asked the rhetorical question '*why would they pay us when we are daft enough to do it for free?*'. Angela said she thinks the school *take it for granted* that they will work for no pay during this time. She also pointed out that this is also the case for the key stage two team, who needed to arrive before the start of the key stage two children's lunchtime to wash the plates and cutlery that had been used by the key stage one pupils as these were also needed by the key stage two children. Christine (who used to work in the key stage two team) also told me that the mid-day supervisors in the key stage two team were expected to undertake jobs after lunchtime had ended when they were no longer being paid. These included sweeping and mopping the floor in the eating area,

putting away the tables and chairs and packing up the crockery and cutlery ready for it to be collected by the outside catering company.

Within the school, mid-day supervisors worked in two main areas – the eating area (the school hall) and the playing area (the school playground/field). On one day during my time at the school, the mid-day supervisors worked in classrooms as the children were inside due to rain.

When I asked mid-day supervisors about what their job involved, they often spoke about *setting out the hall, clearing away plates, getting out and putting away play equipment, serving food, cleaning plates, tidying up and making sure children were in the right place at the right time.* Each mid-day supervisor had duties that they would undertake each day. When I asked how it was decided who did what job, the mid-day supervisors told me this *had just fallen naturally*. For example, Caroline always put the larger water jugs on the table and everyone knew this was her job. This included Caroline. On my second day at the school (before I knew of Caroline's routine) I started to put the jugs on the table and was told by the other mid-day supervisors that Caroline would just swap them around anyway as she always put one of each colour jug on each table. When Caroline emerged from the kitchen she immediately moved the jugs to where she wanted them and told everyone to *never touch my jugs again*.

The mid-day supervisors at the school often told me about the pastoral element that they felt was important to the job. Gloria told me how she had built a relationship with a child in year 6 who came to her to talk about problems at home. Denise told me that that *if a child needs a shoulder to cry on or an ear to bend that is what we are there for*. Angela talked about her job on the playground being to *make sure that children were okay and that they had friends to play with*. Christine said that her main job was to make sure that the children are *happy at lunchtime*. Iris told me that she felt like she had *gotten to know the children socially* and that some would talk to her about issues they were facing in school or at home. She said that this sometimes led to children making disclosures to her which she then passed on to those responsible for safeguarding. Elaine commented that as lunchtime is a social time of the school day, she got to know children *on their terms* as she had the opportunity to talk to them about their interests and *have some fun* with them.

I also discovered the knowledge that mid-day supervisors had in terms of knowing individual children. I initially noticed this on my first day at the school. Before lunchtime, the key stage one mid-day supervisors were given a list of the children and the meal they had ordered that day. Many of the children had ordered a jacket potato with cheese and beans. As the mid-day supervisors were putting the food onto the plates, I noticed that this meal was being prepared in different ways. Some were missing cheese. Some were missing beans. Some were missing both. One was missing the potato. The food was also being presented in different ways, with beans sometimes poured on top of the potato and sometimes put at the side. I realised that the mid-day supervisors were preparing the food on an individual basis for each child. They knew who did not like beans, who did not like cheese, who preferred beans on top of their potato and who preferred them at the side. This happened throughout my time at the school with the different hot meals that were given to the children.

The mid-day supervisors' knowledge of the children did not stop at food preferences. Often, mid-day supervisors would tell me that they were *keeping an eye* on certain children. The phrase 'keeping an eye' was used regularly, both in my conversations with the mid-day supervisors and in conversations between the mid-day supervisors themselves. Often, the reason for 'keeping an eye' on a child was known to the mid-day supervisors because of their presence in the local community and their relationships with the wider parental community. For example, one day on the outdoor playing area Elaine told me that she was *keeping an eye* on a group of children to make sure there was no conflict between them because there had been a falling out between their families at a barbecue the night before. Another time, Helen told me she was *keeping an eye* on a child because their cat had died the day before. The child's mother had messaged Helen to let her know and ask her to check the child was okay. Kelly told me that many parents informed mid-day supervisors of issues that they did not feel were *important enough to bother the school with, but wanted someone to know*. She gave the example of a parent who sent her a text message to say her child had been feeling unwell before school. The parent asked Kelly to check the child was not feeling ill and let her know how her child was feeling after lunchtime. Fiona recounted a time when a parent disclosed to her that a child had been attacked by their older cousin the

night before, but the parent asked Fiona not to tell the school until the police had been informed.

The mid-day supervisors also talked about how being from the local community meant that they knew about the relationships and issues that arose within and between the families of the pupils. One day, Christine told me that she was *keeping an eye* on a child as she knew the child's brother had been arrested the previous night. The police had raided the house in the early hours of the morning and Christine knew because she lived on the same street. One Monday, Gloria told me she was *keeping an eye* on a child as her parents had separated over the weekend. Kelly told me that as a parent, she has many other parents as 'friends' on Facebook and socialised with other parents. This meant she knew *what sort of stuff is going on at home*. Kelly told me this could be useful because it gave her something to talk to the children about, but that it was *difficult* when she found out information about a child's home-life that upset her. Kelly said that she used to pass on concerns about children to the teachers. She stopped doing this because the teachers did not seem interested and so she only began to pass on issues she thought were important.

4.2.4: Relationships with other staff

When I arrived at the school on my first day, I noticed a display with photographs of the school's staff in the main entrance. This was presented as a hierarchy, with the head teacher at the top of the 'pyramid', followed by the deputy head teacher on the next row, teachers, teaching assistants and so on. The mid-day supervisors were at the bottom of the pyramid, just above floor level. This had been noticed by the mid-day supervisors. During conversations within my first week at the school, independently and without prompting, five of the mid-day supervisors commented on how the display made them feel. The words used were *undervalued, unimportant, worthless and rubbish.*

On my first day at the school, I was walking through the building with one of the other mid-day supervisors. As we walked past one of the classrooms, the teacher opened the door and stopped us. The teacher spoke abruptly to the mid-day supervisor, asking her if she knew where a child's hat was as he had returned from lunchtime without it. When the mid-day supervisor told the teacher that she had not seen the child's hat, the teacher sighed and said she would have to get the child to look for it later. The mid-day supervisor went

immediately to the hall and told the other mid-day supervisors about the conversation. She was clearly upset and said to the other mid-day supervisors that she was *annoyed* by the way the teacher had spoken to her. Other mid-day supervisors told me about similar incidents they had experienced. Lucy recalled being *told off* by one of the teachers when a child got food on his clothes at lunchtime. Janet says she had a similar *telling off* when a child got muddy shoes at lunchtime. Gloria shared an incident when she was *shouted at* by a teacher when she allowed a child to go into the classroom to get his coat (this was not usually allowed, but it had started to rain outside and Gloria decided to make an exception to the rule as she trusted the child).

Towards the end of lunchtime on my fourth day at the school, a fight occurred between two boys. I was nearby, but did not see the start of the fight as I was dealing with an injured child. When I explained this to the teacher who arrived to take the children into school for the afternoon, she raised her voice at me and shouted *"how am I meant to deal with this if nobody saw what happened?"*. She turned and walked away before I had the chance to respond. The next day, the same teacher had instructed the senior mid-day supervisor not to allow me to supervise the outside area as she felt I was to blame for not witnessing the fight. The other mid-day supervisors told me this was often the reaction to incidents that happen at lunchtime; *blame the closest mid-day supervisor, or just the mid-day supervisors in general.*

Mid-day supervisors also commented on how they often felt *undermined* by other staff in school. Denise commented that she *knew for a fact that the ladies and myself do feel undermined*. As she made this comment, a teacher approached us (aware the interview was taking place) and asked to speak to her. Towards the beginning of lunchtime, Denise had sanctioned a child and told him that he was not to play football for the rest of lunchtime due to an incident that had occurred. However, the teacher had decided that as the boy now seemed bored, she had given him permission to play football again. As soon as the teacher left, the mid-day supervisor highlighted this as an example of what she meant. She told me it made her *cross that the teacher had undermined her decision*, but said this *happened regularly* and *at least the teacher had told her she had undermined her*, which was not always the case.

Other similar incidents occurred during my time at the school. On one occasion, when children were spending lunchtime inside due to rain, Helen told a class of children that they were not allowed the school laptops (as is usually the case) during lunchtime. When the class teacher was asked by a child, he allowed these to be used even though he had heard Helen tell the children otherwise. Later on, a senior teacher arrived and told all the children to put the laptops away as they were not allowed to be used during lunchtime! The mid-day supervisor was then *told off* by the teacher in front of the children for allowing them to use the laptops. She left the room in tears. I took her place in the classroom and when she returned, many of the children asked if she was okay. One boy told her not to worry because they had all been told off by the same teacher that morning.

On another occasion (the day after the previous incident) the children were able to play outdoors again. As a group, the mid-day supervisors thought that the school field was still too wet for the children to play on, so decided to keep the gate to the field closed and only use the playground that lunchtime. However, when a teacher came onto the playground, she decided (without any consultation with the mid-day supervisors) that the children could play on the field and opened the gate. Elaine told me that this happened *all the time* and pointed out that it would not be the teacher who would have to deal with the children getting muddy as she had *gone inside, probably for a cup of tea.*

Another day, Beryl pointed out a group of children being supervised by a teaching assistant (TA) in an area that was 'out of bounds' at lunchtime. When Gloria came outside, she noticed this and went to talk to the TA. Even as a distant observer, I could tell the conversation was animated. Gloria came to talk to me and told me that she had *had enough*. The TA had refused to move the children away from the 'out of bounds' area. Gloria pointed out that the TA had undermined all the mid-day supervisors who told children that this area was not to be used. She commented that this would cause problems the following day as the children would expect to be allowed to play there again. Gloria said that incidents like this made her feel *like the bottom rung of the ladder.*

On another day towards the end of my time in school, as soon as I arrived Iris told me that all the mid-day supervisors were *pissed off*. The previous day, there had been numerous incidents involving football. The mid-day supervisors had decided that there would be no footballs the following day. Iris had discussed this with a senior teacher, who had agreed.

The key stage two mid-day supervisors then went into the key stage two classes and told the children this would be the case. When Iris had arrived at work the following day, she was met by the senior teacher. He told Iris that he thought taking the balls away was a bad idea and that the children should be allowed 'one last chance'. Iris responded that she felt they should *stick to* the decision that had been made. The teacher then informed Iris that that she would have to allow balls outside as during the morning assembly, he had already told the children that they would have 'one last chance' and that balls could be used at lunchtime. This left all the mid-day supervisors, and particularly Iris, feeling *undermined and frustrated*. Or, as she put it, *really pissed off*!

Aside from specific incidents, mid-day supervisors also commented that they felt other staff did not value them. Denise said she thought other staff *turned their noses up* at mid-day supervisors. Fiona commented that other staff *walk past as if we aren't there*. Angela said the other staff do not want to talk to her because she is *just a dinner lady*. I noticed this a number of times too – other staff avoided interaction with me as we passed in corridors and doorways. Even when I smiled or greeted them, I was usually ignored.

4.2.5: Relationships with children

Whilst relationships with staff were generally strained, mid-day supervisors believed they had good relationships with pupils at the school. The vast majority of interactions between mid-day supervisors and children that I observed appeared to be positive. On one day, I deliberately positioned myself so I could hear the interactions between the children and the mid-day supervisors who were serving the food to the key stage two children. Over the course of thirty minutes, every interaction was positive. Similarly, when I observed interactions between mid-day supervisors outside, these seemed equally positive.

My observations were supported by comments from mid-day supervisors. Fiona told me that the children are *mostly well behaved*. Christine said that she *gets on well* with most children. Lucy told me that most children do not really interact with the mid-day supervisors as they use the time to play with friends, but that others *talk to her every day*. She suggested that these might be the children who do not get much adult attention at home. Many mid-day supervisors commented on *a few children who caused problems* and who could be *argumentative*, but always pointed out that these children behaved in the

same way towards all other staff too. This reflected my own experience; on my sixth day at the school I noted in my field diary that children were generally polite, respectful and do what they are asked to do.

At some point during my time at the school, most mid-day supervisors told me about positive relationships they had built with individual children. Iris told me that there were some children who would come and speak to her on a daily basis, and told me that these were children who *didn't get much attention at home*. Beryl told me that because she usually worked with the younger children, by the time they were in upper key stage two she had known them for a long time and this had allowed her to build strong relationships with some of the older children. Denise commented that she had known many of the children for longer than the teaching staff at the school, as *most teachers didn't stay at the school long enough to get to know the kids as they grew up and changed.* Helen described how she was *closer* to some children than others because they *enjoyed adult attention* and that she felt like a *positive influence* on these children.

It was also the case that many relationships between mid-day supervisors and pupils either began outside the school context, or continued outside the school context. For example, Christine told me that she knew many of the children before they began school, either through family and friendships or through a local toddler group she helped to run in the community. Although she had only recently started the job, Lucy told me that she already knew many of the children in the same year-groups as her own children as she had taken them to *countless birthday parties*. Janet said she knew many children out of school as her own children played in the same football team. Angela described the local community as *close-knit* and one where *everyone knows everyone else*, so she often knew the children through her own friendships. Gloria told me she had a number of nieces and nephews at the school, and this was the case for many of the mid-day supervisors. Indeed many children copied her relatives and called her Aunty Gloria, even though they were not related. I also observed that some pupils were on first-name terms with some mid-day supervisors. This was never raised as an issue by the mid-day supervisors themselves and I did not observe mid-day supervisors insisting on the use of their surname.

All the mid-day supervisors who spoke to me about their relationships with children they knew out of school commented on how they felt this was a positive thing. Gloria told me

that she thought it gave her *common ground* with individual pupils. Janet said that she felt knowing a child out of school meant she knew the child better. She gave an example of a child in year 5 who she described as *difficult*, but felt responded well to her because of a positive relationship they had through the local football club.

Elaine told me that she felt the children at the school developed positive relationships with the mid-day supervisors because *they see us as 'like them'.* When I asked Elaine what she meant by this, she said that the children came from the *same rough estate* as the mid-day supervisors, so related to them *in a different way to the other staff who drive posh cars, wear posh clothes, speak in a posh voice and don't live on the estate.* She told me that she felt the mid-day supervisors had *more in common* with the pupils and therefore were able to build positive relationships.

4.2.6: Community

On my first day at the school, I was shown the 'signing in/out' book that I needed to complete when I arrived and left the school. I noticed that the all the mid-day supervisors signed in using the 'visitors' book, rather than the 'staff' book that was also on the desk at the school reception. I was taken through to the hall where the other mid-day supervisors were preparing for lunchtime. The senior mid-day supervisor gave me a tabard and apologised that it was not new. It was one of her old ones that she had brought for me to wear, but made it clear this was a choice. I noticed that some of the mid-day supervisors wore tabards and some did not. I was told that the school did not provide these, but Angela told me some of the mid-day supervisors had bought their own and preferred to wear them as it meant they did not *get their other clothes covered in food*.

On my first day at the school, one of the mid-day supervisors gave me a tour of the school buildings and the outside area. During this time we walked past many other school staff, but only one greeted us. As this was my first day at the school, I made no comment to the mid-day supervisor. However, at the end of the tour she apologised that the staff had ignored us and told me that this was how the mid-day supervisors were treated. At the end of my first day, whilst I felt welcomed by the mid-day supervisors themselves, this was not the case with the other school staff.

When I spoke to the mid-day supervisors, none of them told me that they felt like part of the school community. Kelly told me that she *barely spoke* to any other staff apart from other mid-day supervisors. Christine said that other staff *weren't interested* in anything to do with the mid-day supervisors and that she was usually ignored by them. Fiona commented that because the working time of the mid-day supervisors was during the break time of other staff, this meant they were like *relief workers*.

When I asked Denise whether she felt like part of the school, she replied *no – not at all*. She told me that the mid-day supervisors are not involved in anything apart from lunchtimes, such as staff meetings or school events. Elaine told me that she did not feel like part of the school community as she was generally ignored, and highlighted the fact that the mid-day supervisors were not allowed into the staff room as evidence that they were not considered to be *proper members of staff*. Fiona told me that she did not feel part of the school community as information was often withheld from them. She told me that this usually related to information about pupils that she felt it was important for her to know, such as a pupil who had suffered a bereavement or who has an allergy. Fiona went on to say that she did not feel part of the school community as other staff *walk past me like I'm not there and don't even speak to me at all*.

Beryl told me that whilst she didn't feel like part of the school, she thought the mid-day supervisors were *a community of our own*. Iris said that she felt like *part of a team* alongside the other mid-day supervisors, and this sentiment was echoed by many of the mid-day supervisors during my time at the school. I also recorded in my field notes that the mid-day supervisors seemed to have positive relationships with each other. Helen told me that whilst they were not invited to staff events, they organised the own party at Christmas, including a Secret Santa just within the group of mid-day supervisors.

Helen told me that whilst she did not feel part of the school community, being a mid-day supervisor made her feel *more of a part of the local community*. She said that the job was *seen as important* by other parents who lived on the estate and that she was considered to be trustworthy and *honest* because she worked at the school. Angela made similar comments about how other parents saw her as *successful* because she had been offered the job as a mid-day supervisor. Christine said that other parents would often ask her how they could become a mid-day supervisor themselves. Iris told me that she felt that the mid-day

supervisors were *an important link* between the local community and the school, as they are the *only adults from the estate who work there*.

4.2.7: Summary

During my time at Kirkley Road, the role of the mid-day supervisors was both procedural and pastoral. The mid-day supervisors recognised the value of their pastoral role, but did not perceive that this was valued by the rest of the school community. Relationships between staff and mid-day supervisors were negative and mid-day supervisors often felt undermined, undervalued and underappreciated. Relationships between pupils and mid-day supervisors were generally positive and the mid-day supervisors believed these were often influenced by out-of-school relationships and a sense of belonging to the same local community. The mid-day supervisors did not feel like part of the school community and this seemed to stem from scarce and negative interactions with other staff and their perceived status within the school environment. They did, however, feel a sense of belonging to a *community of their own* and also that their role was valued within the local community.

4.3: School Portrait – Brecks Drive Primary School

4.3.1: School Context

Brecks Primary School was located in a rural location. None of the pupils lived within the school's catchment area and were from a white British background. The school had approximately 70 pupils on roll. There were an average number of pupils who spoke English as an additional language and a low proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals.

4.3.2: The mid-day supervisors

There were three mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive Primary School; Mary, Naomi and Olivia. All three consented to being involved in the research. Mary and Olivia were the interview participants. Naomi made it clear during my initial meeting that she would be willing to take part in the participatory phase of the research (and indeed was the most forthcoming of the three mid-day supervisors during my time working alongside them), however she did not feel comfortable being interviewed so declined to be involved in this.

None of the mid-day supervisors had children at the school. Mary's son had been a pupil but had moved to another primary school. Olivia had previously been a mid-day supervisor at a different school where her son was a pupil, but told me that she had found it difficult to be a member of staff and a parent so moved to Brecks Drive when the vacancy arose. Naomi had two children who attended a different primary school close to Brecks Drive.

Mary was the longest-serving mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive. She had worked at the school for almost twelve years and described it as *lovely*, *friendly* and *close-knit*. When her own child began school, Mary already worked at Brecks Drive and chose for him to attend there. However, Mary told me that her son *struggled to settle* and as a result she decided to move him to a different school. She was keen to make it clear that this was not a reflection on the school, but that it just *didn't fit* her child. Mary was a mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive before she had children of her own and told me that the job appealed to her as she always wanted to work with children but did not have the qualifications to *do anything else* in schools. She actively looked for a job that involved working with children and had also worked at a different school from 7:30am to 9:00am and 3:30pm to 6:00pm as a member of

staff providing before and after-school childcare, in addition to her mid-day supervisor job at Brecks Drive. When her son was born she gave up her other job to care for him, but after maternity leave continued to be a mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive. Mary told me this was possible because her husband worked shifts so he could often be at home over lunchtime. Her parents were also nearby so could provide childcare if this was necessary. Mary told me that the mid-day supervisor job allowed her to work with children but also allowed her to take and collect her own child from school.

Naomi had worked as a mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive for almost five years. Prior to working at Brecks Drive, she had been a mid-day supervisor at another school for a year. At her previous school, she had also been a parent and had *just been asked by the head teacher* if she wanted to be a mid-day supervisor. She accepted because it seemed like a *good way to meet new people and get out of the house every day*. She commented that the job allowed her to take her own child to school at the start of the day and collect him at the end of the school day, and that she would not require childcare in school holidays and on INSET days. Naomi told me that she *really enjoyed and loved* the job at her previous school, but found it hard to have her own child at the school. She said that she felt her own son was spending time with her rather than making friends, so she began to look for the same job at a different school. She saw the mid-day supervisor vacancy at Brecks Drive online and after a successful interview was offered the post. Naomi said that she felt guilty about leaving the school (and head teacher) who had given her the first mid-day supervisor job, but felt it was right to put her son's needs first.

Olivia had worked as a mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive for just over three years. She told me that her mother had been (and still was) a mid-day supervisor at the school she attended as a child. When Olivia's own two children began school, her mother had encouraged her to become a mid-day supervisor to *keep me busy*. She had accompanied her mother to work a few times and enjoyed spending time with children, so she began looking for a mid-day supervisor job close enough so that she could take her own children to school in the morning and collect them in the afternoon. Olivia told me that she did not enjoy having her own mother at her school when she was a child, so she did not want to *do the same* to her own children and apply for a job at the school they attended. She saw the

mid-day supervisor vacancy at Brecks Drive online and was offered the job after a successful interview with the head teacher.

4.3.3: The Role

All three mid-day supervisors began work at 12:00noon. This allowed for fifteen minutes to set up the hall and playground ready for lunchtime. One mid-day supervisor would set out the tables, another would set out the chairs and the other would set out the playground equipment (bats, balls etc). The mid-day supervisors rotated these jobs each week. At 12:15pm the children from all classes entered the hall and sat at tables assigned to their class. The children were always brought into the hall by their class teacher (or occasionally the teaching assistant). The head teacher was also present as the children came into the hall and when all the children were ready, she would lead a prayer before the children began eating.

Children who had brought their own packed lunches all began to eat after the prayer. Those having hot dinners were called up to the front by class and given their food. Many of the children who had hot dinners were in key stage one, and Mary told me that this was a result of universal free school meals for this age group. As children ate, the mid-day supervisors spent their time interacting with children. On my first day, I noticed that Mary tended to interact with the children in key stage one, Naomi would interact with the children in lower key stage two (years 3 and 4) and Olivia would interact with the children in upper key stage two (years 5 and 6).

At approximately 12.30pm, the first of the children began to finish eating. At this point, a mid-day supervisor went outside and children were allowed to leave the hall to play on the playground. As more children finished eating, at approximately 12.45pm another mid-day supervisor would move from the hall to the playground. The remaining mid-day supervisor would stay in the hall until the end of lunchtime at 1:00pm.

On my first day I left the hall with Olivia, who was the first mid-day supervisor to go outside. She told me that the mid-day supervisors had developed a system of procedures over lunchtime to *make sure all the jobs get done*. The mid-day supervisor who set out the outdoor equipment was always the one to leave the hall first. The mid-day supervisor who had set out the tables would be the second to leave the hall. The mid-day supervisor who

had set out the chairs would be the one who remained in the hall to *chivvy along the slow eaters*, clean the tables and stack the chairs. As the mid-day supervisors rotated the 'setting up' jobs on a weekly basis, this meant that they all *shared the boring job*s equally. When I asked her what she meant by the boring jobs, Olivia described the procedural elements of the role such as stacking chairs, wiping tables, sweeping the floor and emptying the bins. I took the opportunity and asked her what the more enjoyable parts of the job were. Olivia told me that *spending time with the children and helping them* was the reason she became a mid-day supervisor and was still the reason she enjoyed the job.

At 1.00pm, one of the mid-day supervisors blew a whistle on the playground and the children lined up in their classes. Once all the children were lined up, a mid-day supervisor would lead each class back to their classroom to begin the afternoon. At Brecks Drive, the school had introduced a fifteen-minute session from 1:00pm to 1:15pm known as ERIC (Everybody Reading in Class). This included the mid-day supervisors, who would stay in class to listen to children read individually.

At Brecks Drive, each mid-day supervisor was assigned to a particular class as the 'main' mid-day supervisor. Mary was assigned to the Reception and key stage one class, Naomi to the lower key stage two class and Olivia to the upper key stage two class. Naomi told me that this made organisation easier, for example making sure accident forms were given to the correct teacher, children's clothing was returned to the correct cloakroom and that children themselves were *accounted for* at the end of lunchtime!

All three mid-day supervisors regularly talked about the pastoral element of the role. Naomi described this as the *main par*t of being a mid-day supervisor. Olivia told me that she always tried to *get the boring jobs out of the way* so she had time to spend with children before the end of lunchtime. Mary said that she thought that her job was to be *someone who the children could turn to for help and support*.

During my time at the school, all the mid-day supervisors talked to me about pastoral support they offered to children. Mary spoke at length about helping the younger children to make friends when they started the school in Reception. She talked about how she led games in the first few weeks of the year so that the children learned *how to play with each other*. She told me about the children who struggled to settle into the school and how she

helped them by being *a friendly face* and *helping them with the little things like zipping up their coat and cutting up tricky food*. Mary told me that as the children got older, she encouraged them to be more independent and *do things themselves that I did for them when they first started*.

Olivia spoke about the pastoral role regularly in terms of supporting children in an emotional sense. She told me that the older children in the school would often approach her if they were feeling *sad or a bit down or worried about something*. Olivia told me that this was especially the case for children in year six, who were worried about SATs or about moving to secondary school. Olivia also spoke about supporting children with friendships and how this was important, particularly when *the hormones are kicking in*. She told me that she sometimes felt like a *peace maker*, rebuilding children's friendships after an argument.

All three mid-day supervisors also talked about individual children who needed pastoral support. Mary told me that there were some children she would *look out for* on the playground and *keep an eye on* to check they had friends to play with. She also spoke about individual children who were *going through stuff* at home such as parental separation or bereavement. She was keen to point out that although she *kept an eye* on the children she knew were in these circumstances, it was just as important to support children who might be upset about what adults consider to be less serious issues such as the death of a pet or a parent who has gone away for a couple of days. She told me that some things *might seem small to adults, but are really big to children*.

Naomi also spoke about the children she specifically *kept an eye on* during lunchtimes. Like Mary, she told me that these were often children *going through a tough time at home* or children who struggled with maintaining friendships. She specifically told me about a boy who had recently been taken away by his father without the mother's consent, and how this had impacted on the boy as he was no longer able to see his father. Naomi also told me about a child who had been the victim of abuse. When I asked her how she supported the child, Naomi told me that the child had become withdrawn after *the incident* and that she was trying to encourage the child to integrate with the other children again by leading games and putting out equipment that she knew the child enjoyed playing with.

All the mid-day supervisors talked about the role that they thought lunchtimes had in a child's school day. Mary told me that she thought lunchtime was *a chance for children to make friends* and that it *should be a time for fun and games*. Naomi spoke about lunchtime being the chance for children to *unwind and play, like children should.* Olivia told me that she saw lunchtime as *the children's time to choose what to do and have some fun, away from the hard work of the classroom*. None of the mid-day supervisors mentioned the eating of lunch itself.

4.3.4: Relationships with Staff.

Mid-day supervisors often spoke of their positive relationship with the head teacher. Olivia commented that she was *always supportive* and that she *valued what we do for the school*. She commented that she knew the head teacher was *always behind us* in terms of support. Mary told me that the head teacher was *approachable* and *cared about everyone*. Naomi described the head teacher as *caring* and *lovely*.

The mid-day supervisors' views of the head teacher were reflected in my experience at the school. Every day, the head teacher would ensure that she spoke to me either before lunchtime when I arrived at school or in the dining hall immediately before the prayer. I noticed that she would greet the other mid-day supervisors individually every day too, either during the preparation for lunchtime between 12:00noon and 12:15pm or in the hall just before or just after the school prayer. Similarly, the head teacher would often thank me at the end of lunchtime as I left the school and check that everything was okay. I observed that she did the same to other mid-day supervisors when they left after lunchtime.

On the Tuesday of my second week in the school, the weather was drizzly and it had rained heavily during the day. When I arrived at school, Naomi and Mary were in the staffroom discussing the weather and if the children should be allowed outside onto the playground or have 'indoor playtime' in the classrooms. We were soon joined by Olivia and we all went outside to the playground. The heavy rain earlier in the day had created a number of puddles on the playing area and it was still raining, though only lightly. We were joined by the head teacher, who asked us to let her know what was decided so she could tell the children in the hall before they began eating. The head teacher left us and went back into school. As a group, we decided that the children would be allowed outside to play, but not

allowed on the field or climbing equipment. We also 'coned off' some of the deeper puddles on the playground so the children did not play in these. As we walked past the head teacher's office, Mary told her what had been decided and the head teacher thanked us for coming in early and taking the time to go outside so a decision could be made.

On the Tuesday of my final week in the school, the children were not able to use the eating area as it was been used for a science day and a 'luminarium' was taking up the entire floor-space. The head teacher made us aware of this on the day before and asked us where we would like the children to eat the following day and let her know. When the hall had been out of use on another occasion, the mid-day supervisors told me that the children who had hot school meals had eaten in classrooms and the children who had packed lunches ate on the field at the back of school. However, this had not worked well as it had been difficult to supervise all the children in two separate areas. With this in mind, it was decided to use a grassed area at the front of school for all children as this was close to the kitchen (so close that the hot meals could be passed out of the kitchen window) and large enough for all the children to eat together. This meant there were no tables for the (mostly younger) children who ate hot meals. At the end of Monday lunchtime, Naomi told the head teacher the plan for all the children to eat outside the following day. The head teacher asked us how we were going to manage the children eating hot meals on the floor and Olivia told her that she had spoken to the school cook, who was going to prepare meals that could be eaten without cutlery (chicken nuggets and chips (minus the beans that were on the menu) followed by shortbread biscuit rather than sponge and custard!). The head teacher thanked us for thinking about this so carefully and told us that she would be happy to support with lunchtime the following day if needed, but that she trusted us to manage everything smoothly.

On my first day at the school, I noticed that when the class teachers led their class of children into the hall, each teacher approached one of the mid-day supervisors and a conversation took place. This happened every day during my time at the school, with the teacher from each class holding a conversation with the mid-day supervisor assigned to their class. Similarly, I observed that a conversation between the mid-day supervisor and the class teacher always occurred when the children went back into the classroom at the end of lunchtime, usually as the children began the ERIC (Everyone Reading in Class) session.

During my time at the school, I spent a week in each class during the ERIC sessions. In every class, the teacher always asked (within ear-shot of the children) how lunchtime had gone. At the end of the ERIC session, the class teacher always thanked myself and the other mid-day supervisor for our time in the classroom. In my field notes, I often commented on how I felt comfortable to pass on messages and talk to the class teachers during my time at the school.

Mid-day supervisors often spoke of their positive relationships with other school staff. They told me that because they are assigned to a specific class of children, they got to know the class teacher well as they spoke every day. Olivia told me that her relationship with the class teacher had always been *good*, but the introduction of the ERIC session meant that she had got to know the class teacher better than in previous years. Olivia told me that she *got on well* with other staff in the school and that she felt like they treated her *on an equal footing*. Mary described the staff as *great* and *supportive* but that they *didn't interfere*.

Prior to every lunchtime, myself and the other mid-day supervisors would often spend a short time in the staff room before setting out the hall and playground. Often, there would be a member of staff present too as this room was used by staff to undertake out-of-class work such as planning and marking. At this time, there would often be a social conversation between the mid-day supervisors and the other staff present, usually not related to the school. During my time at the school, I noted that all three teachers had shown an interest in my life outside school. In return, over three weeks I was included in conversations about the lives of the teachers, such as how their children were doing at school and how they had spent their weekend. Conversations also centred around television (usually Coronation Street, but occasionally Love Island), sport (football World Cup 2018) and houses (many staff seemed to be moving home).

The mid-day supervisors' comments were supported by my own experience in school. My interactions with staff were positive and frequent. Whilst I was not assigned to a specific class as the other mid-day supervisors were, at the beginning of lunchtime teachers would frequently offer a positive greeting as they brought their children into the hall. I observed that this was the case for all teachers and mid-day supervisors. On some days, I noted that conversations between teachers and mid-days supervisors were longer and when I asked what was discussed, this usually related to individual children. At Brecks Drive, a behaviour

system ran through the school day and included yellow and red 'cards' (though no actual cards existed). If children had been given a yellow or red card in the morning, this was communicated to the mid-day supervisors at the start of lunchtime. Similarly, if one of the mid-day supervisors issued a yellow or red 'card', this would be communicated to the class' mid-day supervisor at lunchtime, who would then inform the child's teacher at the end of lunchtime.

4.3.5: Relationships with Children

Relationships between children and mid-day supervisors at the school seemed to be positive. During the fifteen days I spent in school, I often noted the warm relationship that seemed to exist. When children entered the hall at lunchtime, mid-day supervisors would greet the children from their own class (who all entered through different doors). Usually, this would be a short verbal greeting but sometimes mid-day supervisors would make positive comments. For example, one day I observed a mid-day supervisor talking to a pupil about a 'good behaviour sticker' he was wearing. On another occasion, I overheard a mid-day supervisor talking to a pupil about the child's new hairstyle.

Mid-day supervisors told me that they had positive relationships with the pupils. Mary told me that being with the children was her *favourite part of the job* and that she felt the children saw her as *someone who helps them if they need it*. Naomi spoke about how she felt a *bond* with the children in the school, and particularly with the children in the class she was assigned to. She told me that she *enjoyed spending time with the children* and that she thought all the children were *polite and respectful* towards her. She pointed out that there were *a couple of individuals* who were *more difficult* but told me that this was often due to other reasons and *not personal*.

In terms of pupil behaviour, during my time at the school I observed two incidents of behaviour that required intervention by a mid-day supervisor. On the first occasion, two children had a verbal disagreement about the game of football they were playing. This resulted in one of the children picking up the football and running away with it, closely followed by the other. Olivia called both children over to her and spoke to both of them about how the situation could have been resolved differently. As she spoke to them, she returned the football to the other children to continue playing. At the end of the discussion,

Olivia allowed both children to re-join the game. When I spoke to her about how she had decided to respond to this situation, she told me that she felt talking to the children so that they had some time to *calm down* was all that she needed to do. She told me that she would have used the school's behaviour system if this had happened again or the argument had continued, but she was able to monitor this and had no concerns for the rest of lunchtime. She told me that she could have used the school's behaviour system, but that the mid-day supervisors are able to use their *own common sense* when dealing with minor issues.

The second incident of pupil behaviour involved the only conflict I observed between a mid-day supervisor and a child. Lunchtime had ended and the children were lining up to return to classes when there was pushing in the line, causing a child to fall. Naomi saw the incident and told a child to go to the front of the line so that she could walk into class with him. The child initially refused to move, and then went to the back of the line rather than to the front. Naomi followed him to the back of the line and issued a 'yellow card' in line with the school's behaviour policy. She explained to the child that this was because he had not followed instructions and that she would issue a 'red card' if he did not move to the front of the line. This had the desired impact and the child did as requested and moved to the front of the line. I noticed that as Naomi walked the children into class, the boy chose to hold her hand. I spoke to Naomi about this incident before lunchtime the following day. She told me that the child can be *quite stroppy* but that he soon *came around* and was usually *polite and very affectionate*. She told me that she was going to make sure that she spent some time with him that day so that she could *make sure he has a good lunchtime today*.

The positive relationships between mid-day supervisors I observed and was told about by the mid-day supervisors was reflected in my own experience and relationships with the children. On my first day, I was approached by a number of children on the playground. Some children asked if I could help them with something (usually buttons and zips!). One child asked me to play a game of catch with her whilst she waited for her friends to finish eating inside. Another child asked if I would help him to find a particular piece of playground equipment he wanted to play with. I noted that the interaction with pupils was frequent and that children approached me regularly for a variety of different reasons, even though this was my first day at the school. This high level of interaction continued

throughout my time at the school, particularly on the playground. I noted how sometimes children would come and talk to me with no particular purpose other than to have a conversation.

During my time at the school, I noted that I also began to build relationships with particular individual pupils. A child in the lower key stage two class talked to me almost every day on the playground and often asked to read with me during the ERIC sessions I spent in their classroom. Two children in the upper key stage two class also seemed to speak to me frequently, particularly in the dining hall, and again would ask to read with me in ERIC sessions. Olivia also noticed and commented that she was surprised by this, as these were not children who had particularly strong relationships with her or any of the other mid-day supervisors. Olivia suggested that this could be because these children were boys, all of whom had no contact with male adults at home or at school, where there were no male members of staff. She commented that these pupils were very *boyish* and she thought that they enjoyed having a male member of staff to interact with. Naomi made similar comments about the child in lower key stage two, and told me that she thought it was good that he had a *positive male role model* to talk to as there were no male members of staff and the child did not have contact with adult males at home.

All of the mid-day supervisors commented that being involved in ERIC sessions after lunchtime had improved their relationships with children. Mary told me that the time spent in classroom had led to an *extra bond with the children.* Naomi told me that the ERIC sessions had allowed her to *get to know the children better.* She also said that ERIC allowed her to build closer relationships with children as she works with them on an individual basis during this time. Olivia told me that she thought that working in class had *raised her profile* and that the children took her *more seriously* as they saw her in the classroom. During ERIC sessions, the mid-day supervisors would write a comment in the 'reading records' of the children they worked with. Naomi told me that made her feel like *part of the child's learning* and that it showed the school *trusted me to write something that parents would see.*

The head teacher also spoke to me about the introduction of the ERIC sessions. She told me that these were introduced in an effort to improve standards in reading, as this was a concern across the school. Whilst it was too early to say whether this had been successful,

the head teacher told me that she thought children had responded well to having the mid-day supervisors working in the classroom and that it had *raised the status* of the mid-day supervisors across school, with both pupils and staff.

4.3.6: Community

On my first day at Brecks Drive, when I arrived at the school I was given a brand-new tabard that matched the ones worn by the other mid-day supervisors. Olivia told me the head teacher had ordered this so that I did not look different to the other mid-day supervisors and feel like I was the *odd one out*. Mary told me that before the new tabards were introduced all staff wore something that included the school logo, apart from the mid-day supervisors. Mary said that she felt wearing the school tabard, that included the school logo, made her feel *like part of the school community* and that she was *a proper part of the school*. Naomi showed me how to sign in on the electronic device at the school reception and I noted that all the mid-day supervisors were listed in the 'staff' section of the device, where all staff were listed alphabetically.

Also on my first day, the head teacher introduced me to the children in the dining room after the lunchtime prayer. She told them I was a new mid-day supervisor joining the school for a few weeks and encouraged them to make me feel welcome. The head teacher's welcome made me feel valued and welcomed as part of the school community. I noticed during my time at the school that this time of day was often used to welcome people to the school, such as a teacher who was covering a class for three days, a trainee teaching assistant, a new school governor and a head teacher from another school. At the end of my first day, I reflected that I began to feel part of the school community, mostly as a result of the actions of the head teacher.

When I spoke to the mid-day supervisors, they all commented that they *felt part of the school* and that others understood and valued their role. On my tenth day in the school, all of the mid-day supervisors were sitting in the staff-room before lunchtime. They were discussing the school calendar, displayed on the wall as a large whiteboard. Olivia commented that sports day was next week and told me that the mid-day supervisors always attended sports day to *help out*. Mary commented that their job was to judge which children had finished 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the races. Olivia joked that they were given this job

as it was *too much pressure for the teachers or TAs to cope with*. The mid-day supervisors also spoke about the upcoming Summer Fair and told me that they always stay after lunchtime on that day to *help set up* and then run a stall during the fair after school.

On my eleventh day at the school I noticed that Olivia was not there. This was not mentioned by the other mid-day supervisors, but I felt it might be insensitive to ask why she was not at work. On this day, the upper key stage 2 class were out of school on an educational visit and it was not until the following day that Olivia told me that this is where she had been. She told me that whenever the class allocated to each mid-day supervisor is out of school, the mid-day supervisor accompanies the class. Olivia told me that she feels *valued* and *part of the class* when she is asked to go with the class when they are out of school. She also told me that this extended to staff social occasions, such as the staff Christmas Party and a barbeque held for staff at the end of the summer term.

On my fourteenth day at the school, I joined the lower key stage two class for the ERIC session. At the end of the ERIC session, Naomi told me that she was staying with the class for the rest of the afternoon as the class teaching assistant was absent. When I spoke to her about this the following day, she told me that the head teacher had rung her that morning and asked if she was able to stay during the afternoon to support the class. Mary told me that the mid-day supervisors were regularly asked to cover when teaching assistants were absent. If the absence is known about in advance this was arranged prior to the day, but absences due to illness were *sorted on the day*. Olivia told me that when she covered for an absent teaching assistant, she left at 3:00pm so she could collect her own children from school, or organised for her mother to collect her children. Similarly, if she covered for the morning she arrived at 9:30am or organised for her own children to be taken to school. Naomi told me that she *never felt under pressure* to cover for an absent teaching assistant as she knew that one of the other mid-day supervisors would probably be able to, even if she could not.

4.3.7: Summary

During my time at Brecks Drive, the role of the mid-day supervisors was both procedural and pastoral, but there was an emphasis on the pastoral duties above procedural ones. Relationships between staff and mid-day supervisors were positive, as were relationships

between pupils and mid-day supervisors. The mid-day supervisors felt like part of the school community and this seemed to stem from their view that their contribution to the school was valued and they were involved in areas of school life beyond lunchtime.

4.4: School Portrait – Gleneagles Park Primary School

4.4.1: School Context

Gleneagles Park Primary School was located on an inner-city estate. The vast majority of the pupils lived within the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds was well above average, as was the number of pupils who spoke English as an additional language. The school had approximately 450 pupils on roll. There was an average proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals.

4.4.2: The Mid-day Supervisors

There were eleven mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park Primary School; Pete, Qabilha, Raaka, Saba, Tom, Ubah, Vatusia, Wafa, Xiang, Yachne and Zuzanna. All the mid-day supervisors consented to being involved in the research. Qabilha was only present for the first two days of my time at the school. Pete, Saba and Xiang were the interview participants.

All but one of the mid-day supervisors either had children who still attended the school, or had children who had previously attended the school. Ubah and Wafa were mother and daughter and Wafa had attended the school as a child. Raaka and Saba were sisters. Tom was the mid-day supervisor who did not have children who attended or had previously attended the school. He was also the school caretaker. Tom told me that he became a mid-day supervisor as working over lunchtime *worked well* with the split-shift pattern of his other role. His morning caretaker shift ended at 10:30am and his afternoon caretaker shift began at 2:30pm so working over lunchtime meant he was able to *keep busy* between these times, rather than *sitting around just waiting to go back to work*. Tom was keen to point out that he did not need the money from his mid-day supervisor job because he *earned enough* from his job as the school caretaker.

Ubah had been a mid-day supervisor at the school for 23 years. She became a mid-day supervisor when her family moved into the area from Pakistan. She told me that at the time, the school were *struggling to cope* with the number of children arriving from Pakistan who could not speak English and she was approached as she was able to speak both English and Urdu. She felt that by taking the job, she was *helping the Pakistani community* by

supporting the children from this community during their time at school. Ubah said that this was still one of her reasons for continuing to be a mid-day supervisor, as the school still had many children who, whilst born in England, only spoke Urdu at home in the years before they began school. Ubah told me that her husband was *not very happy* when she first became a mid-day supervisor but had *come around to the idea* over time. Her husband was a successful businessman and owned a large company, so Ubah was keen to point out that she *did not need the money*, but continued to do the job out of a desire to help children.

Ubah's comments about her husband's views were also reflected in comments made by other mid-day supervisors from the Pakistani community. Wafa (Ubah's daughter) also told me that her husband was *a bit annoyed* when she became a mid-day supervisor because he felt that she should be at home. Wafa said that she believed her husband was *eventually okay* with her doing the job because he believed it to be appropriate for a woman as he thought it involved cooking. She joked that she had not told him that she didn't cook any of the food, but that he never asked. Wafa told me that she enjoyed being a mid-day supervisor as it gave her the chance to *get out of the house* and *speak to other people*. Her own daughter was also at the school and she told me that she enjoyed *checking in* with her at lunchtime. Raaka told me that she also became a mid-day supervisor *to get out of the house*. She told me that it was hard to find a job that *fitted in with my culture* as she wanted to be *mostly at home, but not always at home*. She told me that her job as a mid-day supervisor allowed her to cook the family breakfast, drop and collect the children from school and also cook the family meal in the evening. Saba told me that she became a mid-day supervisor because she *felt a bit lost* when her children started school and the job suited her because she *didn't need to worry about child care*. She also said that the job allowed her to *see my kids a bit more and see what they are up to* and commented that when her youngest left the school at the end of the year, she would not continue in the role. Saba also told me that her husband had *been okay* with her taking the job because he was keen for her to *keep an eye on what our kids are doing*, but that he thought she should stop when this was no longer the case.

Xiang, Yachne and Zuzanna also told me that one of the reasons they became a mid-day supervisor was that it was a job that allowed them to take their own children to school in the morning and collect them at the end of the day. Yachne also pointed out that she never

needs to find childcare in the school holidays. Zuzanna told me that before becoming a mid-day supervisor, she had a cleaning job and often had to *rely on friends* to provide childcare, but that this doesn't happen now she is a mid-day supervisor. Xiang, Yachne and Zuzanna also told me that the other reason they became a mid-day supervisor was a desire to work with children. Xiang said that she had *always looked for a job to do with kids* and that becoming a mid-day supervisor was a *perfect opportunity* to do this. Both Zuzanna and Yachne said that they wanted to do a job working with children, but that they did not have the qualifications to apply for other roles in a school. Zuzanna was also a child-minder and did this job before and after school, as well as during the school holidays. All of the children she cared for as a child-minder also attended Gleneagles Park.

Pete told me that he had become a mid-day supervisor *by accident*. He moved to the area with his children after leaving the armed forces and his children joined the school. At the time, he was a single parent so working at the school meant he could take care of them before and after school. However, Pete was not initially employed as a mid-day supervisor but as *a kind of security guard.* He told me that at the time he began working at the school, there were serious challenges in the area and that the headteacher at the time felt that his experience in the armed forces would be *a useful deterrent*. Pete said that the school faced two major challenges when he first began working there. Firstly, high levels of crime in the area meant that the school was targeted by criminals who would enter the building and steal equipment during school hours. He explained that *security wasn't great back in those days* and that the school was *easy to enter*, so he used to spend his time *patrolling the perimeter of the school as a deterrent* to would-be criminals. Secondly, Pete told me that in the past, the school faced many issues relating to family circumstances within the Pakistani community that had become established in the area. He said that many of the issues that are well-known and *hit the papers* these days were unknown to people outside the area at the time. For example, Pete would often face fathers who entered the school to *snatch their kids* so they could be taken out of the country against the wishes or without the knowledge of their mother. This was mostly girls and Pete said he knew that this was often linked to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), even though he *didn't know the official name for it at the time*. Pete told me that when a father arrived unannounced to take a child, he would be *just thrown out there to get rid of the parent, or to protect and hide the child*

somewhere in the school. As security increased and the school became a safer place, Pete told me that he had *just drifted into becoming a mid-day supervisor* because *taking care of kids was just natural*. As he now only worked at the school over lunchtime, he also had a job as a security guard at a local industrial estate.

Most of the mid-day supervisors were approached to do the job by friends or family members who were already at the school. Wafa was Ubah's daughter. Ubah was Raaka's friend and next-door neighbour and had persuaded her to become a mid-day supervisor. Consequently, Raaka *recruited* her sister, Saba, when another mid-day supervisor left the school. Qabilha was Ubah's next door neighbour, although Ubah told me that she wished she had not persuaded Qabilha to do the job as *she was never there.* Yachne and Zuzanna had started at the same time and had been approached by a mid-day supervisor who had now left the school. Xiang, however, told me that she had seen the vacancy advertised online and did not know any of the other mid-day supervisors until she started the job. Only Xiang had completed an application form for the role and none of the mid-day supervisors had been interviewed. The decision to appoint them was always made by the senior mid-day supervisor at the time. None of the mid-day supervisors had undertaken any training or induction and had learned how to do the job *by observing, watching* and *copying* the other mid-day supervisors and *picking things up as they went along*. The mid-day supervisors told me that over the last couple of years they had received first aid training and Safeguarding training

4.4.3: The Role

At Gleneagles Park, all the mid-day supervisors began work at 11:45am and finished work at 1:30pm. When they arrived at 11:45am, the mid-day supervisors split themselves into an 'inside team' and an 'outside team' for that day. The 'outside team' then split themselves into a 'key stage one' and a 'key stage two' team to determine which mid-day supervisors were on each playground.

The time between 11:45am and 12:00noon was spent preparing for lunchtime. The inside team put up the folding tables that the children used for eating and set up cups and a full water jug on each table. They also brought the plates and cutlery from the kitchen, though these were not set out on the tables and were collected by the children who ate hot school

meals when they entered the hall. The two 'outside teams' prepared the playgrounds by setting out play equipment and games for the children to play.

Lunchtime for children in the foundation stage and key stage one began at 12:00noon. Foundation stage and year 1 children entered the hall at 12:00noon, whilst year 2 children went onto the key stage one playground. Pupils in foundation stage and year 1 who ate hot school meals queued at the front of the hall and were given their food by the school cooks, before choosing where to sit to eat their meal. Children in foundation stage and year 1 who brought their own sandwiches from home chose where to sit and eat as soon as they entered the hall. As each child finished their meal, they left the hall and went onto the key stage one playground for the rest of lunchtime. Once enough spaces became available in the hall, a mid-day supervisor went onto the key stage one playground and blew a whistle as a signal for the year 2 children to enter the hall for lunch. As with the younger children, the children who ate hot school meals queued at the front of the hall before choosing where to sit to eat their meal. Those who brought their own sandwiches from home chose where to sit and eat as soon as they entered the hall. Year 2 children were allowed to return to the key stage one playground when they had finished eating. At 1:00pm, a mid-day supervisor from the 'outside key stage one team' blew a whistle and the children lined up in their classes and were collected by their teacher at the end of lunchtime. When the children had left the playground the mid-day supervisors cleared away the playing equipment and games. Some of the 'outside key stage one team' would then go to the hall to support with clearing and cleaning, whilst the others would go onto the key stage two playground until the end of the key stage two lunchtime at 1:30pm.

Lunchtime for children in key stage 2 began at 12:30pm. Children in year 3 went straight to the hall to eat their lunch. Wafa told me that there was usually space for them all to sit down as enough of the younger children had finished eating, but on some days there was not enough room for all the year 3 children when they arrived in the hall at 12:30pm. She said that this was due to the introduction of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) that entitled all of the foundation and key stage one children to free hot meals. As most foundation and key stage one children now had hot school meals, it took much longer for them to collect and eat their lunch and therefore some year 3 children had to wait for a space to sit and eat.

As the year 3 children went to the hall at 12:30pm, the other children in key stage two went onto the key stage two playground. When there became enough spaces in the hall, a mid-day supervisor from the 'inside team' went on to the key stage two playground and blew as whistle as a signal for the year 4 children to enter the hall for lunch. The mid-day supervisors all held up a 'Year 4' sign so the children knew which year group needed to go to the hall. This approach was then repeated for children in year 5 and year 6. Raaka told me that the children in key stage two ate *much more quickly* than those in key stage one, and as a *rough guide* the mid-day supervisors tried to call in the key stage two classes at ten minute intervals (year 4 at 12:40pm; year 5 at 12:50pm and year 6 at 1:00pm). This meant that all children should have finished eating by 1.20pm and this gave the mid-day supervisors time to clear and clean the hall before 1:30pm. Yachne told me that this did make the last ten minutes of lunchtime *very busy* on the key stage two playground, as it was the only time that all the key stage two children were outside. However, because some of the mid-day supervisors who had been on the key stage one playground moved to the key stage two playground during this time, Yachne said that this helped to make sure that the they were *able to cope*.

Raaka also said that the job of deciding when to blow the whistle for the next class was one that all the mid-day supervisors tried to avoid because it *was easy to get it wrong*. She told me that blowing the whistle too early meant children arrived in the hall with nowhere to sit, but blowing it too late meant that some children did not finish lunch before 1:30pm when they had to go back to class. Not finishing lunch on time also meant the hall was not clear at 1:30pm. This was problematic because every day, one of the key stage one classes needed to use the hall for PE at that time. During my time at the school, I undertook this role twice and felt more pressure doing this than any of the other duties undertaken by the mid-day supervisors. I knew that I would feel 'to blame' if I caused a problem by blowing the whistle too early and sending children into the hall with nowhere to sit, but also that I would feel that it was my fault if lunchtime did not finish on time. I understood why the other mid-day supervisors were keen to avoid this particular duty!

When I spoke to the mid-day supervisors about what their job involved, they all told me that it depended on whether they were part of the 'inside team' or the 'outside team', and that the job was *very different* between the two teams.

They told me that the role of the 'inside team' was to make sure that the eating area was prepared, that the children were given the right food if they ate hot meals, make sure all the plates and cutlery were available and cleared away when they had been used, fill up the water jugs when they were empty, put uneaten food in the correct bins, clean up spillages and make sure that the tables and chairs were packed away and that the floor was clean by 1:30pm. It was clear that the duties of the 'inside team' were procedural and focused on ensuring that all children had eaten and that the hall was clear by the required time. None of the mid-day supervisors spoke about their interactions with children when they were part of the 'inside team' and Saba told me that I was there *to look after the hall and not the children* on my first day as part of this team. Throughout my time at the school, I observed very little interaction between mid-day supervisor and children in the dining hall.

However, when the mid-day supervisors told me about the role of the 'outside team', they spoke about *looking after* the children, *making sure the children are okay*, *taking care of the kids, helping the children if they have a problem or they are upset* and *sorting out arguments.* However, all the mid-day supervisors commented that they felt there were not enough of them to *deal with all the issues* that occur on the playground and also have time to provide pastoral care. Xiang told me that she wished she *had more time to get to know the children better* but that this was not possible because she was *usually doing first aid* or *dealing with an argument or fall-out*. Wafa said that she feels like the *quiet children* who *might have problems get over-looked* because the mid-day supervisors were *dealing with the more difficult children or doing first aid*. This reflected my experience on both playgrounds. I noted that my time was mostly taken up with *going from one problem to the next* and that I *only seemed to speak to children who had done something wrong, were about to do something wrong or had suffered a minor injury*. At some point, all the mid-day supervisors said that they were *under-staffed.* Tom told me that he was *frustrated* that he could not help children who were *upset or didn't have any friends* because he was *fire-fighting bad behaviour, arguments and injuries*. Pete commented that he did less pastoral care than he used to because he spent *all his time sorting out problems* and *giving children a cold compress or a plaster*. He also said that the mid-day supervisors had been told to *log any concerns on the computer* rather than talk to a child themselves, so he felt like he *wasn't trusted to try and help children anymore*.

The mid-day supervisors often spoke about *keeping an eye* on certain children. Raaka said that because she knew many of the children and their families, she was aware when children were *finding things hard* so *made a bit of extra time to check up on them*. Saba said that she often *knew stuff* about the children that she had been told by their parents, but that the school did not know. She said that this sometimes put her in a *difficult position* as she had to decide whether or not to disclose information about a child to the school. Yachne told me that she was often asked by parents to *keep an eye* on their child if they seemed to be upset or the parents were *worried about them*. Wafa told me that parents often asked her to *make sure their child ate enough lunch* or to *keep an eye* on how much they ate. On my fifth day at the school, Xiang told me that she was *keeping an eye* on a particular child because his mother was in hospital. On another day, Zuzanna told me that she was *keeping an eye* on two siblings because their father had left the country the night before. Pete spoke about *keeping an eye* on a child he knew had just discovered that his *father was actually his step-father*, a child who he knew had been exposed to domestic violence and a child whose brother had committed suicide.

4.4.4: Relationships with Staff

During my time at the school, I had very few interactions with other staff outside the team of mid-day supervisors. When I was part of the 'inside team', children entered the hall straight from the classroom and were not accompanied by their class teacher or another member of staff. Likewise, when I was part of the 'outside' team on either playground, the children arrived unaccompanied from the classroom. Throughout my time at the school I did not observe another member of staff in the hall or on the playground during lunchtime. At the end of lunchtime on the key stage one playground, the class teacher collected their class of children. I observed that the teachers would often open the classroom door and signal for the children to enter. There seemed to be no interaction between the class teacher and any of the mid-day supervisors at this time. Children who had suffered minor injuries were given 'injury slips' that they gave to the class teacher themselves, rather than these been passed between the mid-day supervisor and the teacher. The exception to this was the foundation stage staff, who came onto the playground to collect the children. The foundation stage teacher often talked to one of the mid-day supervisors as she collected the children. This did not happen every time I worked on the key stage one playground, but it

was noticeable as the only communication between mid-day supervisors and another member of staff that I observed. I also noted that Xiang was often the mid-day supervisor who was on the key stage one playground and took responsibility for the foundation stage children and she commented that she felt like she could *pass on messages* so that the class teacher was *aware of any issues*.

At the end of lunchtime on the key stage two playground, a mid-day supervisor blew a whistle to signal to the children to form a line with the other children in their class. At this point, the mid-day supervisors began collecting the playing equipment from around the playground and put it away in the outside 'shed' used to store this. I noted that the mid-day supervisors left the children at this point and that the lines were *more of a crowd*. The class teacher then called their class and led them into the building, but there seemed to be no *real attempt* from either the mid-day supervisors or other staff to organise the children into class lines. There was also no interaction between the class teachers and the mid-day supervisors at the end of lunchtime. Once the play equipment was put away, if there were still children who had not been collected by the class teachers, the mid-day supervisors stood in a group in a corner of the playground, observing from a distance but not interacting with the children. During my time at the school, I did not observe any interaction between other staff and mid-day supervisors on the key stage two playground. Saba told me that when there used to be a senior mid-day supervisor she used to make each mid-day supervisor take responsibility for *handing over* a class at the end of lunchtime and that this was *helpful* for passing on messages, but since the senior mid-day supervisor had left this no longer happened.

When I asked about relationships with other staff, Pete commented that he felt that previous teachers *had been better* at talking to mid-day supervisors, but that the current staff were *on a conveyor belt* and because the turnover of teaching staff was so high (*they are in, then out, then gone*), teachers and mid-day supervisors *did not get to know each other.* Saba said that she felt teachers were not approachable and that they were not interested in anything the mid-day supervisors told them about the children. Ubah told me that she often became frustrated because the teachers did not pass on information about the children that she thought she needed to know. For example, on one day during my time at the school a child vomited in the hall during lunchtime. When Ubah took the child to the

school office so that the staff could ring the child's parents, the class teacher was also present and said the child had been complaining about feeling ill all morning. Ubah pointed out that it would have been *useful to have known this before I told him to eat his spaghetti and then threw up all over everyone else's food*. Similarly, Zuzanna told me that the teachers *don't confide in the mid-day supervisors and keep information to themselves*.

During my time at the school, I often noted that the relationships between other school staff and the mid-day supervisors were not negative, but they were *barely formed*. There was so little interaction with other staff that there was no opportunity for a relationship to develop. The day-to-day systems established in the school at the beginning and end of lunchtime meant there was little contact between mid-day supervisors and other staff. I also noted that when the opportunity did arise, neither the mid-day supervisors nor the other staff took the opportunity to approach each other and interact.

4.4.5: Relationships with Children

The relationships between children and mid-day supervisors at the school were varied. Xiang told me that she *got on well with most children*. Raaka said that *most of the kids are fine* and that she *had no problems with the majority.* Tom described *most* of the children as *good kids* and said he thought that *most were respectful*. However, many mid-day supervisors commented on a *small number of high profile children* with whom relationships were *difficult* and who were *hard to manage.* Wafa told me that she felt like she spent *most of the time on five or six children* who were *badly behaved and rude*. Similarly, Yachne talked about *a handful* of children who *took up lots of her time every day* because of *poor behaviour*. Ubah said that some children *would not listen to mid-day supervisors* and that they were *argumentative* and *disrespectful*. Saba told me that *certain children – the ones they call 'high profile' – think that just because you are a mid-day supervisor, they don't have to give you respect*. My experience at the school reflected these comments. I noted that *most children behaved well* but that there were a *small number who didn't follow the rules, didn't follow instructions and argued when they were asked to do (or not to do) something that seemed perfectly reasonable and normal.*

Zuzanna told me that most of the children *just wanted to play with their friends* and therefore she felt that the *vast majority* had *no real relationship* with the mid-day

supervisors. When I asked her what she mean by a 'real' relationship, Zuzanna described this as *not good, but not bad.* Xiang told me that she thought it was hard for mid-day supervisors to build relationships and *really get to know the children* as they did not work with the same children each day, though she pointed out that this was slightly different in the foundation stage as she tried to work with these children as much as she could so she could *get to know them better*. Similarly, Raaka said that *chopping and changing* between the different teams meant she did not get to know any of the children *really well*. This was echoed by a number of mid-day supervisors, but when I asked Raaka why they did not keep the teams more consistent, she told me that this had been discussed but that *nobody wanted to be on the key stage two playground every day*.

The mid-day supervisors also commented that some children had better relationships with individual mid-day supervisors, and this was often linked to a relationship that also existed outside of the school context. Yachne and Zuzanna told me that there were two *high profile* children who they had a good relationship with as they knew the children and their family outside school. These children were also from the Eastern European community and Yachne said that she felt this gave them an *extra connection*. She said that she spoke to the children in their first language when they were *angry or upset* and this seemed to be *better* than speaking to them in English. She also joked that the children were more likely to do as they were told by her and Zuzanna as they *thought there was a chance we would tell their mum.* Xiang also spoke about her relationships with children from the Chinese community, who she knew outside school. She told me that she *had known many of these children since they were born* so they were *familiar with her and trusted her*. She told me that she felt that her relationships with children from the Chinese community were stronger as the children felt like they had *something in common*.

Whereas Xiang, Yachne and Zuzanna felt they had stronger relationships with children from their own [cultural] community, the mid-day supervisors from the Pakistani community had mixed views on their relationships with children from the same community. Raaka spoke positively about how knowing the children out-of-school helped her to build relationships with new pupils as there was *something there to start with*. Ubah said that she felt she had some good relationships with girls from the Pakistani community as they *could relate* to her and she was a *familiar face*. However, all the mid-day supervisors from the Pakistani

community spoke about the difficult relationships they had in school with some of the male pupils. Wafa told me that there were still *gender issues* within the Pakistani community and that in the home, many boys viewed adult male members of the family as *the disciplinarians*. This caused an issue in school, as the Pakistani boys were *not used to being told what to do by a woman* so thought they could either *ignore, disobey or argue* with them. As a result, Raaka told me that relationships with boys from the Pakistani community were *made more difficul*t.

Many of the mid-day supervisors told me about positive relationships that they had with individual children. Often, this had developed because the mid-day supervisor was able to speak the child's first language, especially if the child was unable to speak English. Yachne told me that she had built a strong relationship with a child who only spoke Romanian when she first arrived at the school. The child was the only Romanian-speaking girl in key stage two and the Romanian-speaking boys were *too busy playing football to help her*. Yachne said that the girl would speak to her most lunchtimes and seemed to *enjoy having a conversation she could understand*. Yachne told me that the girl still speaks to her most lunchtimes even though she can now speak English. Zuzanna told me about a similar relationship she had built with two children who could only speak Polish.

Both Pete and Tom spoke about individual relationships that they had built with male pupils. Pete told me that having spent many years in the armed forces, some of it working with *new recruits*, he was *very confident working with slightly wayward boys*. He told me that he could *see his younger self* in many of the *more difficult* boys who were *aggressive, short-tempered and rebellious* and as a result had *a good understanding* of how to work with them to help them as much as he could. Pete said that he felt these were the children who he could *get through to the most*. Tom told me that he also felt like he *got on with the boys better than the girls* because they *had something in common.* He described himself as a *blokey-bloke* and said that he could *form a bond* with boys through a *shared passion for football and* supporting the local football team. At the time of my experience in school, the football World Cup was taking place and Tom told me that he was able to talk about this *to the boys who also enjoyed football.*

4.4.6: Community

When I spoke to the mid-day supervisors, only Xiang said that she felt like part of the school community. She told me that this was because the children *said hello* to her at lunchtimes and that they also greeted her out-of-school and this made her feel *like part of the team and this school*. The other mid-day supervisors I spoke to about the school community commented that *they did not have enough communication* with other staff and *did not know* the other staff well enough to feel like part of the school community. Ubah told me that because the mid-day supervisors worked at a time that was *a break for everyone else in school*, they did not get the chance to talk to other staff and this meant the mid-day supervisors were *separated* from the rest of the school. Yachne told me that she did not feel like part of the school as she had *nothing to do with anyone apart from other mid-day supervisors*. Vatusia told me that she did not feel like part of the school because mid-day supervisors were *not allowed to use the staffroom or wear a staff badge*.

An issue that many mid-day supervisors commented on was their lack of information about children with special educational needs (SEN). Xiang told me that some of the children with SEN were *obvious*, but that the mid-day supervisors were not told about *their problems and how to help them*. She gave the example of a child in key stage one who did not communicate verbally and exhibited some challenging behaviour. Xiang told me that she thought the child *probably had autism* but had never been told anything about him or how she could help him. Raaka highlighted a child in year 6 who spent *every lunchtime colleting leaves and talking to himself.* The child did not speak to any other children and ran away when approached by any of the mid-day supervisors, but Raaka told me that all she had been told was to *let him get on with what he wants to do as long as he doesn't cause a problem.* Wafa spoke about a child who ate pebbles and woodchips from the playground and told me that when she asked his teacher how to deal with this, she was told that information about children was *confidential* and that she *shouldn't ask about individual children*. Vatusia told me that she believed the school did not tell mid-day supervisors about the *medical needs* of individual children because one of the mid-day supervisors might have known the child's parents and this would have *made things awkward.* Saba told me that withholding information about children from mid-day supervisors was one of the reasons she did not feel like a *real part* of the school community.

Many of the mid-day supervisors commented that they felt part of a community of their own. Wafa told me that she *enjoyed been part of the mid-day team* and Xiang said that she enjoyed *working together with the other mid-day supervisors*. Pete commented that the role required every mid-day supervisor to be a *team player* if lunchtime was to run smoothly. Yachne said that she thought the team *worked well together* because they all knew different children in the school and could share information with each other. Raaka told me that she enjoyed the job because she felt like *part of a team doing something worthwhile* and Zuzanna said she enjoyed working with *people she would not meet away from school*. Ubah commented that there was *no conflict* between the mid-day supervisors and said that she thought everyone felt like *an equal part*.

Many of the mid-day supervisors also spoke about the link between their role in school and their place in the local and cultural community. Pete told me that because he had been a mid-day supervisor for *such a long time*, he was *well-known* in the local community. He told me that parents often approached him and asked how their child was doing at school. Pete also said that he often spoke to adults who were ex-pupils and that they still had a *level of respect* for him from their time at the school. He told me that being a mid-day supervisor made him feel like *part of the area*. Ubah echoed these view and said that becoming a mid-day supervisor shortly after moving to the country made her feel like she *belonged* in the area. Similarly, Yachne told me that she felt *out of place* when she moved into the area but becoming a mid-day supervisor had helped her to *get to know lots of people* in the local community.

Raaka and Saba both commented that being a mid-day supervisor had given them a *kind of status* in the Pakistani community. Raaka told me that she thought doing the job gave her a *level of respect* in the community and that people often asked her how they could also become a mid-day supervisor. Saba said that other women would often talk to her about their children and asked for advice on *how to get them to behave* because she worked with them at school. Zuzanna told me that other Polish parents asked her advice about *stuff to do with school* and she felt *proud to be a mid-day supervisor*. Yachne said that working as a mid-day supervisor meant that other people knew she was *reliable* and *trusted with children*.

4.4.7: Summary

During my time at Gleneagles Park, the role of the mid-day supervisors was both procedural and pastoral. The mid-day supervisors recognised the value of their pastoral role, but often felt that procedural duties prevented them undertaking pastoral work as much as they wanted to. Relationships between staff and mid-day supervisors were very limited and there was very little interaction between the mid-day supervisors and other school staff. Relationships between pupils and mid-day supervisors were mostly positive, but relationships with some pupils were difficult and confrontational. Many relationships with pupils were also influenced by a personal relationships within the local and cultural communities occupied by pupils and mid-day supervisors. The mid-day supervisors did not feel like part of the school community and this seemed to stem from a sense of being a separate group of staff rather than part of the whole school staff body. They did, however, feel a sense of belonging to a *team of mid-day supervisors* and also that their role was valued within the local and cultural communities they were part of.

Chapter 5 – Analysis

5.1: Outline of the Analysis

The written portraits presented in chapter 4 provided descriptive findings for each school context. Chapter 5 will again focus on each school individually, exploring what can be learned about the role and place of mid-day supervisors from these portraits in light of the research questions of the study, followed by a comparison of these at the end of the chapter.

This chapter will therefore analyse the positioning and enactment of the role of the mid-day supervisor in the three school contexts, drawing on key elements of theories of role that were explored in section 2.5 of the literature review. This will consider how the role was positioned in each school through organisational and structural factors and the interactions that occurred between mid-day supervisors and those occupying other roles (Biddle, 1986). This positioning will be used to then explore how the normative expectations of the role in each school were established and reinforced, considering how these impact on the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973) that apply to the role in the different school contexts.

Given the part-participation of the role of mid-day supervisors, this analysis will also consider how the role was either marginalised or legitimised within the different schools and the impact this had on the mid-day supervisors who enacted the role.

This analysis will also consider the factors that either minimised or intensified role conflict (Shivers-Blackwell, 2004; Mathews & Crow, 2003;) and role strain (Goode, 1960; Turner, 2011) that was experienced by mid-day supervisors within the three different schools and the impact this had on their job satisfaction, well-being and capability to perform the role successfully (House & Rizzo, 1972; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Turner, 2011) for the benefit of the school community.

Within each school, this chapter will explore:

- The positioning of the role;
- The marginalisation and ligitimisation of the role
- Role Conflict and Role Strain.

5.2: Kirkley Road Primary School

5.2.1: The positioning of the role

At Kirkley Road, the role of the mid-day supervisor was strongly positioned within the organisational structure of the school, where it occupied the lowest position within the organisational hierarchy, as also identified by Pike (2010) and Thomson (2007). This was physically presented in the school entrance, where a display of school staff and their roles was ordered to outline the hierarchy to all who entered the building. Mid-day supervisors at the school often commented on their positioning at the 'bottom' of the school hierarchy and there were other physical indicators of this, such as the school website and printed prospectus. As a result, the role was heavily influenced by organisational positioning and this had a significant impact on how the role was perceived and enacted (Biddle, 1986).

The positioning of the role at the bottom of the school hierarchy was reinforced by the organisational constraints (Turner, 2011) placed upon it, many of which were not placed on other roles that existed within the school. These constraints included not being permitted to enter the school staff-room or the school office. Indeed, mid-day supervisors were not given free access to and around the school building itself; whilst all other staff had a 'key card' to open locked doors, these were not given to mid-day supervisors who had to wait for another member of school staff to give them access through these doors. Mid-day supervisors were also not given the 'entry code' to the outer school gate, so had to request access by using the intercom linked to the school office. Constraints were also placed on the knowledge given to mid-day supervisors about pupils at the school, and similarly on the sharing of knowledge held by mid-day supervisors with other staff. These organisational constraints significantly affected the way in which mid-day supervisors enacted their role, establishing and reinforcing the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours expected of those who inhabited the role (Turner, 2011).

At Kirkley Road, the role of the mid-day supervisor was also positioned within the local community beyond the school, as is often the case for this group of the school workforce (Metcalfe et al, 2011) and therefore the perceptions and enactment of the role can be seen through the lens of structural role theory (Biddle, 1986). Many mid-day supervisors spoke about the way in which holding the role positively influenced their position within the local

community, especially the way in which others within that community perceived them as trustworthy and honest because they were employed by the school. Often, mid-day supervisors would be given information by others in the community, so that they were aware of children's circumstances when they encountered them at school during lunchtime. However, the positioning of the role of mid-day supervisors in the local community was perceived by other staff in the school to be problematic, and this influenced the organisational constraints that were applied to the role. For example, constraints were placed on the knowledge that was given to mid-day supervisors about pupils because other staff were concerned that this would be disclosed within the local community.

Both organisational and structural factors (Biddle, 1986) therefore influenced the positioning of the role at the school, and this was reinforced through interactions between those who held the role and other staff undertaking different roles (Biddle, 1986). Generally, interactions that occurred at Kirkley Road between mid-day supervisors and other staff were negative, and often hostile. Many interactions involved other staff 'over-ruling' the decisions of mid-day supervisors, thus reinforcing their position at the bottom of the school hierarchy. For example, other staff regularly over-ruled mid-day supervisors who imposed sanctions on pupils, their decisions about the use of outdoor areas during lunchtime and the activities that were permitted to take place at lunchtime. Often, it was teaching assistants (TAs) involved in these interactions, who held a place in the hierarchy above mid-day supervisors but below teaching staff. However, interactions with teachers were also often confrontational and mid-day supervisors were routinely 'told off' by teaching staff, even in the presence of children, further reinforcing the position of the role at the bottom of the school hierarchy (Pike, 2010).

The positioning of the role at the bottom of the school hierarchy and the interactions that maintained that status established and reinforced the normative expectations that were associated with the role in terms of the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1974; Turner, 2011) of those who inhabited the role at the school.

The obligatory behaviours expected of mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road were mostly focused on the procedural aspects of undertaking the role. Mid-day supervisors were expected to fulfil duties such as setting out and clearing dining tables and cutlery so that

lunchtime was completed on time and the dining area was cleaned and ready for afternoon lessons that took place in the same area. There was an expectation that mid-day supervisors supervised pupils throughout lunchtime by being present in the eating area or the outdoor playing area. Whilst undertaking this supervision, mid-day supervisors were expected to intervene to resolve any poor behaviour, although they were forbidden from using the school's behaviour policy to do so. As a result of the strong hierarchal nature of the school, mid-day supervisors were also expected to defer to staff holding roles that were of higher value within the hierarchy, even when this undermined the decisions that they had made about the organisation of lunchtime.

In terms of optional behaviours, these seemed to be limited at Kirkley Road. Most actions that might be undertaken by mid-day supervisors were either obligatory or forbidden. However, there were elements of optionality when it came to mid-day supervisors interacting with pupils during lunchtime. Day-to-day interactions with pupils in the role were not obligatory as these were so focused on procedural duties. The exception to this was when unwanted behaviour occurred, as mid-day supervisors were expected to interact with pupils to resolve this. The level of interaction between pupils and mid-day supervisors that were not related to unwanted behaviour were varied in terms of the individuals undertaking the role. Some mid-day supervisors interacted with pupils proactively and frequently, especially outdoors when pupils were playing. However, some mid-day supervisors had very little interaction with pupils and limited their interactions with pupils to when they were approached by pupils or intervened to resolve unwanted behaviour.

As a result of the strong hierarchical organisation of the school workforce, there were a number of constraints placed on those who undertook the role of a mid-day supervisor at Kirkley Road, leading to a range of forbidden behaviours for this group of staff that were not applied to other staff within the school. Some of these forbidden behaviours related to areas of school that mid-day supervisors were not permitted to access, such as the staff-room, school office and classrooms. Mid-day supervisors were also forbidden from communicating with teaching staff at the end of lunchtime because this was perceived to impinge on afternoon lessons. During lunchtime itself, mid-day supervisors were forbidden from administering basic first aid to pupils and this was delegated to an assigned teaching assistant each day. This was because mid-day supervisors had been forbidden from taking

part in whole-school first aid training when it was delivered, a concern also identified nationally by Baines & Blatchford (2019). Similarly, mid-day supervisors had been forbidden from attending whole-school safeguarding training. Even when mid-day supervisors were required to intervene to resolve unwanted behaviour, they were forbidden from using the whole-school behaviour policy and were therefore reliant on less formal approaches to behaviour management.

One of the key areas of forbidden behaviour was around the knowing and sharing of information about pupils at the school. Mid-day supervisors were not given or permitted to request information about pupils at the school, even when this might be relevant to their work. For example, whilst mid-day supervisors were told of food allergies, other medical information was withheld from them on the grounds of confidentiality, even though this did not apply to any other group of staff. This concerned mid-day supervisors at the school, as they did not know key information that they might need in a medical emergency or the 'warning signs' that they needed to be aware of if a pupil had a medical need. Previously, mid-day supervisors had proactively asked for information about pupils, but these requests were refused. The head teacher had told the senior mid-day supervisor that the reason for not sharing information with mid-day supervisors was that there were concerns that confidential information would be shared beyond the school within the local community. As a result, the mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road did not feel that they were trusted by the school leadership.

In addition to being forbidden to know information about pupils that was known to the school, mid-day supervisors were also forbidden from sharing information that they knew about pupils as a result of their position in the local community. Often, mid-day supervisors would be aware of a pupil's circumstances at home, but they were not permitted to share this information with other staff at the school. Again, this concerned mid-day supervisors as they held knowledge that they felt the school should also hold, especially when this related to safeguarding issues. However, the mid-day supervisors had been specifically told that knowledge that they acquired away from school should not be shared with school staff, including the head teacher, and any safeguarding concerns should be referred to social services rather than involve the school. This frustrated the mid-day supervisors, who

thought that the knowledge that they held would be beneficial for school staff and also in the best interests of the pupils.

The role of the mid-day supervisor at Kirkley Road therefore consisted of mostly obligatory and forbidden behaviours, although there were some aspects of optional behaviours. Obligatory behaviours mostly involved the performance of procedural duties and these were prioritised by the organisation. Organisational constraints led to a number of forbidden behaviours that limited the opportunity for the role to move beyond the obligatory procedural duties that were expected of those undertaking it.

5.2.2: Role Marginalisation

In the case of the mid-day supervisor role at Kirkley Road, the part-participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2011) of this group of staff was deemed to be problematic. Holding roles in both the local community and the school was perceived to be problematic in terms of confidentiality as the knowledge that mid-day supervisors held about pupils and families originated in the local community. As one mid-day supervisors stated, they were perceived by other staff to be "*one of them* [families from the estate], *and not one of us* [school staff]". Mid-day supervisors felt that their participation at lunchtime was considered to have little value, and that other staff did not really understand the role or consider it to be beneficial to the school and the pupils. This tension was also identified by Pike (2010), who highlighted the differing context between mid-day supervisors and other staff within the school and the potential for this to result in conflict.

At Kirkley Road, mid-day supervisors were not involved in any other aspects of the school community and opportunities to engage in joint activity or shared practice alongside other school staff did not occur. Indeed, the organisation of lunchtime had been structured so that other staff and mid-day supervisors very rarely shared the same physical space as each other. Information about pupils and about the school was also withheld from mid-day supervisors and this prevented shared knowledge. Relationships between mid-day supervisors and other school staff were negative and often hostile. As a result, the role of the mid-day supervisor at Kirkley Road became one that was marginalised from the school community as a whole (Wenger, 1998).

5.2.3: Role Conflict and Role Strain

At Kirkley Road, there were significant aspects of role conflict (Shivers-Blackwell, 2004; Turner, 2011) that impacted negatively on those who enacted the role of a mid-day supervisor at the school and resulted in role strain.

Firstly, conflict between mid-day supervisors and those in other roles led to significant difficulties for those undertaking the role, as their conception of the job was different to the expectations held by those undertaking different roles within the school (Shivers-Blackwell, 2004). Mid-day supervisors perceived their role as one that was primarily about working with children, whereas the organisational expectations of the role focused on procedural duties such as the organisation of resources and cleaning. Due to the strong hierarchical nature of the school, it was the procedural expectations held by those more highly placed in the hierarchy that were given precedence and were therefore enacted by the mid-day supervisors, creating intra-role conflict (Turner, 2011). This conflict led to tension between mid-day supervisors and other staff, especially teaching assistants who were most likely to interact with mid-day supervisors and who held a higher place in the hierarchy. The intra-role conflict also frustrated mid-day supervisors, who valued the pastoral aspect of their role but were unable to fulfil this as procedural duties were prioritised. This tension and frustration resulted in significant role strain (Goode, 1960) for mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road.

Role conflict also occurred as a result of the different roles that mid-day supervisors held in addition to their employment at the school, with conflicting expectations of the different roles that were held leading to inter-role conflict (Turner, 2011). This was most evident in the roles held by mid-day supervisors beyond the school. The vast majority of mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road were related to some pupils within the school and were also part of some of the same social groups as pupils, often through friendships with parents. This led to inter-role conflict, as the behaviours that were expected of them as mid-day supervisors often contradicted the behaviours expected in their role as family members and friends. For example, in their role as a mid-day supervisor pupils would be expected to call them by their title and surname, whereas out of school children and mid-day supervisors were often on first-name terms. Mid-day supervisors often commented on how they felt uncomfortable being called by their title and surname by pupils who they knew out of

school, and especially when they were required to correct this if a child used their first name. Mid-day supervisors also expressed concerns that pupils became 'confused' by the different way in which mid-day supervisors behaved towards them in their different roles. They also worried about the potential for conflict with other parents as a result of interacting with their child at school, highlighting disagreements that had occurred in the local community when parents felt their child had been treated unfairly by a mid-day supervisor. The tension and anxiety that mid-day supervisors often felt as a result of the different roles that they held contributed to role strain for this group of school staff.

Additionally, all mid-day supervisors had children of their own at the school, either at the time of the research or in the past. Many described how this created inter-role conflict between the role of being a parent and a mid-day supervisor. Often, this was in the form of ensuring that they were not perceived by others to 'favour' their own children. This led to them avoiding their own children during lunchtime or ensuring that they were treating them differently at school than they did at home. For example, mid-day supervisors highlighted that physical contact with their own children was very different at home and school, as was their approach to managing their behaviour and eating habits. The inter-role conflict created by being a parent and mid-day supervisor created a common element of role strain for mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road as it was often parents who were recruited to the role. However, often those who undertook the role did so because it offered employment that, on a practical basis, allowed for the fulfilment of parental responsibilities at the beginning and end of the school day, during school holidays and on INSET days. Therefore, there was a general acceptance of this aspect of role strain because of the practical advantages that undertaking the role offered.

There were other elements of role strain that impacted on mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road. Many mid-day supervisors at the school highlighted that a lack of sufficient training, especially when they first became a mid-day supervisor, meant that they felt incapable of fulfilling the role successfully. The lack of a job description resulted in a sense of role ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) and a lack of role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) about the functions that a mid-day supervisor was expected to fulfil, especially for those who were inexperienced in the role. 'Role overload' (Turner, 2011) was also highlighted by mid-day supervisors at the school, particularly in recent years

due to the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). This resulted in many more pupils choosing to eat hot school meals rather than bring 'packed lunches' from home. In turn, this led to a significant increase in the time and staffing that was required to serve hot meals, and also the time it took pupils to eat these. However, no additional time or staffing was allocated to lunchtime even when the requirements of providing hot meals to more pupils exceeded the time and resources that were available. To compound this, on some days pupils had not finished eating by the end of lunchtime and this led to further intra-role conflict between mid-day supervisors and other staff, who expected pupils to be ready for afternoon teaching and the eating area to be accessible for lessons that were held in the same space.

There were therefore a number of factors that contributed to significant role strain for those who enacted the role of a mid-day supervisor at the school. Both intra-role and inter-role conflict meant the enactment of the role often involved "anxiety, tension and frustration" (Turner, 2011; p249). A lack of role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) and ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019), alongside a lack of sufficient training, meant that mid-day supervisors felt both unsure of the purpose and function of the role, and not capable of fulfilling it (Goode, 1960). The introduction of UIFSM had also caused 'role overload' (Turner, 2011) and led to further intra-role conflict with other staff within the school. The intensity of role conflict and role strain at Kirkley Road led to job dissatisfaction and potentially damaged the well-being of mid-day supervisors, lowering their commitment to the role and negatively impacting on their performance of it. Subsequently, the school community did not benefit from the role to the extent that could have been achieved if role conflict and role strain was minimised (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

5.2.4: Summary

The positioning of the role at Kirkley Road was strongly influenced by organisational factors, particularly the strong hierarchical nature of the school and the place of the role at the very bottom of this hierarchy. This organisational positioning and the constraints placed on the role mostly established the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours that were the normative expectations of those who occupied the role, and these were reinforced through the interactions between mid-day supervisors and other staff within the school. Whilst the

role did hold a structural position in the local community, this was perceived to be problematic and led to an even stronger emphasis on the organisational position of the role within the school. The part-participation of the role was also perceived to be problematic and the participation of mid-day supervisors was not valued, therefore marginalising those who occupied the role from the rest of the school community.

There were a number of factors at Kirkley Road that led to significant role strain for mid-day supervisors at the school. Intra-role conflict and inter-role conflict negatively impacted on the experience of being a mid-day supervisor at the school, causing anxiety, tension and frustration (Turner, 2011). Role ambiguity and a lack of sufficient training left mid-day supervisors unsure of what duties the role entailed and incapable of successfully undertaking it. Role overload as a result of UIFSM made it very difficult for mid-day supervisors to meet the organisational requirement of the role to ensure every child finished eating before the end of lunchtime, which led to further inter-role conflict with other staff.

5.3: Brecks Drive Primary School

5.3.1: The positioning of the role

At Brecks Drive, the school did not promote a hierarchical system of staffing and the role of the mid-day supervisor was therefore not explicitly positioned in relation to other roles in the school. Mid-day supervisors were included in the school's display of staff, but this was ordered alphabetically so did not present as a hierarchy. Mid-day supervisors used the same system as all other staff for 'signing in' and 'signing out' of the school and wore lanyards with the same information as all other school staff. The discernible difference between mid-day supervisors and other staff was the wearing of tabards, but these were considered to be a practical tool for the role rather than an indication of a hierarchical place within the school. Tabards were also removed when mid-day supervisors worked alongside other staff in classrooms for the fifteen-minute period of time after lunchtime. This organisational positioning had a significant impact on the way in which the role was perceived within the school and enacted by those who occupied the role (Biddle, 1986).

There were few organisational constraints placed on the role beyond those applied to all other staff in terms of normative expectations of behaviour within the school. Mid-day supervisors could arrive and leave the school building whenever they wished during the school day. They were given electronic staff cards that allowed them full access to and around the building and they were permitted to access all areas of school, including the staff room, where mid-day supervisors would often meet together alongside other staff before and after lunchtime. There were also few constraints on the knowledge given to mid-day supervisors about pupils and sensitive information was communicated to mid-day supervisors when this was necessary. Mid-day supervisors stated that at times specific information remained confidential, but they were always alerted to concerns even if they were not given full details of the circumstances.

Some of the activities of the mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive extended beyond what had previously been accepted as the boundary for those undertaking the role. This had led to a re-positioning of the role within the school. The time that mid-day supervisors spent in the classroom at the end of every lunchtime positioned them as a members of staff who were present in the classroom on a daily basis, rather than simply present outside the classroom

during the lunchtime period. This time within the classroom also positioned the role of mid-day supervisors as one that was also involved in academic provision. Similarly, mid-day supervisors were often asked to cover for absent teaching assistants and accompany classes on educational visits, again positioning the role as one involved other elements of school life beyond lunchtime. As a result, organisational constraints on the role at Brecks Drive had changed significantly to allow mid-day supervisors to become more involved in the work of the school beyond lunchtimes and undertake tasks that would have previously been beyond the boundaries of the role.

At Brecks Drive, the role of the mid-day supervisor was not positioned within a community beyond the school and therefore the role was not influenced by structural factors beyond the organisation (Biddle, 1986). The school was a small, rural school with no immediate local community. The school had no traditional 'catchment area' and pupils were drawn from the catchment areas of other schools. Similarly, the mid-day supervisors did not live in the local area, nor had any relationships with pupils, other staff or each other beyond their role within the school. However, this could be considered unusual, given that previous research involving mid-day supervisors highlighted that mid-day supervisors are commonly draw from the local area surrounding the school (Thomson, 2007; Pike, 2010; Metcalfe et al, 2011; Pike & Kelly, 2014). Mid-day supervisors spoke positively about the role and how they were able to undertake it alongside their role as a parent, but did not make links between the role and how this positioned them in other communities. Only one mid-day supervisor commented on the wider perception of the role within society, highlighting that she considered it to be a job undertaken by 'mums who need to get out of the house'.

The positioning of the mid-day supervisor role as one that was valued within the organisation was reinforced by the interactions between mid-day supervisors and those who occupied other roles within the school, that were frequent and positive. These interactions reinforced the positioning of the role within the school and the way that this was enacted (Biddle, 1986). Opportunities for interaction between mid-day supervisors and other staff were deliberately built into the organisation of the beginning and end of lunchtime. These interactions were perceived to be important for communicating information about pupils between mid-day supervisors and other staff. As a result, this promoted a collaborative approach between other staff and mid-day supervisors. Mid-day

supervisors felt that they were valued by other staff, who listened to them and treated them on an 'equal footing' during their interactions.

The positioning of the role as one that was valued within the organisation, and the interactions that maintained this position, established and reinforced the normative expectations that were associated with the role in terms of the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1974; Turner, 2011) of those who occupied the role at the school.

The obligatory behaviours expected of mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive were mostly focused on the pastoral aspects of undertaking the role. Whist there were some obligatory behaviours that required mid-day supervisors to undertake procedural duties such as setting out equipment and cleaning, these were minimal. The formal job description that was given to mid-day supervisors emphasised the importance of interacting with pupils, offering pastoral support and leading playground activities. Also within the job description was the expectation to communicate with other staff about the welfare and well-being of pupils and raise any safeguarding concerns. As a result of this, the role of the mid-day supervisor was placed within the organisation as one that predominately contributed to the pastoral care of pupils within the school. Mid-day supervisors were expected to know and use the school's behaviour policy during lunchtime, both for recognising positive behaviour and resolving unwanted behaviour. Mid-day supervisors were also expected to administer basic first aid to pupils over lunchtime and complete the appropriate records of this.

An obligatory aspect of the mid-day supervisor role was the time spent in the classroom at the end of lunchtime. Mid-day supervisors were paid for this time, during which they heard individual children read aloud as part of the school's Everyone Reading in Class (ERIC) approach to promoting the enjoyment of reading. This obligatory element of the role was perceived positively by the mid-day supervisors at the school, though it was highlighted that it was not a function that they expected to perform when they first became a mid-day supervisor.

Another obligatory element of the role was that mid-day supervisors were expected to make decisions about the day-to-day running of school lunchtimes. For example, on wet days mid-day supervisors were expected to make the decision about whether pupils would

spend recreational time indoors or outdoors. They also decided what areas of the outdoor area pupils could utilise each day, and the equipment that was provided during lunchtime. When factors impacted on lunchtime, such as the eating area being out of use, mid-day supervisors were expected to make decisions about how to manage changes to lunchtime so that this ran as smoothly as possible. Mid-day supervisors commented that making decisions about the organisation and management of lunchtime made them feel trusted to do their job and part of the school community.

In terms of optional behaviours, there were opportunities for mid-day supervisors to be involved in further aspects of the work of the school. For example, mid-day supervisors regularly accompanied classes on educational visits and were involved in school events such as sports day. They were also invited to relevant after-school staff meetings and to school in-service training (INSET) days, although these were not made obligatory for mid-day supervisors because they also had childcare responsibilities. Similarly, mid-day supervisors were regularly asked if they wanted to cover for absent teaching assistants when this was necessary, even for short periods of time such as an hour after lunchtime. Mid-day supervisors at the school commented that having the opportunity to take part in the wider life of the school made them feel valued and trusted as members of staff.

Mid-day supervisors also had some optionality about the way in which their role was performed, especially as a group of staff. For example, each day the mid-day supervisors assigned one member of staff to complete all the procedural duties that did not involve interacting with pupils. Whilst there was no formal rota for this, generally the mid-day supervisors took turns to fulfil procedural duties. This division of labour was an optional way in which the mid-day supervisors ensured that procedural duties were fulfilled as effectively and efficiently as possible, allowing for the other mid-day supervisors to spend their time interacting with pupils.

At Brecks Drive, the forbidden behaviours of the role were very much the same as those of other roles within the school. The school's *Staff Code of Conduct* was applicable to every role within the school, including mid-day supervisors, and outlined the forbidden behaviours for all members of staff. This included behaviours such as taking photographs of pupils, using mobile devices in the presence of pupils and the use of social media. However, there

were no prohibited behaviours that applied only to mid-day supervisors, either within the *Staff Code of Conduct* or on a day-to-day basis as they enacted the role.

5.3.2: Role Legitimisation

Whilst the mid-day supervisors' participation in the school at Brecks Drive was still part-participatory (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2011), although this had been extended beyond previous role boundaries, the way in which the mid-day supervisor role was considered to be a valuable part of the school workforce led to it becoming legitimised within the school, rather than marginalised. The part-participation of this group of staff was not deemed to be problematic by others, or by the mid-day supervisors themselves. Mid-day supervisors felt that their participation in the school community was considered to be valuable and worthwhile. Interactions between mid-day supervisors and other staff who held central roles were positive, creating positive role relationships and a sense of belonging for mid-day supervisors even though they held a part-participatory role within the school.

The legitimate participation of mid-day supervisors was further reinforced by mid-day supervisors and other staff engaging in shared practice (Wenger, 2011). The most obvious example of this was the time that mid-day supervisors spent in classrooms during the school's ERIC session at the beginning of the afternoon, when they would engage in the same activity as other staff. The organisation of lunchtime was also structured to ensure that mid-day supervisors and other staff shared the same physical space as each other at the beginning and end of lunchtime, creating 'boundary encounters'(Wenger, 2011) so that shared practice could occur. Instances of unplanned shared practice also occurred regularly at Brecks Drive, such as other staff undertaking the procedural duties of mid-day supervisors at the start of lunchtime and joining them on the playground towards the end of lunchtime to transition the children back into classrooms together. Other staff and mid-day supervisors completed first aid records in the same way, enacted the same behaviour policy (often in collaboration) and attended training together.

5.3.3: Role Conflict and Role Strain

At Brecks Drive, role conflict and role strain were minimised and therefore did not have a negative impact on the well-being or effectives of those who occupied the role of mid-day supervisors at the school.

Firstly, the conception of the role was shared by mid-day supervisors and other staff undertaking different roles. The expectations of those who occupied the role were consistent across the school, including school leaders, teaching staff, support staff such as teaching assistants and the mid-day supervisors themselves. All staff perceived the role to be predominantly focused on interacting with pupils and offering pastoral support during lunchtime. Therefore, there was no intra-role conflict (Turner, 2011) between mid-day supervisors and those who held other roles within the school. As a result, this created harmony rather than tension between those undertaking different roles and avoided a potential cause of role strain for mid-day supervisors as a result of differing perspectives of the role (Pike, 2010).

Similarly, inter-role conflict (Turner, 2011) was minimised at Brecks Drive as mid-day supervisors did not tend to hold different roles out of school that intersected with their role within the school. The mid-day supervisors had deliberately avoided creating inter-role conflict between their role as a mid-day supervisor and a parent by working at a different school to the one attended by their own children, although one mid-day supervisor did highlight this as an issue when she had previously worked at her own child's school and cited this as the reason she moved to Brecks Drive. However, the way in which the school recruited mid-day supervisors also contributed to this lack of inter-role conflict as this was not deliberately aimed at pupils' parents but advertised more formally through the local authority. As a result, whilst parents were not precluded from applying for the role, they were not targeted for this and the vacancy was advertised more widely so that it was open to those who were not existing stakeholders in the school.

However, whilst inter-role conflict was minimised in terms of different roles held by mid-day supervisors within and beyond the school, the repositioning of the role had created some elements of inter-role conflict between different roles that they held within the school. During the lunchtime period, the functions of the role were clear and there was a shared understanding of the role. However, mid-day supervisors had begun to perform functions that were previously beyond the expectations of the role, such as their daily involvement in classroom activity. This had created some inter-role conflict, as mid-day supervisors commented that they were performing the role of a teaching assistant rather than a mid-day supervisor, and that transitioning between these two roles was sometimes problematic.

Mostly, this was a result of the mid-day supervisors being unsure of the role expectations of being a teaching assistant and working within a classroom context. This caused anxiety for those who were new to the role and the school as they did not expect this to be a requirement of being a mid-day supervisor. Whilst the mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive had become more comfortable performing this role over time, this did still cause some anxiety for them as they did not consider themselves to be 'qualified' to perform this role.

Other elements of role strain were also minimised at Brecks Drive. With the exception of their function within the classroom, mid-day supervisors perceived themselves to be capable of fulfilling the role. When they first became a mid-day supervisor, they were provided with a job description that detailed the functions of the role. New mid-day supervisors met with the head teacher before they began working at the school to discuss the role and spent lunchtime at the school so that they could observe how this was organised. When first undertaking the role, new mid-day supervisors 'shadowed' an experienced mid-day supervisor for two weeks as part of their initial training. As a result, mid-day supervisors felt confident to undertake the role, even when their experience was limited, avoiding this becoming a source of role strain.

At Brecks Drive, the requirements of the role were clearly set out in the job description that was given to mid-day supervisors. This avoided role ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) and supported role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) for the mid-day supervisors, as they were certain of the functions that they were required to perform. The requirements of the role did not exceed the time or resources of the mid-day supervisors at the school, avoiding role overload (Turner, 2011) and therefore minimising role strain. One mid-day supervisor commented that Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) had caused role overload when these were introduced, but that additional staffing and some changes to systems had alleviated this quickly.

There were therefore a number of factors that minimised role strain for those who enacted the role of a mid-day supervisor at Brecks Drive. The lack of intra-role and inter-role conflict meant that holding the role rarely caused "anxiety, tension and frustration" (Turner, 2011; p249) for mid-day supervisors. Role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) and the avoidance of role ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) meant that mid-day supervisors understood the purpose, functions and expectations of the role. Furthermore,

effective induction and training, alongside the lack of role overload (Turner, 2011) meant that mid-day supervisors felt confident and capable of fulfilling the role, apart from the repositioned aspect of this within classrooms. This minimisation of role conflict and role strain at Brecks Drive increased the job satisfaction and well-being of mid-day supervisors, enhancing their commitment to and performance of the role and therefore benefitting the school community (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

5.3.4: Summary

The positioning of the role at Brecks Drive was strongly influenced by organisational factors, particularly the lack of a hierarchical staffing structure and the valued position of the role within the school. This positioning meant that there were few organisational constraints placed specifically on the role of the mid-day supervisor. Although there were obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours associated with the role, the belief that these were in alignment with the purpose of the role was shared by mid-day supervisors and those undertaking other roles within the school. Whilst the role remained a part-participatory one, this was not perceived to be problematic and the participation of mid-day supervisors was valued, thus legitimising the role within the school community.

There were several factors that minimised role strain for mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive. There was no intra-role conflict between mid-day supervisors and other staff at the school and minimal inter-role conflict between different roles held by mid-day supervisors themselves. Role clarity and effective training meant that mid-day supervisors had a clear understanding of the requirements of the role and felt capable of undertaking it successfully. Whilst UIFSM had caused short-term role overload previously, this was no longer the case and the role could be fulfilled in the time and with the resources that were available.

5.4: Gleneagles Park Primary School

5.4.1: The Positioning of the Role

At Gleneagles Park the role of mid-day supervisors was positioned as one that was separate from the rest of the school workforce. This 'separateness' of mid-day supervisors was also identified by Moore et al (2010), who identified this as a common characteristic across the eleven primary schools.

Mid-day supervisors 'signed in' to the school when they arrived using a specific book only used by them, were asked not to arrive at the school before their contracted hours and did not appear on the school display of staff, or on the school website. As a result, the role of the mid-day supervisor at Gleneagles Park was not positioned within the organisational hierarchy of the school, but outside of it.

The positioning of the role as separate to the other roles within the school was reinforced by organisational constraints that were placed upon it. This mostly centered around the constraints on mid-day supervisors interacting with other staff at the school, with the practical organisation of school lunchtime limiting interactions between mid-day supervisors and staff occupying other roles. Mid-day supervisors were only permitted to arrive at school immediately prior to the beginning of lunchtime and were required to leave as soon as lunchtime was complete, providing no opportunity to interact with other staff. The systems for transitioning pupils between the care of teaching staff and mid-day supervisors at the beginning and end of lunchtime constrained the opportunity for interactions between mid-day supervisors and other staff. Constraints were also placed on the information given to mid-day supervisors about pupils at the school, and on mid-day supervisors sharing knowledge about pupils that they held with other staff.

At Gleneagles Park, the role of the mid-day supervisor was strongly positioned within the different communities beyond the school. As a result, the perception of the role and the way this was enacted by the mid-day supervisors was heavily influenced by structural factors (Biddle, 1986). This was usually linked to the cultural communities that existed within the local community and extended into the school community. Many of the mid-day supervisors at the school perceived their role as one that was part of and contributed to their cultural community, more so than the school community. This contribution to the

cultural community was often the strongest motivating factor for becoming a mid-day supervisor, with mid-day supervisors citing the desire to make a difference to children from their cultural community at school. Many of the mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park spoke about how they felt that an important part of their role was to support children from their own cultural community, especially those who did not speak English fluently and shared the same first language, or those who were new to the area or country.

Holding the role of a mid-day supervisor at the school positioned mid-day supervisors within their cultural community positively. Many mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park stated that this influenced how they were perceived by others in their cultural community, with some commenting that this gave them a 'higher status' within that community. Mid-day supervisors stated that holding the role meant that others within their cultural community perceived them as 'trustworthy' and 'honest' and that holding the role gave them a higher level of 'respect' amongst others in their cultural community.

The lack of interaction between mid-day supervisors and other staff established the role as one that was separate from the rest of the school workforce. Therefore, interactions between other staff and mid-day supervisors had little influence on how those who occupied the mid-day supervisor role enacted it. However, this lack of interaction did not have a negative impact on how mid-day supervisors perceived their own role, or other staff in the school. Many spoke about their role being one that was necessary to give other staff a break at lunchtime and therefore did not expect to interact with them during lunchtime. Indeed, mid-day supervisors seemed to consider a lack of interaction as an indication that they were trusted to undertake their role without interference from those who held other roles within the school. Therefore, interaction had little influence on the perceptions of the role or the way in which mid-day supervisors enacted this (Biddle, 1986).

Whilst the role of mid-day supervisors was separate from the rest of the school workforce, there were some organisational normative expectations of those who occupied the role. These were mostly established through the written job description that was given to mid-day supervisors. This detailed the obligatory behaviours that mid-day supervisors were expected to enact. These mostly focused on procedural duties, such as setting out utensils and equipment, maintaining timings so that all children had finished eating by the end of lunchtime and ensuring that the hall and playground were ready for afternoon use. Within

the job description, there was very little reference to working with children, aside from administering first aid and supervising them on the playground and in the dining hall. The emphasis on the procedural aspect of the role set the organisational normative expectations of those undertaking it.

Whilst the written job description set out the obligatory behaviours expected of mid-day supervisors, there were some forbidden behaviours for those enacting the role. Mid-day supervisors were not permitted to be in the school building beyond the very few minutes either side of lunchtime, or to enter certain parts of the school such as the staffroom and classrooms (with the exception of days when poor weather meant pupils remained inside at lunchtime). Mid-day supervisors were also forbidden from sharing information that they knew about pupils either with other mid-day supervisors, or staff who occupied different roles. The exception to this was if a mid-day supervisor perceived a safeguarding concern, when they were expected to share their concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the school.

Another aspect of forbidden behaviour was the knowing of information about pupils at the school. This was mostly related to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Whist the mid-day supervisors knew that certain children were 'different', the school did not allow mid-day supervisors to know information about individual children, except from that relating to food allergies. When mid-day supervisors raised this as an issue in the past, they were told that they were forbidden from knowing information about individual children because this was confidential and the school did not have parental permission to disclose this. In this respect, the school further emphasised that mid-day supervisors were positioned as a separate part of the school workforce, as such information was shared between other staff in the school. Indeed, one reason that mid-day supervisors were forbidden from entering the staffroom was that an information board with photographs of pupils who had medical conditions was displayed in there, and this was information that mid-day supervisors were not allowed to know about individual pupils, despite this being shared with all other groups of staff at the school who were able to access the staffroom.

In terms of optional behaviours at Gleneagles Park, these were most related to the frequency and way in which mid-day supervisors interacted with pupils during lunchtime.

The obligatory aspects of the role were so focused on procedural duties that there was no organisational expectation of how mid-day supervisors interacted with pupils. As a result, some mid-day supervisors interacted frequently with pupils, whist some had very little interaction with them. This was most evident on the outdoor playing area, where some mid-day supervisors would proactively involve themselves in the games that children were playing or initiate conversations with pupils, whereas some mid-day supervisors only interacted with pupils when they were approached by them. However, mid-day supervisors perceived choosing the extent to which they interacted with pupils to be a positive aspect of the role.

Whilst there were organisational expectations of the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours that were applied to those who occupied the role of a mid-day supervisor, the strong positioning of the role within cultural communities also significantly influenced these expectations. This was mostly unproblematic as there were few behaviours that were considered obligatory within the cultural community that were forbidden by the school, or forbidden within the cultural community but obligatory as part of organisational expectations. The exception to this was the expectations about sharing information with parents. As the role was positioned within cultural communities, mid-day supervisors were often asked about children by others within their cultural community, especially relating to issues such as behaviour, friendship groups and eating habits. However, discussing pupils with others outside of the school was forbidden by the school, so this sometimes placed mid-day supervisors in a difficult position of choosing between the normative expectations of their cultural community and the normative expectations of the school. Some mid-day supervisors commented that not disclosing information about pupils had caused difficulties for them within the cultural community that they were part of beyond the school.

Similarly, there were some normative expectations of the role within cultural communities that impacted on how mid-day supervisors enacted their role within school. Mostly, this focused on the expectation that mid-day supervisors would prioritise working with pupils from the same cultural community as them. This was true of the different cultural communities represented within the school. Mid-day supervisors themselves perceived this to be positive and felt that knowing pupils from their own cultural community not only allowed them to work more effectively with those children, but that it was beneficial for

pupils to interact with adults from their own cultural community during lunchtime. When issues such as disagreements between pupils or poor behaviour occurred, this would usually be referred to and resolved by a mid-day supervisor from the same cultural community as the pupil(s) involved. It was unclear whether other staff in school were aware that this was happening, but as there was significant optionality related to interacting with pupils, this approach was not forbidden by the school.

5.4.2: Role Marginalisation

The part-participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2011) of mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park was strictly limited to the lunchtime period. Whilst this part-participation was not perceived to be problematic in itself, either by the mid-day supervisors themselves or by other staff within the school community, it led to a distinct separation of this group of staff from the rest of the school workforce, as also highlighted in research by Moore et al (2010). Those who were fully-participant in the school community did not seem to take interest in the work of mid-day supervisors and this prevented a positive role relationship from developing between mid-day supervisors and other staff within the school.

At Gleneagles Park, mid-day supervisors were not involved in any other aspects of the school community and opportunities to engage in joint activity or shared practice alongside other school staff did not occur. Indeed, the constraint on the times that mid-day supervisors were permitted to be in the school building and the practical organisation of lunchtime meant that other staff and mid-day supervisors very rarely shared the same physical space as each other. Whilst mid-day supervisors had participated in both first aid and safeguarding training, this had occurred separately to rather than alongside other staff. Information about pupils was also withheld from mid-day supervisors and this prevented shared knowledge.

As a result, the role of the mid-day supervisor at Gleneagles Park became one that was marginalised from the school community. However, this did not seem to be perceived negatively by the mid-day supervisors themselves, who considered that their role at the school was valued within and beneficial to their cultural community.

5.4.3: Role Conflict and Role Strain

At Gleneagles Park, there were some aspects of role conflict and role strain that influenced the way in which mid-day supervisors enacted the role and on their experience of doing so.

Despite the separation of the role from the school community, some elements of intra-role conflict (Turner, 2011) did occur at Gleneagles Park. Most mid-day supervisors perceived working with children, especially those from their own cultural community, as a key element of their role within the school. However, the written job description and the normative expectations of the role focused on procedural duties. At Gleneagles Park, there was approximately one mid-day supervisor per sixty pupils at the school and this low staffing ratio precluded giving equal attention to pastoral and procedural duties. This resulted in intra-role conflict for most mid-day supervisors, who wanted to undertake more pastoral work but were limited from doing so by the procedural duties that they were expected to fulfil.

Significant role conflict also occurred as a result of the positioning of the role both within the school organisation and the cultural communities that mid-day supervisors also belonged to. Often, there were conflicting normative expectations of those undertaking the role and therefore the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours that mid-day supervisors were expected to exhibit were not aligned. This caused high levels of inter-role conflict (Turner, 2011), especially in two aspects of the role where normative expectations were particularly different.

Firstly, mid-day supervisors highlighted that cultural attitudes towards eating influenced how they approached this aspect of their work in school. Within the different cultural communities at the school, attitudes towards eating were often very different to what was expected at school. For example, within one cultural community, the expectation would be that a child ate all the food that is given to them. However, at school this was not the expectation. This created inter-role conflict for mid-day supervisors from certain cultural communities, who were often unsure of whether to act on cultural expectations and be more insistent that children ate all of the food that they were given, or school expectations that allowed children to dispose of food as waste.

Secondly, mid-day supervisors highlighted that cultural attitudes towards the expectations of children's behaviour, and how this was responded to by adults, was also different at school to within the cultural community. Mid-day supervisors commented that the way in which some pupils behaved at school would be 'more harshly dealt with' within the cultural community than it was at school, and this left them in a conflicted position in terms of how to respond to children's behaviour. Often, mid-day supervisors stated that they dealt with the same children's behaviour differently in school than they did when they interacted with them as part of their cultural community, but at times they found it difficult to apply the school's expectations and approaches to behaviour rather than the expectations and approaches that existed within their cultural community, causing inter-role conflict.

The frustration that mid-day supervisors felt about the intra-role conflict of being unable to undertake pastoral work due to the organisational emphasis on procedural duties and the anxiety and tension caused by incompatible normative expectations of behaviour within and beyond the school contributed to significant role strain for mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park.

There were other elements of role strain that impacted on mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park. Mid-day supervisors at the school highlighted that a lack of sufficient training when they first took on the role meant that they felt incapable of fulfilling it successfully for some time. However, the written job description given to mid-day supervisors did stipulate the requirements of the role clearly. This avoided role ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) and supported role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) for the mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park, as they knew the functions that they were required to perform, even though they felt that there should have been less emphasis on procedural duties and more on pastoral work.

The other significant aspect of role strain at Gleneagles Park was as a result of role overload (Turner, 2011). A low staffing ratio, high absence rates amongst mid-day supervisors and growing pupil numbers at the school meant that even the procedural requirements of the role exceeded the collective time and resources of the mid-day supervisors. Despite these challenges, the school had recently shortened the length of lunchtime by fifteen minutes to try and reduce the number of incidents of poor behaviour on the playground. This caused significant anxiety for mid-day supervisors because it was not possible for all pupils in school

to finish eating lunch in the time available. Whilst the mid-day supervisors had introduced some new procedures aimed at speeding up the transitions between the outdoor area and the eating area, these changes could not compensate for the reduction in time that was allocated to lunchtime. Role overload was therefore a significant cause of role strain at Gleneagles Park.

At Gleneagles Park, the role of the mid-day supervisors was negatively impacted through role strain caused by some intra-role conflict, but particularly by high levels of intra-role conflict and role overload. This led to job dissatisfaction and damaged the well-being of mid-day supervisors at the school, lowering their commitment to the role and negatively impacting on their performance of it. Subsequently, the school community did not benefit from the role to the extent that could have been achieved if this role strain was minimised (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

5.4.4: Summary

The positioning of the role at Gleneagles Park was influenced by organisational factors, particularly the separation of the role of the mid-day supervisor from other roles within the school community (Moore, 2010). The part-participatory of the role at Gleneagles Park meant that this was not considered to be a role that contributed to the school community and led to the marginalization of this role and those who occupied it.

Whilst there were normative expectations of the organisation of those who occupied the role, there were also normative expectations held of mid-day supervisors by those within the cultural communities that intersected with the school. These co-existing but contrasting expectations were problematic for mid-day supervisors when it came to enacting the role, as they demanded different obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours and therefore created inter-role conflict. Role overload was also significant at Gleneagles Park and the collective resources of the mid-day supervisors, alongside the short lunchtime period, made it extremely difficult for those who occupied the role to fulfil the requirements of it successfully, leading to job dissatisfaction and a negatively impacting on the experience of being a mid-day supervisor at the school.

5.5: Comparison of the Schools

5.5.1: The Positioning of the Role

There were significant differences between the positioning of the mid-day supervisors' role at the three schools in this study. At Kirkley Road, the role was positioned at the bottom of the school's organisational hierarchy. At Brecks Drive, the role was positioned equally with other roles within the school. At Gleneagles Park, the role was positioned outside of the school's organisational structure.

The positioning of staff was evident physically within the school and online on the schools' websites. At Kirkley Road, information about school staff was presented as a physical hierarchy with mid-day supervisors at the bottom of this, whereas at Brecks Drive this was presented alphabetically. At Gleneagles Park, mid-day supervisors were not included within the school's staffing information.

The positioning of the role was also highlighted through the 'access' given to mid-day supervisors in comparison to other staff within the schools. At Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park, mid-day supervisors were not given free access to enter the school building and were not allowed to enter some areas within the building that were accessible to all other staff. However, this was not the case at Brecks Drive, where mid-day supervisors were able to access the building and areas within the school in the same way as other staff.

The role also held valued position within the wider local community at Kirkley Road and cultural community at Gleneagles Park, however this was perceived to be problematic by the school itself and impacted on the positioning of the role within the organisational staffing structure. Due to its rural context, the role did not hold a position at Brecks Drive beyond the school itself and therefore this did not impact on the positioning of the role within the school.

5.5.2: Obligatory, Optional and Forbidden Behaviours

This positioning led to some variation in the normative expectations of the role at the different schools, and in turn some differences in the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973) expected of those who occupied the role.

Some behaviours that that were forbidden at one school were obligatory or optional at others. For example, administering first aid was forbidden at Kirkley Road, obligatory as part of the role at Brecks Drive and optional at Gleneagles Park, where mid-day supervisors were allowed to administer first aid, but also 'opt out' of doing so. Similarly, mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive were expected to enact the school's behaviour policy at lunchtime, whereas this was forbidden at Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park. Undertaking pastoral work with pupils was also an expectation of the role at Brecks Drive, whereas this was optional at Gleneagles Park and discouraged (although not forbidden) at Kirkley Road. Professional interaction with other staff was also strongly discouraged (though again not forbidden) at Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park, yet was obligatory at Brecks Drive. However, when it came to social interaction with other staff, this was forbidden at both Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park, but optional (and encouraged) at Brecks Drive.

Whilst variation was evident between the schools, there were also some behaviours that were considered to be obligatory within all three schools. These mostly focused on the procedural duties that were expected to be undertaken by mid-day supervisors, such as preparing the eating area with cutlery and crockery and setting up the outdoor area with play equipment for pupils to use at lunchtime. Mid-day supervisors at all schools were expected to intervene when poor behaviour occurred, although they way in which mid-day supervisors were expected to do this was different in each school. Mid-day supervisors at all schools were also expected to manage the transition of pupils between the eating area and the outdoor area and ensure that all pupils had finished eating by the end of lunchtime so that afternoon lessons could begin.

5.5.3: Role Ligitimisation and Role Marginalisation

Whilst the role was inevitably part-participatory at all three schools, it was legitimised at Brecks Drive but marginalised at Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park. At Brecks Drive, the part-participation of mid-day supervisors was not perceived to be problematic, their work was valued, interactions with other staff were positive and shared practice occurred as a result of daily boundary encounters. This led to positive role relationships between mid-day supervisors and other school staff and a sense of involvement and belonging for mid-day supervisors at the school.

The role of the mid-day supervisor at Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park was one that was marginalised from the school community. However, this marginalisation was different in nature at each school. At Kirkley Road the marginalisation was mostly as result of conflict and hostility between mid-day supervisors and other staff within the school that led to negative role relationships. As a result, the marginalisation of the role at Kirkley Road was a source of frustration and job dissatisfaction for the mid-day supervisors who worked there.

At Gleneagles Park marginalisation was mostly a result of the positioning of the role as one that was separate from the rest of the school workforce. Interaction between mid-day supervisors and other staff was uncommon and therefore role relationships were not developed and shared practice did not occur. However, at Gleneagles Park the marginalisation of the role did not appear to be of concern to the mid-day supervisors themselves, who perceived their role as one that contributed to their cultural community rather than to the school community.

5.5.4: Role Conflict and Role Strain

At Kirkley Road, very high levels of inter-role conflict, intra-role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload resulted in significant role strain for mid-day supervisors at the school. In turn, this resulted in a generally negative experience for those who occupied the role at Kirkley Road. At Gleneagles Park there were high levels of inter-role conflict and role overload, alongside some role ambiguity, that resulted in role strain for mid-day supervisors at the school. However, this was not as intense as the role strain experienced by mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road.

This contrasted with the experience of mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive, where there were no elements of intra-role conflict, role ambiguity or role overload. Whist there was some inter-role conflict as a result of mid-day supervisors undertaking duties that had previously being considered to be a function of teaching assistants, this did not seem to be significant enough to create problematic role strain for the mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Implications

This chapter will outline the contribution to knowledge that this research makes to the understanding of the role and place of mid-day supervisors in primary schools, present conclusions from the study and the potential implications that arise. The chapter will then outline the further work that will be done to disseminate this understanding of the role to those in schools who are ultimately responsible for the appointment and management of mid-day supervisors, and the way in which the role of the mid-day supervisor is positioned and expected to be enacted within the school.

6.1: Contribution to Knowledge

Through this study, I have developed an understanding of the role and place of mid-day supervisors within primary schools, focused on the over-arching research question:

- What is the role and place of mid-day supervisors within primary schools?

To explore this more deeply, my research explored key elements and aspects of the role, including:

- What motivates primary-school mid-day supervisors to undertake this role?
- What is the nature of the work undertaken by primary-school mid-day supervisors?
- How is the role of mid-day supervisors positioned within primary schools?
- What factors might impact upon the way in which mid-day supervisors undertake their role within the school and their experience of doing so?

By exploring these questions, this study makes a contribution to knowledge as the role of the primary-school mid-day supervisor is one that has not come under such scrutiny in previous research. Whilst some research has commented on mid-day supervisors, this has always been in the context of other research aims and mid-day supervisors themselves are rarely participants in the research. As such, this study is the first to focus wholly on the role and place of primary-school mid-day supervisors and therefore makes a significant contribution to understanding this role. Also unlike other research, this study has also harnessed mid-day supervisors themselves as participants in order to develop an understanding of the experience of undertaking this role from those who do so within schools.

Whilst the intention of this research was to explore the role of the mid-day supervisor itself rather than its enactment in one specific school, three case studies do limit the generalisability of the study to other school contexts (Newby, 2014). The role and place of mid-day supervisors was significantly different in all three of the schools in this study, as was the experience of being a mid-day supervisor at each school. It is therefore likely that this would also be different again in other school contexts, even in schools with similar demographics and characteristics.

6.2: Reflexive Commentary

The ethnographic approach to this study allowed for an in-depth exploration of the mid-day supervisor role within each of the three schools. This approach allowed me to provide a rich and detailed account (Mills & Morton, 2013) of the experience of mid-day supervisors at each school, using the data to produce vivid written portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) that portrayed the reality of their experiences. This combination of gathering data through ethnographic approaches and presenting this as written portraiture maintained the epistemological aim of the research by highlighting the voices of the mid-day supervisors themselves to articulate an understanding of their role within schools and their experiences of undertaking this.

Key indicators of research quality in an ethnographic approach to research are evident throughout the study. Newby (2014) highlights the importance of both opportunistic and planned data collection to the success of research that uses ethnographic approaches, both of which were utilized during this study by working alongside the mid-day supervisors to collect opportunistic data and undertaking ethnographic interviews to collect planned data. Successful ethnographic approaches to research result in a comprehensive description of a context (Pole & Morrison, 2003) that portrays insiders' perspectives and experiences (Mills & Morton, 2013). This was achieved through the portraits that were produced and analysed using the data that was collected.

My own professional learning in this project was enhanced by being participant in the work of the mid-day supervisors. Having undertaken previous research that did not involve researcher participation, it was evident during this project how much more willing the mid-day supervisors were to share their experience of undertaking the role with me as I worked

alongside them. Mid-day supervisors often proactively sought out opportunities to work alongside me to tell me about their experiences, both positive and negative, and likely that they told me both more and different information, both in the participatory stage and during interviews, than they would have done if I had not shared in their work (Puttick, 2017).

6.3: Conclusions

6.3.1: Motivation for the Role

The vast majority of mid-day supervisors were initially attracted to the role as the working hours were convenient. This was usually because the mid-day supervisor had a young child or children who they were able to take to school in the morning and collect from school in the afternoon. The role also did not require the mid-day supervisor to work at other times when they needed to care for their own children, such as school holidays and INSET days. Mid-day supervisors often worked in the same school that their own children attended as this meant their place of work was within walking distance and they were never required to work when the school was closed to pupils, therefore avoiding difficulties with childcare. Some of the mid-day supervisors began the role as they saw it as an opportunity to have some contact with or *keep an eye on* their own child or children and many, though not all, vacated the role when their own children left the school.

Mid-day supervisors also had other reasons for undertaking the role. For many, it gave them the opportunity to re-enter the working world after caring full-time for their own children, whilst still allowing them to fulfil daily parental responsibilities such as taking their children to school in the morning and collecting them at the end of the school day. A number of mid-day supervisors were attracted to the role to *keep busy* and *get out of the house*. The opportunity to work with children was also cited as a motivation for becoming a mid-day supervisor. Many other roles working with children required qualifications that mid-day supervisors did not hold, so the role was appealing to those who wanted to work with children but did not have the qualifications to do so in other roles. Many mid-day supervisors were also motivated to fulfil the role because of their belief that this contributed positively to the local community.

6.3.2: Positioning of the Role

The positioning of the role of mid-day supervisor within the organisation was distinctly different in each of the three schools.

At Kirkley Road, the role was openly positioned at the very bottom of a strong hierarchical staffing structure within the school. There were significant organsational constraints placed on the role that were not applied to any other roles within the school and made mid-day supervisors feel that the role was unvalued and unimportant to the school. The role's position at the bottom of the staffing hierarchy resulted in mid-day supervisors often being undermined by those who held other roles within the school. This created significant inter-role conflict between mid-day supervisors and other school staff, leading to negative role relationships and causing anxiety, tension and frustration for mid-day supervisors. Holding the role of a mid-day supervisor at Kirkley Road also held a position within the local community, where being a mid-day supervisor was perceived to be a positive role to hold. However, this positioning of the role within the local community was perceived to be problematic by the school, resulting in further constraints being placed on mid-day supervisors, particularly in terms of the information that they were allowed to know about pupils. Again, this frustrated mid-day supervisors who felt that they were not trusted to maintain confidentiality.

At Brecks Drive, staffing roles at the school were not openly hierarchical and therefore the role of the mid-day supervisor was not positioned as one that sat within a hierarchical structure. There were no specific constraints placed on the role that did not apply to other roles within the school and mid-day supervisors perceived their role to be valued by the school and other staff. This led to positive role relationships between mid-day supervisors and the rest of the school workforce. The positioning of the role at Brecks Drive had also changed in recent years, with mid-day supervisors becoming involved in the life of the school beyond lunchtime, such as spending a short time in a classroom every day as part of the school's Everyone Reading in Class (ERIC) session, supporting pupils to develop reading skills. This caused some anxiety for mid-day supervisors as they did not consider themselves to be 'qualified' to perform this role. Mid-day supervisors also perceived that they were performing a function usually associated with the position of teaching assistants and this

created an element of intra-role conflict for mid-day supervisors, who commented that transitioning between these two roles was sometimes problematic.

At Gleneagles Park, the role of the mid-day supervisor was positioned outside of the staffing structure of the school, creating a separate workforce rather than including mid-day supervisors as a role that contributed to the whole-school workforce. However, this separation did not seem to be a concern for mid-day supervisors, who perceived the role as one that was beneficial to their cultural community beyond the school rather than to the school itself. There were organisational constraints placed on the role of the mid-day supervisor that were not applied to other roles at the school, mostly related to the information that they were given about pupils. This caused some frustration for mid-day supervisors, as they believed these constraints prevented them from working with pupils as effectively as they could have done.

The role of the mid-day supervisor at Gleneagles Park was strongly positioned in the cultural communities that mid-day supervisors also belonged to. This had a significant impact on how they enacted the role, as there was consensus amongst the mid-day supervisors that they would focus their pastoral work on pupils who also belonged to their cultural community. The strong positioning of the role within cultural communities created significant inter-role conflict for mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park, as the normative expectations of the school in terms of the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours contrasted with those held within their cultural community.

At all three schools, the role of the mid-day supervisor remained a part-participatory one (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; 2011). At Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park, the role became one that was marginalised from the rest of the school workforce. At these schools, the part-participation of mid-day supervisors was perceived to be problematic and their work was not valued. Role relationships were negative, mid-day supervisors did not engage in shared practice with staff in other roles and key knowledge was withheld from them rather than shared. At Brecks Drive, however, the role became one that was legitimised as part of the school workforce. The part-participation of mid-day supervisors was not perceived to be problematic and their work was valued by other staff. Role relationships were positive, mid-day supervisors engaged in shared practice with staff in other roles and key knowledge was shared with them.

6.3.3: Functions of the Role

At all three schools, the role of the mid-day supervisor entailed two distinct types of duties; procedural and pastoral.

Procedural duties included preparing the dining hall and playground for lunchtime, making sure children were given the correct food, ensuring the availability of drinking water, wiping up spillages, clearing away uneaten food and packing away equipment before the end of lunchtime. At all three schools, mid-day supervisors felt under pressure to make sure the procedural duties of the role happened quickly and effectively so that lunchtime did not over-run. In every school, it was highlighted that the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) posed a challenge for the mid-day supervisors as this had led to a higher number of children accessing hot meals provided by the school. Not only did hot meals take longer to serve to the children, but they also took longer to eat. Two of the schools, Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park, had not increased the length of the lunchtime period or increased the number of mid-day supervisors in response to this change, causing significant role overload (Turner, 2011) for the mid-day supervisors at these schools. In contrast, Brecks Drive had responded to the introduction of UIFSM by employing an additional mid-day supervisor and making some changes to the organisation of lunchtime, and therefore prevented this from leading to role overload.

The pastoral aspects of the role were also common across the three schools, but to varying degrees. These involved specifically monitoring vulnerable children, supporting pupils who were new to the school, interacting with children who appeared to be alone or were upset, repairing broken friendships, taking care of children who were ill or injured, being a *shoulder to cry on* and interacting with pupils who had little adult attention at home. Mid-day supervisors saw the value of their pastoral role and gave this more importance than their procedural duties, although the mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park did not feel other staff valued their pastoral work and viewed their procedural role as a priority to ensure that lunchtime finished on time. The organisational expectations of mid-day supervisors at both Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park focused almost entirely on the procedural element of the role of mid-day supervisors, whereas the expectations at Brecks Drive emphasised the pastoral aspect of the role. This had a significant impact on the way in which the role was enacted in the different schools. At Kirkley Road and Gleneagles Park

there was significant conflict between the schools' expectations of mid-day supervisors to focus on procedural duties and the mid-day supervisors' desire to focus on pastoral work. This created significant role strain for mid-day supervisors and led to job dissatisfaction, lower commitment to the role and contributed to a negative experience of being a mid-day supervisor at these schools.

6.3.4: Role Strain

Role strain can be a result of a variety of factors that impact on those who undertake the role of a mid-day supervisor, such as role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity, a lack of training or experience and the individual's self-perceived capability to fulfil the role. The extent to which an individual experiences role strain is dependent on the intensity of each of these factors and the number of these that are experienced (Turner, 2011). However, for those who experience role strain this is likely to result in job dissatisfaction, anxiety, damage to well-being, lower commitment to the role and lower performance of the role (House & Rizzo, 1972; Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

The extent to which role strain was experienced by mid-day supervisors, and why this occurred, was different between the three schools in this study.

Mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road experienced significant intra-role conflict as a result of conflicting conceptions of the role between themselves and those who occupied other roles in the school, and their negative and often hostile interactions and role relationships with other staff. There were also elements of inter-role conflict for mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road, as the role held a position in the local community that was perceived to be problematic by the school and led to constraints on mid-day supervisors that were not applied to any other staff. A lack of training for mid-day supervisors, especially when they first took on the role, meant that they felt incapable of fulfilling the role and the lack of a job description caused role ambiguity about the functions of the role that they were expected to fulfil. Role overload, exacerbated by Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), was also significant at Kirkley Road as the requirement to ensure that all pupils had finished eating by the end of lunchtime was not possible to achieve within this time with the staffing resources that were available. As a result of these factors, and especially the high levels of

intra-role conflict and role overload, role strain was a significant aspect of undertaking the role for mid-day supervisors at Kirkley Road.

Mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive, however, experienced much lower levels of role strain. There was a consistent understanding of the function of their role within the school that was shared by mid-day supervisors and other staff, who also had positive role relationships built through positive interactions that ensured that inter-role conflict was minimised. There was a clear job description that avoided role ambiguity for those who occupied it and planned induction and ongoing training that supported mid-day supervisors to feel capable of fulfilling the functions of the role. Whilst role overload had occurred with the introduction of UIFSM, this was no longer the case as the school had employed an additional mid-day supervisor in response to this change. The only factor that contributed to role strain at Brecks Drive was that of inter-role conflict, as mid-day supervisors had begun to perform duties within the classroom that were usually undertaken by teaching assistants. This transition between performing the functions of a mid-day supervisor and what was perceived to be a function of a teaching assistant caused inter-role conflict for mid-day supervisors as they did not consider themselves to be qualified to perform this. Whilst this inter-role conflict therefore did create some element of role strain for mid-day supervisors at Brecks Drive, this was not a significant aspect of undertaking the role for mid-day supervisors at the school.

Mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park also experienced a number of different factors that led to role strain. The conception of the role held by the school that the role should be mostly procedural contrasted with the conception that mid-day supervisors held that the role should be focused on pastoral work with children, resulting in intra-role conflict. However, this was not as intense as the inter-role conflict experienced by mid-day supervisors. As a result of the strong positioning of the role in their cultural communities, there was significant conflict between the normative expectations of mid-day supervisors between the school and their cultural community. This created significant inter-role conflict and therefore role strain for mid-day supervisors, who were often forced to make a choice between enacting the expectations of the school or the expectations of their cultural community. Role overload was also significant at Gleneagles Park. As a result of growing pupil numbers and the shortening of the lunchtime period, the requirement to ensure that

all pupils had finished eating by the end of lunchtime was not possible to achieve within the time that was available. As a result of high levels of inter-role conflict and role overload, role strain was a significant aspect of undertaking the role for mid-day supervisors at Gleneagles Park.

6.4: Implications

Whilst this study only involved three primary school contexts and is therefore somewhat limited in scope, there were both common and contrasting findings of how the role was positioned, enacted and experienced by those who occupied it. This research therefore makes four recommendations for schools to make best use of the mid-day supervisors within the workforce.

6.4.1: Organisational Positioning

In terms of the organisational structure of a school, positioning any role openly at the bottom of the hierarchy is likely to have a detrimental impact on how this is perceived by others, and those who occupy it, who are likely to feel undervalued and unimportant. This is also likely to create intra-role conflict and lead to poor role relationships between different groups of staff within the school (Turner, 2011). The recommendation is not simply to re-position the role of the mid-day supervisor in the school hierarchy, as this would inevitably place another role at the bottom, but to develop a structure whereby roles in the school workforce are perceived to contribute in different ways to the operation of the school. This could be achieved by not presenting structural hierarchies visibly within the school ensuring that mid-day supervisors are not 'separated' from other staff in terms of staff policy and procedures, for example by 'signing in' and 'signing out' of school in the same way as other groups of staff.

6.4.2: Legitimising Part-participation

The role of the mid-day supervisor is inevitably a part-participatory one within the school community. However, these roles can be either legitimised or marginalised (Wenger, 1998). Schools should endeavour to legitimise the role of the mid-day supervisor as one that is beneficial to the school community by openly valuing the work of those who occupy the role. The organisation of lunchtime should be structured to allow boundary encounters

(Lave & Wenger, 1991) to occur between mid-day supervisors and other staff, so that they share the same physical space and engage in shared practice. Similarly, mid-day supervisors should be given the opportunity by school leaders and governors, who may need to agree to the financial implication of this, to engage in shared training with other school staff when this is relevant to their role, such as first aid and safeguarding. The sharing of knowledge with and by mid-day supervisors should be encouraged, especially when this relates to safeguarding concerns or the well-being of pupils who mid-day supervisors interact with.

The legitimisation or marginalisation of the mid-day supervisor role not only has implications for those who undertake it, but also for the wider school community. A group of staff who consider themselves to be marginalised from the rest of the school workforce are less likely to contribute to the overarching aims of the school and make a positive impact on the school community. It is therefore incumbent on school leaders to overtly legitimise the role of mid-day supervisors so that this part-participatory role is perceived by other staff to hold value to the school community. This was apparent at Brecks Drive, where the headteacher publicly demonstrated value for the role and its contribution to school life, thus promoting legitimisation over marginalisation. At Brecks Drive, lunchtime was also deliberately structured so that mid-day supervisors and other staff occupied the same physical space and shared in the management of the start and end of lunchtime, further legitimising the role of the mid-day supervisors by enabling shared practice to occur. This highlights the importance of providing opportunities for staff who hold different roles within a school to engage in shared practice to promote the legitimisation of all roles within the school community.

6.4.3: Functions of the Role

Schools should ensure that the functions of the role are clear by producing a written job description for the role and sharing this with potential mid-day supervisors before they take on the role. The aim of this is to avoid role ambiguity (Karkolla, Kuittinen & Hintsa, 2019) and ensure that those who enter the role do so with the knowledge of the functions that they are required to perform.

The role of a mid-day supervisor generally consists of procedural and pastoral duties. Most who undertake the role are motivated by the pastoral element of the role, whilst accepting

that procedural duties are also a necessity. Schools should ensure that the organisational expectation of the role includes both pastoral and procedural duties. Firstly, this maintains the motivation of those undertaking the role, enhancing their commitment to and performance of the role (Turner, 2011). Secondly, this can enable mid-day supervisors to identify potential concerns about the well-being and safeguarding of pupils that can be communicated to others within the school for the benefit of pupils.

6.4.4: Minimising Role Strain

Role strain can have a significant impact on those who undertake the role. Excessive role strain leads to job dissatisfaction, anxiety, damage to well-being, lower commitment to the role and lower performance of the role (House & Rizzo, 1972; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). It is therefore important that schools minimise role strain for mid-day supervisors as much as possible to make undertaking the role a positive experience for those who occupy it and a beneficial role for the school community.

Schools can promote positive role relationships between mid-day supervisors and other staff by avoiding an openly hierarchical staffing structure and promoting shared practice and communication. This minimises the inter-role conflict (Turner, 2011) that can occur between mid-day supervisors and those undertaking different roles.

Inter-role conflict caused role strain for many mid-day supervisors in this study, as they held other roles that intersected with their role as a mid-day supervisor. Often the recruitment of mid-day supervisors is targeted at those who already held another role within the school such as parents, or within the lives of the pupils who attended the school, for example within the immediate local or cultural communities. Schools could therefore minimise this role strain by recruiting staff who do not hold other roles at the school or within the lives and communities of the pupils who attend the school. If schools continue to recruit mid-day supervisors who already hold a role within the school or the lives of pupils, care needs to be taken not to compound this role strain by perceiving this to be problematic and use this a reason to withhold information that supports mid-day supervisors to undertake the role successfully.

As with the recommendation above, school leaders and governors should produce a clear job description of the role and the functions that those who occupy it are expected to fulfil,

as role clarity (Papastylianou, Kalia & Polychronopoulos, 2008) minimises role strain that can be caused when those who undertake a role are unsure of the requirements and purpose of it. A clear and shared understanding of the role across the school also minimises the role strain that can be caused when contrasting conceptions of the role are held by those who undertake it and those who interact with it (Matthews & Crow, 2003 ; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004). It is therefore recommended that the school share the purpose and functions of the mid-day supervisor role with other staff at the school.

The potential role strain (Goode, 1960) experienced by mid-day supervisors also has wider implications for the whole-school community, especially when this involves intra-role conflict (Turner, 2011) with other staff. The intra-role conflict between staff undertaking different roles is not only a cause of role strain for mid-day supervisors, but also for the other groups of staff who are involved in this conflict. As a result, when intra-role conflict occurs, this has an impact on the job satisfaction, well-being and performance of all groups of staff who experience this (House &Rizzo, 1972; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). As such, it is important for school leaders to ensure that intra-role conflict, and therefore role strain, is minimised by ensuring that the role of mid-day supervisors is clear within the school community, and that other roles do not conflict with this. For example, intra-role conflict often occurred between mid-day supervisors and teaching assistants (TAs), causing role strain for both groups of staff. Mostly, this was due to teaching assistants being asked to fulfil the role of a mid-day supervisor, but continuing to exhibit the obligatory, optional and forbidden behaviours (Newcomb, 1950; Dahrendorf, 1973) associated with their teaching assistant role rather than that of a mid-day supervisor. Similarly, mid-day supervisors experienced intra-role conflict when they were asked to undertake duties that they associated with the role of a teaching assistant.

School leaders and governors should ensure that the expectations of a role are clear to all who undertake it, even if they undertake other roles within the community. School leaders and governors should also be aware that requiring an individual to fulfil two roles, whatever these may be, is likely to cause inter-role conflict (Turner, 2011) for those who are required to do this, and therefore increase the likelihood of role strain and the potential negative impact that this can have on the school community.

Finally, role overload (Turner, 2011) can be a significant cause of role strain for mid-day supervisors. School lunchtimes last for a set period of the school day and there is a requirement placed on mid-day supervisors to ensure that all pupils have finished eating before the time that lunchtime ends. However, at times the length of lunchtime, the level of staffing or both of these factors made it extremely difficult for mid-day supervisors to meet this requirement, causing role overload. It is therefore recommended that school leaders and governors do not follow the trend of shortening the length of lunchtime (Baines & Blatchford, 2019), unless they mitigate this by increasing the staffing levels of mid-day supervisors so that the requirements of the school lunchtime can be met without creating role overload and therefore intensifying the role strain experienced by mid-day supervisors.

6.5: Further Work

As outlined in Chapter 1, my interest in school lunchtimes in an ongoing aspect of my professional career. Having moved from teaching in schools into Initial Teacher Training (ITT), I am no longer present during school lunchtimes on a regular basis. However, this is an area of work that I have continued to contribute towards, for example through supporting schools to review and improve lunchtimes, as this continues to be an area of ongoing concern for schools. Whilst this work in schools has often focused on procedural and organisational aspects of school lunchtime, such as timings and transitions, my research has given me an in-depth insight into the role of those who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of school lunchtimes, the potential barriers that they face and how this group of staff might be best utilised and supported. This will support me in my work with school leaders in terms of how the role of the mid-day supervisor is positioned within the school community, defining the functions of the role and communicating a shared understanding of the role across the school.

Part of my work supporting schools to improve school lunchtimes often involves delivering training to the mid-day supervisors. Previously, this has mostly focused on behaviour management, such as responding effectively to poor behaviour and using de-escalation techniques when incidents occur during lunchtime. However, as a result of this work I will now be able to offer a more informed approach to training mid-day supervisors, extending beyond behaviour management into the more practical elements of the role such as the

procedural duties that they are required to undertake and how these might be completed most efficiently.

At the school where I am a governor, we have also recently appointed three new mid-day supervisors. As part of my role, I was able to create an induction programme and resources for these new staff based on the understanding that I have gained about the role through this research, outlining the key requirements of the role based on the school's expectation of the obligatory, optional and forbidden actions that this entails. I also worked alongside the head teacher and senior mid-day supervisor to write a job description that reflects these expectations. This has given both existing and new mid-day supervisors at the school more clarity about the role and therefore avoided a potential cause of role strain. This is something that I believe will also be beneficial to other schools and is the basis of a presentation that will be given at a regional ResearchEd event to disseminate this more widely.

Further to my direct work in schools, I have also had a book proposal accepted that focuses on school lunchtimes. Within this text, a significant section will be dedicated to the work of mid-day supervisors and how schools can ensure that this group of staff feel included, valued and capable of undertaking the role, drawing on the insights from this research. This offers the opportunity to more widely disseminate the contribution to knowledge made through this study and have a positive impact on school lunchtimes, and mid-day supervisors, beyond my direct work in schools.

I also intend to publish journal articles focused on key aspects of this study. One of these will focus on of the role of mid-day supervisors through the lens of role theory, exploring how this role within primary schools can be legitimised and how role strain might be minimised for this group of school staff. A second article will explore the use of written portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) to explore how this can be used to present the authentic voices and experiences of research participants, using this study's focus on mid-day supervisors to illustrate the potential benefits and limitations of this approach.

Having developed an interest in role theory during this study, I am also keen to apply this to further research exploring other roles within primary schools. Many staff in schools hold multiple roles, for example deputy headteachers, subject leaders and special educational

needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) that may result in role conflict, role overload and role strain. Developing and disseminating an understanding of how these challenges might be minimised for staff holding these roles would be beneficial to those who occupy them and the schools where they are employed.

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Appendix 1 – Participant Research Information Sheet – Participatory Stage

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET 1 (Participatory stage)

Outline of the research:

This research explores the experiences and perceptions of primary school mid-day supervisors in England about their role within the school community.

Who is the researcher?

Name: Steven McNichol

Institution:

The University of Nottingham

Contact details:

steven.mcnichol@nottingham.ac.uk

What will my participation in the research involve?

Over fifteen lunchtimes I will be undertaking the role of a mid-day supervisor within your school. During this time, I will be recording my own experience of undertaking the role. This may include informal observations and conversations with you and other mid-day supervisors about your experience and perceptions of the role. You do not need to do anything different or additional to your normal role as a mid-day supervisor.

What happens if I decide I don't want to take part during the research study, or decide I don't want the information I've given to be used?

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. If you choose to withdraw during my time in school, please speak to me an I will ensure that no informal observations/conversations with you are included in the research and any records of these already made will be destroyed. Should

you wish to withdraw from the research after my time in school, you can do so by contacting me on the email address above.

How will you ensure that my contribution is anonymous?

You will not be identified by name and the school at which you work will not be identified.

All data will be considered confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, with the exception of if, during the research, it comes to light you are involved in illegal or harmful behaviours which I may disclose to the appropriate authorities. Your confidentiality will be ensured by utilising identification code numbers to correspond to research data in any research paperwork and computer files.

Appendix 2 – Participant Consent Forms – Participatory Stage

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM 1 (Participatory Stage)

Title of research project: What is it like to be a mid-day supervisor in a primary school in England?

Names of researcher: Steven McNichol

1. I confirm that I have read and understand Research Information Sheet 1 fo the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	Yes	No
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	Yes	No
3. I agree to take part in this research project and for the data to be used for the purposes of the research study outlined in the information sheet and publications directly linked to this study.	Yes	No

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher:

Signature:

Appendix 3 – Participant Consent Forms – Interview Stage

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET 2 (Individual Interview)

Outline of the research:

This research explores the experiences and perceptions of primary school mid-day supervisors in England about their role within the school community.

Who is the researcher?

Name: Steven McNichol

Institution:

The University of Nottingham

Contact details:

steven.mcnichol@nottingham.ac.uk

What will my participation in the research involve?

Your participation will involve an individual interview that will last for approximately 45 minutes. During this interview, you will be asked to reflect on your experience of being a mid-day supervisor in primary schools.

What happens if I decide I don't want to take part during the interview, or decide I don't want the information I've given to be used?

Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any point prior to or during the interview. Should you wish to withdraw the information

you have given afterwards, you can do so by contacting me on the email address above and audio files will be deleted and paper copies will be destroyed.

How will you ensure that my contribution is anonymous?

You will not be identified by name and the school at which you work will not be identified.

All data will be considered confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, with the exception of if, during the research, it comes to light you are involved in illegal or harmful behaviours which I may disclose to the appropriate authorities. Your confidentiality will be ensured by utilising identification code numbers to correspond to research data in any research paperwork and computer files.

How will data from the interview be stored and for how long?

The interview will be audio recorded. This audio file will be password-protected. The interview will then be transcribed and you will be given a copy of this transcription. This written document will be stored electronically and be password-protected. Any printed copies made will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Should you consent to the data being collected and used for the purposes of this research project and associated publications, this will be destroyed when it is no longer necessary for me to hold such data. All data will be considered confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties, with the exception of if, during the research, it comes to light you are involved in illegal or harmful behaviours which I may disclose to the appropriate authorities.

Appendix 4 – Participant Consent Forms – Interview Stage

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM 2 (Individual Interview)

Title of research project: What is it like to be a mid-day supervisor in a primary school in England?

Names of researcher: Steven McNichol

1. I confirm that I have read and understand Research Information Sheet 2 fo the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	Yes	No
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	Yes	No
3. I agree to take part in this research project and for the data to be used for the purposes of the research study outlined in the information sheet and publications directly linked to this study.	Yes	No

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher:

Signature:

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule

Roughly how long have you been a MDS?

What attracted you to the job? What did you have to do to get the job?

What did you expect the job to involve? Was the job as you expected it to be?

What was your first day/week like when you started the job? How did you know what to do?

Do you think other people in the school understand the job you do?

Do you feel part of the school community? Do you think others value the work that you do? What makes you think this?

Much of the role is interacting with children. How do you think the children see you? What makes you think this?

How do you think you are seen by staff with different roles in the school (eg school management/teachers/TAs etc)? What makes you think this?

Do you feel supported by others in the school? What can others do that help you to do your job? Is there anything else that helps you to do your job?

Is there anything that stops you doing your job as well as you could?

Is there anything you think would make your job easier or help you to do it better?

What advice would you give to a new MDS?

What motivates you to continue doing the job?

Appendix 6: Example Interview Transcript

Interview conducted by: Steve McNichol
Interviewee: B

S M How long have you been a mid-day supervisor?

About three and a half years.

S M What made you want to do the job?

Well it was offered by a friend and she said that she enjoyed it so it wasn't really that I chose it because it chose me.

S M Does your friend still work here?

No, she left. She didn't want to leave because she liked it that much but she had to leave for different reasons.

S M Did you have to do anything to get the job?

Well the head supervisor took me around to show me the school and while you are looking around she is, like, monitoring how you react to things. Then you have an interview and then you get the job.

S M Who was the interview with?

It was with Miss (?)Veer and Mr Bernard.

S M How did you feel on your first day of doing the job?

I felt 'oh my God have I got to put up with all this noise!'

S M Were you quite surprised by that?

It was the actual level of noise but Miss Veer said you get used to it.

S M How did you learn all of the things that you have to do?

By watching others and using my own initiative as to what I think should be done. Learning as you go along more than anything.

S M Is that how you think most people learn the job?

Yeah.

S M Was the job different to what you expected?

Not really.

S M Do you think other members of staff within the school understand what the job is like?

No, definitely not.

S M What makes you say that?

Because they are not involved with it that much. There is never really anyone there from when we start to when we finish to notice what we do.

S M Do you think that applies to all the staff?

Yeah. None of the staff really understand what is involved in lunch time supervision.

S M What do you think that they think it involves?

That it's, like, an hour and twenty minutes and they are here all day and it should be easy.

S M So do you feel you are part of the whole school community?

Definitely not.

S M Is there a reason for that?

[*children enter the room from outside and the noise level increases significantly*].

S M So, thinking about the school community, why don't you feel a part of it?

We just don't get informed about what is going on with the different children. There was a certain time when this girl had a bereavement and, of course, she did something totally out of character that needed reprimanding and I did that and then somebody came up to me afterwards and told me that she had just lost her mum and I felt awful.

S M So there is that kind of lack of information which makes you feel that you don't know everything that is going on in the school but is there any other reason for not feeling part of the school?

I can't really say what it is other than they can walk pass as if we were not there and a lot of them won't bother telling us anything.

S M One of the things I've noticed is that with other staff within the staff who aren't mid-day supervisors I'm always the first to say good morning so do you get that feeling as well?

Yeah and some of them don't even speak to you at all. It is just that they don't seem to think that we need to be informed but we need to be informed of everything that is going on with the children because we deal with them day to day and if we know what is going on with them we will deal differently with them. I would have dealt differently with that girl and that, to me, is one of the main things that we need to know. We don't need to have the full information but just enough to be able to deal properly with them.

S M How do you think the children treat you in your job?

This is another thing and I think they are quite happy with me because I am the same to them all the time: I am firm but very fair and I do like to have a laugh with them when they are being good and I like to praise them when they are good. I'm hoping that is how they see me but I don't really know how they see me. I would like to know what they think of me and it would be nice if

somebody asked the kids, when I am not there, how they feel about me just to have that feedback.

S M How do you deal with the children who are a bit more difficult?

I've had two in my time who have been really challenging and nobody could do a lot with them but I could because I spent a lot of time just watching them and = this is where I can't get the right words to say what I mean.

S M I know what you mean. It's that idea of having the time to get to know all of them and there is a pastoral side to the job where you are in a caring situation and you have a relationship with the children which is slightly different from the teachers and they see you more as a pastoral kind of person rather than someone who is there to teach them.

We are different to the teachers and maybe that is the way that they look at it, I don't know.

S M I suppose the only way to do it would be to ask some children at some point.

Yeah but I wouldn't want to ask them myself; I would like someone else to ask them for me. But it would be nice to know from them whether I am doing the right job because that is the main thing.

S M How do you think you are seen by other staff in the school who are mid-day supervisors?

A very few are ok. I get, like, TAs who think that we are second rate but we all feel second rate anyway because that is the way it is but I think TAs seem to be worse than teachers.

S M Do you think there is any particular reason for that?

I don't know. I think it is just an attitude thing.

S M What is it that makes people think you are second rate?

I think it's because we do only work an hour and twenty minutes so we are not fully involved with the school the whole day long so we are a bit like somebody coming to the school visiting. I can only assume that is the reason and so they don't need to go out of their way to make it any different for us.

S M Do you feel that you are supported to do your job by the teachers and the senior management team?

Well no because they don't really know what we do.

S M Are there any things that happen which you wish didn't happen?

Sometimes if we put them on a rep the teacher will ignore that but if we put them on a rep that means they have done something quite serious. So that undermines us.

S M Is there anything that could happen which would help you to do the job?

I think the kids should be made to know that we've got the same level of power as the teachers and that would make things easier for us.

S M What advice would you give somebody just starting this job?

I'd say 'look and learn; just keep looking and learning and if you are not sure about anything then ask before you do it'. There should always be somebody there to tell them how to do it.

S M What keeps you doing the job?

It's the kids that makes it worthwhile because some days I'll come in and I'll feel 'I don't need to be putting up with this' but on other days you'll get the kids just coming up to you and then you know that they appreciate you so I think it is that.

S M Do you think there is any kind of financial reason for people doing the job?

Not at all!

S M Obviously it is a very short period of time and not highly paid so I've always wondered whether it is about the money that people do the job or whether it is for other reasons.

S M I would say they are doing it for other reasons and one maybe that somebody needs sixteen hours and they need to fill in those sixteen hours but because I am self-employed and I don't really need the job at all apart from the reason I've told you that I just need a regular income coming in. So I think that if this were the only job I had I probably wouldn't do it because it just wouldn't pay. I don't think for one minute that they pay us very much.

S M You were talking to me the other day on the field and you said that you agreed with some of the stuff but not all so what kind of things did you disagree with?

The shouting one. I don't shout at the children; I always take the child to one side. But sometimes the only way you can get someone to stop doing something or to get his or her attention is to shout so on them occasions I will shout and I disagree with the book. So I mostly agree with the book about not shouting but there are some very rare occasions when you need to shout because that is the only way they will listen to you.

S M When you think about the team that you are working with where there are lots of different approaches how does that work?

I don't know because I sort of leave them to do it in their way but I think what I do is, if I don't necessarily think it is the right way, I will go and try and tell them without trying to undermine them.

S M Do you find that you get on well as a team?

I think we do. We don't have many disagreements apart from one particular person.

S M What do you think is different about her?

I think she is a control freak and if things aren't going her way then she attacks people and that is not the right way.

S M Do you think that comes over in the way that she deals with the children?

Yes.

S M And how do you think the children respond to that?

Well there was a girl the other week who was sat on the wrong table and instead of saying 'girls you know you shouldn't be sitting there so can you move to the other table please' she said 'you do not sit there; you know you shouldn't' and she went off on one and that was totally unnecessary.

S M So you felt it was a bit over the top.

Yeah and she didn't need to do it that way. That is when I go home and I think 'I wish I could do something about that'.

S M Is that because you thought she was being quite aggressive towards the children?

Yeah. I think she has only got one way of acting with the children. I don't think she necessarily means to be aggressive but that is her only approach.

S M Is there anything else you think it would be interesting for me to know about what it is like doing this job?

I think if you come in and really and truly want to make things better for the children then I think that is all you need. There are things that you can't improve but if you are down to earth you can look at all the different situations that come your way with the kids and, hopefully, make the best of them.

S M Do you see yourself carrying on in the job for the foreseeable future?

I don't know. I could actually see myself retiring from it but on other days I feel quite different. There was one teacher and the kids absolutely loved him but they knew that when he said something he meant it. He was what I would like to be and if they were out of order he would pull them up.

S M What comes across for me with the job is that it is not about the job you do but about how you are with the kids.

If I tell a child to do something they would do it probably because of the way I said it and because of the way I will normally treat them so they know that I mean what I say.

S M I've enjoyed doing this job because of the kids who are well behaved and do what they are asked. Would you agree that the staff are a bigger barrier to doing the job than the children?

Yeah, definitely and the TAs are the worst because they will tell you how you should deal with a child. That is where the job becomes a problem.

S M Do you live locally?

Yeah.

S M Do you think that helps you dealing with the kids in school?

Well I don’t really know a lot of the kids because my boys are grown up now. I know more people now because of this job than I ever did before and my other job is about (? ? ? ? ? ? ?). But, no, I wouldn’t know anybody to be honest if I wasn’t working here so it has been a benefit in some ways.

S M Thank you very much.

Appendix 7 – Example of coded field notes and interview transcript

Today is very rainy! Over the past few days a few MDS have commented that one of the most difficult things to manage is 'wet lunchtime'. Today, children will spend the time when they are not eating in their classrooms.

The 'mood' is very different today. Every MDS enters making a negative comment about the weather and how it's going to be a 'nightmare' for them over lunchtime. They argue (in a jokey way) about who is going to stay in the dining hall so they don't have to supervise the children in the classroom. I decide against asking about how they feel children perceive them! The dread of wet lunchtime has taken over. There is much less general chit-chat amongst the MDSs today. The SMDS calls all the MDSs together – this is the first time I've seen this – to plan how they are going to manage the lunchtime. It feels like a battle-plan. She deploys different staff to different areas. A plan is made about what will happen in some classes. Year 3 will be put in one classroom to watch a DVD. The same will happen in Y2.

One of the MDS tells me that there used to be enough staff for each class to be monitored by a MDS. However, as there has been a reduction in the number of MDSs, this is no longer possible. It means that most MDSs have to monitor two classes, so it's not possible to be monitoring all children all the time. This is particularly difficult in upper KS2 as the classroom are not next to each other. In year 3 and year 4 children tend to watch a DVD (two classes in the same room) so this means only one MDS is required for each class. However, this hasn't worked in the past with children in the year 5 and 6 classes as they want to play games etc. The option to watch a DVD is always 'outvoted'.

Key stage 1 children enter the dining hall. There is a noticeable difference in the noise level of the children today. I mention this to one of the MDSs. She tells me that's normal for a day when the children have been inside all morning (it was raining at playtime this morning) and that there has to be some understanding of this. She points out that the children are just talking – they are all sat down, none of them are shouting and we can't see any individuals being 'disruptive'. I talk to one of the other MDSs about the noise. She says more or less the same thing - they have been inside all day without the opportunity to 'burn off their energy' and this makes then nosier in the hall. She says that it's important that they do get the opportunity to talk to their friends because it helps them to learn how to talk to each other and get along. A teacher enters the hall (some teaching staff have a school dinner at lunchtime). Without any discussion with any of the MDS, the teacher shouts loudly at the children to all stop talking. She tells them off because there is 'too much noise' and asks them to eat without talking. I make eye contact with the MDS who had said that talking is important. She shrugs her shoulders at me. The teacher stands over the children for about 5 minutes, enforcing the 'no talking' rule, before collecting their lunch and leaving the hall. I feel undermined as I'd been party to allowing the noise level which the teacher has then told the children off for. It's undermining in an indirect way in that the teacher decided that the MDSs were wrong to allow that level of noise so used their authority to change the expectation.

I'm immediately approached by both of the MDSs I had spoken to about the noise level. They feel the same way. They tell me that it's not uncommon for other staff to enter the dining room and undermine or change the way they are doing things. They feel like the teachers don't think they can do the job properly, so do it for them. One suggests that the teacher might think they are supporting the MDSs, but actually it weakens their authority with the children when they see a teacher come in and 'take over' their job. They also feel ignored as there was no discussion between the MDSs and the teacher before the teacher intervened with the children. One of the MDSs jokes that she wouldn't tell people to make less noise in a restaurant. This incident left me, and the other

MDSs, feeling devalued, undermined and somewhat frustrated and annoyed by the teacher's actions.

The SMDS asks me to mostly stay with year 5 and 6 today when they are inside, though she suggests I walk around all the classes to 'know what a wet lunchtime is like'. I make my way with the two other MDSs to the year 5 and 6 classrooms. The flours classrooms (2x Y5; 2x Y6) are on the upper floor of the school but fairly spread out. As the MDSs show me where the classrooms are, one of the y5 pupils asks the MDS if they can have the laptops out during lunchtime. She says no, as these might be needed in the afternoon and laptops are not allowed to be used at lunchtime. However, the teacher (who is on their way out of the classroom) over-rules the MDS and says that the children can have laptops as long as they put them back on charge at the end of lunchtime. It's the second time today that a decision made by a MDS has been over-ruled by a teacher. I go into each year 5 and 6 class for about 5 minutes and 'supervise'. I notice that the other MDSs tend to stand at the door and look into the classroom, so I do the same. Again, as outside, it's supervision in that the MDSs (and me) are watching the children only, ready to act if needed! I walk back into the Y5 classroom where children have been allowed laptops. The children are putting them away, which seems odd as it's not time for them to go and have lunch. The MDS tells me she has been 'told off' by a member of the SLT for allowing the children to have laptops! She's almost crying. I wonder why she didn't just explain that the teacher had given permission, but it's not the time to ask! I take over 'supervision' and she leaves the room (I'm not sure where she goes!). When she returns she has composed herself and is more annoyed that upset! She says the member of SLT had 'told her off' in front of the children for letting them have laptops and she didn't feel she had the opportunity to say that it was the teacher who had given permission without making it appear that she was blaming someone else. I notice a number of children ask the MDS if she is okay. I sense that they know that she was upset by the incident.

As suggested by the SMDS I go to the other classrooms. There is one MDS supervising two Y4 classrooms, where the children are fairly noisy but playing games etc and using the class screen to play online games. She is clearly worried it's too noisy, as they first thing she tells me is that she will turn the music off if any of the teachers or TA want to work nearby! I go into Year 3. Both classes are empty as the children have gone to the hall for lunch. One of the teachers, who I have not met before, is in the classroom. He looks at me with a concerned look. So I explain that I'm working in school for a few weeks as a MDS. I introduce myself as Steve. He introduces himself as Mr Smith (pseudonym). I find it interesting that he chooses to introduce himself using his formal title rather than his first name, as I had done. This doesn't tend to happen when I meet staff in school in my professional role. Later on, I ask one of the MDS whether surnames are used at all times between staff. She tells me that among the MDSs teachers are always referred to using surnames. I ask if that works the other way and teachers always used MDSs surnames. She says she is unsure whether most of the teaching staff even know her name (either of them!).

Walking around the school, I don't see the level of problems that the MDSs had described. Most children are busy doing something (drawing/playing games/on Ipads/watching DVDs) and I see no conflict between children themselves or between children and MDSs. At the end of lunchtime, the MDSs are keen to tell me that it has been one of the easiest wet lunchtimes they can remember! They tell me that it's not usually as calm as it has been today and that it would be 'worse' if there was wet lunchtime again tomorrow (or any other day!).

Interview conducted by: Steve McNichol
Interviewee: A

S M How long have you been a mid-day supervisor?

It's about eight years in June. I started off for four years as a supervisor and then I was approached to be a senior supervisor. To be honest I hadn't thought of going for that role but I was approached by the previous senior supervisor who was leaving and she wanted me to take the job.

S M Thinking back to when you first stared as a mid-day supervisor what was it that attracted you to the job?

Well my daughter went to the school and the TA asked me if I wanted the job. Again it wasn't something I had thought about but I was flattered in a way and I said 'yes of course I will'. The job wasn't what I'd expected it to be; it was very, very busy with lots of responsibilities but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

S M When you started how did you learn what to do?

At that time I did shadow the previous senior mid-day supervisor and she showed me = luckily I was familiar with the school anyway with my children going there but you kind of are pushed in at the deep end I have to admit and I say to the ladies here when they start to just please come and ask. It is one of those where you have to learn on the job.

S M And when you started shadowing the senior supervisor do you think you are still doing the same things?

Most things have changed since then. I did start when the old school was here and there was no dining hall; there was a little room which was purely for hot meals and all the lunch boxes stayed in their own classrooms.

S M Do you think other people understand what your job is about and what your role is within the school?

No, basically.

S M What is it that people don't get?

I've been appointed senior mid-day supervisor and that sort of means that I take on everything that happens. Any major issues will obviously get reported to management or any teacher still in the building but I don't think there is much understanding and I think the teachers would be very surprised as to what actually happens at lunchtime.

S M What about the management of the school? Do you think they understand the day to day of what you actually do?

Again I would say no; they don't at all.

S M I've noticed that some of the TAs have started to take on some of the lunch time supervision and the first aid so do you think that has helped the TAs to have an understanding of the job?

I do think it has helped them to have an understanding. But, to be honest with you, they don't like it at all. It has helped us having extra members of staff but I still don't think they thoroughly understand what the job actually means.

S M The school is a kind of community so do you feel part of the school?

Again that has got to be a no; not at all.

S M Is there a particular reason for that?

I know the ladies are not seen as = like in the classroom we were told that if we wanted to volunteer in the classrooms we could do that so that the children get to know us so that they would have that little more respect for us because at the minute we are just ladies out there playing and I think that is what the children see. I mean we are not always involved in the staff meetings so I don't feel part of the school.

S M How do you think you are seen by the teaching staff then?

I know for a fact that the ladies and myself do feel quite undermined sometimes. A teacher will just weigh in and have a go and it doesn't matter who is there. It does make you feel a bit rubbish.

[*Interview is interrupted by someone asking the interviewee a question*]

S M So that is almost an illustration of what you were saying.

That is a good example.

S M Is that something that happens regularly in terms of the decisions that are made by mid-day supervisors that is then overruled by staff?

Well that happens and we are out there at the time and we are the people dealing with this and we have to have a say in what happens.

S M Sometimes a decision will be made but that is overruled - like last week we decided that the children weren't going on the field and then a member of staff let them all out onto the field. Is that regular or is that an unusual situation?

I think that was an unusual situation and it depends on the adults and the management.

S M What about your relationship with the children? What do you think they see you as?

I would be very interested to ask the children that question because we are not in the classroom so they don't see us as members of staff. We are not the teachers and, for instance, I did have an incident with one of the older boys who actually shouted out 'I won't listen to you; you're just a dinner lady'. Some of the older dinner ladies in the past have felt extremely intimidated and they find it hard to deal with the older children.

S M Do you think there is a particular reason for that?

With them not being in lessons it's a kind of letting off steam time so we are not constantly telling them what to do and they've got a free run of the field. I know the management do want us to be = we were going to be play leaders at one point and that would have been brilliant and, of course, we have to interact with the children and keep them busy but this is a hard one to shake off, isn't it?

S M And maybe there are things at home where parents will talk about the teachers but they never think of the lunch time supervisors.

A parent did moan about me on Facebook because I put their child on a yellow but they don't understand the school. When you are in a school the rules apply throughout from start to finish whether you are outside playing with a teacher or with a dinner lady the rules are still the same. It really is a shame that children and staff do see us as lower.

S M There does seem to be a group of children who have a different attitude and they need to be dealt with. They seem to be only dealt with by teachers basically.

I suppose with any behaviour that needs dealing with we will deal with it but we then have to tell the teachers what we've done and that seems to make us look less important.

S M We've talked about the relationship with teachers but do you think there is anything else that stops you doing the job as well as you could?

To make my job easier? Well at the minute we don't have as much staff as we've had in previous years and those who leave are not going to be replaced so that will make us very short. Like you said earlier yes we have the TAs helping but they are going to have to do more duties but they don't really want to do it so they don't get that involved. Another thing that stops us doing the job better is time because everything is so rushed. I like the fact that we are busy but if we are not on time then other members of staff will complain.

S M What would you change to make the job easier?

More staff. Everyone needs to work together and that includes the teachers. Being accepted more in the school would also help.

S M How you find leading that group of ladies?

I do just grin and bear it at times but they are all good and we all know what we need to be doing. Some ladies come in at different times and we all know what areas to cover. I can honestly say that at the end of a lunchtime I know it's been successful and everyone has done their job and everything is ready for lesson time. I just wish everyone would get on a bit more.

S M You mean socially?

Yes. Not having sneaky comments behind each other's back because there have been a few confrontations which are not nice but we have to be professional.

S M Do you think you see that differently to the other ladies?

I do.

S M That work 'professional' is an unusual word to associate with mid-day supervisors but you used it without any prompting but do you think you have a different view of what professional means?

I attend meetings and trainings regularly whereas it is hard to get the ladies to come in and take it seriously. They will say 'what do we have to do any of that for?' so they are actually putting themselves down.

S M That is surprising that they would say that especially if they want to be valued by others.

Absolutely.

S M So if somebody asked you should they apply for a job as a mid-day supervisor what advice would you give them?

With potential new members of staff I've always brought them in at the busiest time and I'll open the door and say 'look this is how it is; this is how noisy and busy it is' because I don't want them coming in and just seeing us sitting around and chatting. They often don't understand that we are members of a team in the school and we follow the school rules. I would tell them to interact with the children as much as possible. I mean we are here for the kids so we have to interact with them and make them feel as comfortable as they can and sometimes we are the only people they talk to openly. In lesson time they are serious and they do the work and they probably don't often have a chance to have a chat and we're there for them. If you just comfort one child during a lunch time then I think your job is done.

S M So there is a pastoral side to the job as well.

As a mother you can't help but be paternal to the children and if they need a shoulder to cry on or an ear to bend that is what we are there for.

S M Do you think that motherly approach is common to mid-day supervisors? Are they all mothers?

Yeah we all are. I'm sure you've noticed how some of them are very different in how they treat the children and whether it is right or wrong that is down to their own personality, isn't it?

S M So do you think there are some supervisors who don't treat the children like they would treat their own?

Yes I do.

S M And is that a good thing?

No. I think they should realise that as well and I've actually asked one of them who actually can be very hard and I said 'what if somebody spoke to your grandchild like you've just spoken to that child?' It's a totally different matter, isn't it? I look at it in that way: what would you do if your daughter came home and somebody had been hard on her? You've got to be kind to the children and then you will get more of an understanding of the job as well.

[*A child interrupts to ask a question*]

S M What is it that keeps motivating you to keep doing the job?

I absolutely love it. I love being here and being with the children and building up different relationships with the different age groups.

S M Do you think many of the staff are motivated because of the money because it is a very short job so do you think there is that financial motivation there for some people? Or is it a job that people do for the social side of it and for the community?

All of the above. For instance one of the ladies her fella was made unemployed and she relied on this job. It's not a lot because we can't get any more hours but she relies on it so much. We were asked last week if anyone wanted to do reduced hours. No! Who can afford to lose money? We don't do overtime obviously although if we were really short staff we might ask people to cover and that would be paid as overtime.

S M Is there anything else you have a burning desire to say?

No. I've enjoyed having you around and I've loved your views because you can see what happens and what goes on and I've liked listening to you.

S M Sometimes I have a real conflict with being an ex-teacher because I can see what's been happening quite clearly at lunchtime. For example when they have SATs because I know how pressured that is and I know that is all they are thinking about on that day but when they arrive in that dining hall with no stickers on that annoyed me because even though I can understand it is still annoying.

How have you found it being an ex-teacher?

S M Well it's a part of the day where, as a teacher, you just try and cut yourself off from.

But with me and the staff that is proper, isn't it? But it's like when we have meetings with members of management sometimes and one person said to me 'you are still in charge of these children no matter what time of day it is'. He was a teacher and he said that if we need them they are there but not everyone thinks that.

S M Thank you very much.