An exploratory study of pupils' experiences of Pupil Referral Units and the perceived impact on self-identity

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore students' experiences of Pupil Referral Units and the perceived impact of their experiences on their self-identity. The aim of the research was to contribute to the existing evidence base regarding the impact of exclusionary practices for young people. The researcher sought to increase awareness of the unique perspectives of young people, in order to increase understanding of what young people might be experiencing during the event of informal or formal exclusion.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five students aged 13 and 14. All students were placed in a local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The researcher used thematic analysis using guidance by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) as a methodological approach to analysing data collected through interviews. Eight Master Themes were derived from the interpretative analysis. Pupils expressed uncertainty about the setting upon entry following an experience of 'failure at mainstream'. They experienced 'positive and provocative relationships at the PRU' with both adults and peers. A shared experienced by students at the PRU related to perceived 'unfair behavior management' and their tendency to make a 'comparison with mainstream' experiences. Finally, their experience at the PRU was affected by 'a lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their personal situation' and placement at the PRU. With regard to self-identity, the participants often held 'perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty'. They held 'concerns that others viewed them negatively', based on attributions made about them by education professionals and the related stigma of being placed in a PRU. Finally, participants had 'concerns about the potential damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations' of being placed in a PRU.

The research findings are discussed in relation to existing literature. Wider implications include the implementation of an induction process for new PRU pupils, redesigning referral systems into the PRU to prevent pupils remaining there for an extended period, as well as reviewing behaviour management policies to include restorative practices, and building students' capacity to regulate their emotions in a safe way. Implications for Educational Psychologists include obtaining the voice of the child and providing clear information to pupils about statutory processes, alongside close working with PRUs to prevent exclusion.

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1 Chapter one: Introduction to the thesis

This thesis is an exploratory study of students' experiences in Pupil Referral Units. The study aims to address two key areas. Firstly, how pupils experience being a student in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and second, the perceived impact on the way they view themselves, their future and self-identity.

The study is an exploratory study of experiences. It adopts Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a method to engage with pupils' experiences and interpret how they make sense of their experiences. The author intends that the findings of the current study will develop the current research literature about PRUs and place the young person's voice at the heart of the discussion.

1.1 Personal and professional interest in the area

The author has a personal and professional interest in the experiences of pupils who are subject to exclusionary practices and placements in PRUs. The interest has grown from professional background and employment experience that has involved working as an Assistant Psychologist and Trainee Educational Psychologist in PRUs. The author's previous involvement with PRUs has led to the desire to add to the current research base and shed light on the experiences and views held by young people who attend them.

1.2 Context and unique contribution of the research

This thesis has been carried out through the Applied Educational Psychology Doctoral Programme at The University of Nottingham. The research aims to explore how pupils, who have had exclusions and spent time out of their maintained schools, experience being students in a PRU. The research has developed from an interest in the importance of school and adolescence on identity development, and the implications of exclusionary practices for adolescents.

The unique contribution of the research is to shed light on the views of pupils regarding PRU provision, and to further understanding of excluded pupils' experiences. It will also contribute an understanding of how pupils may experience the setting which can benefit local authority maintained PRUs, Educational Psychologists (EPs) and those working with pupils attending PRUs.

1.3 Setting the scene

In the year 2013/2014, 4, 950 pupils in the UK had experienced permanent exclusions, with numbers being significantly higher for fixed term exclusions (Department for Education, 2017). The most recent data on the rate of permanent exclusions in England show that the numbers of permanent exclusions have increased by 55% since 2013-2014, rising to 7, 720 pupils in the year 2016-2017. Table 1-1 displays the growing rise in numbers of permanent exclusions since 2013-2014.

The rise in overall exclusions over the years has led to debates about national issues about educating pupils in alternative provision, including funding, exclusion and its role in youth offending and about the inclusion of vulnerable young people in schools. These have been revisited recently in a recent report by the House of Commons Education Committee (2018). Central to the debates are the underlying agreement for children's rights (United Nations, 1989). Every child and young person have a right to education and schools are perceived as critical partners in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people (The Children Act, 2004).

Table 1-1. National UK data showing an increase in the number of permanent exclusions since 2013.

Number of permanent exclusions	Year
4950	2013/14
5795	2014/15
6685	2015/16
7720	2016/17

Permanent exclusion refers to pupils who are excluded permanently from their school, whilst fixed term exclusion refers to those who are excluded for a set period of time (Department for Education, 2015). Considering the national data highlighting the significant rise of exclusions since 2013, further interrogation of the data shows that the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions are highest for secondary schools; for

students aged 13 and 14; and that boys are approximately twice as likely to receive a permanent of fixed term exclusion. The reasons for exclusion are physical assault against an adult or a pupil, verbal/threatening behaviour against an adult or a pupil, bullying, racial abuse, sexual misconduct, drug/alcohol related issues, damage, theft, persistent disruptive behaviour or other. The largest proportion of students who were permanently excluded or received fixed term exclusions in the year 2016/17 were excluded for 'persistent disruptive behaviour', followed by 'physical assault against an adult' or 'other'.

Children and young people who have experienced exclusions and disrupted educational pathways are likely to be those in receipt of free school meals (42%), those of mixed White and Black Caribbean ethnicity, those with a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (5%), or to be looked after children (Malcom, 2018). In the year 2016/2017, it was found that 43% of pupils who were permanently excluded were identified with a special educational need, of which 61% had social, emotional and mental health needs (Department for Education, 2017). Essentially, exclusions are more likely to be experienced by some of the UK's most vulnerable young people.

1.4 Alternative provision and Pupil Referral Units

In events of exclusion, local authorities are responsible for providing and arranging suitable educational provision for children and young people who, by reasons of permanent exclusion or illness, may not receive suitable education at school (Education Act, 1996). For those who have not been formally excluded schools may direct pupils off-site for education as part of arranging educational provision (DfE, 2013). An example of directing pupils off-site or to alternative educational provision is in the event of a 'managed move', which is when students are monitored and placed in a different school. Another option is to move a child to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) without triggering formal exclusions proceedings. PRU are out-of-school units or alternative educational settings for children and young people of compulsory school ages who have been removed from mainstream or special schooling (Meo & Parker, 2004). Historically, PRUs have been maintained by the local authority. In the current climate, PRUs have become academies, or opened as free schools. Pupils who attend PRUs are either registered as students of the PRU or dual-registered with their mainstream school (DfE, 2017).

PRUs have been referred to as an ‘administrative category’ rather than a type of provision due to the significant variations between PRUs across the country (Cooper, 2001). The main objective of these units is to provide assessment of children and young people’s needs, implement intervention and support reintegration of children and young people back into mainstream settings (Meo & Parker, 2004). Children and young people who attend PRUs will include those who have experienced short term or permanent exclusion from their mainstream settings; whilst some young people will only attend the PRUs for a short period of time, others will attend for much longer (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009).

There has been an increase in the number of pupils who are placed in PRUs in the past five years of official school census data (see Table 1-2). In the context of exclusion, school census data from PRUs and alternative provisions show that rates of exclusion, permanent and fixed-term, do not decrease once students spend time in alternative provision. In 2015/16 there were 20 permanent exclusions from PRUs, and 23,400 fixed term exclusions from PRUs. 8,730 pupils experienced one or more fixed term exclusions in 2015-16 from PRUs or alternative provision academies.

The largest number of pupils attending PRUs were pupils aged between 11-15 years. School census data in 2014 showed that 11,590 boys and girls aged between 11-15 years were attending PRUs full-time which was a slight decrease from 11, 815 in 2013. These numbers have risen to 13, 882 pupils aged 11-15 who attended PRUs in January 2017.

Table 1-2. National UK Census data of the rise in pupils attending PRUs from year 2013- 2017.

Year	Number of full-time equivalent pupils attending PRUs
2013	12, 950
2014	12, 890
2015	13, 580
2016	15, 010
2017	15, 665

The use of alternative provision and exclusion have been central to debates in educational research about children's rights (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999). Research shows that the outcomes for students who are educated outside of mainstream schools are poorer than those who are educated in mainstream education (Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen & McCluskey, 2009). Furthermore, research has found that PRU pupils were at risk of delinquency, social isolation, difficulties with peers, relationship difficulties and adult offending (Barnes, 1998).

The purpose of alternative provision is to provide an alternative to what can be offered by a mainstream school. However, alternative provisions have been criticized for being 'holding units', as opposed to educational centres. This is a huge concern, due to the lack of guidance for alternative provisions on providing quality teaching and education (Goodall, 2005). Furthermore, alternative provisions are a costly provision which adds to the concerns about the way they are used (Goodall, 2005). It has been argued that they exist due to the failure of mainstream schools to accommodate the needs of vulnerable children and young people (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999). Lloyd and O'Regan (1999) referred to the paradox of inclusion and exclusionary practices due to the extent to which alternative provisions and PRUs are used. PRUs and alternative provision are

largely used to accommodate and provide education for high numbers of most vulnerable groups; looked after children and those with an Education, Health and Care Plan attending alternative provisions (Malcolm, 2018). Malcom (2018) introduced the idea that for some young people, attending alternative provisions can be 'a far more inclusive and positive period of schools than anything they had previously experienced'. However, it is sometimes the case, for example in 'unofficial exclusions', that parents, families and young people themselves feel that they are coerced into a decision or have minimal involvement in the decision for a PRU placement to be undertaken (Malcolm, 2018). Therefore, the dynamics between inclusion and exclusion are complex.

In summary, national data, papers and research have highlighted the rise of exclusion and the large numbers of children and students attending PRUs, whom as a result experience disrupted educational journeys.

2 Chapter two: Literature review

The following section describes and considers core psychological theory and research that is central to the rationale to of the current research project. It begins with a description of Erikson's theory of identity development and the critical period of adolescence. Theoretical links are made between identity development, self-determination theory and attribution theory. With relevant theory in mind, research related to the impact of school, PRUs and exclusion on identity is addressed. The role of schools in developing healthy identities and in helping young people to recognise their capabilities and develop a sense of competency and autonomy is also considered. Finally, the author considers the voice of young people in educational research.

2.1 Identity development

Erikson's theory of identity is one of the fundamental psychological theories that underpins psychosocial development. Key features of Erikson's theory are outlined below.

2.1.1 Definition and function of identity

Marcia (2009) described identity broadly as referring to "…a sense of who one is, based upon who one has been, and who one can imagine oneself as becoming". Five common

functions of developing identity are an understanding of who one is; providing oneself with direction that is meaningful and governed by identified commitment, values and goals; achieving a sense of personal control; striving for consistency and congruency between values, beliefs and commitments; and finally recognising one's potential, sense of future, possibilities and choices (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

Erikson describes identity as a developmental process that occurs across the lifespan and identifies late adolescence as being a significant period when the individual attempts to discover their individual and personal meaning in society, or sense of self, based on their values, interests, interactions and experiences (Erikson, 1968; Wainwright, Nee and Vrij, 2018). In Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development, developed from Freud's psychosexual stages of development, he described eight psychosocial (ego) development stages that occur through the lifespan. According to his theory, humans progress through a series of stages across the lifespan whilst experiencing various developmental conflicts or crises to be resolved at each stage. Each stage is characterised by the acquisition of basic virtues in ego growth that support the individual to complete further stages and develop personality and a sense of self. Pre-school stages and subsequent crises in ego development include trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame, and initiative versus guilt. At school age, a child is going through the crisis called 'industry versus inferiority' and either achieves the basic virtue of competence or a sense of inferiority. In this stage, a child who experiences success, pride and achievements at school learns that if they work, they can experience success, and working is worthwhile. If a child experiences failure during this stage, they may develop a sense of inferiority. In adolescence, teenagers are posed with the crisis of 'identity versus role confusion'. Resolution of the 'identity' stage is achieved once an individual develops and commits a personal identity. Successful progression in the identity stage allows adolescents to achieve fidelity, which is an important virtue to support progression in later stages. According to Erikson's theory, if resolution at this stage is not achieved, adolescents will experience confusion and a lack of direction or understanding of who they are.

Erikson's theory has been developed by researchers such as Marcia (1993) and Waterman (1982). Marcia (1993) extended Erikson's stages of identity formation and described an 'end-point' as a desirable product of identity exploration; referred to as

identity achievement, or commitment. Marcia (1993) described the functions of identity exploration and commitment as key features of healthy identity development. Where an individual is exploring identities without any commitment, it can cause confusion or the 'identity crisis' that Erikson referred to and the individual enters 'identity moratorium' (Marcia, 1993). Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1993) described the impact of identity development on psychological wellbeing. They described that where one remains without commitment to identity development or identity achievement, this is associated with poorer psychological and mental wellbeing. In other words, when an individual may be exploring different identities, without any commitment, they tend to have lower, psychological wellbeing.

2.1.2 Identity and socialisation

Whilst Erikson's psychosocial stages of identity development are longstanding and often referred to in the field of identity development, social psychologists may critique Erikson's stage-like description of how identity develops.

Social psychological explanations of identity argue that identity is shaped according to social contexts through a social-psychological process of socialisation (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Socialisation is the establishment and maintenance of relationships between individuals as part of integration within a society (Adams & Marshall, 1996) and is understood to be necessary for survival in society. Socialisation involves the selection and organisation of aspects within the social context that are personally meaningful and contribute to both a sense of belongingness and individuation (Adams and Marshall, 1996). **S**ocialisation is thought to enhance one's sense of belonging and connectedness within a society, as well as the provide individuality and agency, which promotes one's sense of self as unique (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

For both children and adolescents, schools become critical social settings that influence and shape identity development (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Adolescents are continually evaluating themselves and their behaviours by the response they get from others, and how well it fits with their own sense self and beliefs about who they are (Hamman and Hendricks, 2005). They are also evaluating themselves against their peers, and from their interactions with teachers (Sylva, 1994). As a result, individuals tend to behave in ways which are consistent with who they believe they are, and who they aspire to

become (Wainwright, Nee & Vrij, 2018). Adams and Marshall (1996) described institutionalized situations, such as school settings, as environments where individuals begin to identify with others and develop a sense of self based on social comparisons. Where communities' express consistent values, positive role models and high cohesion, adolescents develop a positive sense of self and learn about their aspirations and goals. Whereas in situations of conflict, inconsistency, and where adolescents experience confrontation with their perceptions of who they are, this can lead to unconventional behaviours, distress and role confusion (Adams and Marshall, 1996). In other words, adolescents can experience incongruency between who they perceive they are and who they can be.

The influence of school settings as an important social context for the development of identity led to the researcher's concern that exclusionary practices, such as placing vulnerable students in PRUs, could indirectly impact a student's psychosocial development in ways that are not yet fully understood. It is during adolescence that individuals begin to consider their possible future selves. However, during identity development, the young person can feel confused and be influenced by negative outside influences including delinquency (Wainwright, Nee & Vrij, 2018).

Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) used the theoretical framework of possible selves, developed by Markus and Nurius (1986) to explore pupils' self-knowledge and self-perceptions of their capabilities, aspirations and motivation. Possible selves derive from a representation of the self in the past, and in the future, formed by cognitive components such as hopes, fears, threats and goals, and the associated meaning in an individual's current and historical context. An individual can create a variety of possible selves and self-representations and by exploring an individual's possible selves there is the potential to reveal an individual's construction of their 'self' (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Exploration of possible selves involves eliciting who individuals think they are, who they can become and who they fear to become. Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) explored self-concept through 'possible selves' with sixteen young people in a PRU and compared the findings with nine young people in mainstream settings. They found that young people in a PRU were less likely to have a 'positive possible self' and were more likely to describe the negative self. They also found that they were less likely to have a plan of planned action to achieve their possible self and showed minimal awareness of

the barriers they may face. The authors concluded that children and young people in PRUs have a lower self-concept than pupils who are educated in mainstream settings. Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) shed light on the relationship between PRU placements, self-concept and student's aspirations, motivation and competencies.

2.1.3 The risk of social exclusion

Linked to the theory of socialisation comes the idea of social exclusion within society and the potential impact for adolescents where socialisation may not be facilitated, through experiences of exclusion. Daniel and Cole (2010) were interested in following students who were permanently excluded and who did not return to mainstream settings. Daniel and Cole (2010) explored the implications of permanent exclusion and whether it acts as a precursor to social exclusion for secondary aged students. They followed students for two years, some of which who had attended PRUs, and found that although for some young people PRUs helped to widen opportunities and ambitions, many young people had limited outlooks on their lives, and their marginalisation tended to increase, sometimes leading to offending behaviour and social isolation.

The theoretical ideas of identity development and socialisation are pertinent to the study of pupils in PRUs, as according to the socialisation of identity development, experiences of exclusions, relationships, attributions and situational factors will impact self-identity. Studies have explored the outcomes for children in the social context of PRUs and have found various effects on children's self-perceptions, relationships, patterns of motivation, aspirations and attributions about their schooling experience. All are linked to the development of their identity. These will be explored further in the following sections.

2.2 Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in PRUs

The previous section draws attention to the influence of the school context on identity development and socialisation for adolescents. Exploring this further, the quality of relationships is critical for a sense of belongingness, relatedness, self-esteem and future sense of self, which leads us to thinking about how relationships affect identity development. This section describes and links self-concept, with self-determination theory.

Self-esteem, self-concept and aspirations have been linked to motivational concepts such as relationships, competence and independence. La Guardia (2009) identified the role of parents and teachers as relational partners that can encourage adolescents to progress through the exploration stages of identity development and play a critical role in student's self-esteem and sense of self. The theory underpinning such assumptions lies within self-determination theory. Deci and Ryan's (2012) self-determination theory describes that there are three basic psychological needs which are critical to developing intrinsic motivation for individuals to achieve their human potential, goals and aspirations. Individuals require a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness in order achieve optimal psychological development, including identity development. *Autonomy* involves willingness to initiate and actively regulate in behaviours and actions that influence the self; *Competence* refers to engaging in activities that are in line with one's capacities that allows the individual to experience a sense of mastery and control; *Relatedness* refers to connecting with others.

The link between theory addressing human motivation and developmental processes such as identity formation is underdeveloped and scarcely considered (Flum & Kaplan, 2009). La Guardia (2009) conceptualises identity development as internalised values of the self which are and can be influenced by the three psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness. In this view, intrinsic motivation and exploration of identity are what drives individuals to perform in their societal roles. The degree of support for an individual's sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness can determine the identities, and internalised values of the self that they later develop. Therefore, the link between identity and motivation can be viewed as 'the kind of person he or she is or may become', linking identity with goal-directed behaviours/action (Gee, 2000; Flum & Kaplan, 2009).

La Guardia (2009) described the influence that relational partners have on an individual's sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness and identity development in education. Teachers are able to create an environment that can nurture adolescent identity needs in the following ways: firstly, by finding individual strengths and sanctioning capabilities and secondly, by creating identity-safe environments, encouraging adolescents to know about what they can become and experience a sense of mastery. Teachers can also create identity-safe environments by being tolerant of

disengaged peer cliques, but providing effective instruction (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). Hamman & Hendricks (2005) argue that identity-safe environments reduce the risk of destroying academic initiative. With this in mind, it can be questioned what the impact might be on identity and motivation for students who have failed to be supported in mainstream settings and have experienced exclusions. Solomon and Rogers (2001) found that young people attending PRUs experienced 'disaffection' with school due to negative motivational patterns and a lack of self-efficacy.

The impact of learning environment and staff practices on students' psychological needs has been researched. Nicholson & Putwain (2018) examined the relationship between staff practices and student's psychological need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. They concluded that staff practices and an environment that facilitated a student's psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness were an important contributor to educational re-engagement, specifically in alternative provisions. Young people valued trusting, caring and respectful student-staff relationships that provided them with choice, independence and confidence, allowing them to experience success and subsequently viewed themselves more positively (Nicholson & Putwain, 2018). Furthermore, in a study by Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (1994) adolescents' representations of relationships that are characterised by security and connectedness were strongly correlated with self-esteem, confidence and motivation. Whilst Nicholson and Putwain (2018) found potential for alternative provisions to support students' basic psychological needs, Solomon and Rogers (2001) suggested that PRUs were potentially not the best placed provision to address self-efficacy. Daniels & Cole (2010) conducted interventions with pupils who had been permanently excluded or attended PRUs and found that many pupils experiencing exclusion and attending PRUs had few ideas about their future. They had low self-esteem, self-belief, views of themselves and low confidence to engage in new activities. Some experienced social isolation, however, not all.

2.3 Attribution theory

Thus far we have covered theories of identity development, socialisation and self-determination theory. The role of schools in facilitating and fostering healthy identities has been introduced and the potential impact of PRUs on self-efficacy and self-concept has been highlighted. A final pertinent theory to be addressed in this section is

attribution theory. The theory is relevant to the current project as it allows an insight into how attributions of teachers, and attributions of students themselves can impact on the way in which students perceive themselves, and thus develop self-concept.

Attribution theory is the perception or inference of cause (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Attribution theory states that individuals seek to understand the causes behind events and therefore interpret and make inferences towards the causes of behaviour. Inferences that are made subsequently impact on an individual's reaction in a given situation. In a review of attribution theory and research, Kelley & Michela (1980) introduce the idea that an individual's self-esteem and sense of competence is influenced by the attributions one makes. Therefore, in relation to attribution theory, the way in which children and young people attribute the causes for their exclusion may have detrimental effects to their self-concept, self-esteem and self-worth.

2.3.1 Locality, stability and controllability

In attribution theory, causes of specific events or behaviours can be perceived as internal or external (an event caused by something within the individual or outside of the individual), stable or unstable (consistent over time or variable) and controllable or uncontrollable (the degree to which it can be manipulated) (Weiner, 1985). Perceived causalities of locus, stability and controllability of events and situations are consequently linked with emotional experiences including anger, gratitude, guilt, helplessness and shame (Weiner, 1985).

Locus of control refers to the degree to which individuals feel in control over life events. It has been differentiated as two extremities; internal and external. An internal locus of control is the belief that one is control of events in their lives whilst an external locus of control is the belief that events are controlled by outside forces (Tony, 2003). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development associates an internal locus of control with an individual's sense of mastery, freedom, autonomy and thus positive adjustment (Erikson, 1968).

2.3.2 Pupil attributions

Research has been carried out to explore styles of attribution and locus of control with adolescents in school. Tony (2003) explored the attributions styles of secondary aged

pupils in Hong Kong. The author found that adolescents who attribute negative events due to internal, stable and global causes and attribute positive events as external causes were more likely to experience problems related to school discipline and misbehave. In other words, pupils' who associated negative events as caused by themselves and unchangeable, out of their control, were at risk of later difficulties at school. The tendency to explain 'bad' events by internal, stable and global causes is associated with learned helplessness, poorer mental health and depressive symptoms (Peterson & Seligman, 1984).

Tony (2003) linked attribution style and school discipline problems with the development of self-concept. The development of self-concept and identity in adolescence is impacted by negative evaluations and failure to succeed in school (Tony, 2003). Tony (2003) described that failure to develop a meaningful self-concept at school risks reinforcing a young person's internal attributions for failure and learned helplessness. Therefore, the understanding of attribution styles and learned helplessness is ever more important for the vulnerable children and young people who experience failure and bad events frequently at school. Maras, Moon & Gridley (2014) found that children with a 'emotional and behavioural difficulty' were more likely to report a negative attribution style, they were likely to make stable attributions for negative events, and less likely to attribute positive events as internal. Therefore, in relation to the current area of focus, there is a possibility that attribution styles for children who have experienced exclusions and behavioural difficulties are negative and subsequently affect the identities they develop. More research is required to understand wider factors that contribute to the development of negative attribution styles, taking into consideration home and family contexts.

2.3.3 Teacher attributions

Attribution theory has been linked to school and classroom environments and is thought to have important implications on teacher-pupil behaviour. For example, it has been found that teachers' attribute the causes of challenging behaviour as originating from within the child or the home (Shapiro, 1999), whereas pupils' attributions for misbehaviour at school related to 'fairness of teacher actions, pupil vulnerability, adverse family circumstances and strictness of classroom routine' (Miller, Ferguson & Byrne, 2000). Furthermore, for pupils at risk of exclusion, the way in which teachers

describe and explain a situation can have a detrimental effect on pupil outcomes. Exclusion or threats to exclusion in schools have been considered and described as authoritarian practices within education which often results in a medicalised and within-child attribution of difficulties (Carlile, 2011).

Carlile (2011) introduced the idea of the 'extended body' and 'contested space' for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The 'extended body' refers to the pathologising narrative of professionals about a pupil's 'mental state, behaviour, intention and attention' which occurs at the beginning of preventative support meetings in the context of behavioural problems. Carlile (2011) described initial support meetings as 'unofficial threats' of exclusion. The 'contested space' is the existence of conflict between the pupil and school, but also the professionals and external agencies that are involved. Carlile (2011) described the power of professional, pupils and parent narratives pathologising and projecting onto the child, or redirecting the focus of accountability, responsibility and support planning to situating the 'problem' within the child. It is the narrative of the pupil's 'extended body' that has the potential to create barriers for positive outcomes. This is someway reflected in a study by Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen and McCluskey (2011). They found that for permanently excluded children, who had experienced disrupted educational pathways, parents believed this resulted in a 'reputation' following the child and potentially exacerbating their learning and social difficulties even further. Parents reported that due to their child being permanently excluded prior to entering alternative provision, it was a challenge to identify provision and secure placements at PRUs at an early stage.

2.4 Voice of the child

Gaining pupil voice and giving young people the opportunity to express their views is often overlooked and limited in educational research, particularly with children with complex social and emotional needs (Cefai & Cooper, 2010), although acknowledgement of the relevance and importance of the views of excluded pupils is increasing (Munn & Lloyd, 2005). The voice of the child is marginal in education however there are important commitments/duties for involving them in direct research (McCluskey, Riddell & Weedon, 2015). The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines children's rights to education, to express their views in issues that affect them and to be treated in a dignified way (United Nations, 1989). It is

in the interest of children's rights to provide them with a voice and advocate for their voice to be heard. McCluskey, Riddell and Weedon (2015) argued that in the current society where we have the highest rates of exclusions, it is ever more important to hear the views of children and young people.

The UNCRC, amongst more recent legislation, has informed research seeking the views of children and young people for a variety of current educational issues such as exclusion, discipline and matters impacting on them and their education (McCluskey, Riddell & Weedon, 2015). As a result, more recent research has engaged **y**oung people in debates about disciplinary practices and their views in the context of exclusion and experiences in alternative provision (McClusky, Riddell & Weedon, 2015). Qualitative studies exploring the views of children with social and emotional needs have found that often young people experience a sense of helplessness, victimisation, oppression, feelings of being excluded and stigmatisation in specialist and mainstream provision that have failed to include them and support them (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). Research using pupils' perspectives shows that young people can often provide consistent and rational reasons for their behaviour, however, for many pupils who have experienced exclusion, it has been perceived quicker and easier to remove pupils than to apply for extra resources on the basis of identified SEN (Hilton, 2006). Hilton (2006) found that disaffection from pupils who have experienced exclusion is a result of policy pressures that make schools stressful and alienating for many pupils. Young people who have been permanently excluded have reported that throughout their journey they experienced disruption, multiple exclusions, confusion, a lack of control and were less involved in decision making when moving from mainstream to alternative provisions (Pirrie, Macleod, Cullen & McClusky, 2009). Where research has sought the views of young people, there is variability and inconsistency regarding how pupils understand their experiences, or how their experiences have impacted on them. This section now leads on to a systematic literature review that extends the findings of the views of young people.

2.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, there is both theoretical and research-driven purpose to continue pursuing the voices of young people, and more importantly the views of young people in PRUs. The previous chapter has illuminated some research that has shed light on the views of

young people in PRUs, regarding their self-concept, educational journeys and locus of control. The following section presents a systematic literature review that extends the discussion of the views of young people in existing PRU-related research.

3 Chapter three: Systematic literature review

3.1.1 Focus for the systematic review

A systematic literature review was undertaken to explore what research, if any, has already been carried out and investigated the views of permanently excluded children and young people in relation to their experiences. A decision was made to not specify gender and to only include research with young people who are attending PRUs or alternative provision, as this is the context of focus for the current research.

The research questions guiding the systematic literature review are:

1. To what extent has qualitative research explored the views of pupils who have experienced exclusion?
2. What does research tell us about the views of pupils, who have experienced exclusion or alternative provision, and their experiences so far?

3.1.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 3-1 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria for papers included in the review.

Characteristic of the study	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Focus	Exploration of young people's views in relation to their educational experience	Studies that contribute to a large-scale report, where young people's views contributed a minor part of the findings.
Context	Pupils who have experienced exclusion and are attending an alternative provision	Studies reporting views of young people attending alternative provision in the form of 'complementary programmes' in their mainstream provision.
Study design	The use of qualitative	Studies reporting pupil views as

	methods, such as semi-structured interviews with description of data collection and analysis	a narrative account, secondary research or studies that did not refer to analysis or data collection procedures.
Location	Research within the UK	Research outside of the UK
Type of publication	Published	Unpublished articles or non-studies, for example, reports.

3.1.3 Search strategy

An exhaustive search of 3 electronic databases was undertaken in July 2018. The databases included PsycINFO, ERIC and Web of Science. An additional search was conducted using Google Scholar search engine. See Appendix 1 for search terms included for all database searches. Each search included a context-related term, for example 'school' or 'alternative provision', a term related to pupil's voice such as 'pupil' and 'experience' or 'views' and finally the term 'exclusion'. Initially, title and abstracts were screened. Full-text articles of studies that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were obtained.

3.1.4 Results

In total the electronic searches highlighted 128 articles. The title and abstracts for all articles were screened and 14 duplicates were removed. Of the remaining 114 articles, ten full-text articles were obtained. Three articles were excluded due to reasons of context of the study, and study design. Seven articles met the inclusion criteria and were therefore included in the synthesis.

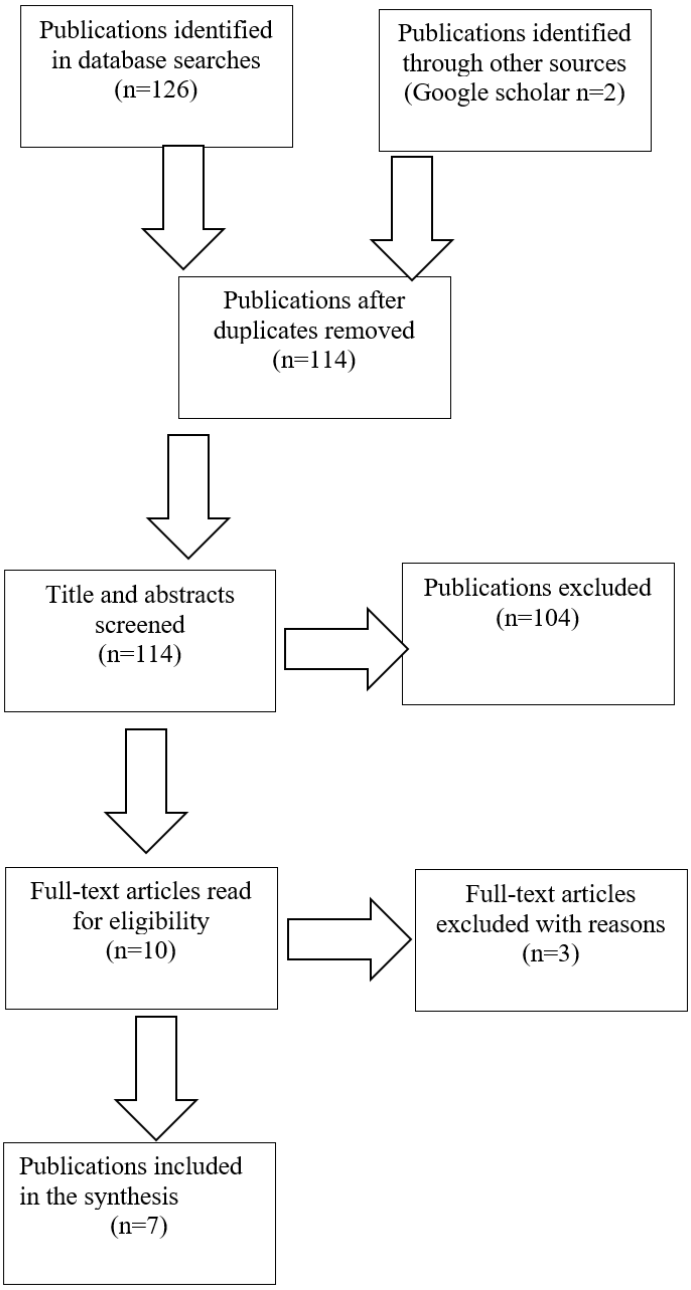

Figure 3-1. Flow diagram showing search strategy and screening.

3.1.5 Critical appraisal

Once ten articles were identified to meet the inclusion criteria for the search, two of the studies were excluded for reasons of context and study design. Eight of the articles were read and are summarised. A further study was excluded due to a low score on the critical appraisal which will be described later (see Table 3-3). Details about the individual studies including participant samples, methodology, measurement and outcomes are provided in Appendix 2.

A critical appraisal tool for qualitative research was consulted for the appraisal of the final studies. Whilst some tools may appraise the reliability, validity and objectivity of studies, it is argued that appraising qualitative research should seek a balance between evaluating methodological flaws and evaluating the relevance of the study and insight to the synthesis (Edwards, Elwin, Hood & Rollnick (2000). The methodological quality of each study was evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Programme (CASP) for Qualitative Research Checklist (CASP, 2013). The CASP was selected as an appropriate tool as it allows the researcher to systematically assess the quality of research on three broad issues: the validity of the study, the results and methodology and wider implications. The checklist is comprised of ten questions which can be answered *yes, no* or *partially*. Appendix 3 outlines ratings for each paper using the CASP qualitative research checklist tool.

Each article was individually evaluated for quality and relevance to the research question using Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence (WoE). The studies were given an overall judgement of the quality of the research, appropriateness of the evidence and relevance to the research question. The appraisal of studies using the CASP allowed the researcher to provide a rating of 'high, medium or low' for Weighting A: the quality of methodology for each study. On the other hand, Weighting B and C allowed the researcher to prioritise the importance and relevance of each study based on the review questions which are repeated here:

1. To what extent has qualitative research explored the views of pupils who have experienced exclusion?
2. What does research tell us about the views of pupils, who have experienced exclusion or alternative provision, and their experiences so far?

Table 3-1 outlines the researcher's High, Medium and Low description for each WoE criteria and Table 3-2 shows the overall judgement for each study included in the review.

Table 3-1. Weight of evidence criteria

Weight of evidence criteria	Description
A. Quality of methodology	High- The study is coherent, with clear aims, rationale and purposes. The methodology employed is fit for the research aims Low- The study makes no reference to their rationale and aims and lacks replicability.
B. Relevance and appropriateness of the methodology	High – There is detailed description provided in the text regarding qualitative data collection and analysis, including the use of quotations and themes derived Medium- The study provides some information regarding data analysis and findings, including some quotations and consideration of reliability and validity Low- The study lacks clarity of methods and procedure throughout.
C. Relevance of the study focus to the research question	High- The study possesses a clear aim to seek the views of pupil's who have experienced exclusion and attending PRUs Medium- The pupils' views were complementary to a larger outcome of the research, involving additional sources of information Low- The study has minimal or no reference made to the views of students and their experiences of PRUs.
D. Overall judgement	An overall judgement of the methodology quality in relation to the research question

Table 3-2 High, medium and low ratings across weight of evidence criteria for each paper

Study	A	B	C	D
Hart (2013)	High-medium	Medium	High	High-medium
Michael & Frederickson (2013)	High	High	High	High
Hilton (2006)	High	High- medium	High- medium	High- medium
Putwain, Nicholson & Edwards (2016)	High	High	Medium	Medium
Nicholson & Putwain (2016)	High	High	High	High
Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015)	High	High- medium	Medium	High- medium
Jalali & Morgan (2018)	High-medium	Medium	High-medium	High-medium
Excluded study				
McClusky, Riddell and Weedon (2015)	Low	Low	Low	Low

28 % of the studies had an overall 'High' weight of evidence. 57% of the studies had an overall 'High-Medium' weight of evidence and 14% had an overall 'Medium' overall weight of evidence. It must be noted that although a systematic approach was undertaken to assess the quality of each study, the final ratings relied on subjective judgements to be made. The following synthesis presented is largely influenced by the relevance of the study to the question (column C) of focus and the current area of research. Although only 28% of studies (2/7 studies) had a 'High' weight of evidence, 42% of the studies (3/7) were of a 'High' relevance to the current focus and questions of the systematic review. As a result, a decision was made to present a synthesis of the

findings for each paper in accordance to the relevance of the study to the review questions beginning with those rated 'High' on Column C. The synthesis will describe aims, methodology and key findings of each study, followed by limitations and finally an integration of the findings across papers.

3.1.5.1 Description of individual studies with a 'High' rating on WoE

Nicholson and Putwain (2016) interviewed 35 students aged 14-16 who attended alternative provision. Almost all students were excluded or refused to attend their mainstream setting. The research examined educational re-engagement and sought pupil views on teacher practices that facilitated or inhibited their need for autonomy, relatedness and competence in their setting. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, alongside staff interviews and observations in the setting. PRU pupils reported that attending a PRU allowed them to feel respected. Participants expressed autonomy and choice over many aspects of their life and a relaxed, informal environment allowed them to feel 'understood'. Teachers at the setting taught them about the value of education and encouraged them to find their capabilities and strengths that would help them on their future career journey. The authors concluded that PRU pupils achieved a sense of connectedness and expressed that they were able to develop nurturing relationships and had a sense that the teachers 'wanted them to achieve'. Pupils expressed that work was difficult at times, or too easy, leading to a sense of helplessness or inhibition of competence and capabilities. They described attempts to control and manage challenging behaviour led to autonomy coercion and as a result, pupils were disaffected. The study was relevant to the current research as it directly explores how students view their autonomy, independence, competence and relatedness in a PRU, linking motivation and experience. The findings highlight the importance of the role of teachers in satisfying pupils' psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness however was less clear on how the pupils' experiences impacted on the way they viewed themselves, linking motivation and self-identity. It has been argued that although alternative provision may improve student behaviour, they may be associated with negative long-term implications, because of exclusionary practices (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). The authors used interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as their methodological approach to analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). As the current study is interested in phenomenology, this increases the relevance of the study to the focus area, however the study employed a

relatively large number of participants, and conducted interviews varying from 5 to 35 minutes. Therefore, it is possible that there was a high level of variety in quality and quantity of the interviews which was not made explicit throughout by the authors. Consequently, this would be a significant factor that would compromise the appropriateness of the method, and validity. In addition, Nicholson and Putwain (2018) reported a minority of students did not want to participate due to possible mental health needs, or less of a positive experience, which may be indicative of a biased population sample.

Michael & Frederickson (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 young people aged 12-16 from PRUS in two local authorities. The study sought pupil views of enabling factors and barriers in PRUs. The author found that enabling factors included positive relationships with teachers, peers and family members, learning environment and personal qualities such as self-motivation, self-belief and self-discipline. Participants viewed unfair treatment and ineffective management strategies as barriers to positive outcomes. The participants made relatable comparisons with students at the PRU (e.g. 'most people here have anger issues') and were able to understand and identify with their own emotional issues in relation to others they were associated with at the PRU. The authors inferred that the PRU pupils expresses a sense of connectedness and belonging, but also disaffection with their experiences at mainstream. The pupils often made comparisons with their mainstream setting. The authors used a thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews to derive themes and identify patterns across the data items from each participant.

Hart (2013) explored protective factors in a PRU as perceived by children, young people and staff. The authors conducted interviews with six children, aged 9-13, who attended the PRU for two terms. The interviews explored participants' PRU experience, previous schooling experience, what helped them at the PRU, improvements at the PRU and their motivation and readiness to leave. Similarly, to the participants described in Michael and Frederickson (2013) PRU pupils reported teacher-pupil relationships, learning environment and expectations as protective factors in the PRU setting. The authors reported on the perceived positive impact of protective factors on participants' self-esteem, sense of safety and security, and connectedness, referring to the PRU as a 'family atmosphere'. Also, PRU pupils held negative perceptions of their experiences in mainstream schools. Hart's (2013) study provides relevant findings to the current area

of focus and how pupils who have experienced exclusion talk about their experiences, however, their findings were combined with data from staff interviews. The authors reported they used a deductive approach to analyse the data using pre-existing themes derived from educational research and scanning transcripts. Although Hart (2013) and Michael Frederickson (2013) found similar results, in the context of the current research and focus on experiences and phenomenology, the methods used to analyse the transcripts can be perceived as 'surface level', compensating for a deeper analysis of pupil's experiences. In addition, the PRU setting selected in Hart's (2013) study was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and participants were due to reintegrate back into their mainstream setting. Therefore, the external validity and generalisation of the findings is compromised. The authors suggested future research and learning from children who might have had a less positive experience would be worthwhile.

3.1.5.2 Description of individual studies with a 'High- medium' rating on WoE

Jalali and Morgan (2018) explored the differences and similarities between primary PRU students and secondary PRU students, with the aim of exploring how they perceived their experiences to change across primary and secondary education. They interviewed children between the ages of 7-16 from three pupil referral units. Eight attended one of two primary PRUs and five attended a secondary PRU. They used semi-structured interviews to explore their attribution of difficulties, supportive factors that help them to make progress at the PRU and their views regarding mainstream education and reintegration. The authors found that in comparison to primary aged pupils who expected to return to mainstream, secondary aged PRU pupils expressed a sense of learned helplessness. Both primary and secondary PRU pupils viewed their behaviour as a form of protest against treatment from others and some labelled their behaviour as 'naughty'. The participants had expressed common feelings of being 'targeted' or attributed themselves as the 'victim' and secondary students expressed displeasure with their mainstream school settings, due to perceived pressure and high expectations. The authors concluded that secondary pupils expressed a lack of connectedness to mainstream education, due to feelings of inadequacy, failure and not fitting in. The authors suggested that there were negative long-term implications of attending PRUs related to exclusion, self-worth, perceived inadequacy and potentially depressive mental health profile. Overall, the study was interested in the degree of consistency and/or change of experiences from primary and secondary aged pupils.

Whilst the study attempted to provide group comparison data and analysis, the authors acknowledge a lack of internal validity of the study, as the study used three different settings, and lend itself more to a longitudinal study design. The authors acknowledged that a longitudinal design of pupil's experiences and perceptions over time may have increased the validity of the conclusions made.

Trotman, Tucker and Martyn (2015) aimed to explore pupils' school experience, experiences of classroom behaviour, understanding of processes leading to exclusion and pupils' experiences of alternative provision. They interviewed 29 young people who attended either a secondary school or alternative provision. The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting school exclusion from the perspective of young people. The authors found a theme of transition regarding the affective disturbance throughout the transition from primary to secondary, with young people reporting 'feeling lost'. PRU pupils spoke positively about their experiences and expressed that PRU teachers promoted a calm and relaxing classroom, with less of a power relationship between teachers and pupils. Pupils reported a sense of relatedness to PRU teachers with high quality **'**human connections' between teachers and pupils. The authors concluded that they found a range of issues contributing to poor behaviour and factors leading to exclusion, such as inadequate teaching practices, insufficient resources and poorly thought-out management strategies. Pupils often spoke about teaching and learning strategies that failed to engage them, transition challenges that led to negative behaviour or exclusion, and issues of school size, support, peer pressure and personal confidence. Although the study aimed to understand exclusion from the perspective of the pupils, only half of the participants disclosed an experience of temporary or permanent exclusion. Therefore, the participant selection process means that it is difficult to generalise the findings of all pupils who have experienced exclusion. In addition, the research study was not explicit about findings about pupil's knowledge and understanding of the self, despite this being an area of exploration during the semi-structured interviews. Instead, the findings summarised pupils and professional interviews combined. Consequently, the relevance of this study to the current area of research on pupils' views, phenomenology and development of identity in the context of exclusion was compromised. The specific findings in relation to pupil views were not sufficiently described in the results as distinct from the views of professionals and were therefore difficult to navigate through.

Hilton (2006) conducted semi structured interviews with 40 young people aged 13-17 from six settings of 'alternative institutional environments' (14 were girls) and two youth clubs. All participants had been excluded from different schools at different stages. They were asked to talk about their experiences of school as well their experience in alternative settings. Pupils reported feelings of 'alienation' from teachers in their mainstream setting. The authors identified a high level of disaffection from the young people about difficulties they experienced in mainstream related to class sizes, pupil teacher ratios and support. Participants expressed punitive experiences in mainstream, e.g. pupils being sent to a 'base' to sit in a room with or without work, and poor relationships with teachers, resulting in students feeling of low status and differentially valued within the school. Although the research highlighted some significant findings about the way pupils experienced PRUs, the methodology employed in the study is flawed. The authors made little reference to the content of semi-structured interview and later data analysis procedures, therefore threatening the reliability and validity of the findings.

3.1.5.3 Description of individual studies with a 'Medium' rating on WoE

Putwain, Nicholson and Edwards (2016) explored practices in an alternative provision and how they were attempted to re-engage disengaged students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 students aged 14-16 years. Almost all students were excluded or refused to attend their mainstream setting or a PRU and had very poor attendance. The semi-structured interviews were based on Reschly and Christenson's (2012) model of student engagement and explored relational climate, affective engagement with school including belongingness, identification and enjoyment at school, cognitive engagement, behavioural and autonomy. The pupils said that mainstream settings resulted in feelings of boredom, which led to disruptive behaviour, whilst the support and learning practices in the alternative provision had changed students' attitudes towards learning to be more positive. The authors used IPA alongside comprehensive interviews with staff and 29 hours of lesson observations. Putwain, Nicholson and Edwards (2016) did not specify the length of interviews with staff or students, and summarised findings from both staff and student interviews, and classroom observations. This was a significant limitation of the paper as the findings did not distinguish their phenomenological analysis of student's experience and the way in

which student's give meaning to and make sense of their experience, which is a critical feature of IPA.

3.1.5.4 Description of individual studies with a 'Low' rating on WoE

McCluskey, Riddell & Weedon's (2015) study was of the least relevance to the current area of research focus and was rated low for overall weight of evidence. The critical appraisal was not completed due to flaws on the first two decision points the appraisal. The study was part of a larger study; however, the appraisal required a clear statement of the aims and purposes of student interviews and adequate information regarding the analysis procedures. The authors provided minimal information regarding participant educational history. The study did report findings on pupil's direct experience of the exclusion process and experience of alternative provision. They found that pupils perceived school as a 'waste of time'; they reported that access to support was stronger in alternative provisions and pupils had a preference to alternative provision in comparison to their mainstream. Due to flaws in the methodology, the paper was excluded from any further synthesis.

3.1.6 Narrative synthesis of the studies

A qualitative meta-synthesis was conducted to compare and integrate findings across the research articles. This allowed interpretive deduction of common themes about how the pupils experienced alternative provisions. Table 3-3 outlines themes identified across the papers and supporting authors for each theme. The themes included the tendency for pupils to make 'comparisons of their PRU experience with previous mainstream school environments', a shared 'sense of belongingness/connectedness in the PRU', 'the impact of the PRU on self-esteem and self-attributions', a personal 'sense of autonomy and control' and finally 'perceived injustice and unfairness'.

Table 3-3. Common themes across papers about how authors reported pupils spoke about their experiences.

Theme	Author/paper supporting the theme
Comparison of PRU experience to mainstream setting linked to feelings of 'alienation' or failure	• Hilton (2006) • Putwain, Nicholson & Edwards (2016) • Michael & Frederickson (2013) • Hart (2013) • Jalali & Morgan (2018) • Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015) • Putwain Nicholson & Edwards (2016)
Sense of belongingness to PRU setting	• Nicholson & Putwain (2016) • Michael & Frederickson (2013) • Hart (2013) • Jalali & Morgan (2018)
The impact of the PRU on self-esteem, self-worth and self-attributions	• Hilton (2006) • Michael & Frederickson (2013) • Jalali & Morgan (2018)
Sense of autonomy and control	• Jalali & Morgan (2018) • Nicholson & Putwain (2016) • Michael & Frederickson (2013) • Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015)
Perceived injustice and unfairness	• Hilton (2006) • Nicholson & Putwain (2016) • Jalali & Morgan (2018) • Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015) • Michael & Frederickson (2013)

Overall the nature of the research literature thus far is often of a descriptive nature, seeking students' views of their experiences and wider areas of focus that could contribute to an understanding of what students perceive is helping them or what isn't.

3.1.7 Synthesis of themes across the literature

A common finding across all papers was the tendency for students to compare their experiences in the PRU with their previous experience of a mainstream setting. Pupil's tended to value smaller class sizes, individualised curriculum and differing power dynamics within a PRU setting, in comparison to a mainstream setting. Michael and Frederickson (2013) and Hart (2013) identified these as 'protective or enabling' factors to support success and reintegration for pupils. Other findings were that pupils were disaffected with mainstream environments, for example in Jalali and Morgan (2018) students spoke about returning to mainstream, e.g. 'they won't let me back', 'it's not fit for everyone, 'I had to back away, it was too much', whereas in Hilton (2006), quotations elicited a lack of support structures in the mainstream setting that had failed them or contributed to disaffection and disengagement.

Several papers found that PRU pupils spoke about their experience as fostering a sense of belongingness and connectedness. In Jalali and Morgan's (2018) study, pupils compared their experiences with mainstream and used language such as mainstream schools choosing 'normal children' whilst other children 'below the standards are outcasts'. Pupils spoke about nurturing staff-pupil relationships in PRUs leading to a sense of belonging or relatedness, for example 'being a big family' and adults making effort to get to know students on a more personal level (Nicholson& Putwain, 2018; Michael & Frederickson, 2013). PRUs were described as a nurturing, calm environment resulting in an increasing sense of safety and security for pupils and a 'small family atmosphere' (Hart, 2013) and contrastingly a lack of connectedness to their mainstream settings (Jalali & Morgan, 2018).

A further theme included an increased sense of control and autonomy in PRUs. For example, primary aged pupils in PRUs reported increased self-regulation of emotions via the structural environment in a PRU, e.g. rooms to take out their anger, whereas secondary students reported an increased sense of control in the presence of adult support systems in place at the PRU (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). Contrastingly, other studies found that pupils reported a lack of control and autonomy due to coercive behaviour management strategies in PRUs (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Nicholson & Putwain, 2018). PRU pupils often spoke about having choice over aspects of their school life and being treated with respect as autonomy support (Trotman, Tucker & Martyn 2015; Nicholson & Putwain, 2018).

A common theme across the selected studies was apparent from the various findings regarding how pupils spoke about themselves, and the perceived impact of their experiences in PRUs on their self-esteem. Authors were able to comment on implications of pupils' experiences on their self-esteem. Hart (2001) found that pupils were reporting that the teaching in PRUs and manageable tasks was beneficial for students' self-esteem, whereas other findings inferred that pupils experienced a sense of helplessness when curriculum or learning activities were too challenging. Where studies used direct quotations, it appeared that pupils often spoke negatively about themselves and others in the PRU, for example in Hilton's (2006) study they reportedly said, 'we're just immature', identified themselves as 'bad pupils', and one pupil said, 'something must be wrong with me'. In Jalali & Morgan's study (2018) pupils who were interviewed would label their behaviour as 'naughty' and make deterministic quotes such as 'I was the one always getting into trouble'. Across some of the papers pupils were referring to 'normal schools'. Although this was not directly analysed further in the studies, it introduces the idea that pupils conceptualised themselves as not attending a 'normal' school. Furthermore, the way in which PRU pupils described other's perception of them, e.g. 'teachers just want you out' offered an insight into pupils' beliefs about how they are perceived by others (Nicholson & Putwain, 2018). Jalali and Morgan (2018) reported that although for some pupils there was reported positive experiences and behavioural improvements in PRU settings, there were long-term implications of pupil's exclusions and the associated consequences of exclusion on pupil's self-esteem and self-worth.

Finally, a common finding across the literature included pupils reporting of perceived injustice and perceptions of themselves as a 'victim'. Pupils were often found to externalise blame towards others and to talk explicitly about the unfair treatment both in mainstream and in PRUs (Jalali and Morgan, 2018; Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Hilton, 2006).

3.1.8 Participants and methodology

All of the studies used semi-structured interviews to interview pupils who had experienced permanent or fixed term exclusions. Some of the studies used additional sources of information such as classroom observations and staff interviews, alongside pupil interviews in order to select more appropriate methodology for the research question (Trotman, Tucker & Martyn, 2015; Putwain Nicholson & Edwards, 2016;

Nicholson & Putwain, 2016; Hart, 2013). All of the papers aside from Trotman, Tucker and Martyn (2015) were aware of pupils' educational histories and experiences of exclusion. Contrastingly, none of the studies explored the views of primary aged pupils attending PRUs aside from Jalali and Morgan (2018).

The analysis of data across studies varied from scanning and using pre-existing codes/themes, thematic analysis, to interpretive phenomenological analysis. The different methods for data analysis were suited to different areas of focus, for example Michael and Frederickson (2013) used thematic analysis to elicit themes of protective and hindering factors, whereas Putwain Nicholson and Edwards (2016), Nicholson and Putwain (2016) and Jalali and Morgan (2018) used phenomenological methods to analyse experiences.

3.2 Rationale for the current study

The current research recognises the importance of understanding more about the vulnerable and marginalised young people experiencing exclusion, and how they talk about their experiences. Hart (2013) suggested that learning from the experiences of young people who might not have fared so well in a PRU may support the development of research in promoting successful provision for the vulnerable young people who have been excluded. Currently within the literature there is limited in-depth research that explores pupils' experiences and their perceived self-identity. In the research proposed here, learning from the experiences of pupils will also contribute to an increased understanding of the impact on exclusionary practices on pupils' development. The current research adopts an exploratory- thematic approach, focusing on young peoples' experiences in a PRU and the perceived impact of their experiences on their self-identity.

Whilst research has explored pupil voice, existing literature is limited to pupils' perceptions regarding protective factors, experiences or barriers to positive outcomes. There is limited literature linking pupils' perceptions and experiences to theoretical understanding of psychosocial and psychological development of identity. Therefore, the original contribution of the proposed research resides in the attempt to explicitly explore the impact of PRU experiences on self-concept and identity development. The research will inform the professional practices for professionals working within education such as EPs, Special Educational Needs Coordinators and PRU staff by

providing an additional insight into the perceived impact of attending alternative provisions or PRUs.

3.3 Research questions

This is an exploratory study that is interested in adolescent pupils' experiences in PRUs and how they describe the impact of their experiences on their self-identity. The research questions are:

1. How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?
2. What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?

3.4 Focus of the proposed research and aims

The research aims to contribute and add to the existing literature on pupils' experiences of PRUs. It does not aim to offer indefinite and generalised answers to the research questions for all students attending PRUs, but instead offer an insight into what pupils may be saying about their individual experiences.

4 Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a consideration of the epistemological position of the proposed research followed by a description of the interpretivist-constructivist approach adopted. The epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the research are then described. A description of thematic analysis as the chosen methodology is offered, with comparison being made to alternative approaches. Finally, the process of data collection and analysis is detailed. An overview of methodological decisions and ethical considerations are presented, and the validity and reliability of the selected approach is considered.

4.2 Methodological orientation

4.2.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research today can be understood as a move away from traditional positivist paradigms, this having been prompted by a growing interest in qualitative methodologies, inquiry and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Qualitative research is essentially inquiry into phenomena that takes place in its natural setting, adopting methods that aim to interpret and make sense of what is being investigated. Willig (2013) defines qualitative researchers as people who usually work in the 'real' world, through direct observation and engagement with phenomena as they naturally

occur. The qualitative researcher tries to make sense of social phenomena and the meanings people bring to them. They are committed to the exploration into natural phenomena, inquiry and to the 'interpretive understanding of human experience' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Some have challenged qualitative research, claiming it to be unscientific, exploratory or subject to bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Where quantitative research is interested in measurable constructs and the establishment of causal relationships, qualitative research is directly interested in the socially constructed nature of reality, seeking to explore how humans create meaning to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The current research adopts a qualitative design, in contrast to positivist approaches, as it is interested in individual experiences, construction of meaning, and rich description of experiences. The epistemological, ontological and methodological standpoints adopted lie in the interpretivist- constructivist paradigm.

4.2.2 Epistemology and ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and the question of 'what is there to know' whilst epistemology is the nature of the relationship between the 'knower and what can be known' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Where positivist approaches might assume a single reality exists, the ontology of the current research is rooted within constructivist paradigm and relativist ontology. The constructivist paradigm assumes that there are multiple realities, and therefore there is no single objective truth that can be tested (Given, 2008). In the constructivist paradigm, epistemology and ontological standpoints view knowledge as individual, and created/experienced through social interaction. Whilst the positivist paradigm assumes that knowledge and truth can be objectively tested, measured and defined, the constructivist paradigm investigates and explores phenomena, answering questions related to the 'why' rather than the 'what'. This research aims to understand the constructions and realities that individual people hold.

Phenomenologists assume that knowledge is created through subjective experiences (Willig, 2013). In the current study, the researcher will adopt an exploratory phenomenological enquiry approach within an interpretivist-constructivist paradigm.

Phenomenology is essentially an interest in the human experience and allows investigation of various aspects of the human experience, particularly those that matter to us and are significant to the individual (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Research that undertakes a phenomenological approach seeks to capture the feeling, thoughts and perceptions of the individuals' experience of an 'event', situation or thing (Willig, 2013). The researcher is interested in what it is like to *be* in the experience, rather than what might be *'really'* going on.

4.3 Thematic analysis

One approach to conducting analysis with qualitative research is thematic analysis. An underlying assumption of thematic analysis is that the way in which individuals talk about their experience depicts the reality of what occurred. It takes participants accounts at face value and looks for explicit themes about social, psychological and contextual factors within the account that contribute to the experience.

Thematic analysis is used widely in qualitative research. The benefits of using thematic analysis include that as opposed to other qualitative methodologies such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) or Discourse Analysis (DA), it is not tied down to any theoretical framework. It can be used flexibly, as a method in its own right, and does not 'fit' into any particular theoretical paradigm.

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe an inductive approach to thematic analysis is when the themes arise naturally from the data set. In this way, the analysis is data driven and not informed by the researcher's existing preconceptions or pre-existing codes. It aims to identify, analyse and report key themes that exist within a data set.

Thematic analysis underpins qualitative methods of analysis including phenomenological approaches such as IPA and discursive techniques such as DA (Willig, 2013). Thematic analysis aims to identify and derive themes of importance for understanding the phenomena that is investigated. There are several comprehensive accounts of how to undertake thematic analysis in qualitative research, positioning thematic analysis as a distinct and unique research method in itself. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue the case for thematic analysis to be a distinct method in its own right. However, it can be argued that thematic analysis is a tool that is used within and across many qualitative methods of analysis (Willig, 2013).

Willig (2013) however, addresses the fact that neither method is mutually exclusive, such that a pluralistic methodological could be adopted in order to answer a variety of questions with participant interviews. For example, if the current research was interested in both how participants experience PRUs and how they use language to communicate their positioning within their experience, I would adopt both phenomenological and discursive methods to analysis.

I felt that the research presented here fit suitably with the flexible, inductive approach of thematic analysis. This allowed for the data analysis to be grounded in participants' accounts as opposed to theoretically driven by pre-existing codes. In addition, it allowed for the research to maintain an exploratory feel which I felt was necessary as the research is interested in participants' accounts of how they experience the PRU setting. In the current study, I am interested in both the *quality* and *texture* of the individual's account, which can allow them to provide descriptive and interpretive analyses of how the individual experiences the 'thing', in order to get as close as possible to the participant's experience. The aim of the research is to allow the researcher to enter the experiential world, which involves stepping into the participant's shoes, experiencing their world as they see it, and seeking to understand how individuals make sense of their experience.

In this research I sought to shed light on what experiences in PRUs could be like for some individuals, with the intention of deepening understanding and transparency of pupils' experiences in PRUs.

4.4 Alternative methodologies considered

Two alternative qualitative methodologies were considered when devising an approach to address the research question. I felt it was important to consult both IPA and DA, and briefly describe and evaluate them here.

4.4.1 Interpretive phenomenological analysis

An interpretive phenomenological approach is one way of understanding the meaning of experience. As opposed to descriptive phenomenology, *interpretation* plays a key role in interpretive phenomenology.

One aspect of IPA is an exploration of the participant's experience: what their world is like. This encompasses an exploration of phenomenology, focusing on their experience of a specific process, event, or a relationship. A second aspect of IPA is to offer an

interpretive analysis of how the participant has expressed feelings and concerns, and an account of the meaning they have attributed to their experiences. IPA seeks to explore communication and to understand the experiences and voices of participants, providing an 'insider's perspective' to the sense-making and meaning making of the individual (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).

The role of interpretation in IPA research is concerned with both the visible and hidden meanings; how things manifest and the deeper meaning (Willig, 2013). IPA can therefore offer a comprehensive, detailed and rich interpretive analysis of individual experience. Where a key feature of IPA focuses on subjective human experience, I felt that the use of thematic analysis would allow for consideration of the social and cultural phenomena as well (Guest & MacQueen, 2012).

A critique of IPA is that it relies on language as a way to encounter an individual's perception of their lived experience and world. It typically uses methods such as interviews or text to present descriptions of events and experiences. It can be argued that language simply constructs and describes events rather than constructs reality and the lived experience, therefore meaning that interpretation of lived experience can be compromised. In other words, the same event can be described in many ways, and accessing someone's true experience through language alone can be impossible (Willig, 2013). Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) suggest that IPA research can be difficult to do well, which can lead some IPA researchers to offer descriptive analyses as opposed to interpretive analyses.

I felt that thematic analysis would be a more appropriate methodological approach for the analysis of the data collected in the current study as it would create an opportunity to shed light on what experiences could be like for a number of pupils. IPA would have been an appropriate methodological choice if the aim of the study was to provide a deeper and detailed interpretive analysis of individual experience.

4.4.2 Discourse analysis

Discursive techniques look at how narratives are constructed by individuals and how individuals position themselves in interaction. Whilst DA and Foucauldian discourse analysis share the assumption that there is more than one reality and 'truth', they place an emphasis on the role of language in constructing social reality, creating subjectivity (Willig, 2013). The underlying assumption of each DA is that the same experience can

be constructed in multiple different ways through the language that is used, by different individuals and for a particular purpose.

DA is interested in the social structure of language and argues that the delivery of language in conversation is a form of 'social action' and is therefore interested in how participants use language to position themselves (Willig, 2013). It assumes the idea of social intent behind language and it is through analysing the way in which individuals talk that allows the researcher to know more about the views of the individual. In other words, DA refutes the idea that 'talk is a route to cognition' and instead argues that through language, individuals are taking part in conversation that is actively and intentionally a response to the context in which the question is asked. As a result of the emphasis placed on the way in which language is used: (language as a 'social action' and 'social structure'), the analysis requires a close look at the use of techniques, such as sequencing of events in a conversation, disclaiming, pleasing, persuading and language structure.

The current research question is interested in exploring the experience of participants. Essentially it is interested in how participants construct meaning to their experiences using language, how they experience PRUs, and what sense they make of their experiences. Therefore, DA does not fit the current area of interest and was deemed less appropriate for the current study than thematic analysis.

4.4.3 Limitations of thematic analysis

It can be argued that as qualitative research and thematic analysis are interested in the texture of experience, namely what it is like to be in particular situation and the way people talk about the phenomena under investigation, the outcome of analysis relies on suitable responses and rich quality data. This raises a question as to how able the participants are to describe their perceptions (Willig, 2013). In the current project I was required to consider the language skills of young people in PRUs and their ability to therefore express coherently how they experience PRUs and their perceptions about the impact it has had for them. The quality of data gathering relied to some extent on the participants' linguistic abilities and ability to reflect on their experiences for their lives.

Exploratory-phenomenological research is generally thematic in its nature of analysis. Therefore, for this study, I decided to use thematic analysis using guidance developed

by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Braun and Clarke (2006). This allowed me to remain focused on the way in which young people talk about their experiences, with the aim to devise key themes of the shared experiences across the several data sets.

4.5 Design

The following sections outline the setting, participant characteristics, methodological decision for data collection and the data analysis procedure.

4.5.1 Settings and participants

4.5.1.1 Pupil Referral Unit

Participants were recruited from the local area's Pupil Referral Unit for Key Stage 3 and 4 children. The setting was referred to as an educational centre, providing part-time and full-time provision for children who were at risk of permanent exclusion. The programmes available at the setting varied from a 1-day programme at the PRU, 2 day and 5-day programme. Where pupils attended the PRU for 1- or 2-day programmes, they spent the rest of the week in their mainstream school or alternative/vocational provision. The setting provided four 5-day programmes; a group for students who are able to access the full range of programmes at the PRU; a group for students to attend whilst they undergo a period of 'assessment'; a group for students following a failed a managed move to a mainstream provision and a final group for students who are expected to attend an extended period of time whilst preparing for a move to another alternative provision. The most recent Ofsted inspection for the PRU took place in September 2018 and resulted as 'good'.

4.5.1.2 Participants

Five participants took part in the study. The decision for a smaller sample is relevant to the current study as it is interested in gathering in-depth and rich data of the individual's experience. Furthermore, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that a sample of three-to-five should allow for sufficient data to support cross-case analysis at later stages of the analysis procedure, and to develop meaningful comparisons across participants. A larger and more generalizable sample may compromise the idiographic and interrogative nature of data analysis for studies that are interesting in gathering rich data (Smith, 2004).

Opportunity sampling was required for the current study. To ensure a degree of homogeneity across participants, I developed inclusion criteria to guide participant selection. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Participants who are in the older age group of the Key Stage, specifically Year 8 and Year 9 who were able to provide rich data and draw on two-to-three years in secondary education. In addition, as the interviews were taking place in the first two terms of the academic year, the participants would have attended the PRU in the preceding year, as opposed to new pupils at the PRU.
- Pupils who were attending the PRU with over 60% attendance as this was the highest percentage of attendance for pupils attending the PRU overall.
- Participants who were able to give informed consent.

I also devised exclusion criteria such as:

- The involvement of young people with social communication and interaction difficulties and/or speech and language needs due to the reliance on linguistic competencies and validity of the interview findings. Furthermore, this decision was made on an ethical basis in order to ensure that participants did not experience distress with the verbal demands in the interview.
- The involvement of young people with mental health needs as an ethical consideration to protect the participant from distress or harm following potential sensitive emotions the interview could have provoked.
- Young people who are in their early days of attendance at the PRU or have not attended for longer than one term of the academic year.

4.5.1.3 Charles

Charles was male, White British ethnicity and had been attending the PRU for 36 weeks. His chronological age at the time of the interview was 14 years, 1 month and he was in Year 9. Charles was in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and had a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He had entered the PRU from a mainstream setting where he had received a total of 12 fixed term exclusions. As reported by the PRU, the reasons for his fixed term exclusions included ‘being physical’ towards another student, disruptive behaviour, and ‘being verbal’ towards a member of teaching staff. At the time of the interview, it was reported that he was awaiting a placement at a specialist provision.

4.5.1.4 Jayne

Jayne was female, White British ethnicity and had been attending the PRU for 21 weeks. Her chronological age at the time of the interview was 13 years and 7 months and she was in Year 9. Jayne was currently undergoing statutory assessment for an EHCP and had been permanently excluded from her mainstream school. The local authority was seeking specialist provision for her. She had entered the PRU from a mainstream setting where she had received a total of 4 fixed term exclusions. As reported by the PRU, the reasons for her fixed term exclusions included 'being physical' towards another student, disruptive behaviour, and 'being verbal' towards a member of teaching staff. At the time of the interview it was reported that the local authority was seeking specialist provision for her.

4.5.1.5 Ben

Ben was male, White Black Caribbean and had been attending the PRU for 23 weeks. His chronological age at the time of the interview was 12 years and 8 months and he was in Year 8. Ben had spent time in a Primary PRU and this his second experience in a PRU. He was currently undergoing statutory assessment for an EHCP and was awaiting a named placement. He had entered the PRU from a mainstream setting where he had experienced 1 fixed term exclusion. The reason for his exclusion included physical assault towards another student.

4.5.1.6 Ellis

Ellis was male, White Black Caribbean ethnicity and had been attending the PRU for 9 weeks. His chronological age at the time of the interview was 13 years and 6 months and he was in Year 9. Ellis was currently attending the PRU part-time for two days. The remainder of the week was spent at an alternative provision out of city. Ben had 6 fixed term exclusions for physical assault towards another pupil.

4.5.1.7 John

John was male, White British and had been attending the PRU for 21 weeks. His chronological age at the time of the interview was 13 years and 2 months and he was in Year 8. The participant was currently attending the PRU for five mornings a week.

Table 4-1. Characteristics of participants

Participant	Chronological Age (years: months)	Year group	Sex	Time spent in PRU	Number of fixed term exclusions in previous educational settings
1	14:1	9	Male	36 weeks	12
2	13:7	9	Female	21	4
3	12:8	8	Male	23	1
4	13:6	9	Male	9	6
5	13:2	8	Male	21	0

4.6 Data collection - setting up interviews

An email was sent to the lead pastoral manager to invite her and the head teacher to discuss a research opportunity. Attached to the email was a letter with information for the school outlining the research aim, purpose, question, requirements of the school, information about data collection and confidentiality (see Appendix 5). Following a meeting, it was agreed that two members of staff were to be able to support the research project to take place; roles and responsibilities were negotiated.

The two members of staff at the PRU were expected to support the study in the following way: to send out consent letters to parents; provide the researcher with demographic details for each participant involved; identify a quiet room for interviews to take place; and to provide pastoral support for each participant after the interview had taken place.

4.6.1 Obtaining consent

Opt-in consent was sought from parents, and then participants. Participants also received an information sheet (see Appendix 7). All consent letters provided information about the recording, handling and use of recordings (see Appendix 6 and 8). Data was stored according to the requirements of data protection legislation, involving password protection and security of the data.

4.6.2 Semi structured interview

The participants took part in a 30-45-minute interview using a semi-structured interview schedule. The decision to use semi structured interviews was made due to the degree of flexibility that can be implemented throughout the interview, whilst setting parameters for the focus of the discussion points in the interview could be ensured with structured

questions. The semi-structured interview explored two main areas of the participant's experience. The first part of the interview explored the participant's perception about their entry into the PRU and day-to-day experiences, and the second part of the interview was focused on their affective or emotional responses to their experiences, perceptions of self and how they communicated the impact of the PRU on their sense of self. Throughout the data collection stage, the semi-structured interview was revised and adapted to include additional questions that would help participants to elaborate on the discussion points, in order to obtain rich detailed data for the areas of focus (see Appendix 10 for interview schedules). For example, additional questions were added to the schedule to help participants to discuss how they understood others to perceive them, how they viewed their future opportunities might be impacted by their position in the PRU, and their aspired identities.

Before interviews were conducted, I aimed to develop familiarity and rapport with the participants through active engagement in some, or part of lessons over a period of one to two days. In addition, time was taken at the beginning of each interview to build a rapport with each participant and provide each participant with the information sheet and consent form.

The use of semi-structured interviews may be viewed as a limitation of the research due to a risk of potentially anticipating and framing the structure and narrative of the interview at the planning stage. The use of an unstructured interview can allow the participant to engage freely in describing their narrative. However, whilst acknowledging this criticism, I felt that a structure would enable the participants to engage in discussions related to the aims of the study.

4.7 Ethics

Ethical approval was sought from the University of Nottingham Research Ethics Committee, in accordance with their research ethics guidance. The Ethics Approval Letter can be found in the Appendix 4. Parents and/or guardians were aware of the purposes and aims of the research, and their agreement for their child to participate in the current study was requested, with the use of opt-in consent. Once written agreement was received from parents/carers, I approached participants to seek their consent.

The following ethical principles were addressed:

4.7.1 Consent and confidentiality

I ensured confidentiality from the outset of the research to both participant and parent/guardian through opt in consent letters. An ethical dilemma in qualitative research occurs with assuring confidentiality in the interviews, as the nature of open interviews and conversation can lend itself to disclosures of criminal activity or issues of safeguarding. The current research addressed this ethical concern by gathering consent from participants to share findings with research supervisor, but also verbally informing participants the parameters with confidentiality. All names of participants and names of people raised by participants in the interviews have been removed from the current study and replaced with pseudonyms.

4.7.2 Power

In employing interviews as a method of data collection researchers need to ensure there is not a power imbalance. In the current study I acknowledged that the participant may feel that they need to 'comply'. A reminder of their right to withdraw was given before and during the interview as necessary. I introduced myself as a university student and allowed participants to refer to her using her first name. The participants were made aware that I was not part of the school staff and that the interview was not for the purpose of the school.

4.7.3 Avoidance of harm

I acknowledged in designing the study that talking about sensitive issues may constitute emotional distress for individuals. Therefore, before the interview I provided information to the participant about the interview schedule, and hence about the questions they were likely to encounter. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any point. Throughout the interview, I responded sensitively to the pupil's emotional needs and a key member of staff was identified in the PRU to ensure that pastoral support and supervision could be provided post-interview if necessary. I was trained in counselling approaches and used empathy, active listening, unconditional positive regard for the participant and containment throughout the interview process. In addition, the interviews included regular opportunities to check in with how the participant is feeling throughout the interview. I allowed time for a break, pause, and to stop the interview if necessary.

4.7.4 Debrief

At the end of each interview, I took time to explore how the participant was thinking and feeling about information they had shared about their personal experiences. All participants received a debrief letter following the interview.

4.8 Data analysis

4.8.1 Data handling

Interviews were audio-recorded for analysis purposes. Full interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The prosodic elements throughout the conversation were of less importance; however, the transcripts included non-verbal notable utterances such as laughter or pauses.

4.8.2 Data analysis

As previously mentioned in Section 4.4.2, I employed thematic analysis using guidance by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Step by step description of the data analysis process is provided next. A key feature of the analysis is concerned with the 'the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole, at a series of levels' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, a crucial part of the analysis included moving back and forth through a range of various ways to interpret the data, rather than a step by step approach to analysis. The researcher provides reflections on the data process in Table 4-3. I used an inductive approach to analysis, as opposed to using pre-existing codes to guide the analysis. This ensured that themes were grounded in the data.

Each interview was analysed one by one, and the steps for analysis are described here.

Step 1

Initially I replayed audio recording and re-read the interview transcripts to begin immersing myself in the data and entering the participants world. This allowed me to become familiar with the content.

4.8.2.1 Step 2

Following this, I engaged in initial note taking and exploratory comments of the content and language used in the scripts. I aimed to include descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments. Descriptive comments included key words or phrases that the participant uses. Linguistic comments include the use of metaphors and how the participant used language explicitly to reflect the content and meaning they

ascribe to it. These were underlined in note-taking stage. Finally, conceptual comments were added to the interview. Conceptual comments allowed for interrogation of the data, aiming to open-up the data to different interpretations. This allowed me to engage with interesting features of the data that prompted further questions. The conceptual comments required a lot of thought and reflection, as it moved away from explicit and descriptive claims from the participant to an understanding of the matters that they are discussing. Conceptual comments were in *italics* in the note-taking stage. An example of the data analysis undertaken at this point follows in Table 4-2.

Examples of exploratory comments and annotations for each individual interview can be found in Appendix 11.

4.8.2.2 Step 3

Using the exploratory comments and descriptive data, I identified emergent themes that arose in the data. The themes were abstract and conceptual however, they were grounded in the data.

An example of exploratory comments made for Jayne is included here (Table 4-2). Examples of emerging themes following exploratory comments can be found in Appendix 11 for all interviews.

Table 4-2. An example of analysis steps 2 and 3 for Jayne's interview

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive linguistic *conceptual)*
Difficult relationships with teachers Provocation from teachers Difference between adults at the PRU and mainstream school Pupil's behaviour towards adults at the PRU	Participant: urm oh it's hard to explain it's not the same, these teachers here they'll dig and dig and dig for you to like, oh what's the word I forget the words, they used to just like, oh my god I've forgot the word I don't know what the word is, err, for you to react basically they'll dig at you for your to react and give them a reaction out of ya Interviewer: here?	The participant describes difference in teacher-child relationships. She talks about her experience of teacher's reactions towards pupils, describing a sense of Provocation Finds it difficult to explain, struggling to articulate and remember the word Use of the word 'dig' *what are the connotations here?* Repetition of the word dig, mirroring a potentially argumentative nature of the teacher-child interactions *Is the participant communicating a power imbalance, negative use of authority, lack of nurture* *Relationship difficulties, unfair treatment and punishment*
Unfairness of behaviour management and detention procedures	Participant: yeah here and like if you got a detention or anything they will, like do you know who [teachers name] is here, no well it's one of the teachers and	Describing detention events and extension of time in relation to detention reference to 45 minutes

Group agreement/ feelings of unjust towards adults Problematic detention procedures Sense of frustration Sense of unfair persecution	everyone, everyone hates him, don't get me wrong he can be nice at times but he will long everything out, in behaviour room you'll be in there for at least 45 minutes because he's he's longing it out and everyone gets frustrated because he just keeps, it's like, oh can you stop like I get it, stop, and just, oh its long, and sometimes like at the end of the day sometimes well go get our stuff and obviously if like anyone's messing about or he'll he'll shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops and it ain't fair on all the rest of us	Describing a consensual agreement of feelings towards the member of staff across students Nice but longing it out *The participant experiences sense of impatience or tiredness towards the teacher's behaviour* *Is the participant talking about detention, or the use of the behaviour room, does detention take part in the behaviour room?* Extended length of something, 'he' 'longs it out' Use of the word 'stop' repeated twice Things being taken away Unfairness of process. Some persecuted for the behaviour of others, others used as an example

4.8.2.3 Step 4

Emergent themes were listed in a *Word* document. This stage of the analysis required me to look for connections between the themes. Some of the techniques used to look for connections included abstraction (clustering smaller themes into a higher-order theme); polarization (examining oppositional relationships between emergent themes); subsuming (identifying an emergent theme as the super-ordinate theme); contextualization (highlighting emergent themes that relate to a particular narrative); and numeration (identifying the frequency in which themes occur). I utilised several, or all of the different techniques in order to chart connections between the themes. Initially, I colour-coded and scanned printed lists of themes. A second attempt at finding connections involved writing emergent themes on post-it notes and arranging them to clusters or groups that provided some connection.

An example of looking for connections between themes for John's interview is in Figure 4-1. Examples of step 4 for all interviews can be found in Appendix 13.

4.8.2.4 Step 5

Step 5 involved moving to the next interview. I made effort to become immersed in the new data, bracketing off reflections and findings from the previous interview.

4.8.2.5 Step 6

Step 6 resulted in eight Master Themes being arrived at for the interviews. I created a table for each Master Theme and subsumed superordinate themes. The tables can be found in Appendix 15. Each table includes transcript excerpts across interviews for superordinate themes within each individual Master Theme. Each Master Theme is described in Chapter 5, along with each individual theme.

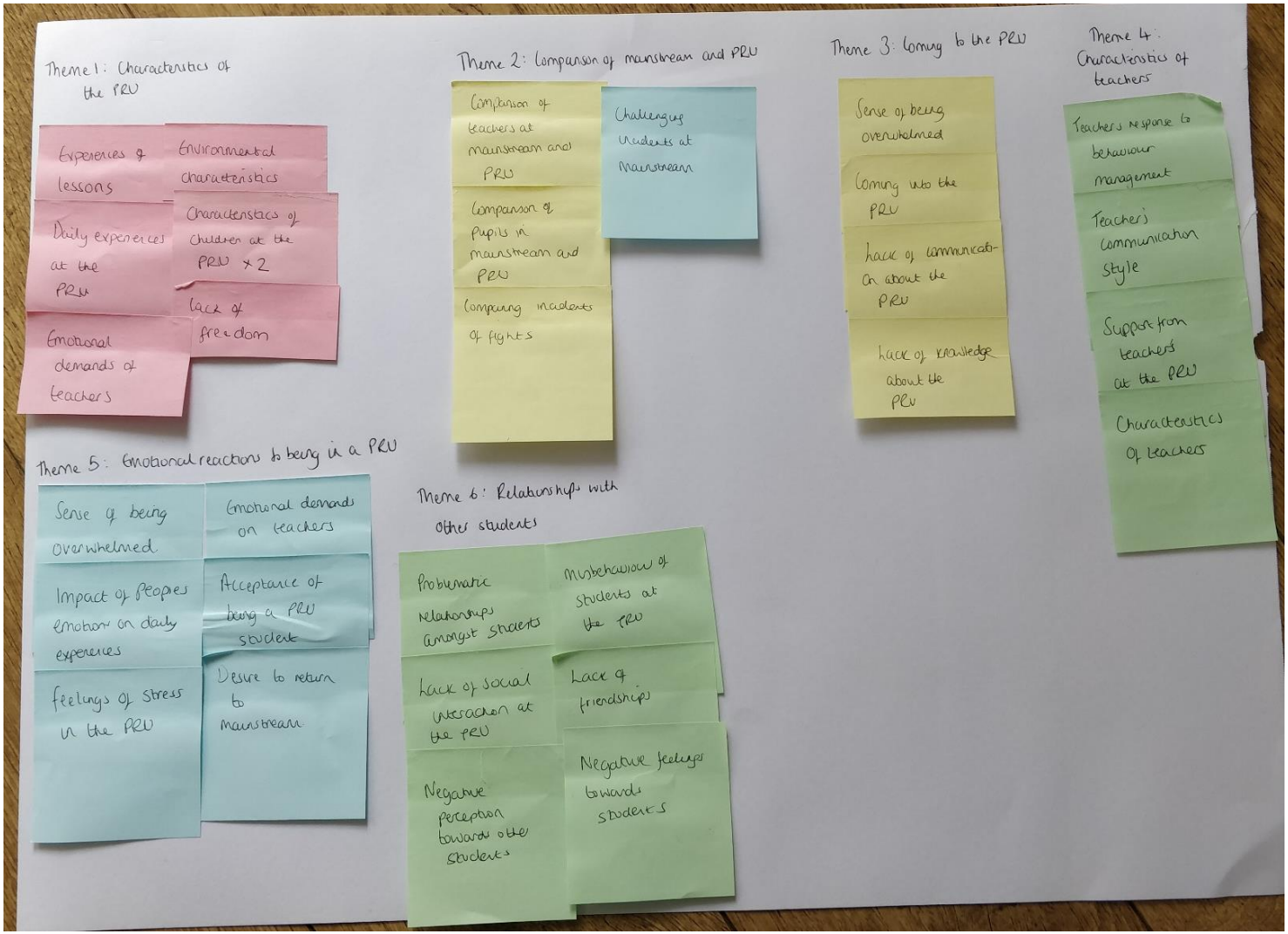

Figure 4-1. Photograph of step 4, findings connections between themes using post-it notes

Table 4-3. A table to show steps towards data analysis and the researcher's reflections throughout the process

Steps of analysis	Activities	Reflections
Stage 1: Immersing myself in the data	• This involved reading and re-reading of transcripts • Re-listening to audio recordings of interviews whilst reading the transcript • I attempted to immerse themselves into the shoes of the participant by reading it out loud and reflecting on tone of voice, pauses, laughter and remembering body language throughout.	• This initial stage helped me to revise and be fully aware of what was said in the interview and how it developed over time. • Re-listening to interview questions, and responses helped me to also reflect on the interview style, and develop the semi-structured interview for later participants (see Appendix 10 for adaptations to the semi-structured interview)
Stage 2: Initial noting	• Undertaking an exploratory textual analysis writing initial thoughts, notes and questions that come to mind throughout the interview process • Electronically producing line by line analysis using three coding techniques: descriptive, linguistic and interpretive comments.	• Initial comments and coding were employed to open up the data. • I went backwards and forwards through the transcript several times and used Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) guidance on initial noting. • I employed strategies such as taking different chunks of the transcript, or reading it backwards to allow opportunities for new perspectives on the data • Interpretive comments allowed for unanswerable questions to be asked post-interview. This allowed me to question the data. • Often the questions were answered later in the text. • Interpretive coding also allowed me to acknowledge inferable contrasts to what the participant was saying at different points of the interview. This allowed a higher level of analysis to be made as I went deeper

		into the interview.
Stage 3: Developing emergent themes	• Using the initial noting and transcript to develop emerging themes • Identifying specific transcript phrases/words to justify each emerging theme	• In the first analysis I began by developing themes from each initial noting which created a large number of themes (up to 200). • I considered the specific wording of each emerging theme which allowed me to become increasingly aware of my own subjective thoughts in the development of themes. This meant that I needed to revisit the text and the initial noting or comments to make sense of each theme. • I found that there were several themes were similar to one another in meaning which led to rewording and integrating the themes. • I became more fluent in developing concise themes throughout the later analyses.
Stage 4: Findings connections between themes	• Colour coding themes which were related to one another either by content, references, or meaningful relationships with each other • Using post-it notes to group together clustered themes based on frequency, description, function, and polarization as guided in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). • Finding superordinate themes within emergent themes or using clusters to develop a super-ordinate theme. • Developing a table for each superordinate theme and related emergent	• At this stage I printed a word document list of every single emergent theme derived from the interview. At earlier stages of analysis there was a cause to revisit stages 2 and 3 as there were a large number of themes collected. Writing each of the themes using post-it notes helped to group together those that proved connections and relationships. • A high number of emerging themes led to questioning the initial analysis and interpretation of the interview. Once looking back at the data some themes were eliminated themes for reasons such as similar meaning to others,

	theme. Findings transcript excerpts for each in order to justify and show thought processes • Some of the emergent themes in stage 3 were eliminated due to clarity, irrelevant to the phenomenon being explored, or repetition and similar meaning to those that were retained	irrelevant or less valid and re-wording of relevant and important themes. • This process required reflexivity, revisiting initial transcripts and reflective questioning of themes to justify my interpretations.
Stage 5: Moving to the next case	• Stages 1-4 were repeated for each case • This allowed for a fresh analysis of each interview, allowing me to become immersed in a new interview and data set.	• Revisiting stage 1 and immersing oneself in the new interview helped me to bracket off the themes from the previous interview.
Stage 6: Looking for patterns across cases	• I used post-it notes for each identified superordinate theme • Patterns and connections were identified across superordinate themes	• It was helpful for me to identify clusters of themes and connections across themes, specific to the research questions. • Some superordinate themes were eliminated due to irrelevance to the research questions at hand

4.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a crucial part of qualitative research. It involves reflecting on the ways in which they might impact on the process, and on the findings produced in qualitative research (Langdridge, 2007). I ensured personal reflexivity by reflecting on the way in which I was invested in the research, using guidance by Langdridge (2007). This involved acknowledging any personal 'biases' and awareness of how my personal experiences and reactions contributed to the insight and understanding of participant accounts and later analysis.

4.9.1 Why is the researcher investigating this particular topic?

I was investigating the topic of pupil's experiences of PRUs due to developing biases of the effectiveness of PRU settings for vulnerable young people and promoting healthy

and positive development. I have the view that pupils who enter PRUs have had unfortunate experiences within education, and that PRUs do not offer a nurturing environment, with positive social relationships and role models. Throughout this study I made every effort to be open to new interpretations based on what the young people were saying about their experiences and used the structure of the interview schedule to avoid leading questions.

4.9.2 Is the researcher an insider or an outsider?

I presented herself as an outsider to all participants. They were informed that I was a student at the University of Nottingham and was interested in hearing about their experiences. All participants were aware that I was not an active member in their system of support and was using their interview solely for research purposes. None of the participants were previously known to me in my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist and I continued to be removed from involvement at a local authority level.

4.9.3 Does the researcher empathise with the participants and their experiences?

I do empathise with the participants and I acknowledged that the students have had challenging experiences at school, and potentially with other adults, leading them to mistrust adults or believe they have an influence on their current situation and future.

4.9.4 Who is the researcher and how might that impact on their involvement?

I am a 27 years old Indian female. I was a visitor to the school and was aware that the participants may or may not have wanted to engage honestly and openly with an unfamiliar adult. I was also aware that participants may have spoken to other external professionals throughout the process and may perceive the researcher as part of the external agencies involved in their placement at the PRU. I attempted to reduce the impact of these possibilities by engaging in informal classroom-based activities and emphasizing my role as a student from a University.

4.10 Quality and validity in qualitative research

4.10.1 Reliability and validity

The validity of analysis was ensured using Yardley's (2000) criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research. Yardley (2000) identified four principles of valid and

meaningful qualitative research. These include research showing sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact/importance.

4.10.1.1 Sensitivity to context

I did not offer any hypotheses about the participants' experiences from the outset of the study. The semi-structured interview allowed my interview style to have a degree of flexiblility, with open-ended questions throughout. I also considered the relationship that I formed with participants and aimed to ensure the participants felt comfortable to take part in the interview. I considered the environment in which interviews took place within the PRU. Willig (2013) addressed the fact that the environment in which interviews take place can impact on the way in which participants think and talk about their experiences, which can change the account. Therefore, I conducted interviews in a familiar setting and provided them with information and their right to withdraw. In addition, I was aware of social desirability effects and the potential for participants to feel obliged to participate or say what they think I wanted to hear. Finally, I addressed salient roles of the interview experience as a whole. For example, I made effort to minimise the participant's awareness of recording equipment, and visual probes such as the semi-structured questions, by setting them aside or using prompts minimally.

I understood that the participants may or may not have spoken about their experiences in-depth before or may not have been asked how they experienced the PRU, and so I ensured there were sufficient pauses between questions and allowed participants the time to think and reflect. In addition, I had professional experience working within PRU settings and therefore understood the processes, systems and situations for different participants. Finally, I was able to have a degree of familiarity of each participant, through spending time in their classrooms. This enabled me to understand the participant's situation, as well as temperament and personality. This also helped me to build rapport before the interview began.

4.10.1.2 Commitment and rigour

I aimed to obtain rigour of analysis and commitment to by following guidance by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). Reflections have been provided throughout the analysis process (described in section 4.8.2) which outline the strategies I took to maintain the idiographic nature in the analysis. Finally, I maintained a small sample to ensure that in-depth analysis of individual interviews was possible, and the quality of analysis would not be compromised by a large number of interviews. The rigour of the

study is addressed with detailed descriptions of participant sample, justifications for the sample size and careful analysis of the quality of the interview.

4.10.1.3 Transparency and coherence

Transparency and coherence was maintained in the current study by including necessary and sufficient detail throughout. I have provided reflections on decision-making regarding the choice of methodology (in section 4.4), the design of the study including the setting, participant details, and data collection, as well as reflections on individual interview processes (which is described later in section 5.1). In addition, I have presented direct quotations and raw transcript data throughout description of findings to further enhance transparency. Finally, the reader should consult appendices 11-16 for examples of analysis extracts from each interview, and the development of superordinate themes to Master Themes for analysis across interviews. It is hoped that section 5.2 will allow the reader to identify a clear chain of evidence and events that have led to the development of Master Themes and shared experienced across participants.

4.10.1.4 Impact and importance

Due to the focus on individual experience offered in this study for a small number of individuals, the reliability and generalisability of the findings will be a limitation. Therefore, generalisation of claims or development of theoretical explanations of phenomenon is approached with caution. Instead I sought to shed light on potential shared themes or shared experiences of a small selection of pupils in PRUs that could lead to professionals working in these settings gain a better understanding of what situations and experiences young people may find themselves in.

5 Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter describes findings from the interpretive phenomenological analysis of data from all interviews as described in the previous section. The findings are based on my own interpretation of the data in relation to the research questions:

1. How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?
2. What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?

Overall, eight Master Themes were identified with related super-ordinate themes. Each Master Theme is constituted of between three to six super ordinate themes.

Throughout this section, the findings will be described in a transparent and systematic way to enable the reader to build a picture of each Master Theme and its relation to the research question. Transparency will be sought throughout, notably through the inclusion of extract taken directly from the transcripts of individual interviews. Two to three quotations will be embedded within each theme discussed. Appendices 16.1 to 16.5 include tables of Master Themes and transcripts from all interviews, and appendices 12.1 to 12.5 include Tables of superordinate themes for individual interviews.

I acknowledge that another researcher may have focused on different aspects of the participants account, however I arrived at themes that could best answer the questions posed for this study.

The individuals who participated varied in their engagement with the interview process. In order to capture the idiographic nature of participants' engagement with the interview, and sensitivity to the context in which the interview took place, a summary is provided below, with key observations and reflections of each interview.

5.1.1 Charles

I gained the impression throughout the interview that Charles held back on his thoughts and opinions regarding questions about other pupils, and about his previous experience. This impression developed when the interview had been interrupted, and Charles sought confirmation from the teacher about his answers and subsequently changed his answer to match the teacher's answer. I perceived that Charles's new response more representative of his initial thoughts, but it also suggested that Charles was not offering his beliefs naturally, possibly since they could be perceived as negative. In addition, Charles stated, 'probably stuff I shouldn't say here now' and I interpreted this as Charles holding back due to the environmental features of the interview process, i.e. and the fact that it was being recorded. The quality of the interview may therefore have been affected by various factors such as social desirability effects or interview specific variables such as recording.

5.1.2 Jayne

Jayne was emotive throughout her interview. Whilst she was calm, she appeared to hold strong negative views towards the members of staff at the PRU and appeared clear and honest about her opinions throughout. Her emotions seemed to be underpinned by her frustration with her situation, as she had been in the PRU for what she considered to be a lot longer than most other students at the PRU. This led to themes emerging about feeling misunderstood, perceived unfairness towards her situation and a lack of motivation to engage with positive behaviour due to her perception that her situation was not going to change.

5.1.3 Ben

Ben was the youngest of all the participants. He had experience at a PRU setting before his entry into the current setting. He also had a previous permanent exclusion at primary school. Ben was willing to engage with all questions. He spoke throughout about his desire to go back to mainstream school, which appeared to be an ongoing conversation he was having with teachers and professionals. He showed awareness that he was being assessed for an Education, Health and Care Plan.

5.1.4 Ellis

Ellis was on a part-time timetable at the setting. He was provided with alternative learning provision at an educational setting outside of the city in which he lived. I was informed before the interview that Ellis was unhappy with his situation and his behaviour was becoming more disruptive at the PRU.

It proved quite difficult to build a rapport with Ellis. He initially answered questions with one-word responses. Although providing informed consent to take part in the interview, Ellis spoke quietly and appeared withdrawn and disengaged. I ended the interview after 27 minutes and provided Ellis with a break mid-way through the interview. Once the interview was completed, Ellis stated that he found some of the questions difficult to answer.

5.1.5 John

John held strongly negative views towards mainstream school and expressed these views throughout the interview. He requested to leave 26 minutes into the interview. This occurred at a point where John offered a more vulnerable insight into the way he

thinks about himself. I took time to provide a verbal debrief and ensure that John did not have any emotional distress post-interview.

John demonstrated the use of defence mechanisms such as denial in some of his responses to questions about his mainstream experience.

5.2 Master Themes derived from all interview

I arrived at eight Master Themes. Table 5-1 below shows the superordinate themes subsumed within each Master Theme. Five Master Themes were identified for research question 1 and three Master Themes were identified for research question 2.

Table 5-2 highlights the prevalence of each Master Theme across each individual interview, in relation to the two research questions.

Table 5-1. Table to show research question, linked Master Themes, subsumed superordinate themes

Research question	Master Themes	Superordinate themes
How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?	Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'	Perception of the PRU : 'they was like it's a behaviour school' Failure at mainstream: 'ain't even been in mainstream a full year' Feelings towards coming to the PRU: 'I just couldn't believe I got expelled' Sense of acceptance over time Movement across groups
	Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers	Relationships with other PRU students Negative perception of other students and their behaviour: 'they're different compared to the other kids I know' Supportive relationships with teachers: 'they chat to ya as friend' Conflict with teachers
	Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'	Perceived imbalance of punishment, sanctions and rewards: 'no-one's actually got a reward' Physical intervention Adults' response to challenging behaviour
	Master Theme 4: Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'	Lessons: 'it's stupid lessons' Environment: 'you've got behaviour rooms' Restrictions: 'you can't actually get away' Mainstream experience: 'our class was all the leftov-'

	Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'	Confusion and dissatisfaction: 'I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school' EHCP process and assessment Lack of knowledge and communication: 'no-one knows what's going on here' Waiting Overspent time in the PRU
What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?	Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'	Negative perception of self: ''it's like me with anger problems' Mixed views of self: 'good but bad' Lack of emotional regulation: 'they'd want me to fight and fights would happen' Comparison to others in PRU: 'they're comparing me to them, I'm not really like them' Medication and diagnoses: 'I'm getting tested' Self-blame, embarrassment and shame: 'I wish I didn't mess about'
	Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'	Parent's perceptions: 'she understood I do have a little bit of anger' Perception of others: 'he's a naughty child get him out' Stigma: 'he's been expelled, he's a trouble maker'
	Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'	Future implications: 'All they'll see is he's been expelled he's a troublemaker, get rid' Future opportunities Self-development and learning: 'I'm proud'

Table 5-2. Table to show research question, Master Themes and prevalence of Master Theme across individual interviews.

Research question	Master Theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half of the sample? (Y/N)
How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?	Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'	X	X	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers	X	X	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'		X	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 4: Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'	X	X	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'		X	x	x	x	Y
What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?	Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'	x	X	x		x	Y

	Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'	X	X	x		x	Y
	Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'	X	X	x	x	x	Y

The following sections describe each Master Theme in turn in relation to research questions 1 and 2. Tables are provided in Appendices 15.1 to 15.8 to illustrate the prevalence of superordinate themes across interviews 1-5 for each individual Master Theme. This is to highlight the extent to which superordinate themes within each Master Theme were shared across interviews and to provide a representation of each superordinate theme across the data set.

A description of each superordinate theme, with extracts of data, is provided to offer as much transparency as possible within my interpretation.

5.2.1 Research question 1: How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?

This section describes Master Themes 1-5 which encompass findings for research question 1. The themes relate to different aspects of the participants' experience in the PRU setting; initial entry to the PRU, relationships with students and teachers at the PRU, behaviour management at the PRU, their comparisons with mainstream and their knowledge and involvement in their individual situations at the PRU. The findings within this theme help the reader to step into the world of the participants and encounter their experiences in the PRU as they perceive it.

5.2.1.1 Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'

Master Theme 1 includes participants' descriptions of entering the PRU, including their perceptions and understanding of what the PRU was, as well as their feelings towards the PRU. Included within this theme are the participants' narratives of perceived failure at reintegrating back into mainstream, and instability at the PRU.

5.2.1.1.1 Perception of the PRU: 'they was like it's a behaviour school'

Participants appeared to have a negative perception of the PRU (*Participant: bad place to be*, Ellis, line number 94) with a strong distaste for being at the PRU (*Participant: no I hate it honestly here*, John, line number 522).

Charlie, Jayne and Ben spoke of the way in which the PRU was described to them. Whilst Charles spoke of it sounding like an unusual place (*Participant: it it doesn't sound right do you know what I mean*, Charles, line number 83), Ben highlighted his lack of agency and involvement with the decision (*Participant:…I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me,* Ben, line number 287).

Jayne shed light on teachers' expectations for the participant to enter the PRU in the foreseeable future. Her response suggested that the she had frequently heard of the PRU and was warned about being sent to the PRU. I interpreted that the PRU was perceived by Jayne and others as the next step for her, as mainstream had concluded that they were unable to support her in school. She shared the description of the PRU that was given to her.

Interviewer: so how did you know you was coming to the PRU? How was it communicated to you?

Participant: obviously they used to, they used… how the way I knew I was coming here cause they'd always used to say I think it's time you go to this place

Interviewer: what's this place?

Participant: Here

Interviewer: What did they call it?

Participant: They said I think it's time for you to start to just go and see what's it like, urmm (named PRU), And I was like what's that, And they was like it's a behaviour school, And I was like well no it's not a behaviour school it's just a place where they think you can just settle down your behaviour a bit and then you can come back school that's what they said to me and obviously my mum went mad and everything

(Jayne, line number 324)

In Jayne's experience the PRU was described to her in a persuasive way 'just go and see what's it like', with the promise that she could return. She experienced it as an emotionally intense experience, describing her mum being mad, and later spoke about her 'overdoing her time' in the PRU as she had been there for 21 weeks across Year 7 to 9.

Jayne, Ellis and John referred to the PRU as a 'behaviour school (John, line number 212, Ellis, line number 125). Whilst Jayne communicated some understanding that the PRU was not a behaviour school, and her perception that she had been given false information about the PRU, I interpreted that the general perception of the PRU as being for challenging behaviour appeared to be shared by both adults and participants.

5.2.1.1.2 Failure at mainstream: 'ain't even been in mainstream a full year'

Whilst at the PRU, Jayne and John spoke of failed reintegration back into mainstream and being sent back to the PRU within the first two days.

Participant: ... I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day

(John, line number 17)

Participant: urmm so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day but it was only for 6 weeks and then I went back to school and obviously got excluded on the first day back and then I came into Patrick's group and I been here just before we started summer holidays

(Jayne, line number 22)

The events of failed reintegration are suggestive of their experiences of failure at mainstream, and informal or formal permanent exclusions from the setting, confirmed by Ben's experience (*Participant: …, I didn't go back to my old school cause they kicked me out fully*, Ben, line number 350*).* I interpreted that participants attributed their failure to reintegrate back in to mainstream to their own behaviour, followed by decisions made for them by adults. I wondered the extent to which participants felt able to be successful reintegrating back to their 'normal' school, and their readiness to leave the PRU.

John reflected on his limited time in mainstream and felt that his success at mainstream school was impacted by those around him 'giving up' on him.

Interviewer: do you feel like they gave up on you

Participant: yeah, they have they gave up on me a long time ago, year 7, 6 weeks of being in year 7 I was already in a behaviour school. I ain't even been in mainstream school for a full year

(John, line number 210)

I interpreted that John experienced a sense of helplessness, limited opportunities for success and rejection from mainstream.

Ben had experienced more than one permanent exclusion, and this was his second experience of a PRU (*Participant: yeah because this is my 2nd time being expelled isn't it? I got expelled from primary,* Ben, line number 87). Ben communicated his second experience of being expelled as a rhetorical question. I interpreted that Ben experienced familiarity with the process of being 'expelled'. This raised the possibility that students at the PRU may have already been in a PRU setting in earlier years, and in primary school years.

5.2.1.1.3 Feelings towards coming to the PRU: 'I just couldn't believe I got expelled'

All participants commented on their emotional reaction to coming to the PRU. Their feelings ranged from fear, to disbelief and feeling overwhelmed.

Interviewer: so, you've been here about 4 months, what did you think when you came here?

Participant: scared

(Ellis, line number 10)

Participant: well when I first I thought at my old school I weren't gonna get expelled I thought I wasn't gonna get expelled I thought isolation seclusion get it over and done with but like I just couldn't believe I got expelled

(Ben, line number 475)

Participant:*… I dunno it's like it's a lot to take in I guess*

(Charles, line number 75)

Throughout the interview Ben described his exclusion with a sense of immediacy, confusion, injustice and feelings of persecution towards him in comparison to others.

Participant: *because because there's kids at my old school, right, I I I think it's just me though because I, there kids out the back smoking, smoking drugs and doing naughty stuff, they don't get expelled they got caught, nothing happens to them. I told I told a girl to f off I got expelled straight away so I don't really get that*

(Ben, line number 364)

Others felt frustration due to the length of time they had already been at the PRU (*Participant: … I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have here*, Jayne, line number 261).

One participant felt a confused sense of relief as they were leaving their mainstream school behind (*Participant: I felt upset because I didn't wanna leave school but I but at the same time I did …*, Jayne, line number 312)

5.2.1.1.4 Sense of acceptance over time

Charles, Ellis and John expressed a process of adaptation and acceptance of for being at the PRU for both themselves (*Participant: …and then I just accepted it,* (Ben, line number 480) and their parents, however, whilst he accepted his placement at the PRU, Charles still expressed parental desires for him to return to mainstream (*Participant:*

she's alright about, it err I told her I'm going to start behaving and she wants me to go back to school, Charles, line number 382).

Participant: err my first reaction was like why the fuck do I have to come to this shitty school like at first I thought it was a bag of crap and then as I got to be here for like over a year now it's I've adapted to the ways of the actual school and it's it feel it don't feel crap nomore it feels better than what it used to

(John, line number 297)

I interpreted that adaptation to the PRU was linked to the possibility that participants felt they had no choice but to accept their placement at the PRU, reflected in John's choice of wording *'as I got to be here for like over a year'*.

5.2.1.1.5 Movement across groups

A final theme for the PRU experience was movement and instability within their placement there. Four of the participants spoke of moving across programmes, extending their days at the PRU and having new classes.

Participant: first time I started I was in 2 day and then like a month or like a couple so a about 5 months after I went to like I did Monday Tuesday and that and then I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day

(John, line number 15)

An implication of their PRU experience was changing group dynamics and building new friendships.

Participant: urmm it was alright cause I got on with loads of people in that class and I'm still mates right now with one of the people that was in there but obviously I went back to school now and I thought I was going back to Pete's group I was like oh I'm going back to Pete's group but na I was in Stevens group and the people in there I didn't really get along with and they have gone now there's only 3 people left and it's really boring

(Jayne, line number 46)

For Jayne and Ellis, change of groups were a result of failed reintegration in the mainstream school and returning to the PRU. I interpreted their experiences reflecting a disruption of friendship groups, relationships with teachers, and belonging to a group, which led to disengagement with education at the PRU: 'it's really boring'.

5.2.1.1.6 Conclusion

Overall Master Theme 1 suggests that pupils often did not want to come to the PRU and did not know what is was. Whilst over time they accepted their placement at the PRU, there was a desire to go back to mainstream – a desire held by themselves or their parents. Whist at the PRU participants experienced movement, instability and failed reintegration to mainstream, leading to longer placements at the PRU.

5.2.1.2 Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers

Master Theme 2 covers the complex nature of relationships with both staff and adults at the PRU.

5.2.1.2.1 Relationships with other PRU students

Some of the participants commented on limited friendships in the PRU (*Participant: I just don't have mates and friends and that I just don't like speaking to anyone,* Charles, line number 254). This was impacted by changes of pupils in groups at the PRU (*Participant: … there's only one person I know*, Ben, line number 149).

Ben compared the number of friends he had in his mainstream setting (*Participant: because because I I know because I got more mates at my old school it's more fun*, Ben, line number 165) indicating the impact of changes of social groups when students enter a PRU. I interpreted that it was important for Ben to have a role in a social group with other students. He described himself as 'well-known' in his mainstream school, perceiving himself to have a high status and important role in his friendship groups.

Ellis spoke of having one friend that he knew from primary school (*Participant: friends one of my new friends err ain't in that group I knew him from primary school*, Ellis, line number 215) whilst Charles expressed a preference to be on his own at the PRU (*Participant: … urmm normally I'd behave and just chill out really normally, I'll keep myself to myself at lunch now*, Charles, line number 21).

Jayne's experience as a female in the PRU was unique, as she was aware of the unbalanced ratio of boys to girls in the PRU (*Participant: because there ain't many girls, I don't like boys*, Jayne, line number 247) and went on to compare this to mainstream school.

Participant… I want it to be equal like a mainstream school like loads of girls and loads of boys

(Jayne, line number 244)

She perceived inequality of the sexes at the PRU and went on to describe the boys having more priority and choice over sports games. I interpreted this as Jayne perceiving a sense of unfairness, or inferiority at the PRU for a number of reasons such as her gender, but also her situation there as a whole, linking her frustration towards spending a prolonged period of time there.

Finally, two of the participants spoke of potential conflicts with other students at the PRU:

Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause]

(Jayne, line number 366)

Participant: because one of my mate, what's his name, [name] from the other class, he urmm he just got told a boy [name] to shut up, all his mates like [name] and everyone is after him well was after him

(Ben, line number 78)

Participant: but but but [stammers] I know they wouldn't touch me in school like hurt me because like they'd get in trouble they'd rather do it out of school but I live on the other side of town so

(Ben, line number 101)

Ben reassured himself that he wouldn't be hurt at the PRU and that other pupils would be unable to reach him outside of the PRU to hurt him. I sensed that Ben was fearful of

other students at the PRU, describing them as bigger than him, and having a reduced number of friends at the PRU to facilitate feelings of safety. In contrast, Jayne who was older and had been at the PRU longer expressed a narrative of provocation and fighting.

None of the participants spoke of strong or consistent, positive relationships with other students at the PRU. The following section 5.2.1.2.2 illuminates the way in which the participants perceived the students at the PRU.

5.2.1.2.2 Negative perception of other students and their behaviour: 'they're different compared to the other kids I know'

Jayne spoke of the social influence of misbehaviour at the PRU:

Participant: what about here? Don't come here it's tough because it I don't know because of all the others obviously negative behaviour around ya you start to think it's okay to start misbehaving and that's why I'm still here because obviously cause everyone else misbehaves obviously I misbehave

(Jayne, line number 109)

Whilst Jayne spoke of modelling the observed misbehaviour of other students, Charles held a different perception towards the behaviour of other students:

Participant: yeah and now I've came here I've seen what it's like from like people fighting and people shouting at teachers and that and people arguing, it just makes you look like a div really

(Charles, line number 179)

Charles' experience at the PRU enabled him to reflect on the behaviour of others and had negative perceptions towards others because of their behaviour. He then went on to reflect that he would look like *'a div'* if he behaved in a similar way, which I interpreted as a potential reason for him isolating himself from other students. Charles perceived himself as different to the other students.

It became evident that several of the participants did not relate to the behaviour of other students and believed themselves to be dissimilar to them. Charles and Ellis commented on others as annoying, weird and loud, whilst Ben described the risks of offending other students at the PRU.

Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument

(Ben, line number 175)

Participant: don't worry because it's not a big thing, right , and just get it over and done with, and hopefully you'll find another school, and just don't make no one mad, really, if you say something horrible to someone the whole lots after ya, if ya get me

Interviewer: so what do you mean by that?

Participant: like so so so if you tell someone to shut up all their mates will hate ya and they'll want to fight ya

(Ben, line number 68)

Ben's perception of rivalry at the PRU was illustrative of a potential fear of other students at the PRU. I interpreted that Ben experienced a sense of helplessness and feelings of unsafety if he were to upset other students at the PRU.

The participants spoke of potential violent behaviour of other students on perceived 'bad days' in the PRU (Participant: *there's loads of kids in behaviour rooms kicking walls making marks punching teachers getting in trouble getting detentions*, Ben, line number 144) and the impact on staff as a result (*Participant: fights. and a lot of stress for the staff I guess and I dunno not staff but I guess it's annoying it's loud*, Charles, line number 119).

5.2.1.2.3 Supportive relationships with teachers: 'they chat to ya as friend'

Charles compared mainstream and PRU teachers' approach towards students. Charles held negative views towards mainstream teachers. This was evident in the way he used language to describe the mainstream teachers 'throwing' students in a behaviour room and keeping them there all day:

Participant: this one's a lot more it's like the teachers here are better and basically the teachers there they would if you got into a fight they'd just throw you in behaviour room and keep you there all day then they'll talk to ya and you'll get detention, here if you get into a fight I guess it's like you go in behaviour room you get spoke to

(Charles, line number 19)

He experienced the teachers in the PRU to immediately respond to students when they go to a behaviour room, as opposed to prolonged response followed by receiving further punishment in the form of detentions at mainstream.

Three of the participants spoke highly of the support they received from teachers (P*articipant: and here they help you more*, Charles, line number 33) and described a more relaxed relationship with teachers at the PRU (*Participant: like they they like they chat to you as a friend*, Ben, line number 121). The impact of the way in which teachers interacted at the PRU led to the participant's sense of rapport building (*Participant: hmm getting to know you more*, Ben, line number 129) and feeling understood when they haven't been previously:

Participant: yeah I just wanted to come here cause I knew I wanted to get help and I wanted staff that could actually understand me and help me more than what a mainstream could do

(John, line number 323)

Charles, Ben and John commented on the skills of the teachers at the PRU:

Participant: … I guess it can take it will take a lot of uh, what's the word [pause] I guess it will take to be really really calm

(Charles, line number 162)

Interviewer: so why do you think the teachers are different here

Participant: cause they they can handle with like mainstream yeah there are some teachers that can handle with behaviour but like here they're more specialised in behaviour problems cause they've like they've dealt with kids from four other schools wherever, they'll go they'll go the PRU, but chilling it's actually calm I like it

(John, line number 47)

5.2.1.2.4 Conflict with teachers

Whilst Charles, Ben and John held positive views about their relationships with PRU teachers, Ellis and Jayne held the opposite. Ellis simply stated his dislike for the teachers at the PRU (*Participant: just don't like them,* Ellis, line number 268), whilst Jayne expressed feelings of provocation by staff at the PRU.

Interviewer: okay so what are the main differences between Fraywood School and your previous schools and the PRU

Participant: urmm oh it's hard to explain it's not the same, these teachers here they'll dig and dig and dig for you to like, oh what's the word I forget the words, they used to just like, oh my god I've forgot the word I don't know what the word is, err, for you to react basically they'll dig at you for your to react and give them a reaction out of ya

(Jayne, line number 52)

Participant: like, you're having a good day they'll they'll say something like, they'll wind you up, like they can't just leave you to have like be in a good mood if you know what I mean, like when were in the lunchroom like were all laughing and they always say you're too loud, and were loud, we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything, whereas in school you're allowed to be as loud as you want at lunch and breaktime it's your own time

(Jayne, line number 90)

Jayne perceived the intentions of adults at the PRU to be provoking and unfair, with ill intent for pupils at the PRU. Her experience depicted a perceived lack of nurture and negative use of authority, which as a result disregarded her own autonomy and independence at the PRU. I interpreted her relationships with adults at the PRU as confrontational and dissatisfying for Jayne, potentially exacerbating her disengagement at the PRU.

5.2.1.2.5 Conclusion

Overall theme 2 reflects the complex nature of relationships at the PRU. Often pupils are reluctant to make friendships due to a lack of relatedness to other children. A lack of relatedness to others was then in some instances apparently exacerbated by the impact of being around misbehaviour at the PRU, and the emotions it provoked. The participants spoke of mixed relationships with teachers at the PRU ranging from supportive to challenging. A potential reason for the variation in teacher-pupil relationships is explored in the next section, which considered the perceived unfairness of behaviour management.

5.2.1.3 Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'

Theme 3 outlines the perceived unfairness of behaviour management, restraint and rewards.

5.2.1.3.1 Perceived imbalance of punishment, sanctions and rewards: 'no-one's actually got a reward'

The behaviour points and reward system at the PRU was described by participants Charles, Jayne, Ben and Ellis. Charles and Ben referred to rewards and behaviour points as a key characteristic of a good day at the PRU:

Participant: ... if it's last day of term then you watch a film uh it's chilled out really on a good day,

(Charles, line number 104)

Participant: just go, you just, you you [stammers] get urmm good points, like in lesson when you get good points it makes ya happier, and it just makes you get through the day quicker

(Ben, line number 131)

However, Jayne described the unlikely chance of receiving rewards for all students at the PRU (*Participant: no, no rewards, no one's actually got a reward*, Jayne, line number 159) and Ellis spoke of his lack of rewards at the time of the interview (*Participant: like I've not had one this week,* Ellis, line number 169).

Jayne appeared to have a negative perception towards the adults use of authority and behaviour management, discussing the cumulative effect of detentions throughout the week and provocation by adults despite positive behaviour:

Participant… *if you've had a good day, they'll try dig at ya and if you give them a reaction they'll go right behaviour room and you stay there*

(Jayne, line number 153)

Participant: *... say if you had half an hour detention and you never done it you'll have to do an hour the next day, these they don't give none of your stuff back, get a phone call home, you get double that detention, it's just, it's just annoying*

(Jayne, line number 103)

I found that participants spoke of rewards as a rarity and dependent upon the whole group, as opposed to the individual. This raised a question as to how often or little participants experienced genuine success and positive feedback, and therefore the impact the PRU had on their sense of competence, self-efficacy and belief that they are able to achieve at the PRU.

5.2.1.3.2 Physical intervention

Three of the participants spoke about incidents of restraint at the PRU. Whilst Ellis spoke of never having experienced restraint before the PRU, Jayne said she had 'only' been restrained three times at the PRU:

Participant: I don't like people touching me either that's why, obviously I've be- I've only been restrained here 3 times in the amount I've been here, the time I've been here

(Jayne, line number 284)

Interviewer: so, tell me a bit about the restraining then? They didn't do that at your old school but they do that here?

Participant: they did, but I never got restrained at my old school

(Ellis, line number 55)

I reflected on Ellis' disclosure that he had never experienced restraint before coming to the PRU. It appeared a significant behaviour that occurred in the PRU more frequently than in other settings. John expressed a more detailed account of restraint at the PRU which had the potential to be a traumatic experience for him. He spoke of the physical and emotional impacts of restraint:

Participant: I'm calm but like I don't really kick off here not cause I've, at the start I used to be like I used to be like I used to kick off all the time and I've be I've been been in a behaviour room for 2 and a half hours with about 5 staff members restraining me every like 20 minutes

(John, line number 127)

Interviewer: how does it make you feel when you've been restrained and you're going to the behaviour room and you're kicking off how does it make you feel

Participant: makes me proper pissed off man I hate it just cause it gets me so tensed up man get me proper angry feel like I just wanna go punch staff member in the face man I don't know, get me proper vexed it leaves me red marks on my arm as well so

Interviewer: what leaves red marks

Participant: cause like they hook you like that enit they got your arms like that so you're like this [demonstrates in the air] and then they'll be like that and like that proper tight so you can't get out and yeah it proper hurts me and you get red marks all over

(Ellis, line number 138)

5.2.1.3.3 Adults' response to challenging behaviour

In addition to physical intervention at the PRU, three of the participants spoke of the use of a behaviour room. Ellis spoke of being locked in the behaviour room (*Participant: you get locked in it,* Ellis, line number 65) and Jayne expressed her frustration with the way in which adults used their authority in the behaviour room. Her response indicated a sense of unfairness and individual persecution based on the behaviour of other students.

Participant: *… in behaviour room you'll be in there for at least 45 minutes because he's he's longing it out and everyone gets frustrated because he just keeps, it's like, oh can you stop like I get it, stop, and just, oh it's long, and sometimes like at the end of the day sometimes well go get our stuff and obviously if like anyone's messing about or he'll hell shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops and it ain't fair on all the rest of us*

(Jayne, line number 62)

On the other hand, despite John's account of restraint at the PRU previously (mentioned in section 5.2.1.3.2) he commented on the relaxed approach by adults at the PRU as a response to student's heightened emotions:

Participant: cause the teacher like here yeah like if your annoyed and pissed off then you can go out and be like miss I'm getting I'm kinda pissed off and say if they're hovering around you and it's like just chill enit like I'm pissed off can you leave me alone they'll le- they'll let they'll leave you alone to calm down and then like after they'll come and talk to you and it's chill they'll see if you're alright see if you calmed down and you go back in lesson and then just get your work done

(John, line number 32)

5.2.1.3.4 Conclusion

Overall, whilst teachers have been described as being supportive and more relaxed in their approach towards students, Theme 3 highlights a perceived unfairness with regard to the behaviour management procedure, including a lack of rewards, distressing experiences of restraint and reduced experience of success at the PRU.

5.2.1.4 Master Theme 4. Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'

Theme 4 outlines how participants compared their experiences in the PRU and mainstream.

5.2.1.4.1 Lessons: 'it's stupid lessons'

Two of the participants commented on a reduced learning opportunity at the PRU (*Participant: ... and you don't really learn anything here where at school you do,* Jayne, line number 114) and reduced amount of work in the lessons at the PRU (*Participant: well, you do more work at my old school like,* Ben, line number 36)

Jayne commented on the repetitive nature of the curriculum at the PRU, referring to the lessons as 'not like mainstream school' or 'GCSEs'.

Participant: not like normal lessons it's stupid lessons if you know what I mean English is like, na hmm English is alright but it's not like mainstream school, mainstream school you work on every single different subject obviously to work up to GCSEs whereas these it's just like silly petty lessons, like oh write a letter from space something, and how you describe the world it's not like actually English what you'd do for your GCSEs maths it's just likes maths you do the same thing like nearly single day, science it's just that's boring you don't really learn anything either you just learn about mostly animals. Err, sport we do the same sport like nearly every time or it's either it's always the boy's choice of what sport should have been, it's just not good here

(Jayne, line number 217)

Ben and Jayne's description shed light on a perceived imbalance of challenge and academic stimulation and variation at the PRU. For Jayne this led to dissatisfaction with lesson materials and feeling deskilled, demotivated and unstimulated by the lessons at the PRU.

Finally, John had a different perception towards lessons at the PRU, based on his motivation to work in the lessons:

Participant: like if it's cooking I'll do that if it's maths I'll do that if it's English I can't really be arsed that much if it's general studies mmm don't really mind doing that but I probably won't do it that much just depending on what lessons I got that day

(John, line number 84)

5.2.1.4.2 Environment: 'you've got behaviour rooms'

Three of the participants commented on the environmental differences at the PRU, in comparison to their experience in mainstream:

Participant: here it's a lot obviously it's smaller and [pause]

(Charles, line number 27)

Participant: obviously we didn't have behaviour rooms in my old school

Interviewer: yes, so the environment is different you've got behaviour rooms

Participant: yeah like we don't have radios in my old school any more

(Ben, line number 63)

5.2.1.4.3 Restrictions: 'you can't actually get away'

Three of the participants expressed increased 'security' or restrictions in the PRU:

Participant: [mumbles] [pause] I dunno really, there's obviously more like I wanna say security cause it's not like you uh walk around the corner and there's a bodyguard there of whatever but you couldn't uh in my old school you couldn't if you misbehave you couldn't walk round the school cause there's no but here you have to have a thingy key to get through the doors so you can't actually get away

(Charles, line number 196)

Reduced freedom at the PRU was also raised:

Participant: everything you used to be able to do at Fraywood School you can't do it here, cannot do it here

(Jayne, line number 101)

Participant… like at breaks you can go out more like at breaks you can go out more you can go in and out in and out, like here you just go out and stay there out in the cold, and yeah

(Ben, line number 166)

5.2.1.4.4 Mainstream experience: 'our class was all the leftov-'

Throughout the interview, three of the participants reflected on their experience in mainstream school (Participant: *… like every lesson it was a battle between me and the teacher,* Ben, line number 374). They commented on how they were segregated from the mainstream school or majority of students in the school. Ben and Ellis spoke of similar experiences of being in a different group or building:

Participant: *In our class because because our class was all the leftov-, na I wouldn't say leftovers but like all the people that had got kicked out the class kind of, or had to move they were all in that group*

Interviewer: right okay

Participant: because all the all the classes were full because I had to move because in my old school yeah I know you swap teachers but you're in one group err with different people you're with the same people nearly every lesson

(Ben, line number 234)

Participant: yeah cause I weren't in the mainstream first I was in another building couldn't do cooking

Interviewer… why were you in another building?

Participant: Naughty

Interviewer: you were naughty

(Ellis, line number 179)

Ben stopped himself from describing being in class of 'leftovers'. I heard the participants' experiences of being segregated from the main school and reflected on the paradox of inclusion in mainstream settings, and the physical separation of 'naughty' or 'kicked out' students. Although they were excluded even further by being sent to the PRU, Ellis did not perceive the PRU to have the same separation of 'naughty' for the pupils. This raised a question for me on the extent to which pupils felt more accepted and less excluded at the PRU. Whilst the PRU accommodated all students across similar groups, with similar structures and systems, the students appeared more aware of a degree of separation from mainstream students in mainstream schools.

John had a different experience in mainstream, such that he was not there for longer than six months, and had been told that they were not able to support him:

Interviewer: they don't want you there

Participant: no, they can't take me back because they can't give me what I need

Interviewer: is that what they've said to you

Participant: basically, like yeah cause if I get pissed off yeah and I wanna go outside for a minute or two to calm down they say they can't do that

Interviewer: hmm and how does that make you feel

Participant: pissed off cause cause they can do that they just don't wanna accept me in

(John, line number 195)

This led to him describing avoiding mainstream school due to problematic relationships:

Participant: ... Never turned up. I used to do two hours and I turned up like I did like turn up at the end but like I never turned up since like a solid over 6 months I never turned up cause I couldn't be arsed

Interviewer: cause you couldn't be arsed

Participant: cause I didn't wanna go cause I'd end up getting wound up and I didn't like the person I was actually doing it with cause I don't like here

(John, line number 216)

5.2.1.4.5 Conclusion

Theme 4 suggests that participants expressed reduced freedom, reduced academic demands and categorical differences between the PRU and mainstream setting. In addition, the participants had their own historical experiences of mainstream that involved segregation from the main school, unsupportive relationships and school refusal.

5.2.1.5 Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'

Theme 5 incorporates the participants' sense of confusion about their situation, alongside their understanding of 'assessments' and the sense of waiting for the unknown.

5.2.1.5.1 Confusion and dissatisfaction: 'I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school'

Ellis and John described common, but also different experiences of confusion regarding their placements. John described his confusion as to why he was still on the school student roll at his mainstream school, as he had previously been told that he was not allowed to go back there.

Participant… like I'm still under like my actual school but like it's it's annoying because I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school cause I'm under both schools

(John, line number 20)

Ellis spoke of being in an alternative provision for part of the week, which was located outside of the city (*Participant: hmm I have to go to another school out of the city*, Ellis, line number 117). He did not like being sent out of the city.

Interviewer: so you go to another school which isn't a mainstream school

Participant: no

Interviewer: and how is that for you, do you like going there?

Participant: no

Interviewer: why don't you like going there?

Participant: cause you have to get a taxi and I don't like getting a taxi out of the city

(Ellis, line number 126)

In Ellis' situation I understood that Ellis was dissatisfied and unhappy with his situation and was powerless to change it. He was forced to go regardless of his views about it 'you have to get a taxi'. He later described waiting for spaces to be in the city but continued to express that it would still not please him.

5.2.1.5.2 EHCP process and assessment

One of the programmes at the PRU is temporary provision for students who were undergoing a statutory assessment process for an EHCP. Three of the participants were in this situation and John described his experience and understanding of the process.

Participant: ... Just like I'm getting tested these EHCP people are getting an educational health care programme and it's basically like people come in and try and help me with my behaviour and I'm getting help people come to my house talk to me and then we go out for meetings and we like we talk to them and see what troubles what troubles me and everything

(John, line number 91)

John perceived the EHCP to be part of a 'test' and involved a group of people there to help him. He understood that he needed help with his behaviour. In addition to the statutory assessment process for an EHCP, John was also having medical and neurodevelopmental assessment of his difficulties (*Participant: ... and then like like I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think*, John, line number 95). John perceived others to be seeking an answer for his anger, and behaviour through the EHCP assessment and associated 'tests'.

5.2.1.5.3 Lack of knowledge and communication: 'no-one knows what's going on here'

Four of the five participants spoke about a lack of knowledge in their current situation, about future educational placement and length of time at the PRU. John highlighted that this was a common finding for several students at the PRU (*Participant: …some people like they don't even know what's going to happen to them*, John, line number 289).

Jayne spoke of uncertainty held by herself and adults involved:

Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while

(Jayne, line number 177)

She understood that her experience at the PRU was unusual, and communicated that the length of time for finding out information was an issue for her, as well as a lack of communication with adults about her situation:

Participant: … but one thing is that obviously I been waiting here for ages, normally when people come here after about a week or two they'll be like right this is happening with you but with me obviously no one knows what's going on here obviously it takes a very long time to actually find out if you're going back to school or not, and they don't tell you anything either

(Jayne, line number 177)

The examples here highlight the sense of insecurity, and uncertainty for the students at the PRU regarding their future.

5.2.1.5.4 Waiting

Three of the participants made reference to waiting, for support (*Participant: like 2 -3 years to get like people to come help me with stuff*, John, line number 161), for EHCP process (*Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment*, Ben, line number 300) and for information (*Participant: … after I finish The PRU they're going to give me and my mum a list of school that I'll be able to go to but yeah. So it'll be fine*, John, line number 273).

Despite waiting, two of the participants understood that there would be conditions for them:

Participant: see if the new school accept me and if not, I'll go to a different school.

(Ben, line number 504)

Interviewer: what do you think the outcome is going to be for you?

Participant: god knows, I'll have to wait and see

(Jayne, line number 189)

5.2.1.5.5 Overspent time in the PRU

Finally, three of the participants communicated an extended length of time at the PRU setting, which was not made aware to them upon entry to the PRU.

Interviewer: and you were saying that you've been here

Participant: for over a year since February last year

(John, line number 13)

Participant: ...I was just thinking I was at the PRU for 6 months and it weren't even that long, but obviously I didn't go back to, I didn't go back to my old school cause they kicked me out fully so I was just waiting till urmm till the end of year till everybody moves up

(Ben, line number 349)

Interviewer: so how long have you been here?

Participant: I've been here since the end of year 7

Interviewer: okay

Participant: I'm year 9 now aren't I [laughs]

Interviewer: so, you've spent a long time here

Participant: a long time

(Jayne, line number 15)

As a result, the participants desired to either return to mainstream, or to leave the PRU (*Participant: … and obviously I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have here*, Jayne, line number 261).

5.2.1.5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, Theme 5 depicts the sense of uncertainty held by participants about their situation. Although they are aware of assessments such as statutory assessment and the EHCP process, they communicated waiting for information that potentially is unknown to both the staff as well as them as students in the PRU.

5.2.2 Research question 2: What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?

Master Themes 6 to 8 describe findings related to research question 2. The themes highlight my analysis of how participants describe themselves, their concerns about other's perceiving them in a negative way, and their concerns about their future opportunities.

5.2.2.1 Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'

Master Theme 6 encompasses how participants spoke about how they perceived and understood themselves, based on the way in which they described themselves in the PRU, in their previous setting and how they described themselves in comparison to other students.

5.2.2.1.1 Negative perception of self: ''it's like me with anger problems'

Three out of five participants held negative perceptions and descriptions of themselves throughout the interviews. When asked how other people may describe them, the participants described characteristics such as 'aggressive' or 'anger problems'.

Participant…around I'm kinda like the aggressive one as well I always go, I always hit (named pupil) like all the time

(Jayne, line number 341)

John used the descriptor ‘anger problems’ throughout the interview in different ways. He used it to describe both himself, siblings and other students at the PRU and related the characteristic as ‘not mainstream’ (John: *probably cause well like with like anger problems and that stuff and say if like they’re not mainstream yeah and the mainstream can’t cope with them,* line number 67). In a similar way, Jayne described herself as different to mainstream ‘goody too shoes’ (Participant: *...mainstream people are all goody too shoes they’re daren’t be naughty*, line number 125) and went on to use the word ‘naughty’.

Interviewer: yeah, so if you’re not goody too shoes then what might you be?

Participant: a bit annoying, a bit distracting, a bit naughty, naughty, [laughs] I find that such a weird word

(Jayne, line number 143)

I interpreted that the participants did not perceive themselves to be ‘mainstream’ students, and that they perceived that there are a group of pupils that do not belong to a mainstream setting.

Some of the negative views that participants held about themselves came to light when participants reflected on their behaviour.

Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain’t good but it’s, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving

(Charles, line number 416)

Charles attributed changes to his character based on medication for ADHD.

Participant… obviously if I don’t take my tablet, I’m just hyper and annoying, I know I’m annoying if I don’t take my tablet, I know I’m really annoying

(Charles, line number 238)

Despite constructing the self as having anger problems and being naughty at home, John shed light on a somewhat confusing nature of his difficulties. The participant felt that the other teachers at the PRU understood him, however he did not understand himself a lot.

Interviewer: do you understand you

Participant: no not really

Interviewer: can you tell me a bit more about that

Participant: I do understand myself but sometimes I don't understand why I get outbursts and stuff it's weird just don't get myself a lot

(John, line number 354)

5.2.2.1.2 Lack of emotional regulation: 'they'd want me to fight and fights would happen'

John and Jayne communicated a lack of emotional regulation. They reflected on their anger in situations of conflict and considered the risk of them hurting someone as a result of their emotions. John held anger towards adults at the PRU and described outbursts at home. He quantified the length of time it takes for him to calm down. In a similar way Jayne communicated her difficulty calming down when angry (*Participant: … if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one,* Jayne, line number 341).

Participant: … when I'm proper pissed I'll end up punching ya if you get in get in my way if you tried to stop me to do anything. Say if like I try to calm down and I go to my room and play Xbox or just chill on my phone try calm down but it's ki- it's hard for me to calm down

Interviewer: so you've got strategies to try and calm down

Participant: yeah but it's hard for me to calm down

Interviewer: do you feel like it's out of your control

Participant: well it's not out of my control like I can calm down but it's like it takes a while takes 20 minutes half an hour or depending what the situation is it would take a short amount of time

(John, line number 179)

The participants identified perceived triggers to outburst, which were related to their interaction with other people:

Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause]

(Jayne, line number 366)

Participant…*loads of teachers kept praising me and that's and I just went mad after that*

(Ben, line number 139)

The participants spoke about their outbursts as an immediate response towards others (*Participant: yeah, they argue straight away. I did that in school as well in mainstream school I argued straight away,* Ben, line number 183) but also as a means of interacting with others (*Participant: I don't know I hit yeah just for fun sometimes but then I can hit in anger*, Jayne, line number 395).

I felt that the participants attempted to understand themselves in relation to their anger. Their narratives about their position and situation in the PRU were related to their behaviour or emotional outbursts. Furthermore, the way participants understood others to perceive them was also related to their behaviour or emotional outbursts (later discuss in 5.2.2.2.2). Therefore, for most of the participants, their anger became a defining characteristic for them and their self-concept.

5.2.2.1.3 Comparison to others in PRU: 'they're comparing me to them, I'm not really like them'

Ben and John compared themselves to other students in the PRU and perceived themselves to be different to them in a variety of ways:

Interviewer: how do you feel you are, what kind of a student are you here? What are you getting out of being here at the PRU?

Participant: I'm I'm getting education compared to some of kids in the class cause I'm the one, the one left in the class cause the rest of them just walk out

(Ben, line number 267)

Participant: see so I just want to do the work and get it over and done with, but I just think kids are not happy

(Ben, line number 43)

John had an awareness that due to being in a PRU or 'behaviour school', he was categorised to be like a 'naughty' group of students with anger problems. He perceived himself to be different to them, contrasting the views of others.

Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you.

Interviewer: like you what did they mean?

Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. They were like they're like you

Interviewer: what do they mean by that?

Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically, they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah

(John, line number 309)

John was faced with contradictory claims about him by others. This resulted in unpleasant feelings towards others, which he later communicated in a defensive way, claiming that he 'would not lose sleep' about what others thought of him.

In a similar way Ben perceived other students at the PRU to be 'more naughty' than him (*Participant : …there's more naughty kids here, that's gone to mainstream, and I'm like naughty mainstream, I'm good like good and bad,* Ben, line number 502).

I viewed participants' self-comparisons with others as an attempt to understand themselves. In so doing, participants were able to hold on to positives in their sense of self and understanding of their character.

5.2.2.1.4 Medication and diagnoses: 'I'm getting tested'

Charles expressed some confusion and question of the extent to which his medication impacted on his behaviour, whilst John spoke of 'getting tested'.

Participant: ... since I came here, and I think in my old school I was on a different dose of ADHD tablet and I think that had something to do with my behaviour but I don't know

(Charles, line number 290)

Participant: ... like like I'm getting tested for ADHD and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has ADHD autism and dyslexia

(John, line number 95)

Neither participant expressed their understanding of what the diagnoses might mean for them, however, the presence of a diagnosis as a label and prescribed medication appeared important in terms of their understanding of their behaviour or their needs. John described the test as an act of filling out forms about his anger.

Participant: cause, it's like it don't bother me because like my brother had to go through it and it's I don't mind taking tests well not tests but doing like cause like to to think like you have to fill out forms like forms like you know how like how do you feel when you get angry and all that and then they'll write that up and put it all on the computer and then and then they'll start testing me and see if I have ADHD, and that lot

(John, line number 149).

John's description of the assessment and 'testing' suggested that he understands that his emotions and anger could be related to particular diagnoses and similar to his brother's experience. He appeared to lack an understanding about how behavioural disorders or pervasive developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are diagnosed.

5.2.2.1.5 Self-blame, embarrassment and shame: 'I wish I didn't mess about'

Charles and Jayne stated regret for their misbehaviour at school.

Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school…

(Charles, line number 416)

Interviewer: yeah, do you wish things were different?

Participant: yeah, I just wish I didn't mess about in school and Miss Peters weren't always there to trigger me, because if I didn't shout that one day I think I'll never have the ability to actually shout at a teacher but Miss Peters, Miss Peters just triggered me

(Jayne, line number 482)

Although Jayne externalised the blame to Miss Peters, she later perceived her situation to be a result of her own behaviour (*Participant: yeah it is my fault it's no one else's fault*, line number 506), and believed her behaviour to be the reason that she was no longer at mainstream school. She spoke of the PRU was a consequence for 'naughty behaviour', and that she had lost the chance to return to mainstream school.

Participant: urmm I wouldn't have obviously met friends here urmm if I was in school and never came here, I think I'd still have them little bloops no no no I would I would still be obviously naughty because I ain't been here obviously to get my consequences so I'd still be naughty so I'm kind of happy I came here but at the same time I'm not like if I went if I didn't like, when I was 5 day obviously for 6 weeks when I had the chance to go back school I wish I took that actually chance instead of messing about the first day I got back

Interviewer: hmm

Participant: obviously I still would have been in school today

(Jayne, line number 496)

5.2.2.1.6 Mixed views of self: 'good but bad'

Whilst the participants had some negative views about themselves, they had the tendency to present mixed perceptions of their behaviour. Jayne described her behaviour to fluctuate. Her perception of herself changed, as she communicated a reflection of how she used to be.

Interviewer: okay so what kind of a student were you?

Participant: good but bad

Interviewer: what about now, what about when you came to the PRU, what kind of a student are you now, here?

Participant: now I still try like obviously do little like chop, sneak a chocolate bar I still do try things I do try get away with things but vie been quite good, but I can still have my little mardy, mardy bleeps [laughs]

(Jayne, line number 369)

Participant: because I don't know I'm more like the troublemaker well I used to be when err

(Jayne, line number 400)

Ben also shared the view that he was 'good and bad' and described himself as 'naughty mainstream'. Ben held the desire to go back to mainstream school and perceived it as a possibility. He appeared to believe he was a 'mainstream child' but 'naughty'.

Ben: *...there's more naughty kids here, that's gone to mainstream, and I'm like naughty mainstream, I'm good like good and bad,*

(Ben, line number 502)

In a similar way John described himself as naughty, but also sweet.

Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that

(John, line number 176)

Interviewer: hmm

Participant: so yeah quite naughty at home

(John, line number 124)

5.2.2.1.7 Conclusion

Overall, Master Theme 6 indicates that participants held either mixed or negative perceptions about themselves. They often described themselves as 'naughty' or 'aggressive', whilst showing a sense of confusion or lack of understanding about their anger, outbursts, and about their diagnoses. They used other students in the PRU as a

way to understand or conceptualise their behaviour and held feelings of regret and condemnation about their situation at the PRU.

5.2.2.2 Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'

Master Theme 7 is comprised of the way in which participants attributed others views about them, namely parents, teachers, students and the stigma or stereotypes about them due to them being a PRU student.

5.2.2.2.1 Parent's perceptions: 'she understood I do have a little bit of anger'

Parents' perceptions of participants arose in interviews 1, 2, 3, and 5. Jayne spoke about her mum's understanding of her needs, whilst Ben spoke of how his mum expressed his difficulties to educational staff.

Interviewer: okay and how did your mum feel about it?

Participant: she was angry at me but then obviously she understood that obviously I do have a little bit of anger and things do trigger it and if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one

(Jayne, line number 340)

Participant… but like if they read my records they'll be like yeah he he can't do that he can't do this because my mum told them, but see with other teachers, and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out

(Ben, line number 357)

I interpreted that Ben perceived his mum to support him against negative evaluations made about him by unfamiliar teachers.

Charles expressed a sense of embarrassment for his parents due to his situation in the PRU.

Participant: it don't always feel good [pause] and I think it's embarrassing for yourself and for your parents as well knowing that your child's misbehaving at school and then you've gotta go in and take them out or whatever

(Charles, line number 313)

Participants perceived parents to understand them and described their parents' emotional reactions to their child being in a PRU. John expressed a balanced view of how his mum would describe him.

Interviewer: what kind of a person would she say you were?

Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that but then I can be proper like when I'm on one and like I have these outbursts I can get proper like pissed off and you don't you don't wanna see me when I get pissed off

(John, line number 174)

5.2.2.2.2 Perception of others: 'he's a naughty child get him out'

Ben expressed the view that some teachers would label him as a naughty and wouldn't want to accept him in their school or class (*Participant: ... and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out,* Ben, line number 359), whilst Charles was reluctant to say exactly how the teachers would have described him (*Participant: probably annoying and really bad really really bad, and probably stuff I shouldn't say here now*, Charles, line number 269).

In general, all participants held the view that the teachers in their old school did not want them in the setting.

Interviewer: what about the teachers in your old school, how would they have described you?

Participant: err nuisance, err difficult to say I'm a nuisance I'm a I'm a bad influence I'm I'm very naughty and they don't want me there

(John, line number 191)

Jayne perceived other teachers to be aware of her anger and described her as abusive towards others. She also believed other students to view her negatively.

Interviewer: what did they how would they have described you?

Participant: they'd say I'm a bright intelligent girl, but if I want to if I'm in the wrong mood or if I'm if I'm like if I'm going off on one I can be urmm aggressive I can be I

don't know I can be I can throw verbal abuse and everything yeah but obviously I ain't done that in a long time

(Jayne, line number 250)

Interviewer: okay urmm and how do you think the other students view you then, so you say you're the troublemaker who thinks you're the troublemaker?

Participant: [laughs] everyone here

Interviewer: kids and class teachers?

Participant: [laughs] well no some kids yeah they'll say oh yeah she's the trouble maker [child noises]

(Jayne, line number 407)

In addition, Jayne and John expressed frustration with how other teachers categorised them to be like family members, or like all other students in the PRU (*Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you,* John, line number 309).

Participant… he said you're gonna turn out like your brother

(Jayne, line number 439)

Interviewer: and how does it make you feel when people are saying you're going to turn out like your brother?

Participant: it makes me angry because like you don't know me like you don't know if I'm going to turn out like my brother or not

(Jayne, line number 444)

This suggests that participants can experience judgement or poor expectations of them. The participants' experienced judgement based on their behaviour and individual characteristics such as their aggression. However, in some cases teacher's knowledge of family experiences and participant's siblings who previously attended the PRU led to further judgements made of the participants. This influenced how participants understood others to perceive them. John adopted defence mechanisms towards claims made by teachers about him.

Interviewer: and what impact does the way other people view you how does that affect the way you see yourself?

Participant: it don't really affect me a lot because whatever they say about me I'm not gonna lose sleep over

Interviewer: hmm

Participant: ain't gonna lose no sleep don't really bother me say whatever you wanna say about me I don't really care cause I ain't gonna lose no sleep I'm not gonna care

(John, line number 261)

5.2.2.2.3 Stigma: 'he's been expelled, he's a trouble maker'

Charles, Jayne, Ben and John spoke of the potential stigma faced by students who have entered the PRU (*Participant: I didn't really wanna be here and I thought it was just full of dickheads*, John, line number 302) and the way in which other people viewed students at the PRU. Charles spoke of the misconception that others would view all students at the PRU as having been kicked out of school, despite this being untrue in reality.

Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it?

Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah

(Charles, line number 422)

Ben demonstrated the preconceptions held by mainstream school staff about pupils in the PRU:

Participant: No because the woman who came to see at my old school for a few weeks made this place sound really bad

Interviewer: what did she say?

Participant: Just saying like it's re-, like, all kids kick off 24 7, break rules and doing everything

(Ben, line number 283)

And judgements that are held towards students who leave the PRU to go on to specialist provision and their future:

Participant: but mum does not want me to go to like the special schools

Interviewer: okay, whys that?

Participant: because she knows pe- people, and, like kids from there, have killed people, going prison and everything, didn't come out with no education, no money, doing drugs and mum was like yeah no no my child ain't doing that

(Ben, line number 318)

5.2.2.2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst parents were perceived as the supportive figures, who understand the participants, the participants held concerns that other teachers or students viewed them as aggressive, and that they are defined by their behaviour. The participants communicated an awareness of perceived stigma for students at PRUs.

5.2.2.3 Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'

Master Theme 8 refers to the concerns that participants had about their future employment, capabilities, and their sense of achievements or failures as PRU students.

5.2.2.3.1 Future implications: 'All they'll see is he's been expelled he's a troublemaker, get rid'

Charles and Jayne held somewhat disabling views about their future as a result of being in the PRU. Charles held the view that although the PRU does not disempower students to go on to 'do something' in the future, their opportunities would be limited, and Jayne referred to retaking examinations and losing out on an education.

Interviewer: you lose out on a future?

Participant: yeah, I think it's like if you keep coming back here you've obviously wasted, I wouldn't say life cause you can still do something, but obviously not a lot [pause]

(Charles, line number 404)

Participant: obviously they'll probably have to redo their GCSEs obviously cause cause if they've been here for a long time then obviously they didn't have, they didn't have the right education what they should have got in mainstream school to actually complete, get the right As and Bs what you should normally get, in GCSE, and obviously cause I'm year 9 I'm supposed to pick my GCSEs I can't even pick,

(Jayne, line number 266)

Ben and Ellis held mixed views on future implications for work, based on his knowledge of previous PRU students.

Participant: ...I th-, I know some kids who be- been to PRUs that have made money, doing successful but I know some kids that haven't,

*(*Ben, line number 342).

Participant: some of them get GCSEs and some of them don't

(Ellis, line number 304)

As well as implications for future employment, Jayne perceived her opportunities for post-16 education would be affected.

Participant: they probably wouldn't let me go in, obviously cause of my urmm report here and obviously my normal school, they're probably oh thinking she ain't good enough to go here, so obviously it's just messed your whole life up basically you just don't, might as well just stay in school

(Jayne, line number 538)

Both Charles and Ben expressed their desire to go back to mainstream school and experience success:

Participant:... But all I wanna do is get back in my old school so I can get good grades get everything, I will get a job,

Ben, line number 426)

Participant: err I wanna go back to school and get an education get a GCSE and go to work

(Charles, line number 343)

5.2.2.3.2 Limited career opportunities

Charles and Jayne perceived that their career aspirations weren't supported by their placement in the PRU. Jayne described lacking skills and education that would support her to work with animals in the future, whilst Charles expressed doubt regarding achieving his aspirations, as a result of being in the PRU.

Interviewer: has it helped you to work with animals?

Participant: here, what no, we don't do we don't work with animals here like we don't learn nothing about animals well we do in science but not nothing like, if I was in school If I picked my GCSEs I would do hair and beauty and I probably do health and social and obviously animal caring and that lot

(Jayne, line number 468)

Interviewer: what do you want to be when you're older?

Participant: I don't know I wanted to be in the army but obviously I don't think that'll happen

(Charles, line number 345)

Some of the participants held unfavourable perceptions of what could happen for pupils who leave the PRU including homelessness, criminality, and unemployment.

Participant: depending on what situation they're in like I don't they don't some people like they don't even know what's going to happen to them and some like some of them from here will probably be successful or probably be like got a job but not a good one or some people would probably be either in pen or dead you never know what could happen, time will tell

(John, line number 289)

Participant: but I, I just, just thinking to myself do you know like, like you you'll be sitting home with no money, you'll be living on the streets if you don't actually get an education, get money

(Ben, line number 421)

5.2.2.3.3 Self-development and learning: 'I'm proud'

Charles, Jayne, Ben and John all spoke of maturities and improvements with the behaviour since entry into the PRU.

Participant: ... and urmm I've learnt that obviously every stu, every child is different, people are some are laid back and chilled but some are obviously aggressive and, yeah

(Charles, line number 326)

Achievements ranged from learning to control their emotions (*Participant: urmm to obviously to help control different triggers and just just to know like I ain't gonna get away with certain things*, Jayne, line number 508) to ignoring conflict (*Participant: I I've learnt to ignore people better urmm*, Ben, line number 389) and to improvements with behaviour (*Participant: umm [pause] that I'm proud, of err, that my behaviours changed, and yeah, my behaviours changed,* Charles, line number 321).

John continued to foresee improvements in the future for him as a result of receiving support through EHCP assessment.

I think that by the time this is all finished and I should have calmed down a whole lot more hopefully and I'll be more calmer in situations where normal I'd be like say like probably when I'm older there'd be situations where if I was a kid I'd be like proper pissed off I'll probably be more calmer

(John, line number 282)

However, for Jayne, her capacity to be successful and achieve what she desired was limited by restrictions with her educational placement. She often perceived a lack of certainty about her placement at the PRU and that she would remain there.

Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while

(Jayne, line number 480)

5.2.2.3.4 Conclusion

Overall, Master Theme 8 highlighted that although participants were aware of some learning of new skills and development at the PRU, they held concerns about their future education, employment and career opportunities. They were of the view that career choices would be limited, and that achieving grades, or a good career would be less likely at the PRU. I interpreted that placement in the PRU limited students outlook on their future capabilities.

6 Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to link the analysis findings with the research questions outlined at the outset of the study, and with the literature and theory discussed in the opening literature review. This chapter will discuss the findings of each theme in relation to the research questions and theory. Considerations of the limitations of the study are also discussed, along with the wider implications of the study for PRUs, EP practice and future research.

The aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of young peoples' experiences in PRUs, how they describe their experiences and how they perceive their experiences impact on their self-identity. The systematic literature review demonstrated that whilst there has been some research into pupils' views regarding their experience in PRUs, the findings tend to have been based on narrow topics in relation to their experiences and presented alongside – or subsumed within - the views of teachers and other professionals. The first question of the current study has led to provision of much richer data than has previously been presented regarding how pupils experience being a student in a PRU, whilst the second question has provided a deeper appreciation of how students in PRUs perceive themselves. The findings discussed here are a reflection of how I interpreted pupils' perceptions of their experiences.

6.1.1 How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?

6.1.1.1 Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'

Findings suggested that participants held a somewhat skewed understanding of what a PRU was on entering the setting from mainstream. They perceived it to be a behaviour school, and communicated that teachers also perceived it to be a behaviour school. The reality however is that PRUs aim to provide short-term intervention and education to those at risk of exclusion, as opposed to providing specialist provision alike to that provided in a 'behaviour school'. In addition, one of the participants perceived it as being a 'consequence' for their behaviour, whilst others simply were not aware of what it was. This could perhaps be due to the variation between PRUs across the country and how they are employed in different local authorities. It certainly raises questions, though, regarding how the PRU was described, and its purpose and objectives communicated to students, and how their understanding of the process was developed.

Whilst at the PRU, participants spoke of failing at reintegration and being 'kicked out' of mainstream school. I interpreted their perceptions of being 'kicked out', not allowed back in mainstream, and being in a 'behaviour school' as a form of social exclusion from their peer group and 'normal' ways of functioning in education. Participants often referred to their mainstream school as 'normal' school, which was interpreted as indicating that they perceived themselves to be in an extraordinary situation. There appeared to be a narrative across interviews of not being able to get a 'normal' education or being unable to return to their 'normal school'. According to guidance for alternative provisions and PRUs, reintegration to schools from alternative provision requires careful planning and an assessment of pupils' readiness to return to school, with appropriate support to assist their reintegration (DfE, 2013). As four of the participants expressed failure to reintegrate into mainstream, I held questions about how reintegration is managed in the PRU, and the success rates of reintegration for pupils. A national study on the reintegration of children excluded from school found that there are school-based barriers that may prevent the successful reintegration of pupils, including a school's reluctance to accept pupils, insufficient resources to support reintegration and limited awareness of pupils needs (DfES, 2004). Previous research on successful integration by Jacklin and Lacey (1993) discussed a significant period of adjustment

when transferring students back into a mainstream setting. They discussed psychological changes that occur when reintegrating students, including developing new support structures in the new/old school, as well facing potential gaps in learning. As a result, it is important that in order for reintegration to be effective, factors at the level of the child, family, school and system should be addressed, as well as considering the inclusive nature of mainstream settings for pupils who have previously attended PRU settings, and the pupils' ability to reintegrate successfully (Lawrence, 2011). However, overall it is acknowledged that nationally very few students who enter PRUs will return to mainstream school (Taylor, 2012).

All participants initially held negative feelings towards coming to the PRU, such as fear, or reluctance to attend. I interpreted and associated their feelings with their lack of knowledge about the setting and understanding of the PRU as a behaviour school. Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that positive relationships with peers at the PRU led to feelings of safety and reassurance for pupils when they first entered the provision. However, Master Theme 2 here highlighted that, for most of the participants, positive relationships with students and teachers were scarce, and they generally shared an experience of confrontational relationships with peers, which potentially contributed to their feelings of fear.

6.1.1.2 Master Theme 2 Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers

Some of the participants were able to develop trusting relationships with teachers at the PRU. They spoke of being understood by teachers at the PRU, being able to connect with them and being supported by them. I interpreted these perceptions and experiences as fostering a sense of connectedness and relatedness with teachers at the PRU. In a similar way, Nicholson and Putwain (2018) found supportive teacher-pupil relationships in alternative provision. Whilst students at the PRU tended to have a long-standing history of difficulty with relationships with teachers, their teacher-relationships at the PRU facilitated, to some degree, educational re-engagement at the PRU. Positive relationships in PRUs have previously been linked with increased motivation and an increased sense of emotional support (Michael & Frederickson, 2013). Positive relationships have also been linked with better engagement, school connectedness, experiences of success and fewer behavioural problems (Thuen & Bru, 2009).

In contrast, I interpreted that participants' perceptions of relationships with peers at the PRU were limited, confrontational, or that friendships at the PRU were undesired. The participants associated the PRU with 'naughty kids' and one of the participants communicated a risk of offending others, fear of being hurt by them, and confrontational experiences with other students. I interpreted the participants' encounters with students at the PRU as being distressing for them, leading to participants preferring to isolate themselves from other students, or feeling unsafe.

I also found that movement across groups, i.e. from a two-day programme to a five-day programme, or to a different class in the PRU, was a shared experience for some of the participants, and ultimately led to further difficulties with the development of supportive friendships at the PRU. This is an interesting finding, which has not been featured consistently in previous research. Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that pupils in PRUs reported positive peer relationships and perceived this as an enabling factor for positive outcomes for them. Billington (2002) found that not having a positive peer support network could hinder successful reintegration to mainstream. Whilst, Daniels and Cole (2010) found that pupils leaving PRUs were at risk of marginalisation later in life and increased social isolation.

Following on from this, one of the participants commented on the influence of misbehaviour and a lack of positive role models for students at the PRU. Jayne had apparently learned from 'group norms' that misbehaving at the PRU was 'okay'. Therefore, there is, it seems, a risk within PRUs that students begin to model and learn new patterns of behaviour, and new social identities regarding the social groups they identify with and connect with.

I interpreted that participants at the PRU identify as a group of students distinct from the majority of the mainstream community. Ben's interview elicited the idea that pupils at the PRU perceived themselves to be somewhat distinctive, and 'not mainstream' due to being 'kicked out' of school. Group identity can, of course, be seen in terms of the social psychology of identity, as introduced in the literature review (Tajfel, 1974). I contemplated the extent to which pupils at the PRU identified themselves as an 'in-group' or 'out-group' (desirable or undesirable) in comparison to 'mainstream pupils'. Where individuals perceive themselves to be in a disadvantaged group, such as 'not mainstream' they can hold hostile or aggressive views towards the group from which

they are excluded (Hutchison, Abrams & Christian, 2007). Whilst the participants here did not seem to hold negative or aggressive views towards mainstream pupils, several of the participants held negative views towards their mainstream school and teachers in their old school, particularly in the cases of Jayne and John. I interpreted that these participants experienced a sense of rejection as a result of their exclusion from mainstream settings.

6.1.1.3 Master Theme 3 Perceived imbalance of punishment, sanctions and rewards: 'no-one's actually got a reward'

Theme 3 highlights the confrontational environment of the PRU, and events such as restraint that may have caused participants distress. I interpreted accounts of perceived punishment and physical intervention as having led to feelings of reduced freedom and autonomy and as having affected relationships with teachers at the PRU. According to self-determination theory, threats of punishment, rewards and sanctions – authoritarian practices- are experienced as pressurising as opposed to supportive (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Instead, negative feedback can convey messages of incompetence and result in a lack of autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). A shared finding in the current research was that the perception of strict or unfair discipline had negative implications on students' relationships with teachers. For the two participants who experienced problematic relationships with teachers, this appeared to be linked to feelings of injustice, provocation, unfairness of behaviour management and reduced success and rewards at the PRU. In contrast, Michael and Frederickson (2013) found that consistent rewards, strict boundaries and clear consequences were perceived by PRU students as being effective for behaviour management. Whereas, ineffective behaviour management in loud or disruptive classrooms was believed to impact on students' learning.

This is an interesting finding as whilst PRUs intend on supporting and improving behaviour, the current study found that behaviour management strategies employed in PRUs can have limited or negative effects on pupils' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, behaviour and educational reengagement. A similar finding was reported in a study by Meo and Parker (2004). They explored institutional practices including classroom control and behaviour management in an alternative provision. Whilst the objectives of the PRU were to improve pupils' behaviour, develop pupil engagement with the curriculum and raise pupil self-esteem, instead they found that some teachers resorted to confrontational behaviour management styles and were often preoccupied with issues of

authority in the classroom. The authors theorised that challenges with classroom behaviour meant that classroom activities were renegotiated to focus on managing behaviour as opposed to building relationships and facilitating educational re-engagement.

6.1.1.4 Master Theme 4. Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'

Theme 4 elicited findings about the observed differences in the PRU regarding lesson structure and academic curriculum. Participants expressed reduced motivation to engage with the learning material, illuminating the decreased motivational patterns of young people in the PRU. It is possible that as mentioned in the previous section, classroom activities and curriculum focus is often overtaken by managing classroom behaviour at the PRU.

The importance of interesting and relevant curricula is deemed as effective for engaging young children with emotional and behavioural needs (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999). Furthermore, an Ofsted inspection of 'good' and 'outstanding' PRUs in 2007 found that positive outcomes and improvement in motivation were found in PRUs that set challenging tasks, had well-designed curriculum that focused on improving basic skills through interesting experiences and appropriate curriculum (Ofsted, 2007). Interestingly in the current study, Jayne held strong views that the educational curriculum was not challenging, but instead was 'stupid' and repetitive. Whilst the recommendations by Ofsted are reasonably plausible, they assume that student motivation is easily facilitated in the most successful PRUs (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010). However, motivation as a concept is multi-faceted and complex. As studied in the literature review, there are a number of individual and relational factors that can impact on motivation. The findings from the current research simply shed light on the finding that students in the current PRU perceive their academic challenge to be reduced, which did not facilitate or increase motivation. However, their level of motivation was influenced by personal, social and relational factors. For example, in the case of Jayne her motivation was decreased due to disaffection with her situation at the PRU, she expressed a lack of motivation to behave at the PRU as she perceived it would not lead to her returning to mainstream.

The participants also had a sense of restricted access and freedom, and a lack of space at the PRU. Inadequate facilities and lack of space were reported as common concerns in

Ofsted's most recent inspection of PRUs (Ofsted, 2007). Whilst Hart (2013) found that pupils held a sense of safety in the PRU environment due to containment in small classes or calm environment, this finding was not evident in the current study. Instead, classrooms and other students were experienced as 'loud', and pupils felt limited with regard to what they were able to do in social times, with one participant commenting that they couldn't do anything that they could at mainstream.

Participants held negative perceptions of their mainstream setting, which echoes previous research discussed in the literature review (Hart, 2013). Many schools have now implemented placement options as part of 'inclusive provision for all' (Hornby, 2015). These placement options vary in degree of inclusion including classes within mainstream school for children with special education needs, to designated specialist provisions for children with special education needs, which are attached to the mainstream building or separate from the main campus (Hornby, 2015). For Ben and Ellis, they experienced being in different provisions at their mainstream school, and understood that their placement in separate classes, or buildings, was due to being 'naughty' or having been 'kicked out' of mainstream classes. I considered whether the initial placement of the students in 'specialist provisions' in the mainstream setting acted as a precursor for later exclusion and placement in a PRU. It is noted that examples of in-school strategies to avert permanent inclusion are justified by within-child explanations, such that the choice of moving students to an on-site or off-site provision is due to a description or narrative of a student's behaviour, rather than the environment or situation in which the behaviour has developed (Carlile, 2011). Carlile (2011) argues that it is the pathologising nature of difficulties within-child, that creates a narrative across professionals that lead to consideration of alternative placement options, such as managed moves or PRUs.

6.1.1.5 Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'

Meo and Parker (2006) address the fact that PRUs are intended to provide short-term intervention for longer term gains. However, for participants in the current study this was not the case. Several of the participants had been placed in the PRU for longer than initially expected, whilst undergoing statutory assessment for EHCPs. In relation to attribution theory, all participants attributed their situations internally, that is, as being due to their own misdoings and misbehaviour, and perceived their situations to be out of

their control, such that they were not sure of their future placement and they had been in the PRU longer than expected. All participants had a degree of negative feelings about their situation, some wanting to change their situation and others desiring to return to school. They expressed that their futures were under the control of others, particularly for Jayne, Ellis and John who referred to decisions about their lives being made by adults around them. I interpreted this as participants having reduced autonomy and agency in decisions made about them.

Jayne expressed a sense of learned helplessness and had the view that even if she improved her behaviour, her situation would still remain the same. Furthermore, she had a sense of helplessness due to a lack of communication and knowledge about how long she would be at the PRU. I perceived the risk of attending PRUs for a continued period of time, as enhancing a sense of learned helplessness. Learned helplessness has been understood by psychologists for a long period of time. Seligman (1972) conceptualised it as a response to events that are perceived uncontrollable, leading to the belief that one is helpless to succeed. This is also linked to self-efficacy, and one's belief about one's own abilities. An individual's expectation that a course of action will lead to success, will rely on their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). Jalali and Morgan (2018) found that secondary aged PRU pupils exhibited a sense of leaned helplessness. I interpreted that the complex nature of attribution styles, learned helplessness and the degree to which participants believed they could change their situation impacted on their sense of self-efficacy and subsequent self-perceptions of what they are able to achieve at the PRU.

6.1.2 What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?

6.1.2.1 Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'

The findings regarding participants' perceptions of self were mixed. Whilst all participants identified negative evaluations of themselves based on their behaviour, they also expressed positive self-perceptions. They contrasted their perception of who they were with their present construction of the self, describing improvements with their behaviour, and desired achievements for the future. Similar findings were found by Mainwaring and Hallam (2010). They found that for PRU pupils who were able to articulate positive self- concepts, these were either limited in contrast to mainstream

pupils or impacted by doubt about their potential achievements in academic contexts. In the current research the participants expressed the requirement to re-take GCSEs, and doubt of achieving their career aspirations due to being in the PRU. This is further summarised within Master Theme 8; however, I interpreted their perception of themselves as being dominated by undesirable characteristics such as anger, aggression and 'troublemaker' as opposed to their achievements and positive qualities.

Self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy are all broadly related to the beliefs held by an individual about his or her attributes and abilities (Valentine, DuBois & Cooper, 2004). Having positive self-beliefs has been said to influence academic achievement, goal-directed behaviours and intrinsic value for education. Those with high self-beliefs may continue to strive for success to maintain self-worth and positive self-perceptions, whereas those with negative self-beliefs may engage in self-handicapping behaviours in order to protect themselves from negative attributions made towards them (Valentine DuBois & Cooper, 2004). Another finding from the data, shared by a number of participants, was participants' tendency to express a lack of emotional regulation, and an inability to manage their emotions well. I interpreted this as being participants identifying their aggression or 'anger problems' as a key attribute and characteristic of the self. This in turn may have impacted on their interaction with others at school and at home. Whilst participants were able to recognise and acknowledge personal responsibility for their actions, it illuminated the emotional challenges faced by the participants.

6.1.2.2 Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'

Overall, participants held concerns that other students, teachers and parents may view them negatively. Ben and Jayne spoke of their parents' understanding of them, and of the support they received from their parents. However, Charles, Jayne, Ben and John were aware that mainstream teachers would view them negatively.

I perceived participants understanding of teacher attributions about their behaviour and their situation created interesting findings. In relation to attribution theory, the participants experienced that teachers attributed their situation internally: either because they are 'naughty', they have 'anger problems' or that 'they can't give them the support that they need' implying that the pupil's needs are not suitable for the mainstream

setting. For two of the participants, professionals attributed their behaviour and placement at the PRU to familial factors - by likening them to their siblings who had also attended the same PRU. This reflects the research findings that teachers attribute the causes of challenging behaviour to within the child or home factors (Shapiro, 1999). I related this to the pathologising narrative of professionals to situate the problem within-child, therefore removing their responsibility to work collaboratively, but instead problem-solve 'difficult cases' which results in placement of students in alternative provisions that Carlile (2011) discussed.

Whilst Carlile's (2011) claims may be relevant in the case of exclusion, I considered other explanations underlying teacher narratives when faced with challenging students. The rhetoric of inclusion is that inclusive education suggests that all students with special educational needs can be taught in mainstream classrooms, whilst the reality is that many teachers do not feel equipped to do so (Hornby, 2015). Teachers do not have the appropriate attitudes, skills to effectively implement a fully inclusive environment, experiencing tensions regarding academic achievement and lack of resources (Hornby, 2015). As a result, students such as John are told that their needs cannot be met in mainstream, leading to a sense of rejection and others 'giving up' on him.

6.1.2.3 Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'

Finally, Master Theme 8 found that participants had limited outlooks on their future capabilities and opportunities. Many considered alternative routes to achieving academic qualifications, whilst others perceived that their career aspirations would be unachievable or restricted. Participants perceived that the PRU did not help them to develop necessary vocational skills or qualifications to benefit them in future education and employment. They also perceived that other students at the PRU may be disadvantaged, and vulnerable, with regard to youth offending, future unemployment and homelessness. I interpreted that whilst participants believed the PRU had helped them to improve their behaviour, secure help or develop maturity, overall, they perceived the PRU to leave them at a disadvantage in the future. This has been found in previous studies that have identified PRU pupils' outlook on their future as significantly different to pupils who have not experienced exclusion (Mainwaring & Hallam, 2010).

Overall, the current research required pupils to share their educational experiences. The research might have benefitted the participants in a number of ways. Firstly, for some participants I understood that the interview process facilitated feelings of empowerment for the individuals. The participants displayed a desire to share their story and their views in detail. In particular, Jayne and John were able to discuss their feelings and views openly and honestly, with both positive and negative views about their situations and of the previous teachers who have worked with them. I interpreted this as a result of feelings of validation, trust and being listened to throughout the process. Secondly, for all of the participants the interview process allowed them to reflect on the progress they have made. This was indicated in the interviews as all the participants spoke of improvements with their behaviour at the PRU. In this way, it is hoped that the participants reflected on their strengths, as well as the challenges or difficulties they discussed in their interviews. Strength-based language, particularly used in strength-based counselling approaches shed light on human potential and protective factors that can help youth to develop resilience and strength in the face of adversity (Smith, 2006). Finally, as a practitioner and researcher the current study has reinforced the perceived benefits and importance of obtaining pupil voice, empowering individuals and developing an understanding of the young person's world view. It has helped me in my professional practice to consider the potential impact of exclusionary practices and the alternative education settings and organisation on young people's educational experience, friendship groups, aspirations and emotional response to their situation.

6.1.3 Limitations of the study

Section 4.3.3 identified some limitations of qualitative research and interview data related to an underlying assumption that language depicts reality and its reliance on linguistic skills. I aimed to produce an account of how a researcher can make sense of participants' lived experiences and acknowledge that another researcher may focus on different findings dependent upon what they were seeking to answer. Therefore, I aimed to describe and discuss findings in relation to the two research questions asked of the current study. Described here are study specific reflections and limitations.

In reflecting upon the study, I acknowledge several limitations. As the study took place in one PRU, the findings cannot be generalised to all PRU settings. Systems, structures and processes in PRUs can vary across local authorities and therefore findings should be considered in relation to the context and characteristics of the PRU itself. I

acknowledged throughout the study that the aim of the study was not to produce general claims regarding PRU experiences, but instead offer an insight into what the PRU experience was like for the participants involved in the current study.

The sample of participants in the current study was relatively small. This means that it is possible that there are a large number of experiences for excluded pupils that have not been accounted for. Whilst variety was compromised in the current study, the study does offer an in-depth analysis of a small number of experiences.

I sought to achieve a homogenous sample, however, this proved problematic. Due to issues with recruitment, participant 4, Ellis, had attended the PRU for a much shorter time than the others. It is possible that Ellis' short period of time in the PRU affected the quality of the interview. I acknowledged in section 5.1.4 that Ellis was more difficult to engage during the interview and therefore the quality of data collected was compromised.

Another possible limitation of the study was that I was a novice in conducting qualitative research and using thematic analysis. As such, I sought and followed guidance for the analysis steps and revisited and reflected on analyses throughout the entire process. Reflections have been provided in 4.8.2. I reflected that due to the age of the participants and verbal demand of the interviews, I would spend much time in the interview reflecting back what participants had said in order to create time and space for the participant to think or elaborate. Furthermore, at times I depended on prompt questions from the interview schedule to encourage the participants to elaborate. On reflection, a pilot of the interview schedule in the planning stage would have been beneficial. It may be that the wording of questions, or interview content was unfamiliar or not fully understood by the participants. I addressed this by revising the interview schedule.

Finally, whilst the study has highlighted some interesting findings on students' perceptions of themselves and future aspirations, the study does not aim to make definite claims that the findings were a direct effect of being placed in a PRU. Whilst a shared experience across the participants was placement in a PRU and historical experiences of exclusionary practices, the study did not consider the influence of participants' background, relationships, and home factors on self-identity.

6.1.4 Implications for PRUs

The findings of the current study aim to offer insight into the experiences of pupils entering the PRU. The study found that pupils often come in to the PRU with historical issues at mainstream, or at primary school. They might have low self-concept, attribute their situation due to their own behaviour, perceive themselves negatively and be fearful of developing new friendship groups and relationships. Often attendance at the PRU can be poor, with periods of absence, such as in the case of John, or dual placements, such as in the case of Ellis. Therefore, there is the potential that pupils are not aware of different behaviour management policies, including physical intervention and behaviour rooms, they may forget novel reward systems, and are experiencing significant changes with friendship groups and relationships leading to the need to develop new social support networks.

An implication for PRUs could be the involvement of pupils in an induction to the new systems and structures at the PRU. Several of the participants spoke about having little knowledge about what the PRU was, referring to it as sounding 'weird', and hearing stories about the poor behaviour of other children at the PRU. An induction programme into the PRU could address preconceptions about the PRU. Students could be given the opportunity to ask questions, and receive specific information about the behaviour policy, agree to the expectations of behaviour at the PRU and gather information about how to seek support and advice whilst there. The induction process could also provide new students with the opportunity to develop new relationships at the PRU between teachers and pupils and develop friendships at the PRU and within their new group. Where appropriate and possible, PRUs should consider supervised mentoring opportunities between current and new pupils as a way to encourage the development of social support systems between students.

A finding in the current study included the perceived imbalance of rewards and punishments, and potentially distressing experiences of restraint. In the event of challenging behaviour, the participants here had an awareness that they found it difficult to 'calm down' and they communicated that their 'anger' or outbursts were a trigger for negative behaviour. An important implication of these findings is that PRUs should reflect and monitor the way in which restraint is used and behaviour is managed. PRUs should seek to ensure the use of physical intervention is the last possible response to challenging behaviour. A graduated response to challenging behaviour should be agreed

amongst staff for individual pupils, following investigating what strategies are successful for each pupil. PRUs should implement behaviour management strategies that seek to empower students by focusing on their strengths, fostering their ability to achieve, and developing individual students' ability to problem-solve and identify healthy coping strategies. Furthermore, a focus on developing the students' capacity to regulate their emotions in a safe way would be important, with guidance and support sought by external agencies such as Psychology Services or qualified school-based counsellors.

Students reported both provocative and positive relationships with students and adults at the PRU. A further implication therefore would be for PRUs to develop restorative practices within the setting, to build on repairing relationships. A study of restorative practices in London PRUs has found that with the correct organisational culture, and ethos on empowerment and collective responsibility, the use of restorative practice in PRUs can be effective (London Councils, 2011).

The study found that pupils such as Jayne and Ben experienced lessons as 'stupid' or that they were not developing skills to support their career aspirations at the PRU. As a result, participants were less motivated to learn or complete work at the PRU. Another implication for PRUs could be to ensure the development of the curriculum includes and involves engaging, varied and appropriate curriculum activities that enable the participants to improve on basic skills, as well as develop an intrinsic motivation to learn. The Ofsted report (2007) on good practice in successful PRUs is a key document that can provide strategies to support PRUs to meet their objectives and aims for student education. The reports discussed systems and structures within the PRU that can promote student motivation. A few examples from the report include developing students' basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, involving up to four tutorials a week to focus on reading with an adult; employing part-time specialist subject staff, and visiting teachers to provide teaching to students; using creative approaches to motivate students to engage in work-related learning; and seeking alternative arrangements for outdoor curriculums and Physical Education lessons where space at the PRU is insufficient.

More than half of the participants in the current study had been attending the PRU for longer than intended. As a result, this affected their motivation to improve their

behaviour, and led to a sense of helplessness and lack of control about their situation. PRUs should consider redesigning referral systems to include a plan of support for pupils at the point of entry and a more rigid system that facilitates an exit plan, to avoid student placements at the PRU to be extended. This could be achieved with the support of managers, the local authority and school headteachers. It would be important for regular communication with the mainstream school throughout students' placements in PRUs, involving ongoing discussion regarding the appropriateness and effectiveness of their time in the PRU.

As students who reintegrated back into mainstream returned to the PRU in less than a week, an implication for PRUs may be to allow a period of time for adjustment for students who are returning to mainstream, by removing the possibility for mainstream schools to send the pupils back without appropriate provision to support the pupil and allow time to achieve success. Interventions at reintegration stage could be considered, such as consultation groups, and negotiating a series of graduated responses, with the support of external agencies, to support the success of reintegration.

6.1.5 Implications for Educational Psychologists

The current study found that pupils had strong views about their experiences, particularly regarding their relationships with adults at the PRU, the lack of rewards they receive at the PRU and their difficult experiences at mainstream. As a result, EPs should consider pupil views and obtaining pupil voice when working with PRUs. When asked, students can and will offer their view on what helps them, what they want to achieve, and what they find difficult.

Two of the pupils were undergoing statutory assessment. They either referred to the EHCP process as an 'assessment' or 'education health care programme', as a way to secure help. As a result of the statutory assessment process for EHCPs, EPs will have a statutory duty that will lead to involvement with these young people. As part of their involvement, EPs can obtain pupil views, but also offer information to young people about the role of professionals within the statutory assessment process. As the current study found a shared experience of uncertainty and a lack of knowledge about their situation across participants, EPs are well-placed in their statutory role to meet with young people and provide clear, simple and coherent information regarding the EHCP

process and timelines. This could be provided in child-friendly leaflets or information about the EHCP process.

Three of the participants had a failed reintegration back to mainstream and returned back to the PRU, entering a different group. An implication for EPs could be to consider the factors within and across different systems, for example the PRU, the mainstream settings, and the family, that may create barriers for successful reintegration and inclusion. In the case of John and Jayne, attributions of difficulties appeared to be located within the child. This is an important factor that may have impacted on their inclusion and provision in mainstream. EPs should consider the attributions of teachers, head teachers and PRU managers, and how they might be hindering or impacting on the student's situation. EPs can support PRUs and mainstream settings in a consultative way to support problem-solving through group consultation, with an aim to facilitate successful reintegration for students.

Another implication for EPs could be to facilitate problem-solving conversations before informal or formal exclusion occurs. EPs could use consultation to change and shift perceptions from within-child nature of difficulties, to a systemic view of individuals' situation. EPs are well-placed to inform schools and organisations about outcomes for pupils in PRUs and research findings as a preventative measure for excluding young people.

Finally, more broadly, EPs will be to understand pupil's experiences through a psychological lens of knowledge and theory as introduced in this thesis. EPs can use their skills to deliver training to schools on developing healthy identities, understanding theories of motivation and learning, but also working with challenging behaviour. PRUs remain to be complex educational settings that are influenced by political, social and cultural pressures and it is important to consider the both children's rights, and the importance of inclusive practice at the heart of all educational settings.

6.1.6 Implications for the Local authorities

The study has offered a deeper understanding of how exclusions and PRU placements can be experienced by individual students. Local authorities should consider ways in which they are able to reduce exclusions for pupils in the city. Given the reduced outcomes for PRU pupils highlighted in the literature review, local authorities should strive to develop capacity for all students in the city or country. It is hoped that the

findings will encourage local authorities and policy makers to consider the individual experiences of students who are placed in PRUs, specifically in situations where students have had an extended period of time at the PRU and are without knowledge of what the future may hold for them. Implications for local authorities include developing guidance for local PRUs, including clear admission policies and protocols for PRUs. Due to the wide variation of PRUs across the country, it would be important for local authorities to be reviewing and monitoring the use of PRUs, numbers of students attending PRUs and at a more individual level, considering the individual situation for students. Where local authorities have worked closely with PRUs, they have a good understanding of the intention of PRUs, and practice, which can ultimately support the provision of pupils back in mainstream schooling (Ofsted, 2007).

6.1.7 Implications for research

Future research that aims to gather pupil views should consider the appropriateness of data collection methods for the participants included. Whilst the current study used semi-structured interviews, the author found that the participants generally spoke in less detail throughout. The author often reflected back what participants were saying or asked probing questions to allow space and time for participants to respond. The participants were aged between 13 and 14. Future research may want to consider older age groups, or pupils in year 10 and 11 to enable more detailed response and engagement in the interview, or consider the use of different methods for data collection, i.e. diary extracts, a second round of interviews. Furthermore, the participant sample in the study consisted of only one female. Previous research has emphasized the importance of studying and learning from the experiences of excluded females, and has highlighted possible gender specific social, emotional and mental health difficulties for excluded females, such as bullying (Thacker, 2017, unpublished thesis) and reported differences in the way exclusion and discipline is used for females (Osler, Street, Lall & Vincent, 2002). Future research may wish to explore a specific population group such as females or alternative population groups.

The current study excluded students with social communication and interaction difficulties and/or speech and language needs. As a result, the participant sample did not include students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Research has recently explored the experiences of school exclusion and re-integration into school for children with

ASD (Brede, Remington, Kenny, Warren & Pellicano, 2017), however this has not been explored with pupils with ASD who have been placed in PRUs.

Also, future research might want to look into the area of young people attending mainstream schools, who at risk of permanent exclusion and have not yet entered the PRU. It would be useful to explore what happens for pupils who were once at risk of permanent exclusion but remained at mainstream. Research should seek evidence of good practice, to address the question of 'what work's using detailed case study designs of individual pupil experiences, or individual school settings that have no-exclusion policies. As the literature review addressed, the rise of exclusions has increased by 55% since 2014, and DfE statutory guidance on school exclusions from maintained schools, academies and PRUs has not been updated since 2014. Therefore, there is scope for more research to seek interventions and good practice examples that will reduce the risk of the numbers of exclusion rising further and will inform updated guidance in future years.

The literature review consults one study that has previously explored the views of young women with identified social, emotional and mental health needs who attended alternative provision (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999). This study included the retrospective views of women a year after they left mainstream school or alternative provision. Future research could extend the population group to explore the views of adults who entered PRUs in their primary or secondary school experience. Research with this population could investigate the future trajectories and post-education journeys of the group, the perceived impact of their school experience on future lifestyle and aspirations, and how they feel they might have been better supported following development of maturity and self-reflection over time.

In the current study, Charles reported on the emotional demands for PRU teachers being stress. This would also be an interesting area to explore further. Future research could explore the roles and experiences of PRU staff for supporting students in classrooms, and how well mental health needs and managing stress is supported in PRUs. Research designs could evaluate the impact of interventions, such as group consultation or supervision, aimed at supporting mental health needs of support staff at the PRU using experimental designs.

6.2 Conclusion

In summary, there has been a rise in numbers of pupils experiencing exclusions, and pupils attending PRUs. The literature review addressed some of the pertinent issues with placing pupils in PRUs, specifically related to the high numbers of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing exclusion and a lack of positive outcomes for PRU pupils reported across research. The first chapter points towards literature on identity development in adolescence and how educational settings can influence the identities developed in adolescence, through experiences and relationships. This thesis has offered an interpretive account of pupils' experiences in PRUs. It aimed to explore how pupils experience being a student in a PRU and the perceived impact of their experiences on their self-identity. The unique focus of this research was how pupils perceive themselves, believe others to perceive them and how they perceived their future.

The study found that whilst generally participants reported generally mixed views of the PRU, they expressed a desire to leave the PRU, and held negative perceptions of mainstream. Whilst at the PRU they lacked opportunities to develop work-related skills, appropriate education, and experienced limited friendships with other students. Relationships with teachers facilitated a sense of relatedness, and acceptance amongst students, however participants reported unfair behaviour management at the PRU which impacted on their relationships, and motivation at the PRU. Participants had a limited outlook on the future opportunities available to them due to the perceived stigma of being in a PRU, and some of the participants felt they were lacking skills that would enable them to achieve their career aspirations.

A key finding was that participants tended to define themselves based on their behaviour, 'anger', or in terms of their diagnoses. Their perceptions of themselves changed over time at the PRU, such that they reported improvements with the behaviour due to being at the PRU. However, they still held concerns that others, both adult professionals, future employers, and other students would view them negatively, reinforcing negative views of themselves as 'naughty'.

A final key finding was that whilst PRUs appear to be the short-term 'intervention' for children at risk of exclusion, there was a pattern of students entering the PRU, failing to

re-integrate back into mainstream settings, followed by returning to the PRU, and in some cases, this led to extended periods of waiting for a new school placement.

It is hoped that the research presented promotes further interest in researching the perspectives of excluded pupils and emphasizes the importance, value and utility of obtaining pupil voice. This research has led to some recommendations for future research in PRUs and implications for PRUs, professionals and local authorities in light of the findings. Some of the implications for future research include exploring the experiences of different population groups, alongside seeking out good practice examples, to develop knowledge of how to work effectively with excluded pupils and alternative provisions.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1. Table outlining search terms for each database in systematics review

Database		Search terms	Number of articles
PsycINFO Terms within the title of the abstract	Search 1	"pupil" AND "experiences" AND"exclusion" AND "school" AND "alternative provision" "pupil" AND "experiences" AND"exclusion" AND "school" OR "alternative provision"	1
	Search 2	"pupil" AND "experiences"	7

		AND”exclusion” AND “school” OR “alternative provision”	
ERIC Terms within the title of the abstract	Search 1	“pupil” AND “experiences” AND “exclusion” AND “alternative provision” AND “school”	3
	Search 2	“pupil” AND “experience” AND “exclusion* “ OR “alternative provision” AND “school”	144
	Search 2 refined	Articles only	58
Web of Science Terms within the title of the abstract	Search 1	“Exclusion” AND “pupils” AND “experience”	70

	Search 1 refined	Articles only	61

8.2 Appendix 2. Table outlining participants, methodology, setting and analysis procedure for each paper

Paper	Participants	Educational settings	Methodology	Analysis
Hart (2013)	6 participants aged 9-13 years	PRUs	Semi-structured interviews and interviews with staff	Pre-existing themes, scanning transcripts and coding.
Michael & Frederickson (2013)	16 participants aged 12-16 years	PRUs	Semi-structured interviews	Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis
Jalali & Morgan (2018)	13 participants aged 7-16	PRUs	Semi-structured interviews	Phenomenological analysis
Hilton (2006)	40 participants aged 13-17	APs and youth clubs	Semi-structured interviews	Not reported
Putwain, Nicholson & Edwards (2016)	35 students aged 14-16	AP	Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and interviews with staff	Interpretive phenomenological analysis
Nicholson & Putwain (2016)	35 participants aged 14-16	AP	Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and interviews with staff	Interpretive phenomenological analysis
Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015)	49 participants aged 13-14	Secondary schools and APs	Semi-structured interviews and interviews with head of AP and behaviour coordinators	Stake (1995) iterative and reflexive process of analysis. Progressive focusing, systematic reduction of broad categories and further coding.

8.3 Appendix 3. Table outlining critical appraisal using CASP

Author	Was there a clear statement of the aims and research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	How valuable is the research?
Hart (2013)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	
Michael & Frederickson (2013)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
McClusky, Riddell and Weedon (2015)	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Hilton (2006)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	2
Putwain, Nicholson & Edwards (2016)	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	2
Nicholson & Putwain (2016)	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2
Trotman, Tucker & Martyn (2015)	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
Jalali &	1	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	1	2

Morgan (2018)										

8.4 Appendix 4. Ethics approval

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

T: +44 (0)115 8467403 or (0)115 9514344

Ref: S1077R

Monday 25th June 2018

Dear Kieranjit and Neil

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'An interpretive exploration of students' experiences of Pupil Referral Units and the impact of their experience on their self-perception as a learner'.

That proposal has now been reviewed by the Ethics Committee and I am pleased to tell you that your submission has met with the committee's approval.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

8.5 Appendix 5. Information for Pupil referral unit

School of Psychology

Email to Head of PRI

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Dear (head teacher),

My name is Kieran Sangha and I am a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, completing the Applied Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Nottingham. As part of my training I am required to undertake a research project. For my project, I am interested in working with the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and with students who have left mainstream education to take part in a programme of support at the PRU.

The aim of the project is to explore student's experiences of being in a PRU and the way in which students describe the impact of their experiences in the PRU on their self-identity.

The research involves the following steps:

- Recruitment of five or six Year 9 students to participate in the project. Participants will need to meet carefully selected criteria jointly agreed with myself as the researcher.
- Sharing information sheets with parents/carers and participants. Obtaining consent for participation and access to data such as the participants demographics (age, gender, nationality) and personal data regarding data about exclusions, and length of time in the PRU.
- Opportunity for myself to visit the participants before the interviews take place and introduce myself as the researcher and build a rapport with participants.
- Conducting interviews with students at the PRU. Interviews are planned to take approximately 30-45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Consent will be sought for the storage and use of recordings and data will be stored on a password protected USB and destroyed at the end of the research project.
- Interviews can be completed in 5 days with one participant per day.

- 2 named members of staff to support with practical arrangements and additional support as required. For example, pastoral support for post-interview support, and obtaining consent for each participant.
- A room at the PRU to conduct the interviews.

All names of participants, educational settings and shared information about this project will remain confidential and anonymised. Parents/carers, participants and the PRU will be able to request information about the findings of the research on completion.

The research project will begin in the current academic year and continue until the end of the next year (2018- 2019) to allow for analysis and a final report to be completed.

I appreciate that this email provides a brief insight into the project and that there may be some unanswered questions you may hold. However, if you are interested in taking part and providing me with an opportunity to work with the pupils in your setting, please email me on lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk.

Kind Regards,

Kieranjit Sangha

Trainee Educational Psychologist

The University of Nottingham

Researcher: Kieran Sangha [lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk]

Supervisor: Neil Ryrie [neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk]

Chair Ethics Committee: Professor Stephen Jackson [stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk]

8.6 Appendix 6. Information and consent letter for parents

Information sheet for parents/carers

My name is Kieran Sangha and I am a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, completing the Applied Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Nottingham. As part of my training I am required to undertake a research project. For my project, I am interested in working with the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and with students who have left mainstream education to take part in a programme of support at the PRU.

The aim of the project is to explore student's experiences of being in a PRU and the way in which students describe the impact of their experiences in the PRU on their self-identity.

I understand that your child is attending (name of PRU) and would like to invite your child to participate in my research.

What the research will involve:

I will visit the PRU, introduce myself to your child and spend time at the PRU so that they become familiar with who I am. A date will be arranged to have a 30-45-minute interview with your child in the school. After the interview is complete, there will be a key adult at the school (name) for your child to go to if he/she holds any questions and no further involvement will be required.

You have the **right to withdraw** your child's involvement in the study at any point during the data collection process. This means that all records of the interviews will be destroyed.

How the interviews will be used:

Interviews will be audio-recorded. The data will be stored on a password protected USB which will be later kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be immediately removed from the Dictaphone. The interviews will be transcribed and analysed by

myself. Findings of the study will be reported in a research thesis for The University of Nottingham and interview data will be kept for up to 3 years after the interview has been completed and analysed for doctoral research project. Any reported findings will be confidential, and all names will be anonymised. You will be able to contact me and request the findings of the study when the research is complete.

Contact information

This research will be fully supported by both XXX Educational Psychology Service (contact Educational Psychologist XXX XXX@XXX.gov.uk) and the University of Nottingham (contact Academic Tutor Neil Ryrie neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk). I can be contacted on email lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk, and by telephone) If you are happy for your child to take part in my research project please sign below.

Please sign if you agree for your child to take part in this research project.

Parent/Carer name:

Parent/Carer Signature:

Kieran Sangha

Trainee Educational Psychologist

The University of Nottingham

Researcher: Kieran Sangha [lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk]

Supervisor: Neil Ryrie [neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk]

Chair Ethics Committee: Professor Stephen Jackson [stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk]

8.7 Appendix 7. Information for participants

Information sheet for participants

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

My name is Kieran Sangha and I am a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, completing the Applied Educational Psychology Doctorate at the University of Nottingham. As part of my training I am required to undertake a research project. For my project, I am interested in working with the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and with students who have left mainstream education to take part in a programme of support at the PRU.

The aim of the project is to explore student's experiences of being in a PRU and the way in which students describe the impact of their experiences in the PRU on their self-identity. I would like you to take part in my research project and invite you to meet with me to talk about what life is like for you at the PRU.

What the research will involve:

I would like to meet with you for 30-45 minutes at the PRU. I will be asking you questions that will help me understand what it is like for you at the PRU. After we meet if I have more questions, I may ask to meet with you again. You will meet me beforehand as I will spend some time working in your class and getting to know you.

You have the **right to leave** the interview at any point. I will be recording the interview, however if you decide to leave and not participate in the study all records of the interview will be destroyed.

How the interviews will be used:

Interviews will be audio-recorded. The data will be stored on a password protected USB which will be later kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be immediately removed from the Dictaphone. The interviews will be transcribed and analysed by myself. Findings of the study will be reported in a research thesis for The University of Nottingham and interview data will be kept for up to 3 years after the interview has been completed and analysed for doctoral research project. Any reported findings will

be confidential, and all names will be anonymised. You will be able to contact me and request the findings of the study when the research is complete.

Contact information

If you would like to contact me to ask any questions, please email me on lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk or call me (telephone number). Otherwise you can speak with (designated person) at the Pupil Referral Unit who will be a named adult who can support you before or after the interview.

Please sign here if you agree to participate in my research study:

Participant name:

Participant signature:

Kieran Sangha

Trainee Educational Psychologist

The University of Nottingham

Researcher: Kieran Sangha [lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk]

Supervisor: Neil Ryrie [neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk]

Chair Ethics Committee: Professor Stephen Jackson [stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk]

8.8 Appendix 8: Consent letter for participants

School of Psychology

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: **An interpretive exploration of students' experiences of Pupil Referral Units and the impact of their experience on their self-identity.**

Ethics Approval Number or Taught Project Archive Number:

Researcher: Kieran Sangha [lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk]

Supervisor: Neil Ryrie [neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk]

Chair Ethics Committee: Professor Stephen Jackson [stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk]

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet? YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study? YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)? YES/NO
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study? YES/NO (at any time and without giving a reason)
- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected. YES/NO
- Do you agree to take part in the study? YES/NO

"This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time."

Signature of the Participant: Date:

Name (in block capitals)

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date:

8.9 Appendix 9: Debrief letter

School of Psychology

Debrief letter

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Name and address

Dear name

Thank you for taking part in the research study on pupil's experiences in Pupil Referral Units.

If you think of any additional information or would like to discuss any of the information we talked about during the interview on the (date) further, please do not hesitate to contact myself by email at …. or by telephone on …..

Alternatively, if you feel that you need to speak with someone at the Pupil Referral Unit at any point, (designated person) has been named as somebody that can support you while you are at the setting.

I will make a follow-up phone call to find out if there is anything else you would like to discuss and to offer you an opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss the findings of the study.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point. All data you have provided will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Sangha

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Researcher: Kieran Sangha [lpxks8@nottingham.ac.uk]

Supervisor: Neil Ryrie [neil.ryrie@nottingham.ac.uk]

Chair Ethics Committee: Professor Stephen Jackson [stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk]

8.10 Appendix 10. Semi-structured interview schedules- initial and revised

Areas to explore	Interview Questions	Probe questions
Interviewee's description of the PRU	• How would you describe pupils who come to the PRU? • What are the main differences between previous schools and PRUs? • What would you want people to know about the PRU? • How would you describe the PRU to someone who doesn't know much about it? • What happens on a good day at the PRU? • What happens on a bad day? • How do you feel about the PRU? • What do you think happens for pupils when they leave the PRU?	Can you tell me more? Could you clarify? Can you think of anything else?
How do pupils describe their sense of self as a learner?	• What kind of a student do you think you are? • What would your mates say about you? • What kind of student were you in your previous school? • How do you think you have changed since coming to the PRU? • What are your achievements in the PRU? • What opportunities do you think you will have in the future in your education? • How will the PRU help you? • How do you think things will be different for you if you didn't come to the PRU?	

Semi- structured interview revised and adapted

Areas to explore	Interview Questions	Probe questions
Interviewee's description of the PRU	• How would you describe pupils who come to the PRU? • What are the main differences between previous schools and PRUs? • What would you want people to know about the PRU? • How would you describe the PRU to someone who doesn't know much about it? • What happens on a good day at the PRU? • What happens on a bad day? • How do you feel about the PRU? • What do you think happens for pupils when they leave the PRU? • What are the lessons like here in the pru • What are the teachers like • What are the children like here at the pru	Can you tell me more? Could you clarify? Can you think of anything else?
How do pupils describe themselves, their future and how do they understand how others perceive them?	• Why did you come here? • What was your reaction? • How do you think your parents felt? • What kind of a student do you think you are? • What role do you have in this group? • Who do you want to be • What are you strengths? • How do others view you in your class • What would X and Y say about you? • What kind of student were you in your previous school? • How do you think you have changed since coming to the PRU? • What are your achievements in	

	the PRU? • What opportunities do you think you will have in the future in your education? • How will the PRU help you? • How do you think things will be different for you if you didn't come to the PRU? • What did your parents think when you knew you were coming to the PRU? • How do they feel about it? • Do you wish things were different?	

8.11 Appendix 11: Example of annotated pages from each interview

8.11.1 Charles

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive <u>linguistic</u> *conceptual)*
Coming in to the PRU Sense of being overwhelmed Lack of knowledge about the PRU Lack of certainty Support from teachers	**Interviewer:** so urm how would you describe the PRU to someone who doesn't know much about it? **Participant:** urm someone that didn't know much about it err, I dunno it's like it's a lot to take in I guess nuna ah [mumbles] err when I when when I was at (named old school) one of the teachers were like if you keep misbehaving then you'll go to a PRU, and like it just sound of a PRU it sounded like weird it's like **Interviewer:** yeah **Participant:** yeah **Interviewer:** what do you mean by weird **Participant:** it it doesn't sound right do you know what I mean (?) **Interviewer:** okay okay so what would you want people to know about the PRU? **Participant:** that people are loud **Interviewer:** people are loud **Participant:** that teachers help and students can be not mmm, students are alright but they're also I dunno just alright	<u>Use of wording 'A lot to take in'</u> *feeling overwhelmed? Because of the environment? Size? Kids? Teachers?* The participant perceived the PRU as a consequence for misbehaviour through the way it was communicated to him (*or threat?)* *Does the participant have a sense of fear towards going there? Fear of the unknown? School is familiar to him and the PRU is something different* *Does he view the PRU as a punishment?* Participant's described his perception of the PRU as 'weird' *why is it weird? Did he know what it was?* Is *he describing an emotional reaction to the PRU?* <u>Doesn't sound 'right'</u> The participant does not know how to describe his perception of the PRU, assumes the interview understands what he means *Sounds different? Wrong? Unusual?* The participant describes uncertainty as to what the PRU was before he came here Perception of other children at the PRU *What if you don't get on with them?* *Is he holding back?* Positive perception of teachers The participant contemplates what he is about to say

Characteristics of pupils at the PRU Relationships with other students Coming in to the PRU Sense of being overwhelmed Lack of knowledge about the PRU Lack of communication about the PRU	really if you get along with them then it's alright **Interviewer:** okay well what happens if you don't get along with them **Participant:** I dunno I dunno I just **Interviewer:** yeah **Participant:** hmm **Interviewer:** and when you said someone that the teacher at (named old school) said oh I might if you carry on behaving like that you're going to go to a PRU you said it that sounded weird um how did you feel about here and the PRU? **Participant:** shocked yeah shocked **Interviewer:** okay **Participant:** cause I didn't know what it was its like na **Interviewer:** you didn't know what it was? **Participant:** na not at all its like what's the PRU	about students, or is unsure how to describe them *Is he referring to what he has seen other pupils do, has he seen things happen that aren't alright?* Reluctant to say *Is this because he doesn't have the words? Or because he doesn't want to talk about it?* *Has the participant had a bad experience? Or is he unsure of what he is allowed to share with the interviewer?* Remembering difficult feelings when he was told he was going to the PRU *Didn't think it would happen? Or shocked because they made the decision?* Feelings of uncertainty *were people talking to him about what was happening for him?* The PRU wasn't described to him? Was he told the purpose of the PRU? Or how long he was meant to go there?

8.11.2 Jayne

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive linguistic *conceptual)*
Friendships in the PRU Change of group dynamics in different programmes at the PRU Change of individuals in the PRU Lack of consistency or belonging to a group or programme Decreased affect towards PRU and as a response to change	Interviewer: okay and then the 5 day how did you feel about the 5 day programme what was that like Participant: urm it was alright cause I got on with loads of people in that class and I'm still mates right now with one of the people that was in there but obviously I went back to school now and I thought I was going back to (named previous teacher at PRU)s group I was like oh I'm going back to (named previous teacher at PRU)s group but na I was in (named teacher at PRU)s group and the people in there I didn't really get along with and they have gone now there's only 3 people left and its really boring Interviewer: okay so what are the main differences between (named previous mainstream school) and your previous schools and the PRU	The participant describes friendships in the class and the maintaining friendships through changing groups A break in the journey- returning back to mainstream and coming back to join a new group. Participant described movement and result of people leaving *How does this impact on a sense of belongingness and what are the effects of insecurity in maintaining a group, a teacher, a friendship group. The participant is experiencing the group based on the way they are organised as a group and relationships within the group.* Changing situations back to being 'boring' *is friendships and getting along with other children how the participant determines a group as boring or not?* Loads of people to only 3 *emphasis on the quantity/community of people* Loss of interest
Difficult relationships with teachers Provocation from teachers Difference between	Participant: urm oh it's hard to explain it's not the same, these teachers here they'll dig and dig and dig for you to like, oh what's the word I forget the words, they used	The participant describes difference in teacher-child relationships. She talks about her experience of teacher's reactions towards pupils, describing a sense of Provocation Finds it difficult to explain, struggling to

adults at the PRU and mainstream school Pupil's behaviour towards adults at the PRU Unfairness of behaviour management and detention procedures Group agreement/ feelings of unjust towards adults Problematic detention procedures Sense of frustration Sense of unfair persecution	to just like, oh my god I've forgot the word I don't know what the word is, err, for you to react basically they'll dig at you for your to react and give them a reaction out of ya Interviewer: here? Participant: yeah here and like if you got a detention or anything they will, like do you know who [teachers name] is here, no well it's one of the teachers and everyone, everyone hates him, don't get me wrong he can be nice at times but he will long everything out, in behaviour room you'll be in there for at least 45 minutes because he's he's longing it out and everyone gets frustrated because he just keeps, it's like, oh can you stop like I get it, stop, and just, oh its long, and sometimes like at the end of the day sometimes well go get our stuff and obviously if like anyone's messing about or he'll he'll shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops and it ain't fair on all the rest of us	articulate and remember the word Use of the word 'dig' *what are the connotations here?* Repetition of the word dig, mirroring a potentially argumentative nature of the teacher-child interactions *Is the participant communicating a power imbalance, negative use of authority, lack of nurture* *Relationship difficulties, unfair treatment and punishment* Describing detention events and extension of time in relation to detention reference to 45 minutes Describing a consensual agreement of feelings towards the member of staff across students Nice but longing it out *the participant experiences sense of impatience or tiredness towards the teacher's behaviour* *Is the participant talking about detention, or the use of the behaviour room, does detention take part in the behaviour room?* Extended length of something, 'he' 'longs it out' Use of the word 'stop' repeated twice Things being taken away Unfairness of process Some persecuted for the behaviour of others, others used as an example

8.11.3 Ben

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive linguistic *conceptual)*
Coming to the PRU Coming to the PRU Lack of involvement when coming to the PRU Family member as support structure Overspent time in the PRU Waiting Ongoing assessment in pupil's situation	Interviewer: so what was your reaction when you got expelled to come here? Participant: I was like I wer- I'm not going here, like come on Interviewer: you said you're not coming? So you didn't want to come? Participant: No because the woman who came to see at my old school for a few weeks made this place sound really bad Interviewer: what did she say? Participant: Just saying like its re-, like, all kids kick off 24/7, break rules and doing everything and I was like well obviously I were I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me Interviewer: yeah Participant: I have to go, I was in the car Interviewer: you weren't in the meeting Participant: no I was supposed to be but I didn't wanna go in and my mum did and my mum told me and I was like yeah I'm not going and ended up going because, rather get it over and done with Interviewer: hmm get it over and done with Participant: hmm but they've told me I'm here for 6 months but at at the the start of October I was supposed to go but obviously that's in the past now Interviewer: hmm Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment	The participant remembers feelings of disbelief towards coming to the PRU Describes previous knowledge about the PRU and how it was communicated. The participant talks about The woman The participant was unsure of who the 'woman' was who came to see him Participant was warned of students at the PRU which created a sense of fear coming to the PRU and reluctance to come to the PRU Weren't in the meeting what *meeting? Lack of communication? Did his involvement in the decision to place him in the PRU matter, did he have a choice?* The participant remembers the day and refused to take part in the meeting Significant person was his mum The participant accepted the decision for him to go *The participant made sense of it as temporary* get it over and done with *and that the experience would end* The participant is uncertain about how long he is going to be there, the participant understood that he would move on however it didn't happen They've told me *who is they? Adults making*

	Interviewer: okay, an assessment to see what you need and where you might be best to go	*decisions around him and about him* Informed of being under an assessment Waiting The participant has knowledge of an assessment is that he is waiting for, *lack of information? Does this related to an EHCP? Is the participant aware of the EHCP process and what it means*

8.11.4 Ellis

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive linguistic *conceptual)*
Mainstream experience Historical issues with behaviour Segregated at mainstream school	Interviewer: you wasn't in the mainstream first you was in another building, right ok. So here you do cooking. Well actually when you say you were in another building why were you in another building? Participant: Naughty Interviewer: you were naughty Participant: Skive all the lessons Interviewer: yeah, how many other kids were there? Participant: where Interviewer: in the other building with you Participant: I don't know about 50 Interviewer: 50? Participant: About 50 about 30 I don't know Interviewer: 30 and why were they there? Participant: urm naughty	Labels himself as 'naughty' *Is the pupil talking about being in a group outside of the main school building due to negative behaviour? This meant he had restricted subjects, not allowed to do things, what else was he restricted from?* Describes being naughty at mainstream and skiving all lessons The participant struggled to predict the number of other children in the other building Other building *was it actually another building or is this reflective of being separated from others?*

Pupil's perception of the PRU	Interviewer: naughty? Participant: probably Interviewer: so they put all the naughty kids together? Participant: [nods] Interviewer: is that similar to here? Participant: [shakes head] Interviewer: what's different here? Participant: it's different Interviewer: so that group in kids in the other building at [old school] were kids that were naughty, how did you think the teachers, what would they have said about you? Participant: don't know Interviewer: how would they describe you as a student? Participant: [pause] don't know mm	Participant describes being grouped with all the naughty children in mainstream *how did this make him feel?* *He perceives the PRU as different to the mainstream group? Could it be because there is no 'comparison group' and difference of being in a naughty group because the nature of kids needs are all the same?* The participant feels that the PRU is different and they haven't grouped all the naughty kids together Participant finds it difficult to think of how teachers would describe him *Is he unsure of any other way they would describe him other than a previous reference to 'naughty'* he understands himself as being naughty?

8.11.5 John

Emerging theme	Transcript	Exploratory comments (Descriptive linguistic *conceptual)*
Time spent in the PRU Movement across groups in the PRU Failed reintegration back into mainstream Confusion about dual school placement	Interviewer: and you were saying that you've been here Participant: for over a year since February last year Interviewer: tell me a bit about that Participant: first time I started I was in 2 day and then like a month or like a couple so a about 5 months after I went to like I did Monday Tuesday and that and then I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day so and then like im still under like my actual school but like its its annoying because I don't get why im under the school when im in this school cause im under both schools and 5 days helped me quite a lot but I started 5 day like all day but now I only do 2 hours cause my behaviour's bad Interviewer: okay so you did 2 day and went on to 3	Participant has been at the PRU over a year Only doing a few hours *What is the participant's understanding of why, does he perceive it to be longer than he should be at the PRU?* The participant describes moving to different groups. Back to mainstream and then to a 5-day programme. The participant's length of time in the PRU extended due to moving to the 5-day programme. Failed reintegration back to mainstream *Why did the placement fail?* Normal/actual school *is the PRU something aside from 'normal'? or is 'normal' school his original setting?* They were like… were putting you in *who were they? Did the participant have a say?* Sense of confusion as to why he remains on roll at mainstream. The participant understands the mainstream school to have ended permanently Reduced timetable due to behaviour, participant shows an awareness of his behaviour deteriorating.

Dual placement at PRU and school Teachers management of students at the PRU	day then went back to your old school Participant: yeah when I did Wednesday Thursday I did that as my normal school Interviewer: okay Participant: that was only 2 hours Interviewer: and then what happened when you went back Participant: and then what after like Interviewer: you said you kicked off Participant: yeah on Monday Tuesday on Monday Tuesday cause the teacher like here yeah like if your annoyed and pissed off then you can go out and be like miss Im getting im kinda pissed off and say if theyre hovering around you and its like just chill enit like im pissed off can you leave me alone they'll le- they'll let they'll leave you alone to calm down and then like after they'll come and talk to you and its chill they'll see if your alright see if you calmed down and you go back in lesson and then just get your work done	<u>Repetition of 'normal' school to describe mainstream</u> The participant had reduced hours at mainstream Describing teachers at the PRU and their management of pupils when they are annoyed. The participant describes the steps taken for him to calm down and return to class. Participant has previously struggled with regulating his emotions at mainstream, the participant values time out period and being left alone in the PRU to calm down. *Does the participant find aspects of school challenging, and have specific trigger for difficult feelings such as annoyance and pissed off ?* <u>Hovering around you</u> *<u>D</u>escribing adults in close proximity without his wish, unwanted attention from teachers when he is angry, values being given space.*

8.12 Appendix 12. Table of emergent and superordinate themes for each interview

8.12.1 Charles

Super Ordinate theme 1: Characteristics of the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Experience of lessons	Interviewer: okay um what are the lessons like here? Participant: they're good. Interviewer: they're good Participant: hm some of them are annoying but most of them are alright Interviewer: what makes them good? what kind of lessons do you have? tell me a bit more Participant: they're just like, uh uh, just like they have activities and, [pause] I think, uh like just I want to say chilled out but that's some lessons anyway but like what makes them good, just when everyone's in a good mood obviously you wouldn't want a teacher that's genuinely can't be arsed	137
Daily experiences at the PRU	Interviewer: okay so what happens on a good day at the PRU? Participant: uhh well a good day probably not really, it's like it's all chilled out and they let you watch a film and whatever and if it's last day of term then you watch a film uh it's chilled out really on a good day Interviewer: on a good day, okay what are people doing? Participant: chilling out like Interviewer: chilling out	102
Daily experiences at the PRU	Participant: uh no na [mumbles] [pause] it's not very often there's a fight it's not every single day	127
Daily experiences at the PRU	Participant: but not really it's not every single day a fight would happen maybe an argument and then like and then fights will kick off but sometimes they will	132

Characteristics of pupils	Participant: very loud Interviewer: okay can you think of anything else? Participant: err [pause] hyper, some of them some of them are hyper, and err I want to say intense but like, I don't know just hyper err [clicks tongue]	5
Characteristics of pupils	Participant: no students are cheeky I guess I dunno some ain't Interrupter: I think the word cheeky err rude Participant: rude yeah	37
Characteristics of pupils	Participant: they are arrogant actually	49
Environmental characteristics	Participant: here it's a lot obviously it's smaller and [pause]	27
Environmental characteristics	Participant: [mumbles] [pause] I dunno really, there's obviously more like I wanna say security cause it's not like you uh walk around the corner and there's a bodyguard there of whatever but you couldn't uh in my old school you couldn't if you misbehave you couldn't walk round the school cause there's no but here you have to have a thingy key to get through the doors so you can't actually get away	196
Lack of freedom	if you misbehave you couldn't walk round the school cause there's no but here you have to have a thingy key to get through the doors so you can't actually get away	199
Emotional demands of the teacher	Participant: fights. and a lot of stress for the staff I guess	118
Emotional demands of the teacher	Interviewer: okay so what kinds of skills do you need then? Participant: for what? Interviewer: like to be a teacher here Participant: I have no idea. I guess it can take it will take a lot of uh, what's the word [pause] I guess it will take to be really really calm	159

Super Ordinate theme 2: comparison of mainstream and PRU settings

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Comparison of teachers	Participant: this one's a lot more it's like the teachers here are better and basically the teachers there they would if you got into a fight they'd just throw you in behaviour room and keep you there all day then they'll talk to ya and you'll get detention, here if you get into a fight I guess it's like you go in behaviour room you get spoke to	19
	Participant: and here they help you more	33
Comparison of pupils	Participant: na and its things, people like, I dunno everyone kept to themselves at (named old school)	56
Comparing incidents of fights	Participant: uh no na [mumbles] [pause] it's not very often there's a fight it's not every single day Interviewer: okay Participant: it's a lot more than it would happen at my old school	127
Challenging incidents at mainstream	Interviewer: what were they like towards you in your previous school? Participant: obviously while I was shouting at them they would restrain me and, they were always shouting and obviously I was shouting, and there was like err I dunno, [pause] hm obviously they wouldn't take me shouting at them so I'd get behaviour points for that [pause] yeah	280

Super Ordinate theme 3: Coming into the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Lack of knowledge about the PRU	Participant: cause I didn't know what it was it's like na Interviewer: you didn't know what it was? Participant: na not at all it's like what's the PRU	99
Lack of knowledge about the PRU	Participant: and like it just sound of a PRU it sounded like weird it's like Interviewer: yeah Participant: yeah Interviewer: what do you mean by weird Participant: it it doesn't sound right do you know what I mean (?)	78
Sense of being overwhelmed	Interviewer: and when you said someone that the teacher at (named old school) said oh I might if you carry on behaving like that you're going to go to a PRU you said it that sounded weird um how did you feel about here and the PRU? Participant: shocked yeah shocked	94
Sense of being overwhelmed	Participant: urmm someone that didn't know much about it err, I dunno it's like it's a lot to take in I guess	75
Coming to the PRU	Participant:… teachers were like if you keep misbehaving then you'll go to a PRU, and like it just sound of a PRU it sounded like weird it's like	77

Super Ordinate theme 4: characteristics of teachers

Teacher's communication style	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Support from teachers at the PRU	Participant: and here they help you more	33
Characteristics of teachers	Interviewer: okay so what kinds of skills do you need then? Participant: for what? Interviewer: like to be a teacher here Participant: I have no idea. I guess it can take it will take a lot of uh, what's the word [pause] I guess it will take to be really really calm	159
Teacher's approach to students	Participant: yeah if the teachers are miserable and even if the students are miserable	158
Teacher's approach to students	Participant: you wouldn't want a teacher that's fed up and don't like kids obviously	148
Teacher's approach to students	Participant: because obviously students here they're if they if they are arguing Interviewer: yeah Participant: and then they start like shouting at teachers and that Interviewer: yeah Participant: you wouldn't want a teacher that's like blows and starts screaming at a kid	167
Teacher's response to behaviour management	Participant: this one's a lot more it's like the teachers here are better and basically the teachers there they would if you got into a fight they'd just throw you in behaviour room and keep you there all day then they'll talk to ya and you'll get detention, here if you get into a fight I guess it's like you go in behaviour room you get spoke to	19

Super Ordinate theme 5: Emotional reactions to being in a PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Sense of being overwhelmed	Participant: urmm someone that didn't know much about it err, I dunno it's like it's a lot to take in I guess	75
Feelings of stress in the PRU	Interviewer: you get along with all the teachers okay, and what happens on a bad day? Participant: fights. and a lot of stress for the staff I guess and I dunno not staff but I guess it's annoying it's loud and yeah [pause] Interviewer: okay Participant: and a lot of arguing, arguing	117
Impact of people's emotions on daily experiences	Participant: they're just like, uh uh, just like they have activities and, [pause] I think, uh like just I want to say chilled out but that's some lessons anyway but like what makes them good, just when everyone's in a good mood obviously you wouldn't want a teacher that's genuinely can't be arsed	143
Impact of people's emotions on daily experiences	Interviewer: okay so what happens on a good day at the PRU? Participant: uhh well a good day probably not really, it's like it's all chilled out and they let you watch a film and whatever and if it's last day of term then you watch a film uh it's chilled out really on a good day	102
Emotional demands on the teachers	Interviewer: you get along with all the teachers okay, and what happens on a bad day? Participant: fights. and a lot of stress for the staff I guess and I dunno not staff but I guess it's annoying it's loud and yeah [pause]	117
Acceptance	Participant: err, I think she's alright with me being here at the minute, and that I'm	389

	behaving	
Desire to return to mainstream	Interviewer: okay so what kind of opportunities do you think you going to have in the future? Participant: err I wanna go back to school and get an education get a GCSE and go to work	341
Sense of regret	Interviewer: would you have likes things to have been different? Participant: yeah Interviewer: in what way? Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving	413
Sense of regret	Participant: Because obviously it's not good getting kicked out of school and coming to a PRU	431

Super Ordinate theme 6: Relationships with other students

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Problematic relationships amongst other students	Participant: I dunno, if someone's annoyed I guess they'll argue with someone I dunno though	123
Negative perception towards other students	Participant: yeah and now I've came here I've seen what it's like from like people fighting and people shouting at teachers and that and people arguing, it just makes you look like a div really Interviewer: makes them look like a div? Participant: hmm	179
	Interviewer: … do you agree that they are rude? Participant: yeah Interviewer: okay arrogant? Participant: yeah	67
Misbehaviour of students at the PRU	Participant: and then they start like shouting at teachers and that	169
Lack of social interaction	Participant: … urmm normally I'd behave and just chill out really normally, I'll keep myself to myself at lunch now Interviewer: at lunchtime? Participant: yeah I don't like speaking to people Interviewer: you don't like speaking to people? Participant: no	241
Lack of social interaction	Participant: I don't hate people I just don't like speaking to people	252
Lack of friendships	Participant: I just don't have mates and friends and that I just don't like speaking to anyone	254

Super Ordinate theme 7: Perception of self

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Negative perception of self	Participant:… obviously I would look like a div if I was in that school	183
Negative perception of self	Participant: how'd that make me feel urmm, [pause] it makes me feel like an idiot pretty much, yeah, it will make me feel like an idiot Interviewer: hmm Participant: Because obviously it's not good getting kicked out of school and coming to a PRU	428
Negative perception of self	Participant: I was really naughty in my old school	260
Negative perception of self	Participant… obviously if I don't take my tablet I'm just hyper and annoying, I know I'm annoying if I don't take my tablet, I know I'm really annoying	238
Negative perception of self	Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving	416
Negative perception of self	Participant: Because obviously it's not good getting kicked out of school and coming to a PRU	431
Impact of medication on behaviour	Participant: … since I came here, and I think in my old school I was on a different dose of ADHD tablet and I think that had something to do with my behaviour but I don't know	290
Impact of medication on behaviour	Participant: …and obviously if I don't take my tablet I'm just hyper and annoying, I know I'm annoying if I don't take my tablet, I know I'm really annoying and I just like, I don't know I'm really hyper when I don't take my tablet,	238
Self-reflection	Participant: I think my behaviour has changed in normally I would in my old school if the teachers told me to stop doing something I would just carry on doing it here well I think when I started I was just quiet and obviously I got to know people made friends and that, and then, I just started behaving	286

	more.	
Self-reflection	Participant: umm [pause] that I'm proud, of err, that my behaviours changed, and yeah, my behaviours changed, and I've learnt that misbehaving ain't obviously really good and it won't get you anywhere, except prison pretty much	321
Historical behavioural issues	Interviewer: what were they like towards you in your previous school? Participant: obviously while I was shouting at them they would restrain me and, they were always shouting and obviously I was shouting, and there was like err I dunno, [pause] hm obviously they wouldn't take me shouting at them so I'd get behaviour points for that [pause] yeah	280
Historical behavioural issues	Interviewer: can you tell me more about that? Participant: I was uh I was getting in fights and I was getting excluded I was just misbehaving, and I don't know I was just really bad at my old school	261
Sense of embarrassment and shame	Participant: it don't always feel good [pause] and I think it's embarrassing for yourself and for your parents as well knowing that your child's misbehaving at school and then you've gotta go in and take them out or whatever	313
	Participant: cause obviously it's it don't feel good to be restrained to the behaviour room, and to be shouting and everything	310
Negative views about him	Interviewer: okay how would the teachers have described you? Participant: what here or my old school? Interviewer: in your old school? Participant: probably annoying and really bad really really bad, and probably stuff I shouldn't say here now	269
Lack of confidence in self, due to being in a PRU	Interviewer: what do you want to be when you're older? Participant: I don't know I wanted to be in the army	345

	but obviously I don't think that'll happen	
Lack of confidence in self, due to being in a PRU	Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it? Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah	422
Lack of confidence in self by others	Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving Interviewer: what makes you think that coming here isn't good? Participant: because I don't, obviously if you were trying to get a job later and they realise that you've been kicked out of school and went to a PRU then I think it will affect you getting a job Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it? Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah	416

Super Ordinate theme 8: Parents

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Impact of exclusion on parents	Participant: err I think my mum was worried about me, and she didn't know what to expect, from it but then obviously when I got settled in and made friends I think she was alright with it	378
Sense of responsibility to parents	Participant: it don't always feel good [pause] and I think it's embarrassing for yourself and for your parents as well knowing that your child's misbehaving at school and then you've gotta go in and take them out or whatever	313
Parental desires	Interviewer: hm and how is she now with you being here at the PRU? Participant: she's alright about, it err I told her I'm going to start behaving and she wants me to go back to school	381

Super Ordinate theme 9: Future implications

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Stigma related to coming to the PRU	Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it? Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah	422
	Participant: Because obviously it's not good getting kicked out of school and coming to a PRU	431
Impact on future employment Lack of job opportunities and employment	Interviewer: you lose out on a future? Participant: yeah I think it's like if you keep coming back here you've obviously wasted, I wouldn't say life cause you can still do something, but obviously not a lot [pause]	404
	Interviewer: what makes you think that coming here isn't good? Participant: because I don't, obviously if you were trying to get a job later and they realise that you've been kicked out of school and went to a PRU then I think it will affect you getting a job	418
Lack of certainty about future for PRU pupils	Interviewer: what do you think happens um for pupils at the PRU after they leave school? Participant: ah after they leave mainstream or here? Interviewer: mainstream or the PRU Participant: um I think if they're good at mainstream then they can leave and get a job or whatever but if they're not good then they come back here and you go back mainstream again or if they leave here they can leave and behave and then get a job or whatever but if they don't if they misbehave and then get like no GCSES then they'll just be living on the streets or whatever Interviewer: living on the streets? Participant: yeah because they don't have a job or	212
Lack of certainty about future	Interviewer: so, what do you think happens for pupils when they leave the PRU? Participant: uh they will I think some of them would go	206

for PRU pupils	back to their old school and behave or come back here or go to a different school and behave or come back here, I dunno, depends how they are or who it is Interviewer: okay so they can go back to their old school or come back here? Participant: they can. if they misbehave or obviously depends what school it is I think	
Future options considered	Interviewer: what other opportunities do you think you're going to have? Participant: I think that I'll have the opportunity to make more friends and like [pause incoherent mumbling] Interviewer: I can't hear you Participant: urmm I think I'll have the opportunity to make more friends friends and meet new people and see what they're like	351
Future options considered	Interviewer: okay so what kind of opportunities do you think you going to have in the future? Participant: err I wanna go back to school and get an education get a GCSE and go to work	341
Desire for employment	Participant: err I wanna go back to school and get an education get a GCSE and go to work	343

Super Ordinate theme 10: self-development

Emerging themes	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Sense of maturity	Participant: … and urmm I've learnt that obviously every stu, every child is different, people are some are laid back and chilled but some are obviously aggressive and, yeah	326
	Participant: umm [pause] that I'm proud, of err, that my behaviours changed, and yeah, my behaviours changed and I've learnt that misbehaving ain't obviously really good and it won't get you anywhere, except prison pretty much	321
PRU as support for improving behaviour	Interviewer: and since you've come here to the PRU you think your behaviours changed? Participant: yeah massively	298
PRU as support for improving behaviour	Interviewer: how do you feel about school here at the PRU? Participant: it's good, it it really helps Interviewer: okay so you're feeling like it's helped you your behaviours changed Participant: yeah, a lot Interviewer: and generally you're feeling Participant: better	301
PRU as support for improving behaviour	Participant: yeah it definitely it changed, it changed, it changes who you are I guess	440
PRU as support for improving behaviour	Participant: Because obviously it's not good getting kicked out of school and coming to a PRU Interviewer: hmm Participant: but I think it does help with behaviour	431

8.12.2 Jayne

Super-ordinate theme 1: Mainstream experience

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Perceived failure at mainstream: 'obviously I got excluded'	Interviewer: how long have you been on the 5-day programme Participant: urmm so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day but it was only for 6 weeks and then I went back to school and obviously got excluded on the first day back and then I came into (named teacher at PRU)'s group and I been here just before we started summer holidays	21
	Interviewer: what would you say to another girl who was coming to the PRU what would you say about the PRU? Participant: don't, don't. if you wanna come, if you are coming here then obviously like if you got if you got a chance go back to school then take it and don't mess it up because I been here for ages now, I've not been I'm not I'm not allowed back to mainstream ever, I think I think I dunno they're still planning out what they're going to do with me but I'm not allowed in no mainstream school	248
Threatened to go to the PRU: 'I think it's time you go'	Interviewer: so how did you know you was coming to the PRU? How was it communicated to you? Participant: obviously they used to, they used… how the way I knew I was coming here cause they'd always used to say I think it's time you go to this place Interviewer: what's this place? Participant: Here Interviewer: What did they call it? Participant: They said I think it's time for you to start to just go and see what's it like, urmm (named PRU), And I was like what's that, And they was like it's a behaviour school, And I was like well no it's not a behaviour school	324

	it's just a place where they think you can just settle down your behaviour a bit and then you can come back school that's what they said to me and obviously my mum went mad and everything	
Historical problems and behavioural issues at school	Participant: that was in year 7 and then year 8 I was here 2 day weren't I and then I went to 5 day like mid-way through year 8 and I was there I had about 600 no 700 no 632, I remember I had a form come through, behaviour points in year 7 and in year 8 my behaviour points were 911 Interviewer: okay that was at (named previous mainstream school)? Participant: yeah and I think I had 42 isolations, 3 IEs and I think 2 or 3 exclusions	318
Historical problems and behavioural issues at school	Participant: no I used to just go, like the te- I I wouldn't write anything and they used to be like Jayne get your pen and I used to be like no I'm not writing it and they'd be like well you might as well go to isolation then and I'll be like fine and I just walked out and I'll just start walking round the classrooms to calm myself down, not walk the classrooms but walking around the school	421
Historical problems and behavioural issues at school	Participant: basically, I started year 7 there was a teacher called Miss Peters* and like, she used I hate it when people like always getting up in your face it just annoys me and obviously I don't like people touching me either that's why, obviously I've be- I've only been restrained here 3 times in the amount I've been here, the time I've been here, because I don't like being touched they say well have to move you there I'll just be like fine I'll go there myself, like I hate being touched, and one time Miss Peters she used to always do it, she literally she worked in Hayward School* now, but err, and one time she got on my nerves and I shouted in her face, like obviously I didn't mean to it just came out at time and obviously ca I do it one I kept doing it again and then obviously my anger elevated from there and then	282

	obviously as time went through as I was in year 7 I started to be a bit naughty and start like to not listen to none of the teachers, cause I used to think oh well you can't really do anything … that's what I used to think and you can't keep me in for detention cause I'll just walk out the gates whereas these they can restrain you and everything	
Historical problems and behavioural issues at school	Interviewer: how would you describe what you were like at mainstream? Participant: urmm ah it's I don't know like I always uh it's hard to explain I did work but if I couldn't be bothered I couldn't be bothered and I wouldn't do the work Interviewer: hm Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause]	362
Experiences of exclusions	Interviewer: so did you have many exclusions in your previous school Participant: [yawns] uh-huh I had 6 exclusions in year 7 Interviewer: hmm Participant: and in the 2 weeks I was there I had 3 exclusions	311

Super-ordinate theme 2: Instability and uncertainty at the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line Number
Extended length of time at the PRU: 'I been here a while now, overdoing my time'	Interviewer: so how long have you been here? Participant: I've been here since the end of year 7 Interviewer: okay Participant: I'm year 9 now aren't I [laughs] Interviewer: so you've spent a long time here Participant: a long time	15
	Participant: yeah and it's not it don't drag like oh I gotta go to the same school like I had two schools at the same time if you know what I mean so it weren't it weren't boring, it weren't dragging obviously cause like I been here a while now	40
	Participant: … and obviously I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have her	261
Fear of the unknown on entry to the PRU	Participant: They said I think it's time for you to start to just go and see what's it like, urmm (named PRU), And I was like what's that…	331
	Interviewer: how did you feel about it? Participant: I felt upset because I didn't wanna leave school but I but at the same time I did …	311
	Participant: other children are alright people think when you come here people are gonna be horrible to ya…	117
Movement between programmes at the PRU	Participant: urmm so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day but it was only for 6 weeks and then I went back to school and obviously got excluded on the first day back and then I came into Steven's group and I been here just before we started summer holidays	22
	Participant: that was in year 7 and then year 8 I was here 2 day weren't I and then I went to 5 day like mid-way through year 8	318
	Participant: [little laugh] the naughty group err [pause] mmmm I wanna go back into Pete's* group 5 dp I feel like I can get along with a lot of people in there and yeah	173

Super-ordinate theme 3: Difficulties with behaviour management and problematic relationships with adults at the PRU

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Problematic detention procedures: 'It ain't fair on the rest of us'	Participant: yeah here and like if you got a detention or anything they will, like do you know who [teachers name] is here, no well it's one of the teachers and everyone, everyone hates him, don't get me wrong he can be nice at times but he will long everything out, in behaviour room you'll be in there for at least 45 minutes because he's he's longing it out and everyone gets frustrated because he just keeps, it's like, oh can you stop like I get it, stop, and just, oh it's long, and sometimes like at the end of the day sometimes well go get our stuff and obviously if like anyone's messing about or he'll hell shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops and it ain't fair on all the rest of us	60
Adult authority perceived as overly punitive: 'we're not allowed to sit next to each other or anything'	Participant: And it's really annoying whereas school they don't take none of your stuff off ya, you can walk around with your phone in your pocket so long as you just don't get it out like, like with these though, if you got a detention you can still have your phone but with these like if you mess up in a detention you'll have to do it tomorrow but you won't get none of ya stuff back	71
	Participant: … he'll hell shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops	68
	Participant… like when were in the lunchroom like were all laughing and they always say you're too loud, and were loud, we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything,	92
Sense of punishment: 'you get double that detention, it's just annoying'	Participant: everything you used to be able to do at Fraywood School* you can't do it here, cannot do it here even in detention say if you had half an hour detention and you never done it you'll have to do an hour the next day, these they don't give none of your stuff back, get a phone call home, you get double that detention, it's just,	101

	it's just annoying	
	sometimes they can still try dig at ya, right at the end of the day if you've had a good day they'll try dig at ya and if you give them a reaction they'll go right behaviour room and you stay there	152
Difficult feelings towards restraint: 'I don't like being touched'	Participant: obviously I don't like people touching me either that's why, obviously I've be- I've only been restrained here 3 times in the amount I've been here, the time I've been here, because I don't like being touched they say well have to move you there I'll just be like fine I'll go there myself, like I hate being touched,	284
Imbalance of sanction and rewards: 'no-ones actually got a reward'	if you have bad you get a cross and if you're good you get a tick and if you get like loads of ticks you get you'll earn rewards for the next day but if you got a cross that would overtake the ticks you won't get a good reward, you wouldn't get what you would normally get	34
	Interviewer: don't you get rewards? Participant: no, no rewards, no one's actually got a reward	158
	Interviewer: no it's not not because of the group I'm in but they don't they just in general you don't really get good rewards, and the reward box over there no one's actually achieved none of those	198
Group identity impacting on reward success: 'hard for our group'	Interviewer: you get time in the reward room? Is that a reward? Participant: oh yeah that's only if you got an heroic lanyard but that's hard for Steven's* group to get Interviewer: it's hard for your group to get? Participant: yeah because were the, like our groups the naughty group if you know what I mean	160
Negative feelings towards teachers 'I don't want be around you'	Participant: just didn't do none of my work, Steven got really mardy with me so I got mardy with him so I couldn't I , I hate it when people are mardy, because it's like I don't wanna be around you if you're mardy	207
	Participant: … no well it's one of the teachers and everyone, everyone hates him,	61
Feelings of provocation:	Interviewer: okay so what are the main differences between Fraywood School and your previous schools	52

'they'll dig at you to react'	and the PRU Participant: urmm oh it's hard to explain it's not the same, these teachers here they'll dig and dig and dig for you to like, oh what's the word I forget the words, they used to just like, oh my god I've forgot the word I don't know what the word is, err, for you to react basically they'll dig at you for your to react and give them a reaction out of ya	
Social divide, 'Them and Us', adults versus students Negative intentions by adults: 'can't leave you to be in a good mood'	Participant: like, you're having a good day they'll they'll say something like, they'll wind you up, like they can't just leave you to have like be in a good mood if you know what I mean, like when were in the lunchroom like were all laughing and they always say you're too loud, and were loud, we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything, whereas in school you're allowed to be as loud as you want at lunch and breaktime it's your own time	90
	Participant: urmm Fraywood School they're really they're nice tempered, these they just throw at ya, like they throw bad negativity at ya and it's not it's annoying if you know what I mean they'll try get a reaction out of ya all the time or they'll try wind you up with things,	84
	Participant: like they can't just leave you to have like be in a good mood if you know what I mean	91
	Participant: let out, at a normal time, like if you've been bad obviously you gotta do a detention,, ahh annoying, but sometimes they can still try dig at ya, right at the end of the day if you've had a good day they'll try dig at ya and if you give them a reaction they'll go right behaviour room and you stay there	151

Superordinate theme 4: Peer relationships, groups and social influence

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Group changes: 'there's only 3 left'	Participant: urmm it was alright cause I got on with loads of people in that class and I'm still mates right now with one of the people that was in there but obviously I went back to school now and I thought I was going back to Pete's group I was like oh I'm going back to Pete's group but na I was in Stevens group and the people in there I didn't really get along with and they have gone now there's only 3 people left and it's really boring	46
Feelings of provocation and retaliation: 'they want me to fight'	Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause]	366
	Participant: no but yeah at the same time if they piss me off then I'll be like fine then I'll do something to piss you off you know what I mean cause I like revenge,	403
	Interviewer: what difference do you think that means in that group? Participant: they can't hit me back so I'm gonna take everything I can to hit em well (named pupil) does hit back but he's weak you know what I mean so [laughs] but it's funny but we've been separated though so we can't hit and kick and argu- we still argue	386
Perceived role in PRU group: 'I'm more like the trouble maker'	Interviewer: okay urmm in Steven's group what's your role, what kind of a student are you there, what would happen if you weren't there? Participant: bossy one, I'm the bossy one	376
	Participant: cause I'm always going off on one I'm always dashing things around I'm always hitting	392
	Interviewer: Why is that Participant: because I don't know I'm more like the troublemaker well I used to be when err	399
	Participant: bossy one, I'm the bossy one Interviewer: bossy one? Okay what would happen if you weren't there how would the group change?	378

	Participant: I don't know probably be like ah yeah Jayne's* gone not gonna be be bossed around I'm kinda like the aggressive one as well I always go I always hit (named pupil) like all the time	
Social modelling with other children: 'everyone else misbehaves'	Participant: what about here? don't come here it's tough because it I don't know because of all the others obviously negative behaviour around ya you start to think it's okay to start misbehaving and that's why I'm still here because obviously cause everyone else misbehaves obviously I misbehave	109
Misbehaviour as a group norm: 'our group, we can't chill'	Participant: yeah it's cause, ah I don't know, I'm not not trying to blame them buts it's like ah it's hard to explain like , mainstream people are all goody too shoes they're daren't daren't be naughty so you be like you're like oh I have to be good whereas here, you come here and every else is misbehaving and you get away with, no you don't get away with it actually that's a lie but urmm you think it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya so	124
	Participant: yeah whereas other groups like all it is is just petty messing about and they'll stop they'll do their work when it's our group we start messing about we can't chill Interviewer: why do you think yours is the naughty group? Participant: because it's got all kids that just can't behave in it	167
	Participant: … it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya	129
Social modelling with other children: 'everyone else misbehaves'	Participant: what about here? don't come here it's tough because it I don't know because of all the others obviously negative behaviour around ya you start to think it's okay to start misbehaving and that's why I'm still here because obviously cause everyone else misbehaves obviously I misbehave	109
Misbehaviour as a group norm: 'our group, we can't chill'	Participant: yeah it's cause, ah I don't know, I'm not not trying to blame them buts it's like ah it's hard to explain like , mainstream people are all goody too shoes they're daren't daren't be naughty so you be like you're like oh I have to be good whereas here, you come here and every else is misbehaving and you get away with, no you don't get away with it actually that's a lie but urmm you think it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya	124

	so	
	Participant: yeah whereas other groups like all it is is just petty messing about and they'll stop they'll do their work when it's our group we start messing about we can't chill Interviewer: why do you think yours is the naughty group? Participant: because it's got all kids that just can't behave in it	167
	Participant: … it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya	129

Superordinate theme 5: Working on self/self-development

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Improvements over time: 'I started to settle now'	Participant:… but I've been quite good but I can still have my little mardy, mardy bleeps [laughs]	374
	Participant: ur naughtier yeah but after a while I started to settle now down now I'm not as not as bad like I'm alright I'm I'm actually quite good now I think I'll be able to cope in mainstream school again but obviously according to these lot I cant	427
	Interviewer: hmm [pause] what have you achieved here? Participant: urmm to obviously to help control different triggers and just just to know like I ain't gonna get away with certain things how I think I'll get away with them	507
Reparation and planning future	Participant: probably but if not then if I ask to redo my GCSES then obviously I'm gonna obviously if I when I do finish school and ain't got my GCSEs I'll go to the courses and I'll get the GCSEs for that thing I want to do	527
Recognising the responsibility of her own: 'it's my own fault no one else's'	Interviewer: yeah so do you take a lot of the responsibility for it? Participant: yeah it is my fault it's no one else's fault	505
	Participant: urmm obviously they helped to how to like control triggers that would like make me angry, urmm how to control things more better and if I need to do my work I gotta do it cause I ain't gonna be getting my GCSEs I if I don't do my work am I, I ain't gonna be getting the right levels they said I'll turn out like my brother, cause he came here	434

Superordinate theme 6: comparison of PRU and mainstream: pupils, lessons and independence

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Comparison of PRU pupils and mainstream:	Interviewer: hmm yeah, so you think that the children here, the pupils here aren't goody too shoes, they're different? Participant: yeah they're not, yeah they're all different in their own way, in their own way	139
	Participant: yeah it's cause, ah I don't know, I'm not not trying to blame them buts it's like ah it's hard to explain like , mainstream people are all goody too shoes they're daren't daren't be naughty	124
Stigma for PRU students	Interviewer: what are the other children like here? Participant: other children are alright people think when you come here people are gonna be horrible to ya they're they're alright it's just most of them it's just silly behaviour but some can have like issues like anger problems and	116
Reduced academic demands and stimulation : 'you don't learn anything here'	Participant: … and you don't really learn anything here where at school you do	114
	Participant: not like normal lessons it's stupid lessons if you know what I mean English is like, na hmm English is alright but it's not like mainstream school, mainstream school you work on every single different subject obviously to work up to GCSEs whereas these it's just like silly petty lessons, like oh write a letter from space something, and how you describe the world it's not like actually English what you'd do for your GCSEs maths it's just likes maths you do the same thing like nearly single day, science it's just that's boring you don't really learn anything either you just learn about mostly animals. Err, sport we do the same sport like nearly every time or it's either it's always the boy's choice of what sport should have been, it's just not good here	217
	Participant: … science it's just that's boring you don't really learn anything either you just learn about mostly animals.	223
Comparing	Participant: obviously they'll probably have to redo	266

academic achievements in mainstream and in the PRU	their GCSEs obviously cause cause if they've been here for a long time then obviously they didn't have, they didn't have the right education what they should have got in mainstream school to actually complete, get the right As and Bs what you should normally get, in GCSE, and obviously cause I'm year 9 I'm supposed to pick my GCSEs I can't even pick	
Restrictions/lack of freedom in the PRU: 'you can't do it here'	Participant: everything you used to be able to do at Fraywood School you can't do it here, cannot do it here	101
	Participant: ….we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything, whereas in school you're allowed to be as loud as you want at lunch and breaktime it's your own time	93

Superordinate theme 7: Role as female in the PRU

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Boy: Girl ratio	Interviewer: so is there a lot of girls here? Participant: no Interviewer: no? Participant: mostly boys Interviewer: so how is that for you being a girl here? Participant: a bit frustrating Interviewer: whys that? Participant: because there ain't many girls, I don't like boys	239
Dominated by boys: 'I want it to be equal'	Participant:… I want it to be equal like a mainstream school like loads of girls and loads of boys	244
Gender inequality	Participant: well it's the boy's choice like like you never do girly things, na that's sexist, you never do things that girls would usually do like gymnastics or anything, it's either always football or cricket or hockey	229

Superordinate theme 8: Perceptions of self

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Construct of the self as 'naughty'	Interviewer: yeah, so if you're not goody too shoes then what might you be? Participant: a bit annoying, a bit distracting, a bit naughty, naughty, [laughs] I find that such a weird word I find that's what my sister would say, urmm yeah everyone's like just got their own way	143
Mixed feelings about her behaviour	Interviewer: okay so what kind of a student were you? Participant: good but bad Interviewer: what about now, what about when you came to the PRU, what kind of a student are you now, here? Participant: now I still try like obviously do little like chop, sneak a chocolate bar I still do try things I do try get away with things but I've been quite good, but I can still have my little mardy, mardy bleeps [laughs]	369
	Participant: because I don't know I'm more like the troublemaker well I used to be when err	400
	Interviewer: do you want to be the troublemaker? Participant: no but yeah at the same time	402
Lack of emotional-regulation: 'no way you can bring me down'	Participant: I don't know I hit yeah just for fun sometimes but then I can hit in anger,	395
	Participant: … if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one	341
Construct of the self as 'aggressive'	Participant…around I'm kinda like the aggressive one as well I always go I always hit (named pupil) like all the time	382
	Participant: … then obviously my anger elevated from there and then obviously as time went through	292
	Participant: she was angry at me but then obviously she understood that obviously I do have a little bit of anger	341
Self -blame	Interviewer: yeah so do you take a lot of the responsibility for it? Participant: yeah it is my fault it's no one else's fault	505
Parent's	Interviewer: okay and how did your mum feel about it?	340

understanding	Participant: she was angry at me but then obviously she understood that obviously I do have a little bit of anger and things do trigger it and if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one	
Mixed perceptions of her by adults	Interviewer: what did they how would they have described you? Participant: they'd say I'm a bright intelligent girl, but if I want to if I'm in the wrong mood or if I'm if I'm like if I'm going off on one I can be urmm aggressive I can be I don't know I can be I can throw verbal abuse and everything yeah but obviously I ain't done that in a long time	250
Negative perceptions of her by students: 'trouble maker'	Interviewer: okay urmm and how do you think the other students view you then, so you say you're the troublemaker who thinks you're the troublemaker? Participant: [laughs] everyone here Interviewer: kids and class teachers? Participant: [laughs] well no some kids yeah they'll say oh yeah she's the trouble maker [child noises]	407
Low expectations of her: 'you're gonna turn out like you're brother'	Interviewer: and what do you think they might say? Participant: I always I always start the arguments over petty things [laughs] and then I think the teachers will probably say that I'm always the first one to, I dunno first one to like give up on the work and just screw my work up for good and go I'm not doing it and then causing a big problem out of nothing Interviewer: yeah Participant: yeah it's bad	413
	anymore I think his name is Chris he said you're gonna turn out like your brother	439

Super-ordinate theme 9: Emotional responses to being in a PRU

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Angry and annoyed	Interviewer: and how does it make you feel when people are saying you're going to turn out like your brother? Participant: it makes me angry because like you don't know me like you don't know if I'm going to turn out like my brother or not	444
Reduced motivation for prosocial behaviour: 'what am I going to achieve'	Participant: so it's like why am I being good if, what am I going to achieve if you know what I mean, Interviewer: yeah Participant: it's just uh annoying Interviewer: what do you think the outcome is going to be for you? Participant: god knows, I'll have to wait and see	185
Feeling misunderstood	Interviewer: okay how do you think that the mainstream school how did they understand you? Participant: they didn't	345
Decreasing interest in the PRU: 'I hate it here'	Interviewer: but I get the impression you don't want to stay here Participant: no I hate it honestly here	521

Super-ordinate theme 10: Lack of agency and involvement in their situation

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Lack of autonomy and independence 'I can't even pick'	obviously cause I'm year 9 I'm supposed to pick my GCSEs I can't even pick,	270
	Participant: … I think I'll be able to cope in mainstream school again but obviously according to these lot I cant	428
Poor communication about her future: 'they don't tell you anything'	Participant: but one thing is that obviously I been waiting here for ages, normally when people come here after about a week or two they'll be like right this is happening with you but with me obviously no one knows what's going on here obviously it takes a very long time to actually find out if you're going back to school or not, and they don't tell you anything either	177
Feeling her time at the PRU is indefinite 'might be here for quite a while'	Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while	480
	Interviewer: what do you think the outcome is going to be for you? Participant: god knows, I'll have to wait and see	189
Decisions are made by adults	Interviewer: so how did you know you was coming to the PRU? How was it communicated to you? Participant: obviously they used to, they used, how the way I knew I was coming here cause they'd always used to say I think it's time you go to this place	324
	Participant: … I'm not allowed back to mainstream ever, I think I think I dunno they're still planning out what they're going to do with me	252
	Participant: … so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day	22
Perceived unfairness about her situation	Participant: … but one thing is that obviously I been waiting here for ages, normally when people come here after about a week or two they'll be like right this is happening with you but with me obviously no one knows what's going on here obviously it takes a very long time to actually find out if you're going back to school or not, and they don't tell you anything either	177

Overspent time in the PRU: 'it's overdoing my time here	Interviewer: so you've spent a long time here Participant: a long time	19
	Participant: … I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have here	261
	Participant: … obviously cause like I been here a while now	42

Super-ordinate theme 11: Lost opportunities past present and future

Emerging themes	Transcripts excerpts	Line number
Loss of opportunities for education: 'I'm not in mainstream school to do that'	Participant: obviously they'll probably have to redo their GCSEs obviously cause cause if they've been here for a long time then obviously they didn't have, they didn't have the right education what they should have got in mainstream school to actually complete, get the right As and Bs what you should normally get, in GCSE, and obviously cause I'm year 9 I'm supposed to pick my GCSEs I can't even pick,	266
	Participant: and obviously I would have been I would have been going to school like about 3 days a week and 2 days on courses like I'm not in mainstream school to do that	474
Impact on future education and employment: 'messed your whole life up basically'	Interviewer: you're thinking you're going to have to retake? urmm so how do you think say if you were going to go to college what might they look at when they look at your application and? Participant: they probably wouldn't let me go in, obviously cause of my urmm report here and obviously my normal school, they're probably oh thinking she ain't good enough to go here, so obviously it's just messed your whole life up basically you just don't, might as well just stay in school	435
Lost opportunities for career development	Interviewer: has it helped you to work with animals? Participant: here, what no, we don't do we don't work with animals here like we don't learn nothing about animals well we do in science but not nothing like, if I was in school If I picked my GCSEs I would do hair and beauty and I probably do health and social and obviously animal caring and that lot	468
Restricted chance to transition back to mainstream: 'I'm not allowed back'	Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while	480
	Participant: I'm not allowed back to mainstream ever, I think I think I dunno they're still planning out what they're going to do with me but I'm not allowed in no mainstream school	253

Sense of regret: 'I wish I didn't mess about'	Interviewer: yeah, do you wish things were different? Participant: yeah I just wish I didn't mess about in school and Miss Peters weren't always there to trigger me, because if I didn't shout that one day I think I'll never have the ability to actually shout at a teacher but miss billy, Miss Peters just triggered me	482

8.12.3 Ben

Super Ordinate Theme1: Coming to the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Coming to the PRU	Interviewer: So the first part of the interview is just for you to tell me what it's like here at the PRU Participant: it's alright like uh well when I knew I was gonna come here I was like oh no new school I need to make new friends I found out like half my mates from my old school came here so after that I was just fine with everything	2
Coming to the PRU	Participant:…I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me	287
Mixed feelings towards coming to the PRU	Participant: I was like I wer- I'm not going here, like come on	281
Mixed feelings towards coming to the PRU	Participant: yeah it's not a big thing like you get, well obviously the big thing is you got expelled but but it's not scary	68
Feelings of disbelief coming to the PRU	Participant: well when I first I thought at my old school I weren't gonna get expelled I thought I wasn't gonna get expelled I thought isolation seclusion get it over and done with but like I just couldn't believe I got expelled	475
Sense of acceptance	Interviewer: you didn't believe it Participant: no and then I just accepted it	479
Perceived pride in being a PRU student	Participant:… but there's kids here who whose got a chance to go to a mainstream school but but they don't wanna go cause they're ain't cause cause they feel like big big big big and bad, here, right, but I think any child would love to take that place	327
Perceived pride in being a PRU student	Participant: like like yeah I don't go to a mainstream school Interviewer: okay like it's a cool thing? Participant: yeah	334
Feelings associated to coming to the PRU	Interviewer: yeah urmm, how do you feel about the PRU how do you feel about [name]? Participant: at the start of it I was scared but happy as well	147
Feelings	Participant: but but [stammers] like I was more scared	94

associated to coming to the PRU	because, because from primary I was a small kid and everybody else was little Interviewer: yeah Participant: but in here I'm a littler person and there's loads of more tall kids Interviewer: yeah so do you find that scary here Participant: a little bit	

Super Ordinate Theme2: Comparison with mainstream

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Comparing autonomy between PRU and mainstream	Participant:… like at breaks you can go out more like at breaks you can go out more you can go in and out in and out, like here you just go out and stay there out in the cold, and yeah Interviewer: so is there a bit more to do at my old school ? Participant: yeah bit more to do at break and lunches	166
Comparing classes	Participant: there's not there's not that much of a difference of my old school really here, like I know I know the people say things but like you're in you're in classes of different age groups, like I weren't used to that Interviewer: okay different classes different age groups Participant: and I was the only year 7 in Patrick's class	49
Comparing classes	Participant: well, you do more work at my old school like Interviewer: at my old school? Participant: when you go to maths class they say do this by the end of the lesson like 8, 8 pages of maths. Here here they go gradually like say do this do that do this do that. See I'm happy with it because I'm trying to get back into my old school	36
Comparing PRU and mainstream environment	Participant: obviously we didn't have behaviour rooms in my old school Interviewer: yes so the environment is different you've got behaviour rooms Participant: yeah like we don't have radios in my old school any more	63
Comparing PRU and mainstream teachers	Participant: because because the teachers here co co cooperate, I can't say it, cooperate Interviewer: cooperate Participant: yeah that's it, like they talk to ya do st-, they do stuff where at my old school work there done don't do it you get a detention after	192
Comparing PRU and mainstream teachers	Participant: it's fun like because like you got teachers in mainstream schools saying do this do that but the teachers here they talk to you 1 on 1 and they help they help ya	115

Super Ordinate Theme3: Contrast between friendships and fear of other students

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Friendships at the PRU	Participant:… got new friends here ain't I so I'm happy	155
Friendships at the PRU	Participant: because because I I know because I got more mates at my old school it's more fun, right	165
Friendships at the PRU	Participant: they are ni- they are kind, you you got some that just don't ha- you know when you get people you don't like and you just don't wanna be around you got kids who you like and like you just wanna be friends with them	186
Importance of knowing people at the PRU	Participant: well I-I-if if I came to sch- new school and didn't know no one her I wouldn't I couldn't have coped	153
Importance of knowing people at the PRU	Interviewer: what what about the kids? Participant: yeah I know some of them out of school, in school, and from different places	11
Importance of knowing people at the PRU	Interviewer: so how do you feel here when there isn't many people that you know? Participant: like like you just be the weird kid in the corner	201
Rivalry between students at the PRU	Participant: don't worry because it's not a big thing, right , and just get it over and done with, and hopefully you'll find another school, and just don't make no one mad, really, if you say something horrible to someone the whole lots after ya, if ya get me Interviewer: so what do you mean by that? Participant: like so so so if you tell someone to shut up all their mates will hate ya and they'll want to fight ya	68
Underlying fear of fights with students	Interviewer: yeah so do you find that scary here Participant: a little bit Interviewer: yea okay Participant: but but but [stammers] I know they wouldn't touch me in school like hurt me because like they'd get in trouble they'd rather do it out of school but I live on the other side of town so	98
Interpreted feelings of other students at the PRU	Participant: see so I just want to do the work and get it over and done with but I just think kids are not happy	43

Interpreted feelings of other students at the PRU	Participant: well obviously me and Jayne* got that relationship that we fight playfight 24 7, right, so like like I think she's like yeah like he's annoying don't like him but even like we like were mates secretly	377
Desire for respect	Participant: it's like like a kid told me to oi like you can't tell me to oi like have some respect at least even though I don't give you none give me some	394
Misbehaviour at the PRU	Interviewer: okay and what about what happens on a bad day? Participant: there's loads of kids in behaviour rooms kicking walls making marks punching teachers getting in trouble getting detentions	144
Misbehaviour at the PRU	Interviewer: and a lot of the kids here if the teacher tells them to do they argue? Participant: yeah they argue straight away. I did that in school as well in mainstream school I argued straight away	182
Misbehaviour at the PRU	Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument	175
Pupils leaving the PRU	Interviewer: yeah urmm, how do you feel about the PRU how do you feel about [name]? Participant: at the start of it I was scared but happy as well but like but as I all the people from my old school are gone now and there's only one person I know	147
Conflict within the PRU	Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument	175
Conflict within the PRU	Participant: because one of my mate, what's his name, [name] from the other class, he urmm he just got told a boy [name] to shut up, all his mates like [name] and everyone is after him well was after him	78

Super Ordinate Theme4: Teacher relationships at PRU

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Support from teachers at the PRU	Interviewer: so to finish then, what's helping you here? Participant: more or less like Patrick like like he's like he teaches he teaches you in a kid manner	482
Support from teachers at the PRU	Participant: it's fun like because like you got teachers in mainstream schools saying do this do that but the teachers here they talk to you 1 on 1 and they help they help ya	115
Teacher-pupil relationships	Interviewer: hmm hmm okay so they talk to you more one on one here? Participant: hmm Interviewer: and help you in what way? Participant: like they they like they chat to you as a friend like when wh when like as you're writing they chat to ya, saying if you're okay and everything,	118
Teacher-pupil relationships	Interviewer: in a PRU then isn't so at my old school you're doing lots of work maybe talking less to the teachers and here they're talking to you a bit more? Participant: hmm getting to know you more	127
Characteristics of teachers	Participant: it's alright err people are kind here well some teachers	8
Teacher-pupil conflict	Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument Interviewer: yeah [pause] so that's what some of the kids are like here, they're different to one's that...	175
Teacher-pupil conflict	Interviewer: and a lot of the kids here if the teacher tells them to do they argue? Participant: yeah they argue straight away. I did that in school as well in mainstream school I argued straight away	182

Super Ordinate Theme5: Historical issues at mainstream

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Historical issues at mainstream	Participant: I'm better here as I was in my old school like [pause] I think I think I'm good here as I was at my old school, I was I was arguing with teachers every day at my old school but here like I get more out of teachers in one week, a week, like every lesson it was a battle between me and the teacher	372
Historical issues at mainstream	Participant… but at the start of the year I started like if someone said oi I would go mad but I could I could ignore anyone right now Interviewer: why do you go mad? What is it about you? Participant: it's like like a kid told me to oi like you can't tell me to oi like have some respect at least even though I don't give you none give me some	390
Previous incidents at mainstream	Participant…and that's what I didn't like in my old school as well, loads of teachers kept praising me and that's and I just went mad after that	139
Previous incidents at mainstream	Participant:… I told I told a girl to f off I got expelled straight away so I don't really get that	367
Demands of work in mainstream	Participant… like I don't want be sitting in the class doing work 24 7 I wanna have fun with friends	413
Demands of work in mainstream	Participant: well, you do more work at my old school like Interviewer: at my old school? Participant: when you go to maths class they say do this by the end of the lesson like 8, 8 pages of maths	36
Difficulties with teacher authority	Participant: that's another thing that's another thing with teachers like I don't get how they get to tell me what to do Interviewer: teachers? How can they tell you what to do? Participant: yeah like ev- even outside of school I saw a teacher in Tesco I was buying a coke she was like put that coke back it's too much sugar I'm like, picked it up and took it	397
Difficulties with teacher authority	Interviewer: okay you don't like people telling you what to do? Participant: na I hate it	403
Mainstream-didn't fit anywhere	Participant: In our class because because our class was all the leftov-, na I wouldn't say leftovers but like all the people that had got kicked out the class kind of, or had to move they were all in that group Interviewer: right okay Participant: because all the all the classes were full because I	234

	had to move because in my old school yeah I know you swap teachers but you're in one group err with different people you're with the same people nearly every lesson	
Mainstream-didn't fit anywhere	Participant: yeah they weren't the le-, because because I had to get moved from the class and put in that class because th th they were like 8-7 classes and they got full up so I had to go to that group	245
Sense of injustice at mainstream	Participant: because because there's kids at my old school, right, I I I think it's just me though because I, there kids out the back smoking, smoking drugs and doing naughty stuff, they don't get expelled they got caught, nothing happens to them. I told I told a girl to f off I got expelled straight away so I don't really get that	364
Precious experiences of exclusion	Participant: yeah because this is my 2nd time being expelled isn't it? I got expelled from primary	87
Precious experiences of exclusion	Participant: she she told me she was like oh great this again but like she's used to it from my old school to phoenix, she's she she was used to that, so so she was like here we go here we go again,	347
Precious experiences of exclusion	Interviewer: so you got expelled? Participant: yeah Interviewer: what do you know why or? Participant: fighting	30

Super Ordinate Theme6: Parents

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Family as support structure	Participant: no I was supposed to be but I didn't wanna go in and my mum did and my mum told me and I was like yeah I'm not going and ended up going because, rather get it over and done with	293
Family as support structure	Participant… but like if they read my records they'll be like yeah he he can't do that he can't do this because my mum told them, but see with other teachers, and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out	357
Parents perceptions	Interviewer: so how do you feel when you think you might be in a group, the left-over group? Participant: see my mum really cares about it, but I don't really care	248
Parents perceptions	Participant: but mum does not want me to go to like The special schools Interviewer: okay, whys that? Participant: because she knows pe- people, and, like kids from there, have killed people, going prison and everything, didn't come out with no education, no money, doing drugs and mum was like yeah no no my child ain't doing that	318
Parents perceptions	Participant: I'm not a naughty child like my mum said look you're not a naughty child, some kids like here kick off run out run out of school, like I'm not like that I get it over and done with, new new day	432
Parents perceptions	Interviewer: okay, so how did your mum feel when she thought you were coming here? Participant: she she told me she was like oh great this again but like she's used to it from my old school to phoenix, she's she she was used to that, so so she was like here we go here we go again,	346

Super Ordinate Theme 7: characteristics of PRU

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Rewards	Interviewer: so what happens on a good day here? Participant: just go, you just, you you [stammers] get urmm good points, like in lesson when you get good points it makes ya more happy, and it just makes you get through the day quicker	130
Sanctions and punishments	Participant: at start when I came here even Patrick said I was good but ever since we start back since summer I been really naughty Interviewer: okay Participant: because Patrick told me cause I been in behaviour room a lot more Interviewer: right Participant: got lots of detentions	216

Super Ordinate Theme8: perception of self

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Interviewer: how do you feel you are, what kind of a student are you here? What are you getting out of being here at the PRU? Participant: I'm I'm getting education compared to some of kids in the class cause I'm the one, the one left in the class cause the rest of them just walk out	267
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Interviewer: yeah Participant: because kids have been here year and a half and I've only been here 6-5 months	212
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Participant: no a lot of weirder kids here Interviewer: so there's other kids here that are weird Participant: yeah yeah sit in the corner and just be quiet in my old school I was in the middle of everything	206
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Participant: but in here I'm a littler person and there's loads of more tall kids	97
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Participant: see so I just want to do the work and get it over and done with but I just think kids are not happy	43
Comparison of self to others in PRU	Participant : …there's more naughty kids here, that's gone to mainstream, and I'm like naughty mainstream, I'm good like good and bad,	502
Comparison of self to mainstream pupils	Participant: because because there's kids at my old school, right, I I I think it's just me though because I, there kids out the back smoking, smoking drugs and doing naughty stuff, they don't get expelled they got caught, nothing happens to them. I told I told a girl to f off I got expelled straight away so I don't really get that	364
Reputation / perception of self	Participant: it was alright, like after I got expelled, yeah but urmm yeah it was alright, like well-known there Interviewer: well-known there? Participant: yeah	26
Reputation / perception of self	Interviewer: are you the kind of person who's on the side sitting at the back away from everyone or are you in the middle ? Participant: yeah like we just have big characters, right, so I was like away, being good, ever since they all gone, I would be more naughty, cause me and [name] just mess about in class	222

Reputation / perception of self	Participant: at start when I came here even Patrick said I was good but ever since we start back since summer I been really naughty	216
Reputation / perception of self	Participant: yeah yeah sit in the corner and just be quiet in my old school I was in the middle of everything	208
Argumentative nature of self	Participant: yeah they argue straight away. I did that in school as well in mainstream school I argued straight away	183
Argumentative nature of self	Participant:…loads of teachers kept praising me and that's and I just went mad after that	139
Argumentative nature of self	Participant: … at the start of the year I started like if someone said oi I would go mad but I could I could ignore anyone right now Interviewer: why do you go mad? What is it about you? Participant: it's like like a kid told me to oi like you can't tell me to oi like have some respect at least even though I don't give you none give me some	390
Lack of feelings of success at the PRU	Interviewer: so he's helping you? That's good and what have your achievements been here? Have you achieved anything? Participant: no	487
Improvements in behaviour	Interviewer: hmm so how do you think you've changed since coming to the PRU? Participant: I I've learnt to ignore people better urmm because when I went to primary PRU I learnt to ignore came my old school and ignored everyone but at the start of the year I started like if someone said oi I would go mad but I could I could ignore anyone right now	388
Improvements in behaviour	Participant: I'm better here as I was in my old school like [pause] I think I think I'm good here as I was at my old school, I was I was arguing with teachers everyday	372

Super Ordinate Theme9: perception of self by others

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Negative perception by others	Participant: at start when I came here even Patrick said I was good but ever since we start back since summer I been really naughty	216
Negative perception of self by teachers	Participant: well well well some of my teachers who I talk to they know I work, like I can't be in big groups I have to be in little groups they have to do 1-1 I can't help being so, but like if they read my records they'll be like yeah he he can't do that he can't do this because my mum told them, but see with other teachers, and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out Interviewer: so you think some people think your naughty, get him out? Participant: yeah hmm hmm	355
Stigma towards children who have gone to specialist provision	Participant: like like cause like at work, when I'm older and I get a job and they look at my record old school and all they'll see is he's been expelled like 2 times he's a troublemaker get rid, I don't want him,	425
Stigma towards children who have gone to specialist provision	Participant: but mum does not want me to go to like The special schools Interviewer: okay, whys that? Participant: because she knows pe- people, and, like kids from there, have killed people, going prison and everything, didn't come out with no education, no money, doing drugs and mum was like yeah no no my child ain't doing that	318

Super Ordinate Theme10: lack of agency, involvement and knowledge

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Overspent time in the PRU	Participant: hmm but they've told me I'm here for 6 months but at at the the start of October I was supposed to go but obviously that's in the past now Interviewer: hmm Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment	297
Overspent time in the PRU	Participant: …I was just thinking I was at the PRU for 6 months and it weren't even that long, but obviously I didn't go back to, I didn't go back to my old school cause they kicked me out fully so I was just waiting till urmm till the end of year till everybody moves up	349
Lack of involvement when coming to the PRU	Participant: … I was like well obviously I were I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me Interviewer: yeah Participant: I have to go, I was in the car Interviewer: you weren't in the meeting Participant: no I was supposed to be but I didn't wanna go in	287
Lack of freedom in PRU	Participant: because because I I know because I got more mates at my old school it's more fun, right, like like obviously I said said like at breaks you can go out more like at breaks you can go out more you can go in and out in and out, like here you just go out and stay there out in the cold, and yeah Interviewer: so is there a bit more to do at my old school ? Participant: yeah bit more to do at break and lunches	165
Ongoing assessment in pupil's situation	Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment	300
Waiting	Interviewer: and are you, do you have any worries whilst this is going on, you know the whole transition, not transition but it can feel like a waiting game? Participant: yeah I just want to get it over and done with Interviewer: but you don't want to stay here Participant: no	506
Lack of certainty about what will happen for him 'big	Participant: well well I found out what happens and it will be done by the 20th of October and we'll have a big meeting, see if I go back to mainstream or see if I go to like like [names 2 special schools]	499

meeting’		
	Participant: see if my old school accept me and if not I’ll go to a different school.	
desire to go back to mainstream	Participant:… See I’m happy with it because I’m trying to get back into my old school	40
desire to go back to mainstream	Participant:… you see but but there’s kids here who whose got a chance to go to a mainstream school but but they don’t wanna go cause they’re ain’t cause cause they feel like big big big big and bad, here, right, but I think any child would love to take that place	327
desire to go back to mainstream	Participant: see so I just want to do the work and get it over and done with	43
desire to go back to mainstream	Participant: but obviously I’d like to go back to my old school Interviewer: you would like to go back to my old school? Participant: yeah okay Participant: just people I know from a baby goes there	158

Super Ordinate Theme11: impact on future

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Potential impact on future employment	Interviewer: okay so in terms of like in the future for you, I think I've already asked this question but I will ask it again so urmm the idea that you've been expelled a few times and you've been perceived as a naughty child how do you think that's going to impact on you? Participant: like like cause like at work, when I'm older and I get a job and they look at my record old school and all they'll see is he's been expelled like 2 times he's a troublemaker get rid, I don't want him, it'd be hard to get a job. But all I wanna do is get back in my old school so I can get good grades get everything, I will get a job.	421
Potential outcomes for PRU pupils	Participant: but I, I just, just thinking to myself do you know like, like you you'll be sitting home with no money, you'll be living on the streets if you don't actually get an education, get money Interviewer: yeah yeah so do you think then a lot of kids here then struggle to make money when they get older? Participant: I th-, I know some kids who be- been to PRUs that have made money, doing successful but I know some kids that haven't	338
Stigma towards children who have gone to specialist provision	Participant: but mum does not want me to go to like The special schools Interviewer: okay, whys that? Participant: because she knows pe- people, and, like kids from there, have killed people, going prison and everything, didn't come out with no education, no money, doing drugs and mum was like yeah no no my child ain't doing that	318

8.12.4 Ellis

Super-ordinate theme 1: mainstream experience

Emerging theme	Transcripts excerpt	Line number
Previous school (mainstream experience)	Participant: my old school is boring, don't like it	30
Previous school (mainstream experience)	Interviewer: so tell me a bit about the restraining then? They didn't do that at your old school but they do that here? Participant: they did, but I never got restrained at my old school	55
Historical issues with behaviour	Participant: Naughty Interviewer: you were naughty Participant: Skive all the lessons	184
Segregated at mainstream	Participant: yeah cause I weren't in the mainstream first I was in another building couldn't do cooking	179
Segregated at mainstream	Interviewer:… why were you in another building? Participant: Naughty Interviewer: you were naughty	182

Super-ordinate theme 2: PRU experience

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Comparing mainstream and PRU experience	Interviewer: so tell me about your old school then, what was it like, was it big, small? Participant: big, Interviewer: yeah Participant: very big Interviewer: what else was different about Participant: don't know big field Interviewer: big? Participant: field Interviewer: big field, was it bigger than The PRU? Participant: loads of students	35
Negative perception of PRU: 'bad place to be'	Interviewer: would you say it's a good place to be, would you say … Participant: bad place to be Interviewer: it's a bad place to be, whys that then? Participant: I don't know	94
PRU classes	Interviewer:… They're dead classes Participant: yeah Interviewer: yeah what does that mean? Participant: boring like	275
Movement between programmes at the PRU: 'I haven't been in that class long'	Interviewer: are you here every day? Participant: 2 days, I was here everyday	100
Movement between programmes at the PRU: 'I haven't been in that class long'	Interviewer: yeah what about your form tutor. If I was to say to here tell me about Participant: what would she say? Participant: ask her I don't know I haven't been in that class long	253
Imbalance of good days and bad days at PRU: 'never had a	Interviewer: do you have more good days or more bad days? Participant: both… never had a good day here	140

good day here'		
Imbalance of good days and bad days at PRU: 'never had a good day here'	Interviewer: yeah so you have had a good day Participant: yeah not all the time	165
Experience of adult intervention	Interviewer: so why is it that they do that here? Participant: I dunno they can't hurt anyone Interviewer: and what happens after you've been restrained Participant: you get put into isolation I think I don't know what it's called Interviewer: okay so what's the purpose of that then, is that a room is that a table is it.. Participant: you get locked in it	60
Experience of adult intervention	Interviewer: so tell me a bit about the restraining then? They didn't do that at your old school but they do that here? Participant: they did, but I never got restrained at my old school Interviewer: you never and what about here? Participant: yeah I have been	55
Behaviour policy	Participant: you get a 5 if you get a you can get heroic lanyard or you get creative Participant: You get 5s and 4s and 3s you can get creative or you can get a heroic lanyard Interviewer: A grey lanyard? Participant: heroic Interviewer: heroic lanyard. And what happens if you get a heroic lanyard like that? Participant: you get chocolate and rewards	156
Behaviour policy	Participant: like I've not had one this week	169

Super-ordinate theme 3: Coming to the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Fear of coming to the PRU	Interviewer: so you've been here about 4 months, what did you think when you came here? Participant: scared	10
Lack of knowledge about the PRU	Interviewer: at your old school? And how did people describe the PRU to you, what did they say, where did they say you were going? Participant: The PRU Interviewer: did you know anything about it? Participant: (shakes head)	15
Role of family member	Interviewer: wow okay so your sister, when your old school was saying they were going to bring you to the PRU who went to the meetings Participant: my sister Interviewer: okay and what did she say when she knew you was coming Participant: nothing Interviewer: how did she feel about it Participant: she didn't want me to come	370

Super-ordinate theme 4: Relationships at the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Lack of relatedness with other teachers/pupils at the PRU	Interviewer: okay so Miss Peters and Tim what are the teachers like here Participant: don't like some of them Interviewer: you don't like some of them how come? Participant: [no response] Interviewer: what is it about them that you don't like? Participant: just don't like them Interviewer: is it the way they talk? Is it the way they dress? Participant: no Interviewer: Is it the way they teach? What is it then? Participant: don't know just don't like them	263
Lack of relatedness with other teachers/pupils at the PRU	Interviewer: so you think some of the kids in your class are weird because they do dirty stuff and say dirty stuff Participant: Not in my class some different people Interviewer: in the PRU? Participant: hmm Interviewer: here at The PRU? Are you different to them? Participant: [nods head]	246
Friendship at the PRU	Interviewer: do you have friends? Participant: friends one of my new friends err ain't in that group I knew him from primary school	214
Friendship at the PRU	Interviewer: so tell me about the bad days then, why are they bad what's happening? Participant: I don't know Interviewer: what makes them bad? Participant: silly comments and that Interviewer: from? Participant: from me and my friends	144
Perception of other pupils/teachers at the PRU	Interviewer:urm how would you describe them? Participant: some of them are fun Interviewer: some of them Participant: some of them are annoying Interviewer: annoying? What makes them annoying? Participant: weird Interviewer: how so? Participant: they do weird things	228
Perception of other	Interviewer: what is it about them that you don't like? Participant: just don't like them	267

pupils/teachers at the PRU		

Super-ordinate theme 5: dissatisfaction with alternative placement provision

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Dissatisfaction with alternative placement provision	Interviewer: where you're not coming here everyday Participant: I'd rather come here everyday Interviewer: you'd rather come here every day? Participant: hmm I have to go to another school out of the city	114
Dissatisfaction with alternative placement provision	Interviewer: so you go to another school which isn't a mainstream school Participant: no Interviewer: and how is that for you, do you like going there? Participant: no	126
Out of city location	Interviewer: why don't you like going there? Participant: cause you have to get a taxi and I don't like getting a taxi out of the city	130
Waiting placement	Interviewer: and how long are you supposed to be going to the other school? Participant: don't know till I get a place at (named special school) Interviewer: till you get a place at (named special school) Participant: yeah and then when I get (named special school) I won't be coming here	317
Desire to be within city	Interviewer: (named special school), so you wanted to be in the city? Participant: yeah	134
Uncertainty about placement	Interviewer: and how long are you supposed to be going to the other school? Participant: don't know till I get a place at (named special school) Interviewer: till you get a place at (named special school) Participant: yeah and then when I get (named special school) I won't be coming here	317

Super-ordinate theme 6: Future opportunities

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Future possible trajectories for PRU students	Interviewer: what do you think happens for kids who leave the PRU Participant: some of them go back to mainstream some of them go back to different school Interviewer: and then what happens after they leave school, year 11 Participant: some of them get GCSEs and some of them don't	300

8.12.5 John

Super-ordinate theme 1: PRU experience

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Behaviour needs of children in the PRU	Interviewer: so what are the kids here, what are they good at what do they find hard, what are their challenges? Participant: depending on like what like what group you're in cause there's different groups and like people have like different like behaviour problems like some people have like adhd some will have autism some will have dyslexia and different problems yeah	57
Behaviour needs of children in the PRU	Participant:… say if like they're not mainstream yeah and the mainstream can't cope with them they'll come they'll either send them here but if they're too naughty think they won't cope here then they'll go to (named special school).	65
Time spent in the PRU	Interviewer: and you were saying that you've been here Participant: for over a year since February last year	13
Coming to the PRU	Participant: I didn't really wanna be here and I thought it was just full of dickheads and they were all mean but they weren't and it turned out to be they're actually really nice Interviewer: who told you about the PRU? Participant: hmm well I just got told that I was getting sent here so	302
Coming to the PRU	Interviewer: and what did they tell you the PRU was? Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you.	308
Adapting to the PRU	Participant: err my first reaction was like why the fuck do I have to come to this shitty school like at first I thought it was a bag of crap and then as I got to be here for like over a year now it's I've adapted to the ways of the actual school and it's it feel it don't feel crap nomore it feels better than what it used to	297
Movement across groups in the PRU	Participant: first time I started I was in 2 day and then like a month or like a couple so a about 5 months after I went to like I did Monday Tuesday and that and then I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day	15
Motivation for learning in the PRU	Participant: I'm the one that does my work like I'm the one who don't wanna do the work depending on what work it is I'll do Interviewer: hmm Participant: like if it's cooking I'll do that if it's maths I'll do	81

	that if it's English I can't really be arsed that much if it's general studies mmm don't really mind doing that but I probably won't do it that much just depending on what lessons I got that day	
Family history with PRU	And then yeah my brother used to be when he were younger he used to be at (named special school)	68
Lack of involvement with decision to come to the PRU 'they told me I was getting sent here'	Interviewer: who told you about the PRU? Participant: hmm well I just got told that I was getting sent here so	304
Lack of involvement with decision to come to the PRU 'they told me I was getting sent here'	Interviewer: did you have a say in any of it? Participant: no I was like I don't really mind I'll go there	306

Super-ordinate theme 2: Problematic relationships at mainstream

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Problematic relationships	Participant: cause I didn't wanna go cause I'd end up getting wound up and I didn't like the person I was actually doing it with cause I don't like her Interviewer: hmm Participant: I call her saggy sally Interviewer: whose that Participant: sally someone from *old school, don't like her I just call her saggy sally when she pisses me off.	220
Problematic relationships	Participant:… I was in a meeting once and this fucking disabled fat bastard deputy head whatever I don't know deputy bitch school or whatever and urmm he was something that I apparently said and he was making up a bunch of lies and I got pissed off, almost wacked him one	244
Perceived unjustified claims made by staff at mainstream	I was in a meeting once and this fucking disabled fat bastard deputy head whatever I don't know deputy bitch school or whatever and urmm he was something that I apparently said and he was making up a bunch of lies and I got pissed off, almost wacked him one, but miss fletcher that's the head of the school said go out and like calm down for a bit cause I was in her office and Id end up punching him because he was making up a bunch of lies and it pissed me off so yeah	244
Perceived unjustified claims made by staff at mainstream	Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah	314
Negative perception of participant	Interviewer: what about the teachers in your old school, how would they have described you Participant: err nuisance, err difficult to say I'm a nuisance I'm a I'm a bad influence I'm I'm very naughty and they don't want me there	191
Negative perception of participant	Participant: I don't know they don't wanna accept me in cause they think I'm too naughty Interviewer: hmm Participant: cause they said they're not gonna accept me back in	203
Sense of defensiveness towards	Participant: it don't really affect me a lot because whatever they say about me I'm not gonna lose sleep over Interviewer: hmm	363

people at mainstream	Participant: ain't gonna lose no sleep don't really bother me say whatever you wanna say about me I don't really care cause I ain't gonna lose no sleep I'm not gonna care	
Emotional reaction provoked by experiences at mainstream	Participant: cause I didn't wanna go cause I'd end up getting wound up and I didn't like the person I was actually doing it with cause I don't like her	220
Emotional reaction provoked by experiences at mainstream	Participant: disappointed and pissed off. I just I just have to get away from them because I don't like being near em .	243
Broken trust	Interviewer: what were they like? Participant: they weren't giving me no help at all they made promises that they couldn't keep that's why I have a lot of trust issues in people	42
Broken trust	Interviewer: do you feel like they gave up on you Participant: yeah they have they gave up on me a long time ago, year 7, 6 weeks of being in year 7 I was already in a behaviour school. I ain't even been in mainstream school for a full year	210

Super-ordinate theme 3: experience of rejection, refusal and exclusion at mainstream

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Rejection from mainstream	Participant: … they don't want me there Interviewer: they don't want you there Participant: no they can't take me back because they can't give me what I need Interviewer: is that what they've said to you Participant: basically like yeah cause if I get pissed off yeah and I wanna go outside for a minute or two to calm down they say they can't do that Interviewer: hmm and how does that make you feel Participant: pissed off cause cause they can do that they just don't wanna accept me in	194
Rejection from mainstream	Participant: I don't know they don't wanna accept me in cause they think I'm too naughty Interviewer: hmm Participant: cause they said they're not gonna accept me back in	203
Failed reintegration in mainstream	Participant: … I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day	17
Failed reintegration in mainstream	Interviewer: do you feel like they gave up on you Participant: yeah they have they gave up on me a long time ago, year 7, 6 weeks of being in year 7 I was already in a behaviour school. I ain't even been in mainstream school for a full year	210
Lack of support Refusal of support	Interviewer: what were they like? Participant: they weren't giving me no help at all they made promises that they couldn't keep that's why I have a lot of trust issues in people	43
	Interviewer: they don't want you there Participant: no they can't take me back because they can't give me what I need Interviewer: is that what they've said to you Participant: basically like yeah cause if I get pissed off yeah and I wanna go outside for a minute or two to calm down they say they can't do that Interviewer: hmm and how does that make you feel Participant: pissed off cause cause they can do that they just don't wanna accept me in	195
Limited time	Participant: … 6 weeks of being in year 7 I was already in a	211

in mainstream	behaviour school. I ain't even been in mainstream school for a full year Interviewer: hmm Participant: like an actual full year I've not even been in a mainstream school. I've only been doing 2 hours for 2 days.	
Exclusions	Participant: ah that they don't mind me I don't really care I've had exclusions and meetings from that school cause they'd they'd exclude me all the time Interviewer: would they Participant: yeah so yeah it's rubbish I don't like that school	260
School refusal	Participant: … Never turned up. I used to do two hours and I turned up like I did like turn up at the end but like I never turned up since like a solid over 6 months I never turned up cause I couldn't be arsed Interviewer: cause you couldn't be arsed Participant: cause I didn't wanna go cause I'd end up getting wound up and I didn't like the person I was actually doing it with cause I don't like her	216
Feelings of disappointment	Interviewer: yeah, what effect has it had on you being round teachers that have given up on you or Participant: disappointed and pissed off. I just I just have to get away from them because I don't like being near em	241

Super-ordinate theme 4: Relationships at the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Positive relationships at the PRU	Participant: I have a good relationship with other people here I get on with people here	327
Positive relationships at the PRU	Participant: … I got to know them a lot and I know like basically a lot of staff	233
Positive relationships at the PRU	Participant: it's helped me because they understand me more and err I like they understand me more and like it's hard to explain they understand me more and like like they they understand me more and like they like [pause] they like get to know me and they understand like how I am and how I feel inside and stuff there's hardly any staff members that understand me a lot like Maria my class teacher like she understands me a lot	348
Positive feelings towards staff in PRU	Participant: yeah I like I like staff in this school I don't really like the staff in my other my mainstream school	239
Perception of teacher's skill set Teacher's management of students	Interviewer: so why do you think the teachers are different here Participant: cause they they can handle with like mainstream yeah there are some teachers that can handle with behaviour but like here they're more specialised in behaviour problems cause they've like they've dealt with kids from four other schools, saf, wherever, they'll go they'll go The PRU, but chilling it's actually calm I like it	47
	cause the teacher like here yeah like if your annoyed and pissed off then you can go out and be like miss I'm getting I'm kinda pissed off and say if they're hovering around you and it's like just chill enit like I'm pissed off can you leave me alone they'll le- they'll let they'll leave you alone to calm down and then like after they'll come and talk to you and it's chill they'll see if you're alright see if you calmed down and you go back in lesson and then just get your work done	32
	Participant: cause they they can handle with like mainstream yeah there are some teachers that can handle with behaviour but like here they're more specialised in behaviour problems	48
PRU teacher's perception of	Interviewer: what about the teachers here how would describe you Participant: oh no they'll be like ah he does have his moments he's a really nice boy though he's very nice to talk to he's he's	230

participant	sweet he's kind he says like every morning I'll say hello to staff and say like say like you're alright and all that. I'm nice here cause I got to know them a lot and I know like basically a lot of staff	
PRU teacher's perception of participant	Interviewer: but generally do you think that your you were saying that the teachers here probably view you more positively than others Participant: hmm yeah Interviewer: and has that helped you in any way Participant: yeah	342

Super-ordinate theme 5: Physical intervention at the PRU

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpts	Line number
Experience of restraint	Participant: I'm calm but like I don't really kick off here not cause I've, at the start I used to be like I used to be like I used to kick off all the time and I've be I've been been in a behaviour room for 2 and a half hours with about 5 staff members restraining me every like 20 minutes and urmm now I've been in the school long enough I when I go to behaviour room I won't mind I'll go the behaviour room I'll be chill I won't kick off or anything, I'll just be calm and just get it over and done with get back to class cause I'm chilling now not really kicking off	127
Emotional impact of restraint	Interviewer: how does it make you feel when you've been restrained and you're going to the behaviour room and you're kicking off how does it make you feel Participant: makes me proper pissed off man I hate it just cause it gets me so tensed up man get me proper angry feel like I just wanna go punch staff member in the face man I don't know, get me proper vexed	134
Physical impact of restraint	Participant: … it leaves me red marks on my arm as well so Interviewer: what leaves red marks Participant: cause like they hook you like that enit they got your arms like that so you're like this [demonstrates in the air] and then they'll be like that and like that proper tight so you can't get out and yeah it proper hurts me and you get red marks all over	138

Super-ordinate theme 6: EHCP process and assessment

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Assessment process	Participant: … Just like I'm getting tested these EHCP people are getting a educational health care programme and it's basically like people come in and try and help me with my behaviour and I'm getting help people come to my house talk to me and then we go out for meetings and we like we talk to them and see what troubles what troubles me and everything	91
Diagnostic testing	Participant: … and then like like I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has adhd autism and dyslexia	95
Family experiences of diagnoses	I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has adhd autism and dyslexia and he has one of them and my mum my mum don't know what it is and like my other brother he hasn't, he hasn't been tested or diagnosed with adhd but my mum thinks he might have adhd and I know he but, me my brother and my older brother we all have anger problems and so does my sister like me my 2 brothers and my other 2 sisters we all have anger problems	95
Family experiences of diagnoses	Participant: cause, it's like it don't bother me because like my brother had to go through it	149
Length of time taken to receive support	but my other brother got tested for it when he was a kid cause like when he was a kid he wasn't getting as much help as me it took my other brother 4 years just to get him help just so then they could help him but it's not it's not took me that long took about 2 years 3 years Interviewer: 2 years to get help Participant: like 2 -3 years to get like people to come help me with stuff	156
Securing help	Interviewer: and what effect do you think it's going to have like when you leave because Participant: I don't think it's going to affect me because like I think I'm going to get a lot of help with my situation that I'm in now and I think that by the time this is all finished and I should have calmed down a whole lot more	280
Emotional response to being under assessment	Interviewer: so because you're going through the EHCP process and you are Participant: are getting tested for adhd and that and autism Interviewer: how does that make you feel Participant: it's its fine like I don't I don't mind getting tested	143

	for that stuff it doesn't really bother me that much Interviewer: whys that Participant: cause, it's like it don't bother me because like my brother had to go through it and it's I don't mind taking tests well not tests but doing like cause like to to think like you have to fill out forms like forms like you know how like how do you feel when you get angry and all that and then they'll write that up and put it all on the computer and then and then they'll start testing me and see if I have adhd, and that lot	

Super-ordinate theme 7: improvements with behaviour

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Improvements over time	Participant: I'm calm but like I don't really kick off here not cause I've, at the start I used to be like I used to be	127
Self-development over time	I think that by the time this is all finished and I should have calmed down a whole lot more hopefully and I'll more calmer in situations where normal I'd be like say like probably when I'm older there'd be situations where if I was a kid I'd be like proper pissed off I'll probably be more calmer	282
Future aspirations	Interviewer: and what about when you leave school in year 11 and you go on to do Participant: urmm I'm gonna go well I'm not gonna go college straight away I'm gonna chill for like a year probably go college and then after that wait for about 3 years after college go Uni do what I gotta do at Uni try get a degree for engineering cause I'm really good at engineering I can fix cars fix bikes, build a bike and stuff	275

Super-ordinate theme 8: lack of certainty and stability with placement

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Uncertainty for other pupils about future	Participant: depending on what situation they're in like I don't they don't some people like they don't even know what's going to happen to them and some like some of them from here will probably be successful or probably be like got a job but not a good one or some people would probably be either in pen or dead you never know what could happen, time will tell	289
Uncertainty of future placements	Interviewer: how does it feel then not knowing where you're going next Participant: I don't really wanna go the special schools really cause yeah I can't be arsed. I don't like it does annoy me not knowing where I'm gonna go but they what they doing after I finish The PRU they're going to give me and my mum a list of school that I'll be able to go to but yeah. So it'll be fine	270
Uncertainty of future placements	Interviewer: what about urmm where you're going next ? Participant: either the special schools or they're gonna try find me a mainstream school that will accept me so yeah Interviewer: mainstream school that will accept you? Participant: yeah so like (named another school) or something. Ima try get in (named another school) but I don't know if I wanna go there	264
Confusion about dual placement	like I'm still under like my actual school but like it's it's annoying because I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school cause I'm under both schools	20
Clarity over time	Participant: … you never know what could happen, time will tell	292
Clarity over time	Participant: … after I finish The PRU they're going to give me and my mum a list of school that I'll be able to go to but yeah. So it'll be fine	273

Super-ordinate theme 9: View of self

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
View of self as angry, aggressive, outburst	Participant: I dunno I just just no started about year 5 year 4 like I just started getting like proper angry I started kicking off and booting doors and putting holes through doors and everything Interviewer: so it sounds like Participant: like if I get proper pissed off I'll end up punching and putting my hand through the door Interviewer: hmmm Participant: cause like [mumbles] I can punch through a door easily	105
View of self as angry, aggressive, outburst	then I can be proper like when I'm on one and like I have these outbursts I can get proper like pissed off and you don't you don't wanna see me when I get pissed off cause if any if anyone gets in my way sorry about it but I'll probably end up punching you in your face cause that's how I am when I'm proper pissed I'll end up punching ya if you get in get in my way if you tried to stop me to do anything. Say if like I try to calm down and I go to my room and play Xbox or just chill on my phone try calm down but it's ki it's hard for me to calm down Interviewer: so you've got strategies to try and calm down	175
View of self as nice	Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that	176
View of self as nice	Participant: … like every morning I'll say hello to staff and say like say like you're alright and all that. I'm nice here	232
Lack of emotional regulation	Participant: … when I'm proper pissed I'll end up punching ya if you get in get in my way if you tried to stop me to do anything. Say if like I try to calm down and I go to my room and play Xbox or just chill on my phone try calm down but it's ki it's hard for me to calm down Interviewer: so you've got strategies to try and calm down Participant: yeah but it's hard for me to calm down Interviewer: do you feel like it's out of your control Participant: well it's not out of my control like I can calm down but it's like it takes a while takes 20 minutes half an hour or depending what the situation is it would take a short amount of time	179
Experience of diagnostic testing and in	like like I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has adhd autism and dyslexia	95

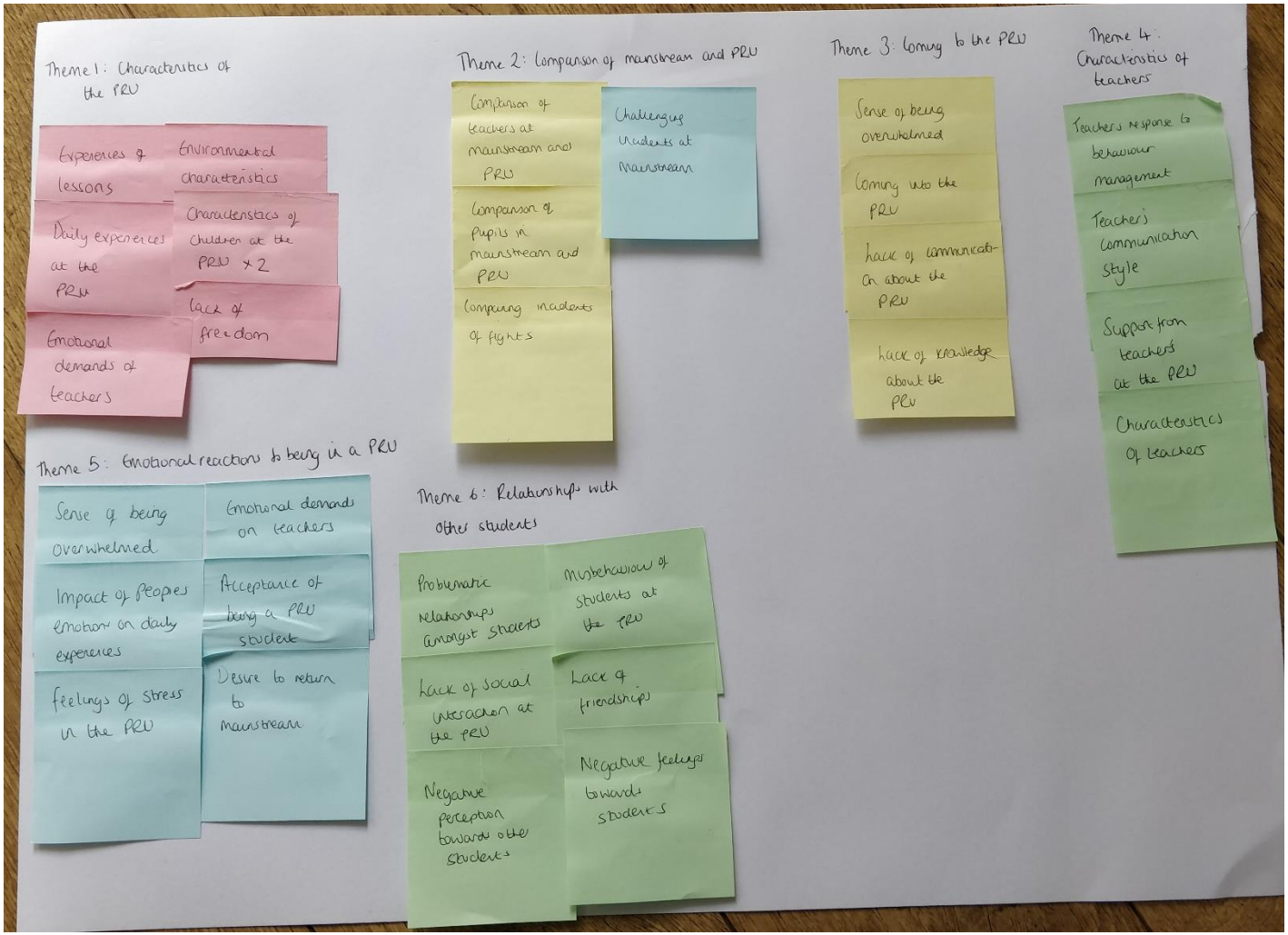
assessment		
	Participant: it's its fine like I don't I don't mind getting tested for that stuff it doesn't really bother me that much	
Lack of understanding of self	Interviewer: do you understand you Participant: no not really Interviewer: can you tell me a bit more about that Participant: I do understand myself but sometimes I don't understand why I get outbursts and stuff it's weird just don't get myself a lot	354
Parent's perception of self	Interviewer: what kind of a person would she say you were Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that but then I can be proper like when I'm on one and like I have these outbursts	174
Negative view of self by mainstream	Interviewer: what about the teachers in your old school, how would they have described you Participant: err nuisance, err difficult to say I'm a nuisance I'm a I'm a bad influence I'm I'm very naughty and they don't want me there	191
Negative view of self by mainstream	Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you. Interviewer: like you what did they mean Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. they were like they're like you Interviewer: what do they mean by that Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah	309
Behaviour and anger at home	Interviewer: hmm Participant: so yeah quite naughty at home	124
Behaviour and anger at home	Participant: someone pissed me off and there's loads of dents in my fridge as well Interviewer: hmm Participant: mum had to pay for 2 new doors Interviewer: hmm Participant: £450 for both of them	119
Desire to be understood by staff members	Participant: yeah I just wanted to come here cause I knew I wanted to get help and I wanted staff that could actually understand me and help me more than what a mainstream could do	323

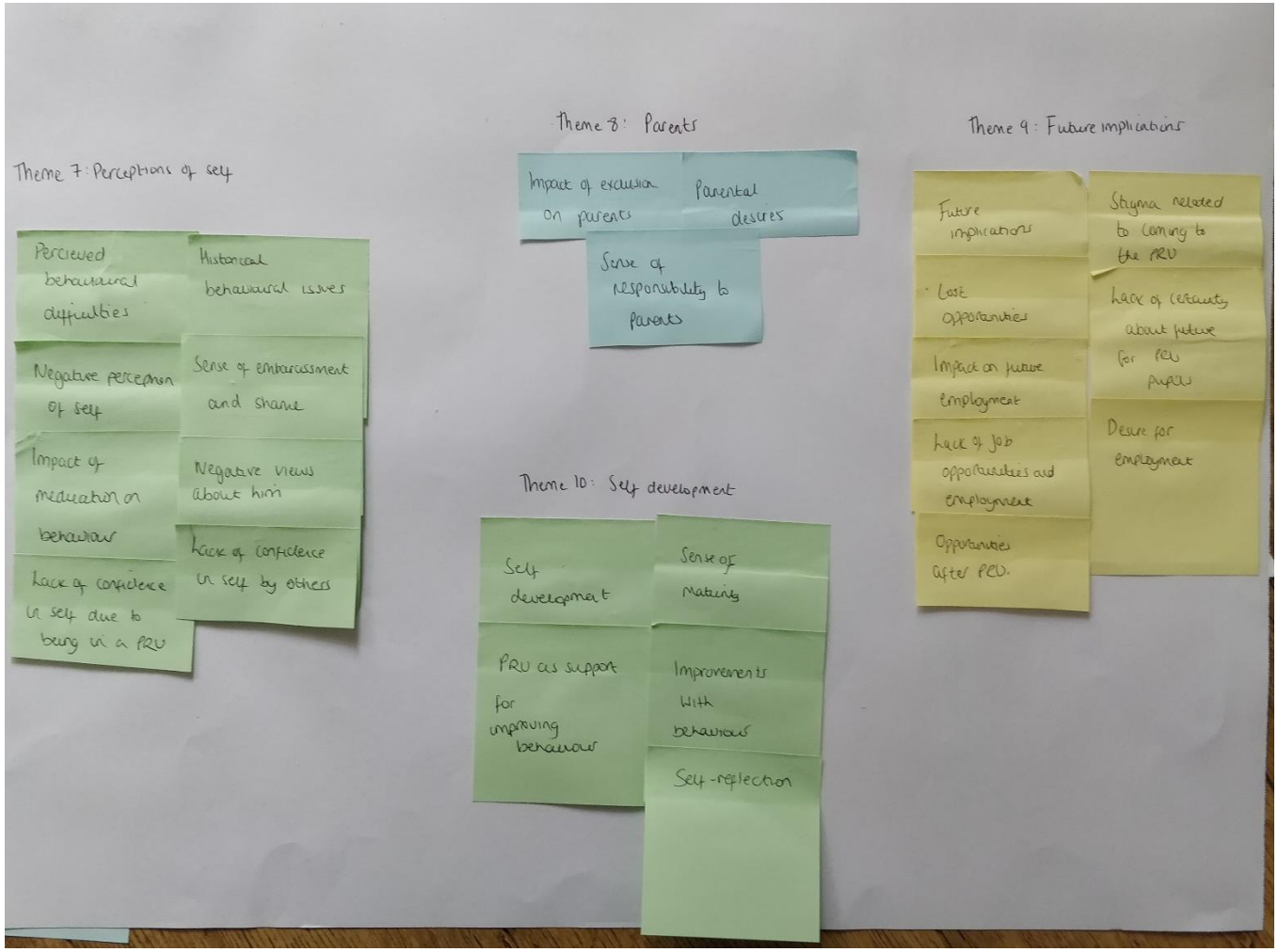
Super-ordinate theme 10: Denial and defensiveness

Emerging theme	Transcript excerpt	Line number
Denial of responsibility	Participant: I kicked it in [pause] but not my fault Interviewer: what do you mean it's not your fault Participant: someone pissed me off	117
Denial of feelings	Participant: cause they said they're not gonna accept me back in Interviewer: hmm Participant: don't really bother me I don't like that fucking school anyway bag of shit but yeah	206
Defensive against others	Interviewer: and what impact does the way other people view you how does that affect the way you see yourself Participant: it don't really affect me a lot because whatever they say about me I'm not gonna lose sleep over Interviewer: hmm Participant: ain't gonna lose no sleep don't really bother me say whatever you wanna say about me I don't really care cause I ain't gonna lose no sleep I'm not gonna care	261

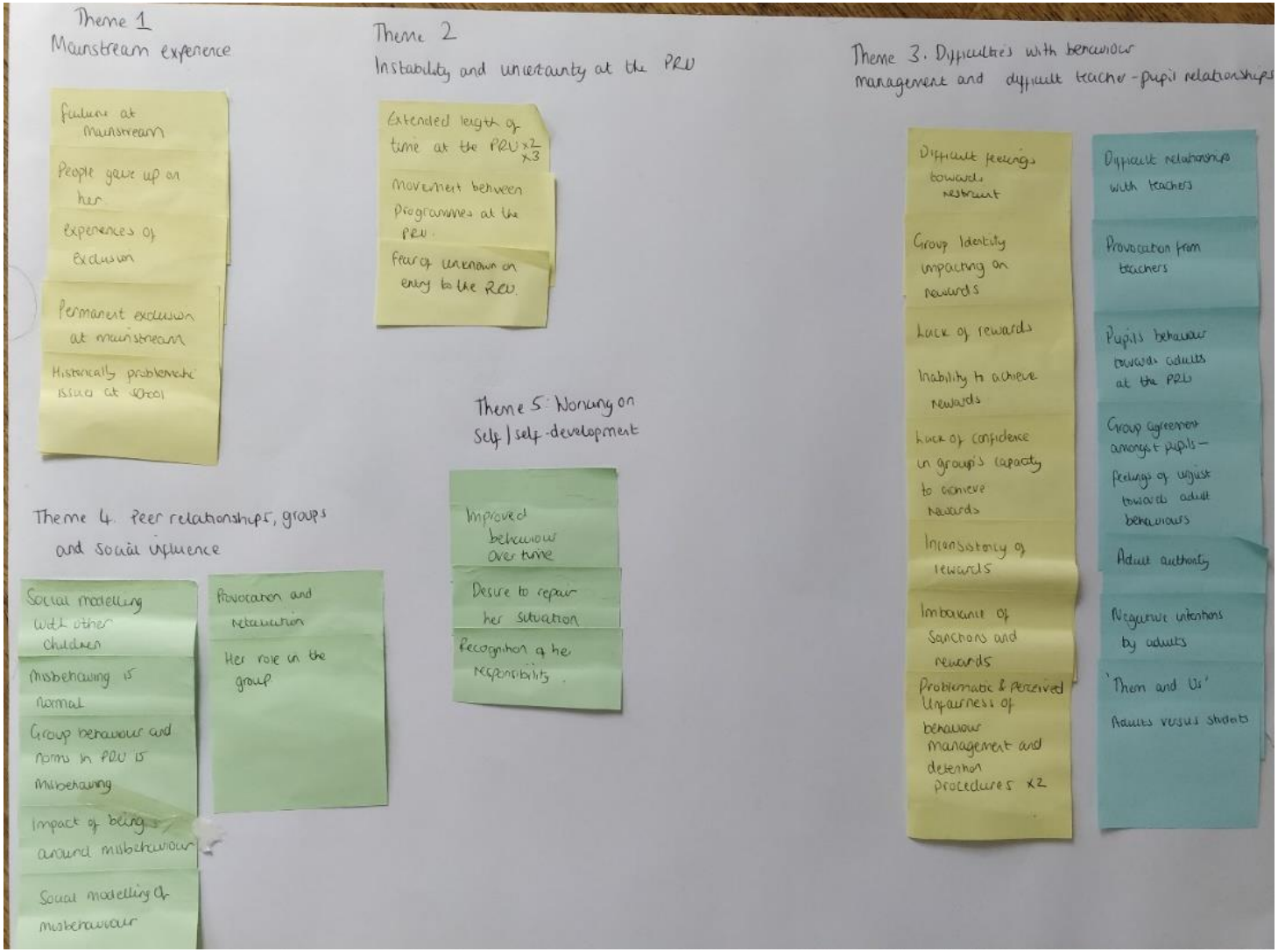
8.13 Appendix 13. Photographs of subordinate and emergent themes for individual interview

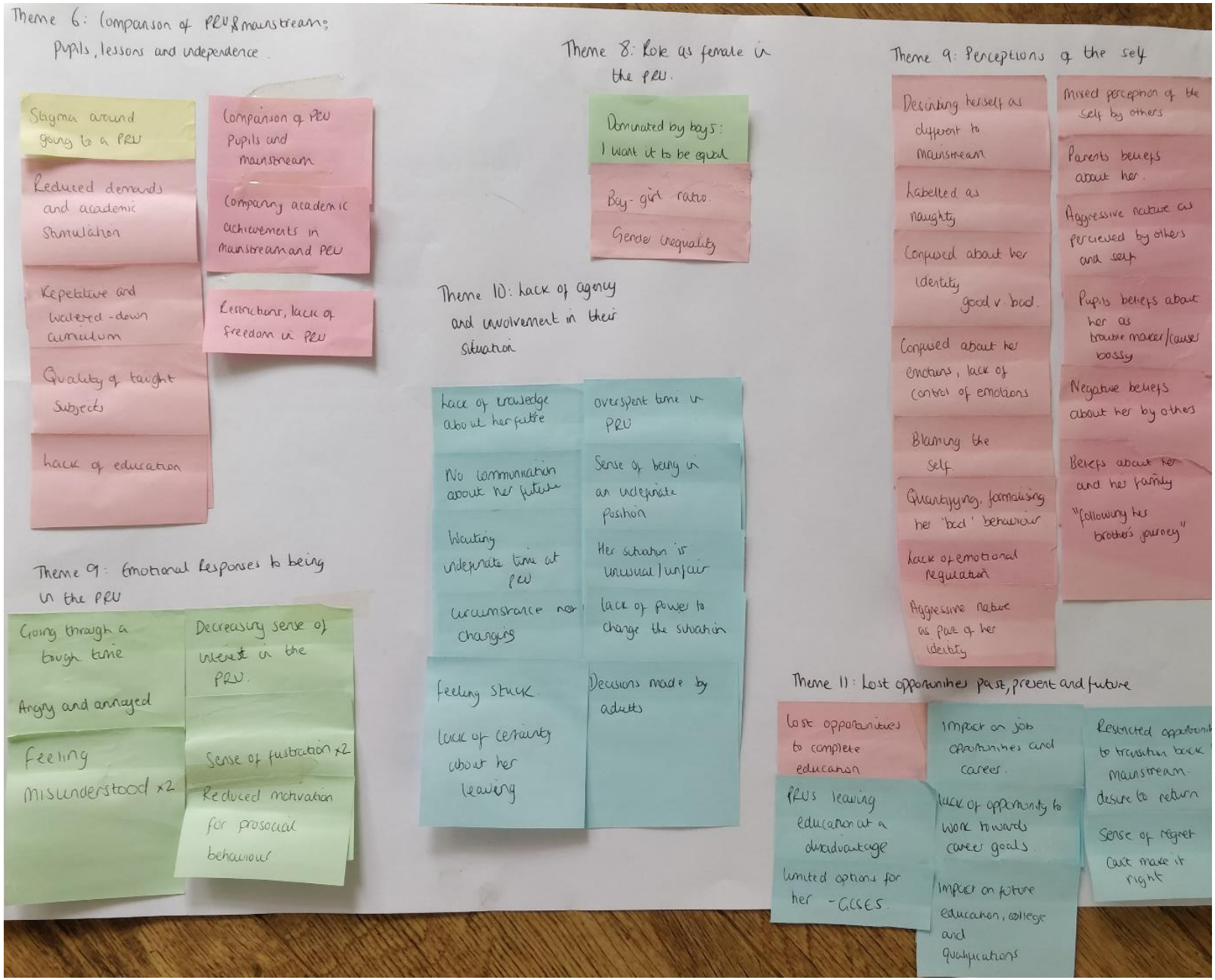
8.13.1 Charles



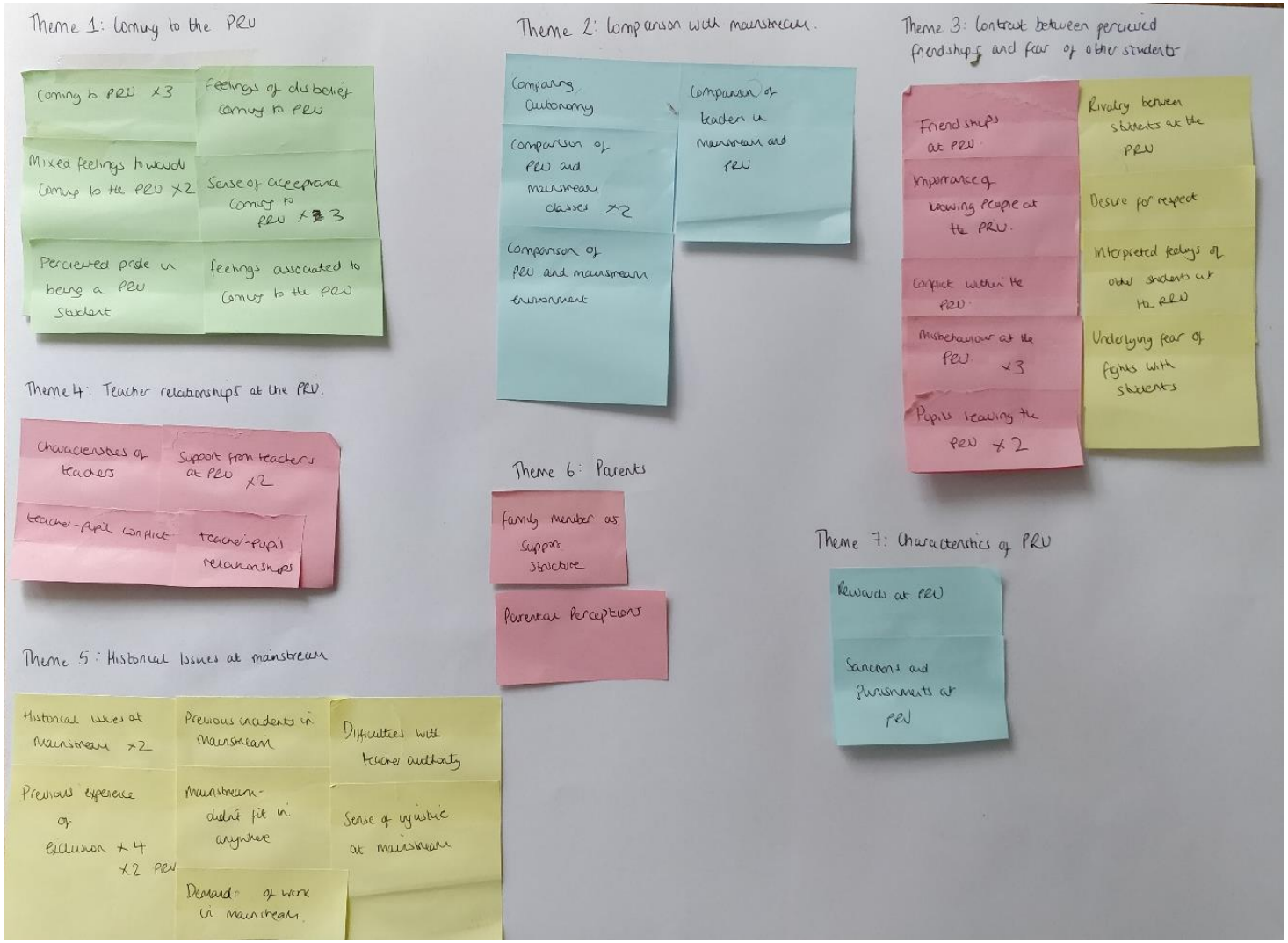

Theme 7: Perceptions of self
Perceived behavioural difficulties
Historical behavioural issues
Negative perception of self
Sense of embarrassment and shame
Impact of medication on behaviour
Negative views about him
Lack of confidence in self by others
Lack of confidence in self due to being in a PRU
Theme 8: Parents
Impact of exclusion on parents
Parental desires
Sense of responsibility to parents
Theme 9: Future implications
Future implications
Stigma related to coming to the PRU
Lost opportunities
Lack of certainty about future for PRU pupils
Impact on future employment
Desire for employment
Lack of job opportunities and employment
Opportunities after PRU.
Theme 10: Self development
Self development
Sense of maturity
PRU as support for improving behaviour
Improvements with behaviour
Self-reflection

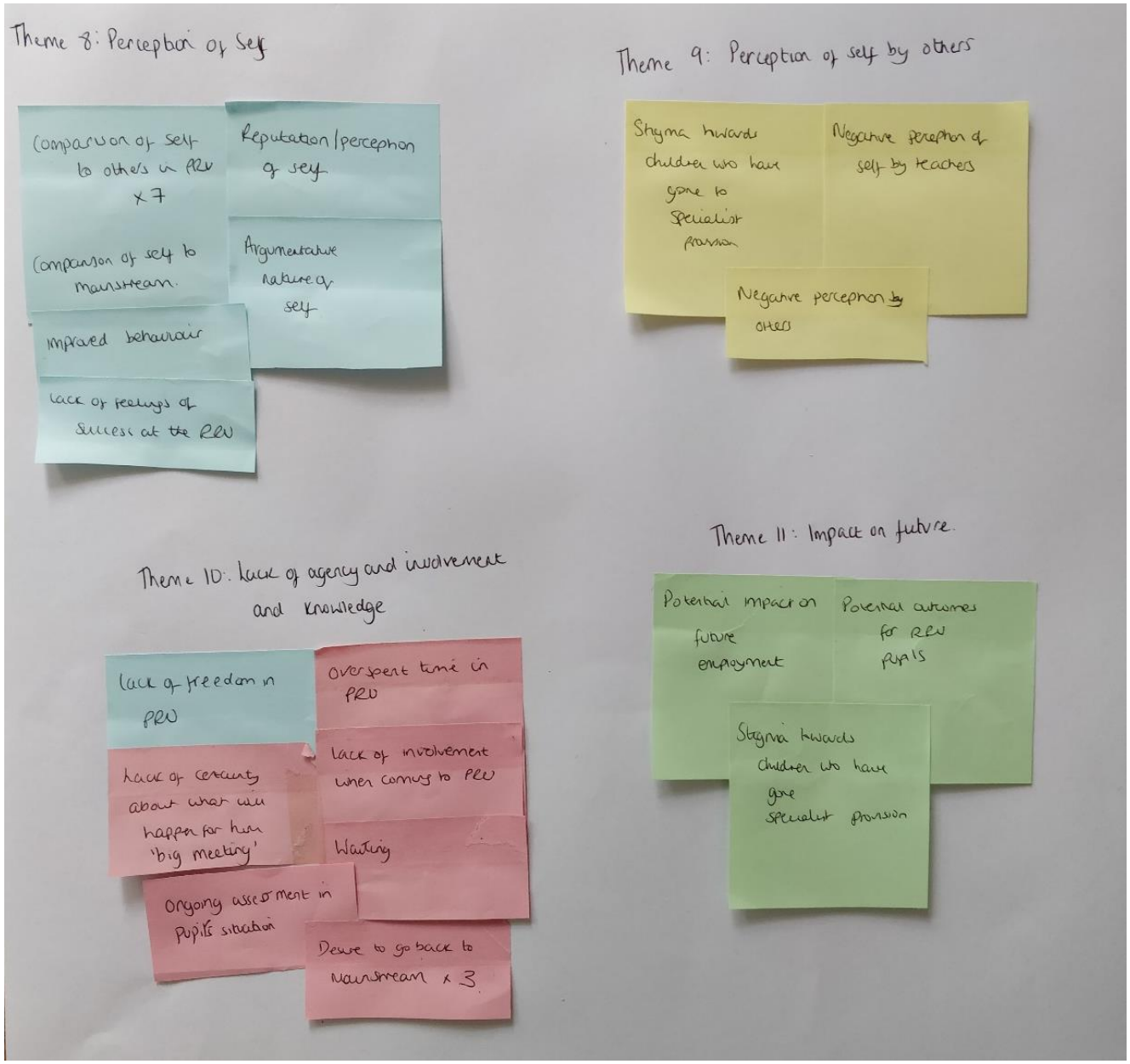
8.13.2 Jayne


Theme 1
Mainstream experience
failure at mainstream
People gave up on her
Experiences of Exclusion
Permanent exclusion at mainstream
Historically problematic issues at school
Theme 2
Instability and uncertainty at the PRU
Extended length of time at the PRU x2 x3
Movement between programmes at the PRU.
Fear of unknown on entry to the PRU.
Theme 3. Difficulties with behaviour management and difficult teacher-pupil relationships
Difficult feelings towards restraint
Group identity impacting on rewards
Lack of rewards
Inability to achieve rewards
Lack of confidence in group's capacity to achieve rewards
Inconsistency of rewards
Importance of Sanctions and rewards
Problematic & Perceived Unfairness of behaviour management and detention procedures x2
Difficult relationships with teachers
Provocation from teachers
Pupils behaviour towards adults at the PRU
Group agreement amongst pupils — feelings of injust towards adult behaviours
Adult authority
Negative intentions by adults
'Them and Us' Adults versus students
Theme 4. Peer relationships, groups and social influence
Social modelling with other children
Misbehaving is normal
Group behaviour and norms in PRU is misbehaving
Impact of being around misbehaviour
Social modelling of misbehaviour
Provocation and retaliation
Her role in the group
Theme 5: Working on Self / self-development
Improved behaviour over time
Desire to repair her situation
Recognition of her responsibility

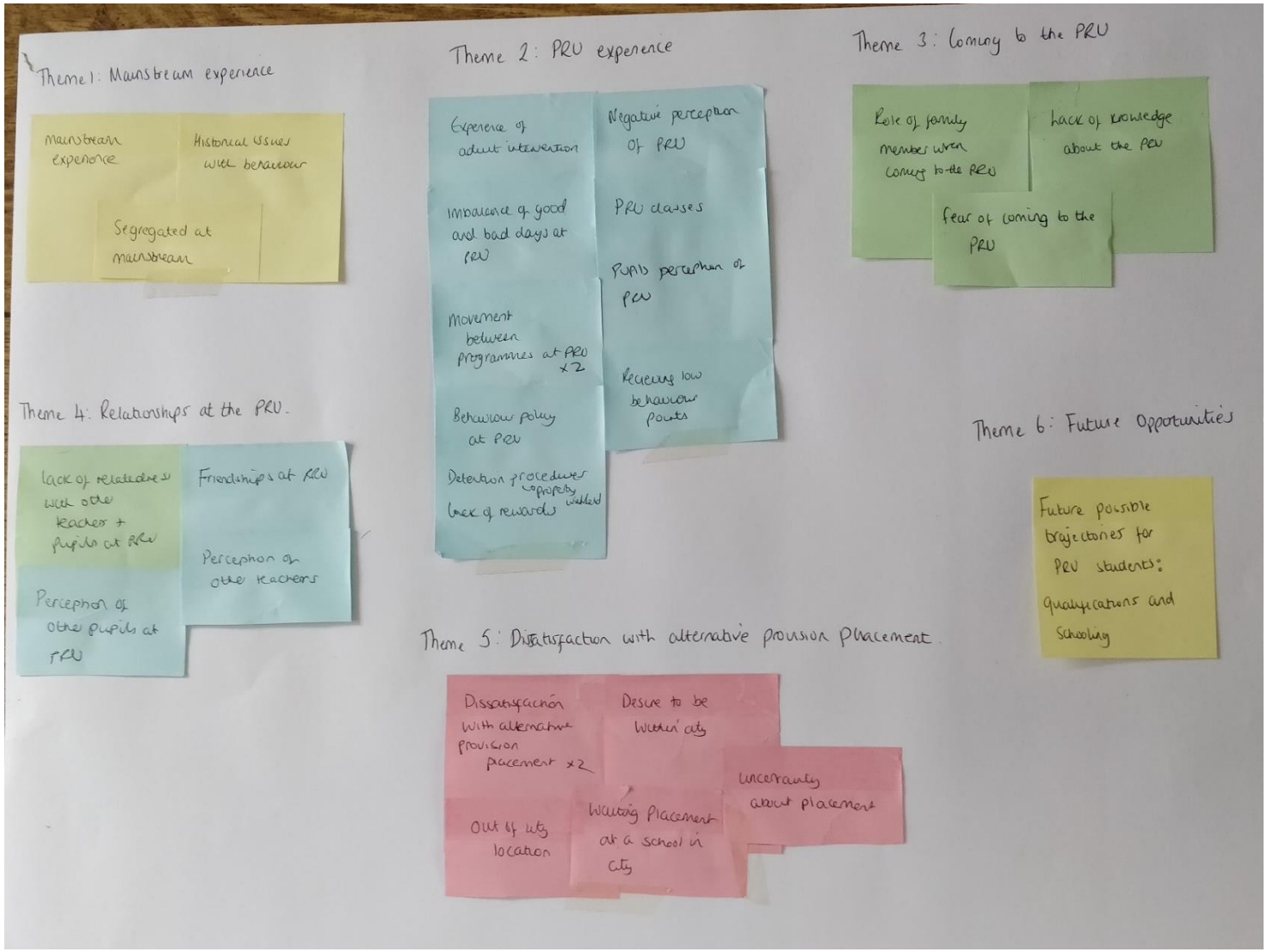

Theme 6: Comparison of PRU & mainstream: Pupils, lessons and independence.
Stigma around going to a PRU
Reduced demands and academic Stimulation
Repetative and watered-down curriculum
Quality of taught Subjects
Lack of education
Comparison of PRU Pupils and mainstream
Comparing academic achievements in mainstream and PRU
Restrictions, lack of freedom in PRU
Theme 8: Role as female in the PRU.
Dominated by boys: I want it to be equal
Boy-girl ratio.
Gender inequality
Theme 9: Perceptions of the self
Describing herself as different to mainstream
Labelled as naughty
Confused about her identity good v. bad.
Confused about her emotions, lack of control of emotions
Blaming the self.
Quantifying, formalising her 'bad' behaviour
Lack of emotional regulation
Aggressive nature as part of her identity
Mixed perception of the self by others
Parents beliefs about her.
Aggressive nature as perceived by others and self
Pupils beliefs about her as trouble maker/cause bossy
Negative beliefs about her by others
Beliefs about her and her family
"following her brothers journey"
Theme 10: Lack of agency and involvement in their situation
Lack of knowledge about her future
No communication about her future
Waiting indefinate time at PRU
Circumstance not changing
Feeling STUCK.
Lack of certainty about her leaving
Overspent time in PRU
Sense of being in an indefinate position
Her situation is unusual/unfair
Lack of power to change the situation
Decisions made by adults
Theme 9: Emotional Responses to being in the PRU
Going through a tough time
Angry and annoyed
Feeling misunderstood x2
Decreasing sense of interest in the PRU.
Sense of frustration x2
Reduced motivation for prosocial behaviour
Theme 11: Lost opportunities past, present and future
Lost opportunities to complete education
PRUs leaving education at a disadvantage
Limited options for her - GCSES.
Impact on job opportunities and career.
Lack of opportunity to work towards career goals.
Impact on future education, college and qualifications
Restricted opportunity to transition back mainstream. desire to return
Sense of regret Can't make it right

8.13.3 Ben

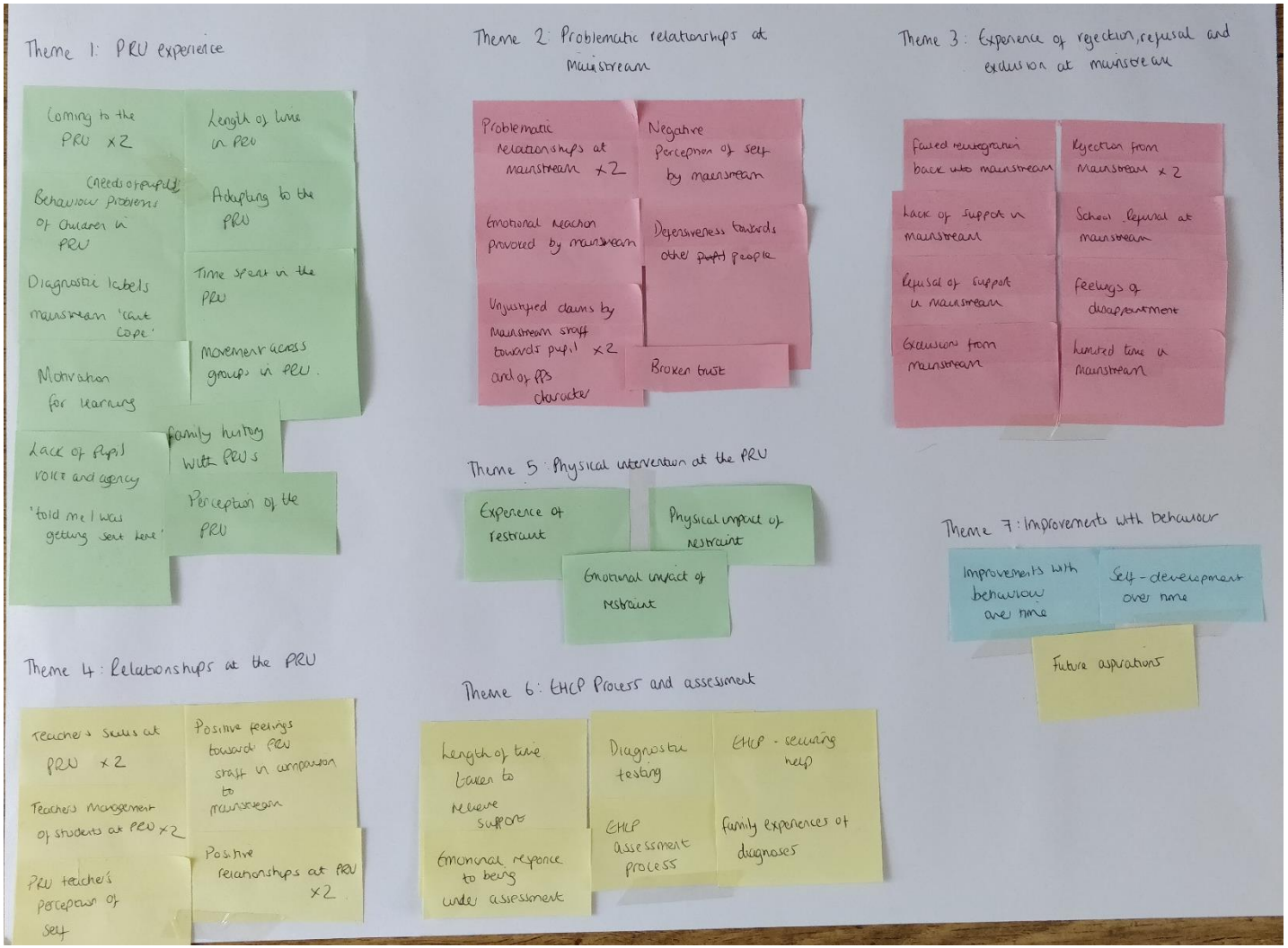

Theme 1: Coming to the PRU
Coming to PRU x3
Feelings of disbelief coming to PRU
Mixed feelings towards coming to the PRU x2
Sense of acceptance coming to PRU x3
Perceived pride in being a PRU student
feelings associated to coming to the PRU
Theme 2: Comparison with mainstream.
Comparing Autonomy
Comparison of teachers in mainstream and PRU
Comparison of PRU and mainstream classes x2
Comparison of PRU and mainstream environment
Theme 3: Contrast between perceived friendships and fear of other students
Friendships at PRU
Rivalry between students at the PRU
Importance of knowing people at the PRU.
Desire for respect
Conflict within the PRU
Interpreted feelings of older students at the PRU
Misbehaviour at the PRU x3
Underlying fear of fights with students
Pupils leaving the PRU x2
Theme 4: Teacher relationships at the PRU.
Characteristics of teachers
Support from teachers at PRU x2
Teacher-Pupil conflict
teacher-pupil relationships
Theme 6: Parents
Family member as support structure
Parental Perceptions
Theme 7: Characteristics of PRU
Rewards at PRU
Sanctions and Punishments at PRU
Theme 5: Historical issues at mainstream
Historical issues at mainstream x2
Previous incidents in mainstream
Difficulties with teacher authority
Previous experience of exclusion x4 x2 PRU
Mainstream-didn't fit in anywhere
Sense of injustice at mainstream
Demands of work in mainstream

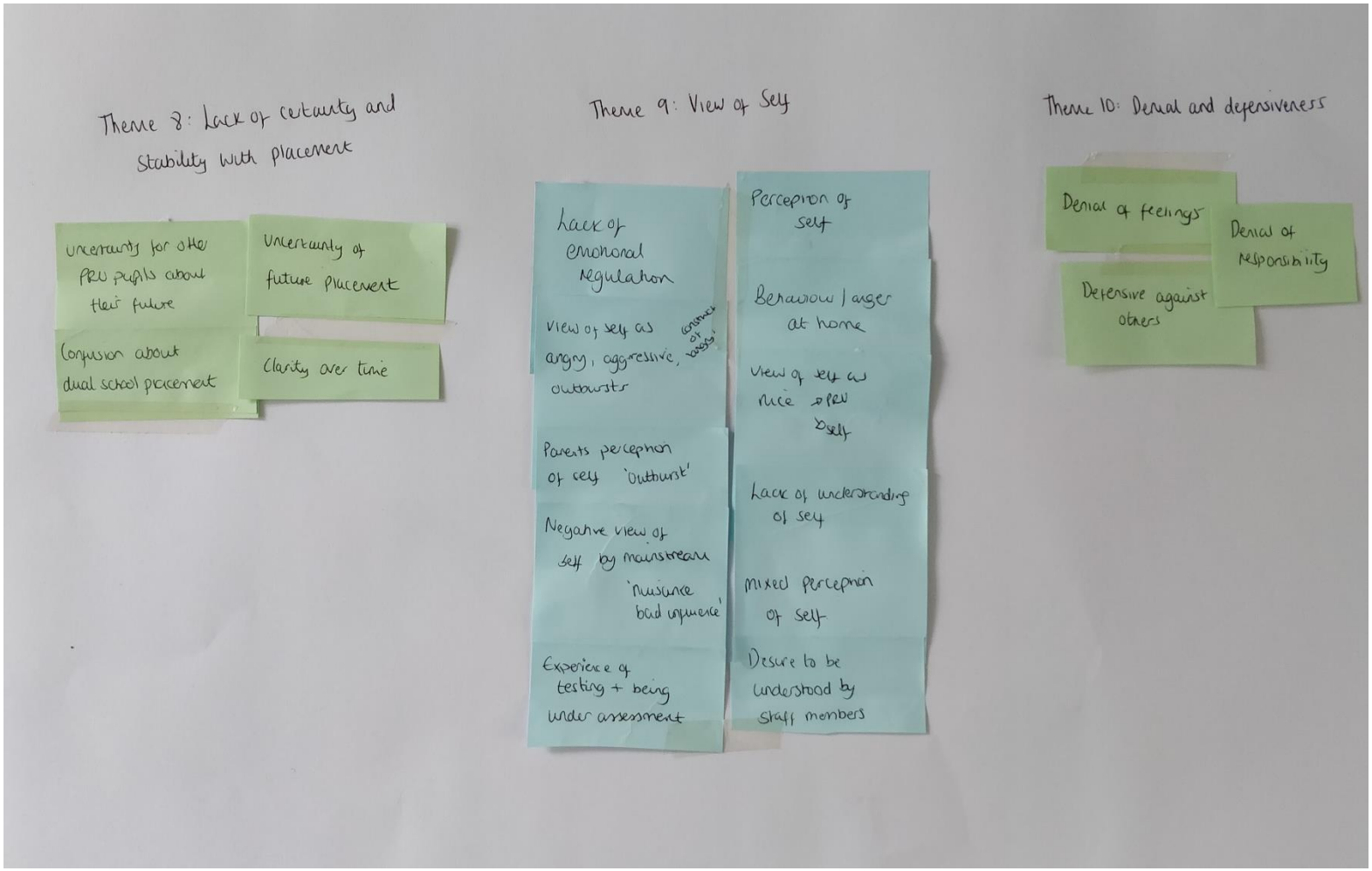

Theme 8: Perception of Self
Comparison of self to others in PRU x 7
Reputation/perception of self
Comparison of self to mainstream.
Argumentative nature of self
Improved behaviour
Lack of feelings of success at the PRU
Theme 9: Perception of self by others
Stigma towards children who have gone to Specialist Provision
Negative perception of self by teachers
Negative perception by others
Theme 10: Lack of agency and involvement and knowledge
Lack of freedom in PRU
Overspent time in PRU
Lack of certainty about what will happen for her 'big meeting'
Lack of involvement when coming to PRU
Waiting
Ongoing assessment in Pupils situation
Desire to go back to Mainstream x 3
Theme 11: Impact on future.
Potential impact on future employment
Potential outcomes for PRU pupils
Stigma towards children who have gone Specialist provision

8.13.4 Ellis


Theme 1: Mainstream experience
Mainstream experience
Historical issues with behaviour
Segregated at mainstream
Theme 2: PRU experence
Experence of adult intervention
Negative perception of PRU
Importance of good and bad days at PRU
PRU classes
Pupils perception of PRU
Movement between programmes at PRU x2
Receiving low behaviour points
Behaviour policy at PRU
Detention procedures inconsistently worked
Lack of rewards
Theme 3: Coming to the PRU
Role of family member when coming to the PRU
Lack of knowledge about the PRU
Fear of coming to the PRU
Theme 4: Relationships at the PRU.
Lack of relatedness with other teachers + pupils at PRU
Friendships at PRU
Perception of other teachers
Perception of other pupils at PRU
Theme 5: Dissatisfaction with alternative provision placement.
Dissatisfaction with alternative provision placement x2
Desire to be within city
Uncertainty about placement
Out of city location
Waiting placement at a school in city
Theme 6: Future Opportunities
Future possible trajectories for PRU students: qualifications and schooling

8.13.5 John


Theme 1: PRU experience
Coming to the PRU x2
Length of time in PRU
Needs of pupils
Behaviour Problems of Children in PRU
Adapting to the PRU
Diagnostic labels
mainstream 'can't cope'
Time spent in the PRU
Motivation for learning
movement across groups in PRU
Lack of Pupil voice and agency
family history with PRUs
'told me I was getting sent here'
Perception of the PRU
Theme 2: Problematic relationships at Mainstream
Problematic relationships at mainstream x2
Negative Perception of self by mainstream
Emotional Reaction provoked by mainstream
Defensiveness towards other pupils people
Unjustified claims by Mainstream staff towards pupil x2 and of PPS character
Broken trust
Theme 3: Experience of rejection, refusal and exclusion at mainstream
Failed reintegration back into mainstream
Rejection from Mainstream x2
Lack of support in mainstream
School Refusal at mainstream
Refusal of support in mainstream
Feelings of disappointment
Exclusion from mainstream
Limited time in Mainstream
Theme 5: Physical intervention at the PRU
Experience of restraint
Physical impact of restraint
Emotional impact of restraint
Theme 7: Improvements with behaviour
Improvements with behaviour over time
Self-development over time
Future aspirations
Theme 4: Relationships at the PRU
Teacher's skills at PRU x2
Positive feelings toward PRU staff in comparison to mainstream
Teachers Management of students at PRU x2
Positive relationships at PRU x2
PRU teacher's perception of self
Theme 6: EHCP Process and assessment
Length of time taken to receive support
Diagnostic testing
EHCP - securing help
EHCP assessment process
Family experiences of diagnoses
Emotional response to being under assessment


Theme 8: Lack of certainty and stability with placement
Uncertainty for other PRU pupils about their future
Uncertainty of future placement
Confusion about dual school placement
Clarity over time
Theme 9: View of Self
Lack of emotional regulation
View of self as angry, aggressive, outbursts
Evidence of labels
Parents perception of self 'Outburst'
Negative view of self by mainstream 'nuisance bad influence'
Experience of testing + being under assessment
Perception of self
Behaviour / anger at home
View of self as nice @ PRU & self
Lack of understanding of self
Mixed perception of self
Desire to be understood by staff members
Theme 10: Denial and defensiveness
Denial of feelings
Denial of responsibility
Defensive against others

8.14 Appendix 14. A table of prevalence of superordinate themes and subordinate themes for each Master Theme across interviews

Research question	Master Theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half of the sample? (Y/N)
How do students who attend PRUs describe their experience of being in a PRU?	Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'	x	x	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers	x	x	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'		x	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 4: Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'	x	x	x	x	x	Y
	Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'		x	x	x	x	Y
What is the perceived impact of experiences in PRUS on self-identity?	Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'	x	x	x		x	Y
	Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'	x	x	x		x	Y

	Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: ‘I wanna go back to school and get an education’	x	x	x	x	x	Y

8.15 Appendix 15. Tables to show the prevalence of superordinate themes across interviews 1-5 for each Master Theme

8.15.1 Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Perception of the PRU : 'they was like it's a behaviour school'	x	x	x	x	X	Y
Failure at mainstream: 'ain't even been in mainstream a full year'		x	x		X	Y
Feelings towards coming to the PRU: 'I just couldn't believe I got expelled'	x	x	x	x	X	Y
Sense of acceptance over time	X		x		X	Y
Movement across groups	x	x		X	X	Y

8.15.2 Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Relationships with other PRU students	x	x	x	x		Y
Negative perception of other students and their	x	x	x	x	X	Y

behaviour: 'they're different compared to the other kids I know'						
Supportive relationships with teachers: 'they chat to ya as friend'	x	x	x		x	Y
Conflict with teachers		x		X		N

8.15.3 Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Perceived imbalance of punishment, sanctions and rewards: 'no-one's actually got a reward'	x	x	x	X		Y
Physical intervention		x		x	X	Y
Adults' response to challenging behaviour		x	x	x	x	Y

8.15.4 Master Theme 4: Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Lessons: 'it's stupid lessons'	x	x	x	x	X	Y
Environment: 'you've got behaviour rooms'	x		x	X		Y
Restrictions: 'you can't actually get away'	x	x	x			Y
Mainstream experience: 'our class was all the leftov-'			x	x	X	Y

8.15.5 Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Confusion and dissatisfaction: 'I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school'				x	x	N
EHCP process and assessment					X	N
Lack of knowledge and communication: 'no-one knows what's going on here'		X	x	x	x	Y
Waiting		x	x		X	Y
Overspent time in the PRU		x	x		X	Y

8.15.6 Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Negative perception of self: ''it's like me with anger problems'	x	x			X	Y
Mixed views of self: 'good but bad'		x	x		x	Y
Lack of emotional regulation: 'they'd want me to fight and fights would happen'		x	x		X	Y
Comparison to others in PRU: 'they're comparing me to them, I'm not really like them'		x		x	X	Y
Medication and diagnoses: 'I'm getting tested'	x				x	N
Self-blame, embarrassment and shame: 'I wish I didn't mess about'	x	x				N

8.15.7 Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Parent's perceptions: 'she understood I do have a little bit of anger'	x	x	x		X	Y
Perception of others: 'he's a naughty child get him out'	x	x	x		X	Y
Stigma: 'he's been expelled, he's a trouble maker'	x	x	x		X	Y

8.15.8 Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'

Superordinate theme	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Present in over half the interviews
Future implications: 'All they'll see is he's been expelled he's a troublemaker, get rid'	x	x	X			Y
Future opportunities	x	x		x	X	Y
Self-development and learning: 'I'm proud'	x	x	x		x	Y

8.16 Appendix 16. Tables to show cross-analysis and development of Master Themes for all interviews

8.16.1 Master Theme 1: Failing at mainstream and entering a 'behaviour school': 'obviously I didn't want to go there'

Coming to the PRU	
Perception of the PRU : 'they was like it's a behaviour school'	Participant:… teachers were like if you keep misbehaving then you'll go to a PRU, and like it just sound of a PRU it sounded like weird it's like Interviewer: yeah Participant: yeah Interviewer: what do you mean by weird Participant: it it doesn't sound right do you know what I mean (Charles, line number 77) Participant: cause I didn't know what it was it's like na Interviewer: you didn't know what it was? Participant: na not at all it's like what's the PRU (Charles, line number 99) Interviewer: so how did you know you was coming to the PRU? How was it communicated to you? Participant: obviously they used to, they used… how the way I knew I was coming here cause they'd always used to say I think it's time you go to this place Interviewer: what's this place? Participant: Here Interviewer: What did they call it? Participant: They said I think it's time for you to start to just go and see what's it like, urmm (named PRU), And I was like what's that, And they was like it's a behaviour school, And I was like well no it's not a behaviour school it's just a place where they think you can just settle down your behaviour a bit and then you can come back school that's what they said to me and obviously my mum went mad and everything (Jayne, line number 324) Interviewer: but I get the impression you don't want to stay here Participant: no I hate it honestly here (John, line number 521) Interviewer: So the first part of the interview is just for you to tell me what it's like here at the PRU Participant: it's alright like uh well when I knew I was gonna come here I was like oh no new school I need to make new friends I found out like half my mates from my old school came here so after that I

	was just fine with everything (Ben, line number 2) Participant:…I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me (Ben, line number 287) Participant: I didn't really wanna be here and I thought it was just full of dickheads and they were all mean but they weren't and it turned out to be they're actually really nice Interviewer: who told you about the PRU? Participant: hmm well I just got told that I was getting sent here so (John, line number 302) Interviewer: would you say it's a good place to be, would you say … Participant: bad place to be Interviewer: it's a bad place to be, whys that then? Participant: I don't know (Ellis, line number 94) Interviewer: do you have more good days or more bad days? Participant: both… never had a good day here (Ellis, line number 140) Interviewer: at your old school? And how did people describe the PRU to you, what did they say, where did they say you were going? Participant: The PRU Interviewer: did you know anything about it? Participant: (shakes head) (Ellis, line number 15) Interviewer: who told you about the PRU? Participant: hmm well I just got told that I was getting sent here so (John, line number 304) Interviewer: and what did they tell you the PRU was? Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you. (John, line number 308) Participant: … I was like well obviously I were I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me Interviewer: yeah Participant: I have to go, I was in the car Interviewer: you weren't in the meeting Participant: no I was supposed to be but I didn't wanna go in (Ben, line number 287)
Failure at mainstream:	Interviewer: do you feel like they gave up on you Participant: yeah they have they gave up on me a long time ago, year

'ain't even been in mainstream a full year'	7, 6 weeks of being in year 7 I was already in a behaviour school. I ain't even been in mainstream school for a full year (John, line number 210) Participant: … I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day (John, line number 17) Participant: yeah because this is my 2nd time being expelled isn't it? I got expelled from primary (Ben, line number 87) Participant: urmm so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day but it was only for 6 weeks and then I went back to school and obviously got excluded on the first day back and then I came into Patrick's group and I been here just before we started summer holidays (Jayne, line number 22) Participant: …I was just thinking I was at the PRU for 6 months and it weren't even that long, but obviously I didn't go back to, I didn't go back to my old school cause they kicked me out fully so I was just waiting till urmm till the end of year till everybody moves up (Ben, line number 349)
Feelings towards coming to the PRU: 'I just couldn't believe I got expelled'	Interviewer: so you've been here about 4 months, what did you think when you came here? Participant: scared (Ellis, line number 10) Participant: well when I first I thought at my old school I weren't gonna get expelled I thought I wasn't gonna get expelled I thought isolation seclusion get it over and done with but like I just couldn't believe I got expelled (Ben, line number 475) Interviewer: and when you said someone that the teacher at (named old school) said oh I might if you carry on behaving like that you're going to go to a PRU you said it that sounded weird um how did you feel about here and the PRU? Participant: shocked yeah shocked (Charles, line number 91) Participant: urmm someone that didn't know much about it err, I dunno it's like it's a lot to take in I guess (Charles, line number 75) Participant: … I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have here

	(Jayne, line number 261) Interviewer: how did you feel about it? Participant: I felt upset because I didn't wanna leave school but I but at the same time I did … (Jayne, line number 311) Participant: I was like I wer- I'm not going here, like come on (Ben, line number 281) Interviewer: yeah urmm, how do you feel about the PRU how do you feel about [name]? Participant: at the start of it I was scared but happy as well but like but as I all the people from my old school are gone now and there's only one person I know (Ben, line number 147) Participant: but but [stammers] like I was more scared because, because from primary I was a small kid and everybody else was little Interviewer: yeah Participant: but in here I'm a littler person and there's loads of more tall kids Interviewer: yeah so do you find that scary here Participant: a little bit (Ben, line number 94) Participant: I didn't really wanna be here and I thought it was just full of dickheads and they were all mean but they weren't and it turned out to be they're actually really nice Interviewer: who told you about the PRU? Participant: hmm well I just got told that I was getting sent here so (John, line number 302) Interviewer: hmm okay so when you came here what was your reaction Participant: err my first reaction was like why the fuck do I have to come to this shitty school like at first I thought it was a bag of crap (John, line number 296)
Sense of acceptance over time	Participant: err my first reaction was like why the fuck do I have to come to this shitty school like at first I thought it was a bag of crap and then as I got to be here for like over a year now it's I've adapted to the ways of the actual school and it's it feel it don't feel crap nomore it feels better than what it used to (John, line number 297) Interviewer: hm and how is she now with you being here at the PRU? Participant: she's alright about, it err I told her I'm going to start behaving and she wants me to go back to school (Charles, line number 381)

	Interviewer: you didn't believe it Participant: no and then I just accepted it (Ben, line number 479)
Movement across groups	Participant: that was in year 7 and then year 8 I was here 2 day weren't I and then I went to 5 day like mid-way through year 8 (Jayne, line number 318) Participant: first time I started I was in 2 day and then like a month or like a couple so a about 5 months after I went to like I did Monday Tuesday and that and then I started Friday group and then I finished the Monday Tuesday group and then when I went back to my my normal school the first two days I kicked off but then like they were like oh yeah were putting you in 5 day (John, line number 15) Interviewer: are you here every day? Participant: 2 days, I was here everyday (Charles, line number 100) Interviewer: how long have you been on the 5-day programme Participant: urmm so I went 2 day and then they moved me to 5 day because they thought I had to be here 5 day but it was only for 6 weeks and then I went back to school and obviously got excluded on the first day back and then I came into (named teacher at PRU)'s group and I been here just before we started summer holidays (Jayne, line number 21) Participant: urmm it was alright cause I got on with loads of people in that class and I'm still mates right now with one of the people that was in there but obviously I went back to school now and I thought I was going back to Pete's group I was like oh I'm going back to Pete's group but na I was in Stevens group and the people in there I didn't really get along with and they have gone now there's only 3 people left and it's really boring (Jayne, line number 46) Interviewer: yeah what about your form tutor. If I was to say to here tell me about Participant: what would she say? Participant: ask her I don't know I haven't been in that class long (Ellis, line number 253)

8.16.2 Master Theme 2: Positive and provocative relationships with students and teachers

Superordinate themes	Transcript excerpts from interviews 1-5
Relationships with other PRU students	Participant: I just don't have mates and friends and that I just don't like speaking to anyone (Charles, line number 254) Participant:… got new friends here ain't I so I'm happy (Ben, line number 155) Participant: because because I I know because I got more mates at my old school it's more fun, right (Ben, line number 165) Participant: they are ni- they are kind, you you got some that just don't ha- you know when you get people you don't like and you just don't wanna be around you got kids who you like and like you just wanna be friends with them (Ben, line number 186) Participant: well obviously me and Jayne* got that relationship that we fight playfight 24 7, right, so like like I think she's like yeah like he's annoying don't like him but even like we like were mates secretly (Ben, line number 377) Interviewer: do you have friends? Participant: friends one of my new friends err ain't in that group I knew him from primary school (Ellis, line number 214) Participant: … urmm normally I'd behave and just chill out really normally, I'll keep myself to myself at lunch now Interviewer: at lunchtime? Participant: yeah I don't like speaking to people Interviewer: you don't like speaking to people? Participant: no (Charles, line number 21) Participant: I don't hate people I just don't like speaking to people (Charles, line number 252)

	Interviewer: so is there a lot of girls here? Participant: no Interviewer: no? Participant: mostly boys Interviewer: so how is that for you being a girl here? Participant: a bit frustrating Interviewer: whys that? Participant: because there ain't many girls, I don't like boys (Jayne, line number 232) Participant:… I want it to be equal like a mainstream school like loads of girls and loads of boys (Jayne, line number 244) Interviewer: yeah urmm, how do you feel about the PRU how do you feel about [name]? Participant: at the start of it I was scared but happy as well but like but as I all the people from my old school are gone now and there's only one person I know (Ben, line number 147) Interviewer: so you think some of the kids in your class are weird because they do dirty stuff and say dirty stuff Participant: Not in my class some different people Interviewer: in the PRU? Participant: hmm Interviewer: here at The PRU? Are you different to them? Participant: [nods head] (Ellis, line number 246) Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause] (Jayne, line number 366) Interviewer: what difference do you think that means in that group? Participant: they can't hit me back so I'm gonna take everything I can to hit em well (named pupil) does hit back but he's weak you know what I mean so [laughs] but it's funny but we've been separated though so we can't hit and kick and argu- we still argue (Jayne, line number 386) Participant: no but yeah at the same time if they piss me off then I'll be like fine then I'll do something to piss you off you know what I mean cause I like revenge, (Jayne, line number 403) Interviewer: yeah so do you find that scary here Participant: a little bit

	Interviewer: yea okay Participant: but but but [stammers] I know they wouldn't touch me in school like hurt me because like they'd get in trouble they'd rather do it out of school but I live on the other side of town so (Ben, line number 98) Participant: because one of my mate, what's his name, [name] from the other class, he urmm he just got told a boy [name] to shut up, all his mates like [name] and everyone is after him well was after him (Ben, line number 78)
Negative perception of other students and their behaviour: 'they're different compared to the other kids I know'	Participant: and then they start like shouting at teachers and that (Charles, line number 169) Interviewer: you get along with all the teachers okay, and what happens on a bad day? Participant: fights. and a lot of stress for the staff I guess and I dunno not staff but I guess it's annoying it's loud and yeah [pause] (Charles, line number 117) Participant: what about here? don't come here it's tough because it I don't know because of all the others obviously negative behaviour around ya you start to think it's okay to start misbehaving and that's why I'm still here because obviously cause everyone else misbehaves obviously I misbehave (Jayne, line number 109) Participant: … it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya (Jayne, line number 129) Interviewer: okay and what about what happens on a bad day? Participant: there's loads of kids in behaviour rooms kicking walls making marks punching teachers getting in trouble getting detentions (Ben, line number 144) Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument (Ben, line number 175) Interviewer: so tell me about the bad days then, why are they bad what's happening? Participant: I don't know Interviewer: what makes them bad? Participant: silly comments and that Interviewer: from? Participant: from me and my friends (Ellis, line number 144) Participant: yeah and now I've came here I've seen what it's like from like people fighting and people shouting at teachers and that

	and people arguing, it just makes you look like a div really Interviewer: makes them look like a div? Participant: hmm (Charles, line number 179) Interviewer: … do you agree that they are rude? Participant: yeah Interviewer: okay arrogant? Participant: yeah (Charles, line number 67) Participant: don't worry because it's not a big thing, right , and just get it over and done with, and hopefully you'll find another school, and just don't make no one mad, really, if you say something horrible to someone the whole lots after ya, if ya get me Interviewer: so what do you mean by that? Participant: like so so so if you tell someone to shut up all their mates will hate ya and they'll want to fight ya (Ben, line number 68) Participant: they're different compared to the kids that I know, like, because, like one little thing a teacher says it sets them off they walk out big argument Interviewer: yeah [pause] so that's what some of the kids are like here, they're different to one's that.. (Ben, line number 175) Interviewer:urm how would you describe them? Participant: some of them are fun Interviewer: some of them Participant: some of them are annoying Interviewer: annoying? What makes them annoying? Participant: weird Interviewer: how so? Participant: they do weird things (Ellis, line number 228) Participant:… say if like they're not mainstream yeah and the mainstream can't cope with them they'll come they'll either send them here but if they're too naughty think they won't cope here then they'll go to (named special school) (John, line number 65)
Supportive relationships with teachers: 'they chat to ya as friend'	Participant: and here they help you more (Charles, line number 33) Participant: this one's a lot more it's like the teachers here are better and basically the teachers there they would if you got into a fight they'd just throw you in behaviour room and keep you there all day then they'll talk to ya and you'll get detention, here if you get into a

	fight I guess it's like you go in behaviour room you get spoke to (Charles, line number 19) Interviewer: so to finish then, what's helping you here? Participant: more or less like Patrick like like he's like he teaches he teaches you in a kid manner (Jayne, line number 482) Participant: it's fun like because like you got teachers in mainstream schools saying do this do that but the teachers here they talk to you 1 on 1 and they help they help ya (Ben, line number 115) Participant: because because the teachers here co co cooperate, I can't say it, cooperate Interviewer: cooperate Participant: yeah that's it, like they talk to ya do st-, they do stuff where at my old school work there done don't do it you get a detention after (Ben, line number 192) Participant: yeah I just wanted to come here cause I knew I wanted to get help and I wanted staff that could actually understand me and help me more than what a mainstream could do (John, line number 323) Interviewer: but generally do you think that your you were saying that the teachers here probably view you more positively than others Participant: hmm yeah Interviewer: and has that helped you in any way Participant: yeah (John, line number 342) Interviewer: okay so what kinds of skills do you need then? Participant: for what? Interviewer: like to be a teacher here Participant: I have no idea. I guess it can take it will take a lot of uh, what's the word [pause] I guess it will take to be really really calm (Charles, line number 159) Participant: you wouldn't want a teacher that's fed up and don't like kids obviously (Charles, line number 148) Interviewer: hmm hmm okay so they talk to you more one on one here? Participant: hmm Interviewer: and help you in what way? Participant: like they they like they chat to you as a friend like when wh when like as you're writing they chat to ya, saying if you're okay and everything,

	(Ben, line number 118) Interviewer: in a PRU then isn't so at my old school you're doing lots of work maybe talking less to the teachers and here they're talking to you a bit more? Participant: hmm getting to know you more (Ben, line number 127) Interviewer: so why do you think the teachers are different here Participant: cause they they can handle with like mainstream yeah there are some teachers that can handle with behaviour but like here they're more specialised in behaviour problems cause they've like they've dealt with kids from four other schools, saf, wherever, they'll go they'll go The PRU, but chilling it's actually calm I like it (John, line number 47)
Conflict with teachers	Participant: I dunno, if someone's annoyed I guess they'll argue with someone I dunno though Participant: like, you're having a good day they'll they'll say something like, they'll wind you up, like they can't just leave you to have like be in a good mood if you know what I mean, like when were in the lunchroom like were all laughing and they always say you're too loud, and were loud, we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything, whereas in school you're allowed to be as loud as you want at lunch and breaktime it's your own time (Jayne, line number 90) Participant: … no well it's one of the teachers and everyone, everyone hates him, (Jayne, line number 61) Interviewer: okay so Miss Peters and Tim what are the teachers like here Participant: don't like some of them Interviewer: you don't like some of them how come? Participant: [no response] Interviewer: what is it about them that you don't like? Participant: just don't like them Interviewer: is it the way they talk? Is it the way they dress? Participant: no Interviewer: Is it the way they teach? What is it then? Participant: don't know just don't like them (Ellis, line number 263) Interviewer: okay so what are the main differences between

	Fraywood School and your previous schools and the PRU Participant: urmm oh it's hard to explain it's not the same, these teachers here they'll dig and dig and dig for you to like, oh what's the word I forget the words, they used to just like, oh my god I've forgot the word I don't know what the word is, err, for you to react basically they'll dig at you for your to react and give them a reaction out of ya (Jayne, line number 52)

8.16.3 Master Theme 3: Unfair behaviour management procedures: 'I never got restrained at mainstream'

Superordinate themes	Transcript excerpts from interviews 1-5
Perceived imbalance of punishment, sanctions and rewards: 'no-one's actually got a reward'	Interviewer: okay so what happens on a good day at the PRU? Participant: uhh well a good day probably not really, it's like it's all chilled out and they let you watch a film and whatever and if it's last day of term then you watch a film uh it's chilled out really on a good day (Charles, line number 102) Interviewer: so what happens on a good day here? Participant: just go, you just, you you [stammers] get urmm good points, like in lesson when you get good points it makes ya more happy, and it just makes you get through the day quicker (Ben, line number 130) Interviewer: don't you get rewards? Participant: no, no rewards, no one's actually got a reward (Jayne, line number 158) Interviewer: no it's not not because of the group I'm in but they don't they just in general you don't really get good rewards, and the reward box over there no one's actually achieved none of those (Jayne, line number 198) Participant: you get a 5 if you get a you can get heroic lanyard or you get creative Participant: You get 5s and 4s and 3s you can get creative or you can get a heroic lanyard Interviewer: A grey lanyard? Participant: heroic Interviewer: heroic lanyard. And what happens if you get a heroic lanyard like that? Participant: you get chocolate and rewards (Ellis, line number 156) Participant: like I've not had one this week (Ellis, line number 169) if you have bad you get a cross and if you're good you get a tick and if you get like loads of ticks you get you'll earn rewards for the next day but if you got a cross that would overtake the ticks you won't get a good reward, you wouldn't get what you would normally get (Jayne, line number 34) Participant: let out, at a normal time, like if you've been bad obviously you gotta do a detention,, ahh annoying, but sometimes they can still try dig at ya, right at the end of the day if you've had a

	good day they'll try dig at ya and if you give them a reaction they'll go right behaviour room and you stay there (Jayne, line number 151) Participant: everything you used to be able to do at Fraywood School* you can't do it here, cannot do it here even in detention say if you had half an hour detention and you never done it you'll have to do an hour the next day, these they don't give none of your stuff back, get a phone call home, you get double that detention, it's just, it's just annoying (Jayne, line number 101)
Physical intervention	Participant: basically, I started year 7 there was a teacher called Miss Peters* and like, she used I hate it when people like always getting up in your face it just annoys me and obviously I don't like people touching me either that's why, obviously I've be- I've only been restrained here 3 times in the amount I've been here, the time I've been here, because I don't like being touched they say well have to move you there I'll just be like fine I'll go there myself, like I hate being touched, and one time Miss Peters she used to always do it, she literally she worked in Hayward School* now, but err, and one time she got on my nerves and I shouted in her face, like obviously I didn't mean to it just came out at time and obviously ca I do it one I kept doing it again and then obviously my anger elevated from there and then obviously as time went through as I was in year 7 I started to be a bit naughty and start like to not listen to none of the teachers, cause I used to think oh well you can't really do anything … that's what I used to think and you can't keep me in for detention cause I'll just walk out the gates whereas these they can restrain you and everything (Jayne, line number 282) Interviewer: so tell me a bit about the restraining then? They didn't do that at your old school but they do that here? Participant: they did, but I never got restrained at my old school (Ellis, line number 55) Participant: I'm calm but like I don't really kick off here not cause I've, at the start I used to be like I used to be like I used to kick off all the time and I've be I've been been in a behaviour room for 2 and a half hours with about 5 staff members restraining me every like 20 minutes and urmm now I've been in the school long enough I when I go to behaviour room I won't mind I'll go the behaviour room I'll be chill I won't kick off or anything, I'll just be calm and just get it over and done with get back to class cause I'm chilling now not really kicking off (John, line number 127)

	Interviewer: how does it make you feel when you've been restrained and you're going to the behaviour room and you're kicking off how does it make you feel Participant: makes me proper pissed off man I hate it just cause it gets me so tensed up man get me proper angry feel like I just wanna go punch staff member in the face man I don't know, get me proper vexed it leaves me red marks on my arm as well so Interviewer: what leaves red marks Participant: cause like they hook you like that enit they got your arms like that so you're like this [demonstrates in the air] and then they'll be like that and like that proper tight so you can't get out and yeah its proper hurts me and you get red marks all over (Ellis, line number 138)
Adults' response to challenging behaviour	Participant: yeah here and like if you got a detention or anything they will, like do you know who [teachers name] is here, no well it's one of the teachers and everyone, everyone hates him, don't get me wrong he can be nice at times but he will long everything out, in behaviour room you'll be in there for at least 45 minutes because he's he's longing it out and everyone gets frustrated because he just keeps, it's like, oh can you stop like I get it, stop, and just, oh it's long, and sometimes like at the end of the day sometimes well go get our stuff and obviously if like anyone's messing about or he'll hell shut the door and no one can get their stuff until that person stops and it ain't fair on all the rest of us (Jayne, line number 60) Participant: at start when I came here even Patrick said I was good but ever since we start back since summer I been really naughty Interviewer: okay Participant: because Patrick told me cause I been in behaviour room a lot more Interviewer: right Participant: got lots of detentions (Ben, line number 216) Interviewer: so why is it that they do that here? Participant: I dunno they can't hurt anyone Interviewer: and what happens after you've been restrained Participant: you get put into isolation I think I don't know what it's called Interviewer: okay so what's the purpose of that then, is that a room is that a table is it.. Participant: you get locked in it (Ellis, line number 60)

	cause the teacher like here yeah like if your annoyed and pissed off then you can go out and be like miss I'm getting I'm kinda pissed off and say if they're hovering around you and it's like just chill enit like I'm pissed off can you leave me alone they'll le- they'll let they'll leave you alone to calm down and then like after they'll come and talk to you and it's chill they'll see if you're alright see if you calmed down and you go back in lesson and then just get your work done (John, line number 32)

8.16.4 Master Theme 4: Comparison with mainstream: 'you can't actually get away'

Superordinate themes	Transcript excerpts from interviews 1-5
Lessons: 'it's stupid lessons'	Interviewer: okay um what are the lessons like here? Participant: they're good. Interviewer: they're good Participant: hm some of them are annoying but most of them are alright Interviewer: what makes them good? what kind of lessons do you have? tell me a bit more Participant: they're just like, uh uh, just like they have activities and, [pause] I think, uh like just I want to say chilled out but that's some lessons anyway but like what makes them good, just when everyone's in a good mood obviously you wouldn't want a teacher that's genuinely can't be arsed (Charles, line number 137) Participant: … and you don't really learn anything here where at school you do (Jayne, line number 114) Participant: not like normal lessons it's stupid lessons if you know what I mean English is like, na hmm English is alright but it's not like mainstream school, mainstream school you work on every single different subject obviously to work up to GCSEs whereas these it's just like silly petty lessons, like oh write a letter from space something, and how you describe the world it's not like actually English what you'd do for your GCSEs maths it's just likes maths you do the same thing like nearly single day, science it's just that's boring you don't really learn anything either you just learn about mostly animals. Err, sport we do the same sport like nearly every time or it's either it's always the boy's choice of what sport should have been, it's just not good here (Jayne, line number 217) Participant: … science it's just that's boring you don't really learn anything either you just learn about mostly animals. (Jayne, line number 223) Participant: well, you do more work at my old school like Interviewer: at my old school? Participant: when you go to maths class they say do this by the end of the lesson like 8, 8 pages of maths (Ben, line number 36) Participant: there's not there's not that much of a difference of my old school really here, like I know I know the people say things but like

	you're in you're in classes of different age groups, like I weren't used to that Interviewer: okay different classes different age groups Participant: and I was the only year 7 in Patrick's class (Ben, line number 49) Interviewer:… They're dead classes Participant: yeah Interviewer: yeah what does that mean? Participant: boring like (Ellis, line number 275) Participant: I'm the one that does my work like I'm the one who don't wanna do the work depending on what work it is I'll do Interviewer: hmm Participant: like if it's cooking I'll do that if it's maths I'll do that if it's English I can't really be arsed that much if it's general studies mmm don't really mind doing that but I probably won't do it that much just depending on what lessons I got that day (John, line number 81)
Environment: 'you've got behaviour rooms'	Participant: here it's a lot obviously it's smaller and [pause] (Charles, line number 27) Participant: obviously we didn't have behaviour rooms in my old school Interviewer: yes so the environment is different you've got behaviour rooms Participant: yeah like we don't have radios in my old school any more (Ben, line number 63) Interviewer: so tell me about your old school then, what was it like, was it big, small? Participant: big, Interviewer: yeah Participant: very big Interviewer: what else was different about Participant: don't know big field Interviewer: big? Participant: field Interviewer: big field, was it bigger than The PRU? Participant: loads of students (Ellis, line number 35)
Restrictions: 'you can't actually get away'	Participant: [mumbles] [pause] I dunno really, there's obviously more like I wanna say security cause it's not like you uh walk around the corner and there's a bodyguard there of whatever but you couldn't uh in my old school you couldn't if you misbehave you couldn't walk round the school cause there's no but here you have to have a thingy

	key to get through the doors so you can't actually get away (Charles, line number 196) Participant: everything you used to be able to do at Fraywood School you can't do it here, cannot do it here (Jayne, line number 101) Participant: ….we have to all my mates we sit on separate tables now were not even allowed to sit next to each other or anything, whereas in school you're allowed to be as loud as you want at lunch and breaktime it's your own time (Jayne, line number 93) Participant:… like at breaks you can go out more like at breaks you can go out more you can go in and out in and out, like here you just go out and stay there out in the cold, and yeah Interviewer: so is there a bit more to do at my old school ? Participant: yeah bit more to do at break and lunches (Ben, line number 166)
Mainstream experience: 'our class was all the leftov-'	Participant: I'm better here as I was in my old school like [pause] I think I think I'm good here as I was at my old school, I was I was arguing with teachers every day at my old school but here like I get more out of teachers in one week, a week, like every lesson it was a battle between me and the teacher (Ben, line number 372) Participant: In our class because because our class was all the leftov-, na I wouldn't say leftovers but like all the people that had got kicked out the class kind of, or had to move they were all in that group Interviewer: right okay Participant: because all the all the classes were full because I had to move because in my old school yeah I know you swap teachers but you're in one group err with different people you're with the same people nearly every lesson (Ben, line number 234) Participant: yeah they weren't the le-, because because I had to get moved from the class and put in that class because th th they were like 8-7 classes and they got full up so I had to go to that group (Ben, line number 245) Participant: yeah cause I weren't in the mainstream first I was in another building couldn't do cooking (Ellis, line number 179) Interviewer:… why were you in another building? Participant: Naughty Interviewer: you were naughty (Ellis, line number 182) Interviewer: they don't want you there

	Participant: no they can't take me back because they can't give me what I need Interviewer: is that what they've said to you Participant: basically like yeah cause if I get pissed off yeah and I wanna go outside for a minute or two to calm down they say they can't do that Interviewer: hmm and how does that make you feel Participant: pissed off cause cause they can do that they just don't wanna accept me in (John, line number 195) Participant: … Never turned up. I used to do two hours and I turned up like I did like turn up at the end but like I never turned up since like a solid over 6 months I never turned up cause I couldn't be arsed Interviewer: cause you couldn't be arsed Participant: cause I didn't wanna go cause I'd end up getting wound up and I didn't like the person I was actually doing it with cause I don't like here (John, line number 216)

8.16.5 Master Theme 5: Lack of knowledge, stability, involvement and certainty about their situation: 'they don't know what's going to happen to them'

Superordinate themes	Transcript excerpts from interviews 1-5

Confusion and dissatisfaction: 'I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school'	Participant:… like I'm still under like my actual school but like it's it's annoying because I don't get why I'm under the school when I'm in this school cause I'm under both schools (John, line number 20) Interviewer: where you're not coming here everyday Participant: I'd rather come here everyday Interviewer: you'd rather come here every day? Participant: hmm I have to go to another school out of the city (Ellis, line number 114) Interviewer: so you go to another school which isn't a mainstream school Participant: no Interviewer: and how is that for you, do you like going there? Participant: no (Ellis, line number 126) Interviewer: why don't you like going there? Participant: cause you have to get a taxi and I don't like getting a taxi out of the city (Ellis, line number 130)
EHCP process and assessment	Participant: … Just like I'm getting tested these EHCP people are getting a educational health care programme and it's basically like people come in and try and help me with my behaviour and I'm getting help people come to my house talk to me and then we go out for meetings and we like we talk to them and see what troubles what troubles me and everything (John, line number 91) Participant: … and then like like I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has adhd autism and dyslexia (John, line number 95)
Lack of knowledge and communication: 'no-one knows what's going on here'	Participant: depending on what situation they're in like I don't they don't some people like they don't even know what's going to happen to them (John, line number 289) Interviewer: how does it feel then not knowing where you're going next Participant: I don't really wanna go the special schools really cause yeah I can't be arsed. I don't like it does annoy me not knowing where I'm gonna go but they what they doing after I finish The PRU they're going to give me and my mum a list of school that I'll be able to go to but yeah. So it'll be fine (John, line number 270) Interviewer: and how long are you supposed to be going to the other

	school? Participant: don't know till I get a place at (named special school) Interviewer: till you get a place at (named special school) Participant: yeah and then when I get (named special school) I won't be coming here (Ellis, line number 317) Interviewer: what do you think happens for kids who leave the PRU Participant: some of them go back to mainstream some of them go back to different school Interviewer: and then what happens after they leave school, year 11 Participant: some of them get GCSEs and some of them don't (Ellis, line number 300) Participant: … I was like well obviously I were I like obviously I don't wanna go there and I weren't in meeting when they told me Interviewer: yeah Participant: I have to go, I was in the car Interviewer: you weren't in the meeting Participant: no I was supposed to be but I didn't wanna go in (Ben, line number 287) Participant: well well I found out what happens and it will be done by the 20th of October and we'll have a big meeting, see if I go back to mainstream or see if I go to like like [names 2 special schools] (Ben, line number 499) Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while (Jayne, line number 177) Participant: … but one thing is that obviously I been waiting here for ages, normally when people come here after about a week or two they'll be like right this is happening with you but with me obviously no one knows what's going on here obviously it takes a very long time to actually find out if you're going back to school or not, and they don't tell you anything either (Jayne, line number 177)
Waiting	Participant: .. but my other brother got tested for it when he was a kid cause like when he was a kid he wasn't getting as much help as me it took my other brother 4 years just to get him help just so then they could help him but it's not it's not took me that long took about 2 years 3 years Interviewer: 2 years to get help Participant: like 2 -3 years to get like people to come help me with stuff

	(John, line number 156) Participant: … you never know what could happen, time will tell (John, line number 292) Participant: … after I finish The PRU they're going to give me and my mum a list of school that I'll be able to go to but yeah. So it'll be fine (John, line number 273) Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment (Ben, line number 300) Participant: see if my old school accept me and if not I'll go to a different school. (Ben, line number 504) Participant: … but one thing is that obviously I been waiting here for ages, normally when people come here after about a week or two they'll be like right this is happening with you but with me obviously no one knows what's going on here obviously it takes a very long time to actually find out if you're going back to school or not, and they don't tell you anything either (Jayne, line number 177) Interviewer: what do you think the outcome is going to be for you? Participant: god knows, I'll have to wait and see (Jayne, line number 189)
Overspent time in the PRU	Interviewer: and you were saying that you've been here Participant: for over a year since February last year (John, line number 13) Participant: hmm but they've told me I'm here for 6 months but at at the the start of October I was supposed to go but obviously that's in the past now Interviewer: hmm Participant: So but so were just waiting to see waiting for this, how do you say it, assessment (Ben, line number 297) Participant: …I was just thinking I was at the PRU for 6 months and it weren't even that long, but obviously I didn't go back to, I didn't go back to my old school cause they kicked me out fully so I was just waiting till urmm till the end of year till everybody moves up (Ben, line number 349) Interviewer: so how long have you been here? Participant: I've been here since the end of year 7 Interviewer: okay Participant: I'm year 9 now aren't I [laughs]

	Interviewer: so you've spent a long time here Participant: a long time (Jayne, line number 15) Participant: … and obviously I don't really wanna be here for another years cause it's overdoing my time, here, what I should have here (Jayne, line number 261) Participant: yeah and it's not it don't drag like oh I gotta go to the same school like I had two schools at the same time if you know what I mean so it weren't it weren't boring, it weren't dragging obviously cause like I been here a while now (Jayne, line number 40)

8.16.6 Master Theme 6: Perceptions of themselves as aggressive and naughty: 'just don't get myself a lot'

Master Theme: How they perceive themselves to be	
Negative perception of self: ''it's like me with anger problems'	Participant: I was really naughty in my old school (Charles, line number 260) Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving (Charles, line number 416) Participant:… obviously if I don't take my tablet I'm just hyper and annoying, I know I'm annoying if I don't take my tablet, I know I'm really annoying (Charles, line number 238) Interviewer: yeah, so if you're not goody too shoes then what might you be? Participant: a bit annoying, a bit distracting, a bit naughty, naughty, [laughs] I find that such a weird word (Jayne, line number 143) Participant:…around I'm kinda like the aggressive one as well I always go I always hit (named pupil) like all the time (Jayne, line number 341) Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. they were like they're like you (John, line number 311) Participant: I dunno I just just no started about year 5 year 4 like I just started getting like proper angry I started kicking off and booting doors and putting holes through doors and everything Interviewer: so it sounds like Participant: like if I get proper pissed off I'll end up punching and putting my hand through the door Interviewer: hmmm Participant: cause like [mumbles] I can punch through a door easily (John, line number 175) Interviewer: do you understand you Participant: no not really Interviewer: can you tell me a bit more about that Participant: I do understand myself but sometimes I don't understand why I get outbursts and stuff it's weird just don't get myself a lot (John, line number 354) Participant: yeah whereas other groups like all it is is just petty messing about and they'll stop they'll do their work when it's our group we start messing about we can't chill Interviewer: why do you think yours is the naughty group?

	Participant: because it's got all kids that just can't behave in it (Jayne, line number 167)
Mixed views of self: 'good but bad'	Interviewer: okay so what kind of a student were you? Participant: good but bad Interviewer: what about now, what about when you came to the PRU, what kind of a student are you now, here? Participant: now I still try like obviously do little like chop, sneak a chocolate bar I still do try things I do try get away with things but I've been quite good but I can still have my little mardy, mardy bleeps [laughs] (Jayne, line number 369) Participant: because I don't know I'm more like the troublemaker well I used to be when err (Jayne, line number 400) Participant : …there's more naughty kids here, that's gone to mainstream, and I'm like naughty mainstream, I'm good like good and bad, (Ben, line number 502) Interviewer: do you understand you Participant: no not really Interviewer: can you tell me a bit more about that Participant: I do understand myself but sometimes I don't understand why I get outbursts and stuff it's weird just don't get myself a lot (John, line number 354) Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that (John, line number 176) Interviewer: hmm Participant: so yeah quite naughty at home (John, line number 124)
Lack of emotional regulation: 'they'd want me to fight and fights would happen'	Participant: yeah they argue straight away. I did that in school as well in mainstream school I argued straight away (Ben, line number 183) Participant:…loads of teachers kept praising me and that's and I just went mad after that (Ben, line number 139) Participant: … when I'm proper pissed I'll end up punching ya if you get in get in my way if you tried to stop me to do anything. Say if like I try to calm down and I go to my room and play Xbox or just chill on my phone try calm down but it's ki it's hard for me to calm down Interviewer: so you've got strategies to try and calm down Participant: yeah but it's hard for me to calm down

	Interviewer: do you feel like it's out of your control Participant: well it's not out of my control like I can calm down but it's like it takes a while takes 20 minutes half an hour or depending what the situation is it would take a short amount of time (John, line number 179) Participant: urmm if someone you know started to really piss me off Id end up having a go at them and obviously then they'd want me to fight and then fights would happen and then [pause] (Jayne, line number 366) Participant: I don't know I hit yeah just for fun sometimes but then I can hit in anger, (Jayne, line number 395) Participant: … if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one (Jayne, line number 341)
Comparison to others in PRU: 'they're comparing me to them, I'm not really like them'	Participant : …there's more naughty kids here, that's gone to mainstream, and I'm like naughty mainstream, I'm good like good and bad, (Ben, line number 502) Interviewer: how do you feel you are, what kind of a student are you here? What are you getting out of being here at the PRU? Participant: I'm I'm getting education compared to some of kids in the class cause I'm the one, the one left in the class cause the rest of them just walk out (Ben, line number 267) Participant: see so I just want to do the work and get it over and done with but I just think kids are not happy (Ben, line number 43) Interviewer:urm how would you describe them? Participant: some of them are fun Interviewer: some of them Participant: some of them are annoying Interviewer: annoying? What makes them annoying? Participant: weird Interviewer: how so? Participant: they do weird things (Ellis, line number 228) Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you. Interviewer: like you what did they mean Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. they were like they're like you Interviewer: what do they mean by that

	Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah (John, line number 309) Participant: yeah it's cause, ah I don't know, I'm not not trying to blame them buts it's like ah it's hard to explain like , mainstream people are all goody too shoes they're daren't daren't be naughty so you be like you're like oh I have to be good whereas here, you come here and every else is misbehaving and you get away with, no you don't get away with it actually that's a lie but urmm you think it's okay to obviously misbehave with all the other negativity around ya so (Jayne, line number 124) Interviewer: hmm yeah, so you think that the children here, the pupils here aren't goody too shoes, they're different? Participant: yeah they're not, yeah they're all different in their own way, in their own way (Jayne, line number 139)
Medication and diagnoses: 'I'm getting tested'	Participant: … since I came here and I think in my old school I was on a different dose of ADHD tablet and I think that had something to do with my behaviour but I don't know (Charles, line number 290) Participant: … like like I'm getting tested for adhd and err autism I think cause that's what my brother has, he has adhd autism and dyslexia (John, line number 95)
Self-blame, embarrassment and shame: 'I wish I didn't mess about'	Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving Interviewer: what makes you think that coming here isn't good? Participant: because I don't, obviously if you were trying to get a job later and they realise that you've been kicked out of school and went to a PRU then I think it will affect you getting a job Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it? Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah (Charles, line number 416) Interviewer: yeah, do you wish things were different? Participant: yeah I just wish I didn't mess about in school and Miss Peters weren't always there to trigger me, because if I didn't shout that one day I think I'll never have the ability to actually shout at a

	teacher but miss billy, Miss Peters just triggered me (Jayne, line number 482)

8.16.7 Master Theme 7: Concerns that others view them negatively: 'it makes me angry, you don't know me'

How others perceive them	
Parent's perceptions: 'she understood I do have a little bit of anger'	Interviewer: okay and how did your mum feel about it? Participant: she was angry at me but then obviously she understood that obviously I do have a little bit of anger and things do trigger it and if I'm off on one then there's no way you can bring me off like bring me down because if I'm off on one I'm off on one (Jayne, line number 340) Participant: it don't always feel good [pause] and I think it's embarrassing for yourself and for your parents as well knowing that your child's misbehaving at school and then you've gotta go in and take them out or whatever (Charles, line number 313) Participant:… but like if they read my records they'll be like yeah he he can't do that he can't do this because my mum told them, but see with other teachers, and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out (Ben, line number 357) Interviewer: what kind of a person would she say you were Participant: I'd say like I can be a nice person I can be sweet and all that but then I can be proper like when I'm on one and like I have these outbursts (John, line number 174)
Perception of others: 'he's a naughty child get him out'	Interviewer: what did they how would they have described you? Participant: they'd say I'm a bright intelligent girl, but if I want to if I'm in the wrong mood or if I'm if I'm like if I'm going off on one I can be urmm aggressive I can be I don't know I can be I can throw verbal abuse and everything yeah but obviously I ain't done that in a long time (Jayne, line number 250) Interviewer: okay urmm and how do you think the other students view you then, so you say you're the troublemaker who thinks you're the troublemaker? Participant: [laughs] everyone here Interviewer: kids and class teachers? Participant: [laughs] well no some kids yeah they'll say oh yeah she's the trouble maker [child noises] (Jayne, line number 407) Interviewer: and what do you think they might say? Participant: I always I always start the arguments over petty things [laughs] and then I think the teachers will probably say that I'm always

	the first one to, I dunno first one to like give up on the work and just screw my work up for good and go I'm not doing it and then causing a big problem out of nothing Interviewer: yeah Participant: yeah it's bad (Jayne, line number 413) Participant:… anymore I think his name is Chris he said you're gonna turn out like your brother (Jayne, line number 439) Interviewer: and how does it make you feel when people are saying you're going to turn out like your brother? Participant: it makes me angry because like you don't know me like you don't know if I'm going to turn out like my brother or not (Jayne, line number 444) Participant: well well well some of my teachers who I talk to they know I work, like I can't be in big groups I have to be in little groups they have to do 1-1 I can't help being so, but like if they read my records they'll be like yeah he he can't do that he can't do this because my mum told them, but see with other teachers, and with other teachers they're just like yeah he's a naughty child get him out Interviewer: so you think some people think your naughty, get him out? Participant: yeah hmm hmm (Ben, line number 355) Interviewer: okay how would the teachers have described you? Participant: what here or my old school? Interviewer: in your old school? Participant: probably annoying and really bad really really bad, and probably stuff I shouldn't say here now (Charles, line number 269) Interviewer: what about the teachers in your old school, how would they have described you Participant: err nuisance, err difficult to say I'm a nuisance I'm a I'm a bad influence I'm I'm very naughty and they don't want me there (John, line number 191) Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you. Interviewer: like you what did they mean Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. they were like they're like you Interviewer: what do they mean by that Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some

	kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah (John, line number 309) Interviewer: and what impact does the way other people view you how does that affect the way you see yourself Participant: it don't really affect me a lot because whatever they say about me I'm not gonna lose sleep over Interviewer: hmm Participant: ain't gonna lose no sleep don't really bother me say whatever you wanna say about me I don't really care cause I ain't gonna lose no sleep I'm not gonna care (John, line number 261)
Stigma: 'he's been expelled, he's a trouble maker'	Interviewer: whys that how do you think people view it? Participant: I think it's like well obviously he's misbehaved in school, and, he's like, obviously he's been kicked out of school for misbehaving and yeah (Charles, line number 422) Participant: I wish I was well behaved at school because coming here obviously ain't good but its, helped me realise that I was being stupid and misbehaving Interviewer: what makes you think that coming here isn't good? Participant: because I don't, obviously if you were trying to get a job later and they realise that you've been kicked out of school and went to a PRU then I think it will affect you getting a job (Charles, line number 416) Interviewer: what are the other children like here? Participant: other children are alright people think when you come here people are gonna be horrible to ya they're they're alright it's just most of them it's just silly behaviour but some can have like issues like anger problems and (Jayne, line number 116) Participant: but mum does not want me to go to like The special schools Interviewer: okay, whys that? Participant: because she knows pe- people, and, like kids from there, have killed people, going prison and everything, didn't come out with no education, no money, doing drugs and mum was like yeah no no my child ain't doing that (Ben, line number 318) Participant: like like cause like at work, when I'm older and I get a job and they look at my record old school and all they'll see is he's been expelled like 2 times he's a troublemaker get rid, I don't want him, (Ben, line number 425) Participant:… say if like they're not mainstream yeah and the mainstream can't cope with them they'll come they'll either send them

	here but if they're too naughty think they won't cope here then they'll go to (named special school). (John, line number 65) Participant: I didn't really wanna be here and I thought it was just full of dickheads and they were all mean but they weren't and it turned out to be they're actually really nice (John, line number 302) Participant: they said it was a behaviour school and that deals with kids like you. Interviewer: like you what did they mean Participant: yeah it's like me with anger problems and that like when you get very angry and stuff. they were like they're like you Interviewer: what do they mean by that Participant: they're like me basically they're like me in a way that they're naughty as well so basically they're comparing me to them when I'm not really anything like em like the other kids. I am like some kids in here but I'm not like not really any of them but yeah (John, line number 309)

8.16.8 Master Theme 8: Concerns about the damaging impact on their future career opportunities and aspirations: 'I wanna go back to school and get an education'

Future implications	
Future implications: 'All they'll see is he's been expelled he's a troublemaker, get rid'	Interviewer: you lose out on a future? Participant: yeah I think it's like if you keep coming back here you've obviously wasted, I wouldn't say life cause you can still do something, but obviously not a lot [pause] (Charles, line number 404) Interviewer: what makes you think that coming here isn't good? Participant: because I don't, obviously if you were trying to get a job later and they realise that you've been kicked out of school and went to a PRU then I think it will affect you getting a job (Charles, line number 418) Participant: obviously they'll probably have to redo their GCSEs obviously cause cause if they've been here for a long time then obviously they didn't have, they didn't have the right education what they should have got in mainstream school to actually complete, get the right As and Bs what you should normally get, in GCSE, and obviously cause I'm year 9 I'm supposed to pick my GCSEs I can't even pick, (Jayne, line number 266) Interviewer: you're thinking you're going to have to retake.. urmm so how do you think say if you were going to go to college what might they look at when they look at your application and? Participant: they probably wouldn't let me go in, obviously cause of my urmm report here and obviously my normal school, they're probably oh thinking she ain't good enough to go here, so obviously it's just messed your whole life up basically you just don't, might as well just stay in school (Jayne, line number 535) Interviewer: okay so in terms of like in the future for you, I think I've already asked this question but I will ask it again so urmm the idea that you've been expelled a few times and you've been perceived as a naughty child how do you think that's going to impact on you? Participant: like like cause like at work, when I'm older and I get a job and they look at my record old school and all they'll see is he's been expelled like 2 times he's a troublemaker get rid, I don't want him, it'd be hard to get a job. But all I wanna do is get back in my old

	school so I can get good grades get everything, I will get a job. (Ben, line number 421) Participant: but I, I just, just thinking to myself do you know like, like you you'll be sitting home with no money, you'll be living on the streets if you don't actually get an education, get money Interviewer: yeah yeah so do you think then a lot of kids here then struggle to make money when they get older? Participant: I th-, I know some kids who be- been to PRUs that have made money, doing successful but I know some kids that haven't (Ben, line number 338)
Future opportunities	Interviewer: has it helped you to work with animals? Participant: here, what no, we don't do we don't work with animals here like we don't learn nothing about animals well we do in science but not nothing like, if I was in school If I picked my GCSEs I would do hair and beauty and I probably do health and social and obviously animal caring and that lot (Jayne, line number 468) Interviewer: okay so what kind of opportunities do you think you going to have in the future? Participant: err I wanna go back to school and get an education get a GCSE and go to work (Charles, line number 341) Participant: probably but if not then if I ask to redo my GCSES then obviously I'm gonna obviously if I when I do finish school and ain't got my GCSEs I'll go to the courses and I'll get the GCSEs for that thing I want to do (Jayne, line number 527) Interviewer: what do you want to be when you're older? Participant: I don't know I wanted to be in the army but obviously I don't think that'll happen (Charles, line number 345) Interviewer: what do you think happens for kids who leave the PRU Participant: some of them go back to mainstream some of them go back to different school Interviewer: and then what happens after they leave school, year 11 Participant: some of them get GCSEs and some of them don't (Ellis, line number 300) Participant: depending on what situation they're in like I don't they don't some people like they don't even know what's going to happen to them and some like some of them from here will probably be

	successful or probably be like got a job but not a good one or some people would probably be either in pen or dead you never know what could happen, time will tell (John, line number 289)
Self-development and learning: 'I'm proud'	Participant: … and urmm I've learnt that obviously every stu, every child is different, people are some are laid back and chilled but some are obviously aggressive and, yeah (Charles, line number 326) Interviewer: hmm [pause] what have you achieved here? Participant: urmm to obviously to help control different triggers and just just to know like I ain't gonna get away with certain things how I think I'll get away with them (Jayne, line number 507) Interviewer: hmm so how do you think you've changed since coming to the PRU? Participant: I I've learnt to ignore people better urmm because when I went to primary PRU I learnt to ignore came my old school and ignored everyone but at the start of the year I started like if someone said oi I would go mad but I could I could ignore anyone right now (Ben, line number 388) I think that by the time this is all finished and I should have calmed down a whole lot more hopefully and I'll more calmer in situations where normal I'd be like say like probably when I'm older there'd be situations where if I was a kid I'd be like proper pissed off I'll probably be more calmer (John, line number 282) Participant: umm [pause] that I'm proud, of err, that my behaviours changed, and yeah, my behaviours changed and I've learnt that misbehaving ain't obviously really good and it won't get you anywhere, except prison pretty much (Charles, line number 321) Participant: ur naughtier yeah but after a while I started to settle now down now I'm not as not as bad like I'm alright I'm I'm actually quite good now I think I'll be able to cope in mainstream school again but obviously according to these lot I cant (Jayne, line number 427) Participant: I'm better here as I was in my old school like [pause] I think I think I'm good here as I was at my old school, I was I was arguing with teachers everyday (Ben, line number 372) Participant: I'm calm but like I don't really kick off here not cause I've, at the start I used to be like I used to be

	(John, line number 127) Interviewer: so he's helping you? That's good and what have your achievements been here? Have you achieved anything? Participant: no (Ben, line number 487) Participant: I'm not allowed back in mainstream school but they don't know what's going on now so I might be here for quite a while (Jayne, line number 480)