At risk of exclusion in Key Stage 1:
An exploratory study of class teachers' perceptions of the school context and the impact of a Circle of Adults intervention

Jennifer Elizabeth Cosgrove

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Abstract

Background

Increasing numbers of UK primary school exclusions (Department for Education, 2019a) are a cause for concern due to evidence demonstrating the negative outcomes common for these children (Parsons, Godfrey, Howlett, Hayden, & Martin, 2001). Therefore, an evidence-base to support interventions and practices effective in reducing school exclusion within mainstream primary schools is imperative to inform professional practice. Previous literature has indicated that staff attitudes are influential in mediating exclusionary practices (Hatton, 2013; Pomerantz, 2016). An intervention which seeks to build on such research and support school staff in order to avoid exclusionary practices is the Circles of Adults (CoA) group facilitation approach to problem-solving (Wilson & Newton, 2006). This study aims to investigate the nature of class teachers' perceptions of a target student at risk of exclusion and explore the classroom context prior to their involvement in a CoA intervention. This research also seeks to explore the class teachers' experience of the intervention itself and its perceived efficacy.

Method

Participants within this research were 4 class teachers working with 3 target students in different schools. Following a constructionist epistemology, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with class teachers prior to their involvement in a CoA intervention. Further semi-structured interviews were then held with 2 of these class teachers to follow up on their experiences of the intervention. Thematic Analysis has been used to explore themes within the data.

Findings

Findings indicated complexities in the way in which teachers construed their student, both prior to and following the CoA. The school context prior to a CoA demonstrated a system of interaction which disempowered the teacher and led to a sense of working in isolation, under immense pressure. The CoA effectively punctuated the system of the school context, enabling teachers to feel supported and part of a cohesive team, promoting more empathic responses within colleague and teacher-student interactions. The perceived value of the CoA intervention was, however, shown to be undermined when concrete actions did not follow.

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I would like to dedicate this research to all those children who find themselves at risk of exclusion from education before their journey into learning has really gotten started. May this research provide a step in the direction of supporting more children to beat the barriers to inclusion and success, to flourish within education and experience the joys of learning.

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List of abbreviations

BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BSS	Behaviour Support Service
CoA	Circle of Adults
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
PATH	Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SC	Solution Circle
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TA	Thematic Analysis
TME	Target Monitoring and Evaluation
WoE	Weight of Evidence

1. Introduction

This introduction seeks to orientate the reader to the research, providing an overview of the thesis topic. The background to the research will also be described, providing the reader with an insight into the author's research journey and the rationale for the current study.

1.1 Background and Rationale

Between academic years 2012/13 and 2017/18, a consistent increase can be seen in the combined numbers of state-funded, primary aged students in the UK experiencing permanent exclusions and fixed-term exclusions (FTE). The combined number of primary school children experiencing permanent exclusions and FTE has risen from 19,530 children in 2012/13 to 29,424 children in 2017/18. Taking into account the increasing numbers of students in school over this time period, the data show an increase in exclusions which is greater than the increase in population. The rate of primary school children experiencing permanent exclusion has risen from 0.02% in 2012/13 to 0.03% in 2017/18 and experiencing FTE has risen from 0.45% in 2012/13 to 0.62% in 2017/18, (Department for Education, 2014, 2017a, 2019a).

This is a concern, as research has demonstrated that school exclusion is associated with poor academic achievement, poor social outcomes, involvement in criminal activity and difficulties gaining employment in adulthood (Valdebenito, Eisner, Farrington, Ttofi, & Sutherland, 2018). Of those students excluded, as reported in the most recent 2017/18 statistics, 13,718 experienced more than one fixed-term exclusion over the course of the academic year (Department for Education, 2019a). There must be an acknowledgment that these figures are likely to demonstrate an underrepresentation of the actual number of students experiencing exclusionary practices in schools. This is due to some existing practices of unofficial exclusions, internal exclusions and simply sending students home (Care Quality Commission & Ofsted, 2017; McCluskey, Riddell, Weedon, & Fordyce, 2016). This amounts to significant proportions of time out of education for some children, who are therefore missing out on opportunities to develop the academic, practical, personal and social

skills which will enable them to achieve more positive outcomes and build the foundation for future successes (Robinson, 1998).

Research on exclusions repeatedly points to the implications of the school's philosophy and values (Pomerantz, 2016), the importance of relationships (Hendry, 2009), of ethos (Hatton, 2013), and of valuing and believing in each child, and holding high expectations and beliefs in the students' ability to progress (Hendry, 2009). The Circle of Adults approach (Wilson & Newton, 2006) aims to promote cultural change through group supervision. Inspired by the work of Hanko (1999, 2002) on group problem solving, and Hawkins and Shohet (1989) on supervision, the Circle of Adults approach attempts to provide school staff with a supportive, collaborative context in which to voice and hear varied perspectives on a target student. This seeks to expose staff to greater factual information about the student and enable them to develop a deeper understanding of the student's context and hypothesised perspective, promoting greater empathy. Additionally, the approach promotes skills in reflective practice. In light of the aims of the CoA approach, it appears potentially useful in supporting school staff to develop the ethos and attitudes suggested by research to be key in avoiding exclusionary practices (Hatton, 2013; Pomerantz, 2016).

1.1.1 Author's personal interest

The author's personal interest in this topic comes from a history of supporting students to maintain their educational placements. As a Teaching Assistant the author supported students in 'at risk' placements in school and supported those who had been excluded and attended the primary pupil referral unit (PRU). The author has also held roles within a Local Authority (LA) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team and as an Assistant Educational Psychologist (EP). This variety of related roles has enabled the author to see and support students at risk of exclusion from a range of perspectives.

The author hopes that this research can form one small part of a much larger picture, seeking to better understand and ameliorate the many factors involved in the exclusion of students from education.

1.1.2 Stakeholder engagement

This research study aims to better understand the school context for Key Stage 1 students at risk of exclusion. The CoA intervention is used within the Local Authority where the author has undertaken her second and third Trainee EP placement years. Within this LA, reducing school exclusions is a priority area. The current research therefore sought to build on local research by Pomerantz (2016) to explore the perceptions held by class teachers of their infant student at risk of exclusion, as well as the perceived utility of the CoA intervention in supporting the 'at risk' educational placement. This aim was fully supported by the Principal Educational Psychologist and the research initially involved meetings with the former Deputy Principal EP to gain a full picture of previous research within the area. The project was undertaken with the support of the Trainee EP's service, with the expectation that the project would be discussed at regular intervals with the Trainee's EP team at team meetings and presented to the service following completion of the research.

2. Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide a coherent picture of the existing literature and theoretical insights which underpin the current study. The review takes a broad approach to considering the landscape of school exclusion in the UK in order to fully contextualise the current study. Further exploration is then taken into relevant existing research literature and theory. Attention will then narrow to a focused critical literature review which takes a systematic approach to appraising the existing literature around the Circle of Adults intervention, consisting primarily of doctoral theses. This leads to a justification for the current study, highlighting gaps in the existing literature and presenting research questions the current study seeks to address.

2.1 School exclusion

Within this section, the author further elaborates on the problem of school exclusion in the UK education system. Definitions of school exclusion will be provided, followed by an overview of the UK exclusion rates, highlighting characteristics of the student populations over-represented within these statistics. Changes to society's conceptualisation of students who experience school exclusion will be introduced, with particular reference to a systemic, holistic approach.

2.1.1 Definitions of school exclusion

This thesis focuses on students at risk of experiencing periods of 1 day or more of exclusion from opportunities to access education. The literature examined therefore considers both students at risk of permanent exclusion and those at risk of receiving repeated fixed-term exclusion (FTE). Definitions for both terms are provided, as set out by the Department for Education in their research into the profiles of student exclusions in England (Department for Education, 2012):

Fixed period exclusion (known as a fixed term exclusion (FTE) within this thesis and much of the existing literature) refers to a student who is excluded from a school but

remains on the register of that school and is expected to return once the exclusion period is complete.

Permanent exclusion refers to a student who is excluded and has their name removed from the school register. Following permanent exclusion, the student of statutory school age would be educated at another school or via some other form of provision.

2.1.2 School exclusion statistics in England

Since the 2006/2007 academic year, exclusion data from all non-independent schools in England has been collected and analysed by the Department for Education and National Statistics through the annual school census. This data is then provided annually each July on a public platform to be used by a range of publications (such as the good schools guide, housing websites, Ofsted) and for a number of functions. These functions include providing data for the academic research community and Education Policy Institute (Department for Education, 2017a).

At the time of writing, the most recent data to be analysed is from academic year 2017/18. This data demonstrates that since 2006/7, permanent exclusions in primary school have shown an increase from 0.02%, standing at present at 0.03% of primary students. This equates to 3 per 10,000 students annually. The rate of primary schools' use of FTE has risen from 1.11% in 2006/7 to 1.4% in 2017/18. Data from 2017/18 show that of those students in receipt of a FTE, 53.1% received 1 period of FTE and 27.6% received 3 or more periods of FTE throughout the academic year. 3.5% of these primary school students were permanently excluded following 1 or more periods of FTE (Department for Education, 2019a).

Of these primary school exclusions, the data show that in 2017/18 a total number of 305 students in Key Stage 1 (comprising of school-based nursery (also known as Foundation Stage 1), Reception (also known as Foundation Stage 2), Year 1 and Year 2) were permanently excluded. A further 7,671 students received 1 or more FTEs (Department for Education, 2019a). The numbers of students excluded during

primary school is far lower than the number of students excluded during secondary school, with the rates of permanent exclusion and FTE peaking between 13 – 14 years of age (Year 10) for both male and female students (Department for Education, 2019a). Nonetheless, Walker & Donaldson (2011) highlight school exclusion as a major risk factor promoting vulnerability. The 2017/18 statistics reflect that in one academic year, this applied to 7,976 UK students under the age of 7 years.

2.1.3 Profile of exclusion statistics in England

The vulnerability factors increasing the likelihood of school exclusion include being male, having a special educational need or disability (SEND), being eligible for Free School Meals or coming from an ethnic background such as Irish Traveller, Roma/Gypsy or Black Caribbean. In a DfE report exploring in detail the profile of pupil exclusions in England in the academic year 2009/10 the data demonstrated that 84.2% of permanently excluded students had at least 1 or more of the following characteristics; Black Caribbean, eligibility for Free School Meals and SEN (Department for Education, 2012).

Furthermore, 2017/18 data show a direct correlation between level of deprivation of state-funded primary schools and number of exclusions, both permanent and FTE. These data show that within the 10% most deprived primary schools in England, 211 more students experienced permanent exclusion and 4,401 more students experienced FTE than in the 10% least deprived primary schools.

In the academic year 2017/18, 78.6% of permanent exclusions and 76.6% of FTEs in primary school were recorded as being due to one of three reasons (Department for Education, 2012, 2019);

- Persistent disruptive behaviour (the most common reason for FTE), defined as:
    - Challenging behaviour
    - Disobedience
    - Persistent violation of school rules
- Physical assault against a pupil, defined as

    - Fighting
    - Obstruction and jostling
    - Violent behaviour
    - Wounding
- Physical assault against an adult (the most common reason for permanent exclusion), defined as:
    - Obstruction and jostling
    - Violent behaviour
    - Wounding

Between the academic years 2014/15 and 2017/18 for which exclusion statistics have been analysed by Special Educational Need and Disability (known as SEN or SEND), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), recorded as a primary need of a student's SEND, consistently correlates with the highest numbers of permanent exclusions and FTE (Department for Education, 2016b, 2017b, 2018, 2019a). Data from a detailed report into school exclusions in 2009/10 further demonstrate this to be the case, however the category of need at that time was known as, 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty' (BESD) (Department for Education, 2012).

2.1.4 Re-framing 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties'

The renaming of 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty' as 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health' was introduced by the Children and Families Act (2014) and related SEND Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015). Notably, the term 'behaviour' was removed, and 'mental health' included instead. Lane (1994) argued that historically, a within-child perspective was the over-riding perspective taken towards thinking about challenging behaviours in school. In fuelling this view, the 1981 Education Act and 1989 Children Act had both focused on the need for professionals to work together to meet the needs of the 'problem child'. Whilst moving away from categorising children and young people with labels, the emphasis in the 1980s remained on the within-child basis of challenging behaviours, as opposed to the contextual factors which may play a role in causing such behaviour.

Perhaps resulting from such a perspective, behavioural principals appear to have dominated legislation for schools around the management of behaviour. For example, the government guidance for managing behaviour in schools continues to discuss 'punishment' (Department for Education, 2016a), while a recent independent review of behaviour in schools focuses in a more balanced fashion on 'rewards and sanctions' (Bennett, 2017). Such approaches to managing challenging behaviours within schools could perhaps be considered reductionist, as they fail to account for the contextual and systemic factors of the school and home environments, the student's cognitive processes and their emotional well-being - including their mental health (Hart, 2010). The re-naming of this category of SEND in 2014 perhaps indicates a greater emphasis on factors underpinning challenging behaviours, and therefore encourages a more holistic, systemic approach to providing students with support.

This holistic approach is further encouraged within the work of Educational Psychologists. In a key text by Beaver (2011), a systemic approach to Educational Psychology practice is recommended (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). Beaver highlights the value of assessment and intervention which facilitates change within the system, and thereby the context within and as part of which the student operates, in order to support positive change in and for the student themselves.

In summary, school exclusion leads to significant periods of time out of education for some students whereby opportunities to make academic, personal and social progress are missed. The statistics demonstrate disproportionate rates of exclusion for students with particular racial, socio-economic and SEND characteristics. 'Challenging behaviour' is highlighted as a defining feature of persistent disruptive behaviour, given as one of the most common reasons for exclusion. The term 'challenging behaviour' opens up a discussion about society's conceptualisation of the students experiencing exclusion. Whilst historically, their behaviours were thought of as indicating within-child difficulties, the term 'challenging behaviour' locates the

difficulty as outside of the student, a notion consistent with more holistic, systemic approaches.

2.2 The problem of challenging behaviour in schools

Despite removing the term 'behaviour' from the category of SEND, 'challenging behaviour' remains a defining term of 'persistent disruptive behaviour', and a key factor in school exclusions. Jones, Monsen, & Franey (2013) consider 'challenging behaviour' to be a socially constructed phenomenon. Their research, using the Staff Sharing Scheme as a framework for group supervision, supports previous literature (Miller, 1995; Weiner, 1980, 2010) which suggests that teachers' perceptions of students' behaviour affect their responses to the behaviour. Jones et al. (2013) report teachers attributing the cause of challenging behaviours as coming predominantly from outside of their, the teacher's, control, whereas 'solutions' are perceived as within the teacher's control. These notions of teachers' causal attributions of student challenging behaviours will be discussed further below.

Students' challenging behaviours have been well documented in literature for getting "*deeply under the skin of teachers*" (Miller, 2003, p. 17). Poulou and Norwich (2002) refer to these students' behaviours as one of the most frequently reported causes of high levels of occupational stress experienced by teachers, leading teachers to feel frustrated, helpless and incompetent. Furthermore, "*teachers can be left feeling aggressive, demoralised and with a real sense of low morale, particularly when faced with a group of extremely challenging students*" (Rae, 2011, p. 8). The problem of challenging behaviour therefore runs the risk of fostering a circular, interactive process as the student and teacher respond to each other's negative messages.

2.2.1 Defining challenging behaviour

In seeking to define 'challenging behaviour' the author draws upon school-based research by McCready & Soloway (2010) which sought to understand, through use of interviews and focus groups, teachers' perceptions of challenging behaviour. The research was undertaken primarily within primary schools, in deprived city areas of

Toronto, Canada. By analysing transcripts of responses to the question, "*what types of behaviour and classroom management situations are the most challenging for you to deal with? Please explain why they are challenging*" (McCready & Soloway, 2010, p.115), the following 4 categories of challenging behaviour were identified:

1. Physical behaviours (temper tantrums, kicking, pushing, hitting, running away)
2. Verbal behaviours (screaming, yelling, swearing, lying)
3. Academic disengagement (time management, setting priorities)
4. Miscellaneous non-compliance (opposition, social conflicts, stubbornness)

The term 'challenging behaviour' or 'behaviour that challenges' has been further defined in the UK by NICE Guidelines, focusing upon a learning disability population which includes both children and adults (NICE Guidelines, 2015). The guidelines specifically emphasise the argument referenced above (Hart, 2010; Jones et al., 2013; Lane, 1994), that behavioural presentations are not evidence of a within-person problem, as historically suggested by terms such as 'abnormal', 'dysfunctional', 'problem' or 'maladaptive'. Instead, the NICE guidelines refer to the introduction of the term 'challenging behaviour' being part of an effort to prevent the phrase being used as a diagnosis and moving the focus from 'fixing' the person, to 'fixing' the environment. The NICE guidelines state that "*it is important to recognise that 'challenging behaviour' is rather the result of an interaction between the person and their environment, and as such is largely socially constructed*" (NICE Guidelines, 2015, pt. 2.1.2.).

Furthermore, and again in relation to people with learning disabilities, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, British Psychological Society and Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists provide a definition of 'challenging behaviour' which has been collaboratively agreed between the different disciplines. "*Behaviour can be described as challenging when it is of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion*" (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2007, p. 10). This definition directly relates to the teacher's perceptions

of challenging behaviour as found by McCready & Soloway (2010). In focusing upon the physical safety of the individual and others, as threatened by physical behaviours, and the quality of life (in this case, in reference to the quality of educational and social life experiences) for the individual and others, as potentially threatened by verbal behaviours, disengagement and non-compliance. The definition provided by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2007) also goes a step further in referencing the consequences of such challenging behaviours. 'Restrictive' or 'aversive' responses could include examples within the education context such as, negative consequences, including loss of social opportunities or enrichment opportunities through internal exclusion practices, or exclusion from education, as is the focus of this research.

2.2.2 A theoretical perspective on challenging behaviour

Causal attributions

Miller (2003) undertook an in-depth exploration of students' challenging behaviour in schools from a psychosocial perspective. One of his findings related to attribution theory and the differing ways in which students, parents and teachers may attribute (account for or explain) the origins of challenging behaviours and the possible solutions to reduce these. Miller found that teachers attributed the origins of challenging behaviours primarily to parents. Furthermore, teachers listed the greatest number of possible causal attributions for challenging behaviour to the students themselves. Conversely, the teachers attributed possible solutions as being primarily within their, the teachers', control. This implies an often 'compensatory model' of combination of attributions (Fiske & Taylor, 1984) by which the teacher is responsible for the solution, but not the origin, of challenging behaviours in school. This did not match with the views of parents or students, who were more likely to attribute the cause of challenging behaviours to '*unfairness of the teachers' actions'*, or '*pupil vulnerability'*, with parents also considering the impact of '*peer influence and adverse family circumstances'* (Miller, 2003, p. 150). The students involved in Miller's research further evidenced their views on the possible solutions to challenging behaviour in schools, rating parents and then the student themselves as the most able to help improve behaviour. These differences in the understandings held by teachers,

parents and students as to the origins and possible solutions of challenging behaviours demonstrates the potential for misunderstandings, and a lack of shared assumptions underpinning communication between these parties on the potentially sensitive subject of challenging behaviours. This basis of different views, assumptions and attributions lay the foundation for a complex interplay of actions which systems theory argues may interact in a way which maintains challenging behaviours in school through a vicious cycle (Miller, 2003). This systems theory approach comes from a basis within family therapy and demonstrates a process of circular causality (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). Thus, systems theory highlights the importance of providing a punctuation point whereby the interactions and assumptions occurring within the complex system, maintaining a student's challenging behaviours, can be made explicit, challenged, or changed. Providing such a punctuation point forms the basis of interventions, such as the CoA, aimed at supporting students in school to reduce the intensity or frequency of challenging behaviours and ultimately reduce or avoid exclusionary practices.

The relationship between causal attributions held by teachers and their responses to challenging behaviour in the classroom has been investigated by Poulou and Norwich (2002), in their questionnaire-based study involving 391 elementary school teachers in Athens, Greece. Using vignettes describing conduct, emotional or conduct and emotional difficulties, teachers used Likert-scales to rate their views regarding the cause of the students' difficulties as relating to family, child, teacher or school factors. They also rated their views regarding coping strategies, including how they would feel, how able they would feel to 'cope' or 'deal' with the situation, their views regarding the support available from external services and the resolvability of the difficulty. Lastly, the teachers rated their views regarding suggested approaches for managing the behaviour, including actions directly from the teacher, from other agencies, the wider school and school policies, and social care provision. The results of the study demonstrated that the teachers' cognitive and emotional responses could be predicted by their causal attributions of the student's difficulties as being due to teacher, school or within-child factors. The teachers' feelings of the resolvable

nature of the difficulties, their perceptions of their responsibility for effecting a solution and their feelings of self-efficacy then predicted their intentional behaviours. In turn, their intentional behaviour, along with their confidence in the availability of support from other services and their perceived effectiveness of coping strategies, predicted the teacher's responses about actual use of coping strategies in managing the difficulty presented.

When the teachers attributed difficulties as being caused by teacher factors, they were more likely to feel the difficulties were resolvable and to feel responsible for effecting a solution. When the teachers attributed the problems to within-child factors, they reported more feelings of stress and helplessness, although to a lesser extent with emotional difficulties than conduct difficulties, and some indications of feeling able to deal with the difficulties. These feelings of stress could also reflect teachers' reports that when they attribute the cause of the difficulty to within-child factors, they perceive greater expectations from parents and school leadership to effect a solution. Influencing the teachers' feelings about their ability to effect a solution, was confidence in access to support from others, including external support agencies and additional training. When the teachers attributed the cause of difficulties as being due to school factors, they then reported feelings of anxiety, stress and helplessness without related responsibility or control to be able to provide a solution.

Poulou and Norwich's (2002) findings are limited by the use of vignettes and questionnaire responses which may not reflect teachers' actual thoughts, feelings or behaviour in the same situation in their own classroom. Additionally, the results may not be generalisable to UK culture due to their study using a Greek population sample. Despite this, the results did concur with Bandura's (1977, 1997) social cognitive theory. This postulates that teacher's feelings of self-efficacy will be key in determining their intentional and actual behaviours. Bandura goes a step further in suggesting this involves two distinct aspects influencing the teacher's intentional behaviours; their perceptions of their self-efficacy, including their ability to effect

change through intervention, and their perceptions of their control, including the extent to which the nature of the student's difficulty is resolvable and therefore within their power to impact on. Bandura's notion of self-efficacy will be discussed in more detail below.

Looking further at the role of attributions; Weiner's (1980) research involved a series of experiments to investigate the impact of cognitive, causal attributions on help-giving behaviour. The dimensions of causality fell into three distinct categories; locus (whether the cause of the difficulty is internal or external to the individual experiencing the difficulty), stability (whether the cause of the difficulty is temporary or permanent) and control (whether the individual experiencing the difficulty has influence over the cause). Based on his research, Weiner hypothesised that helping responses toward someone experiencing a difficulty follow a sequence, as was further supported and elaborated on with reference to a school setting by Poulou and Norwich (2002), as described above. From the perspective of the potential help-giver; their perceived causal attributions influence their feelings, which in turn influence their behaviour. So, in one of Weiner's conditions, when investigating the likelihood of students sharing their lecture notes with an unknown student, helping behaviour was most likely if the unknown student's difficulties (i.e. their lack of lecture notes) were due to external factors beyond their control (i.e. the lecturer was unclear, despite their effort to make notes). A refusal to help was predicted by experimental conditions whereby the unknown student's difficulties (i.e. their lack of lecture notes) were attributed as being internal and controllable (i.e. a lack of effort to make notes).

In a systematic literature review identifying dimensions of teacher attributions for challenging behaviour in primary-aged students, Nemer, Sutherland, Chow, & Kunemund (2019) reviewed 25 articles sampling 3,657 participating teachers from 11 countries, published between 1980 and 2018. The results of their review demonstrated that the most common causal attributions identified by teachers across the studies mirrored the dimensions of locus, stability and control suggested by Weiner, with a particular focus upon locus. Nemer et al. propose that a reliable

measure of teacher attributions could have major implications for the implementation of interventions aimed at supporting students presenting with challenging behaviours and their student-teacher relationship. Nemer et al. highlight the importance of developing an attribution measure which can be used consistently across studies, ideally focusing participants on student-specific classroom incidents, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the intricacies of teacher's attributions. It is of note that Nemer et al.'s review included only quantitative and mixed method studies, in the development of a tool which seeks to measure individual teacher's attributions, consideration of the data from qualitative studies will be key in providing insight into the nuances of teachers' attributions across different individuals and contexts.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1977, 1997) proposed that self-efficacy refers to a person's belief about their "*capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments*" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Bandura suggested that self-efficacy influences behaviour, with high perceived self-efficacy increasing the likelihood that a person will persist in a particular behaviour, even in the face of challenge. Bandura actively separates self-efficacy from controllability, suggesting that a person with high self-efficacy within an environment whereby they can effect change (by having some level of control over outcomes) is more likely to experience feelings of productive engagement, determination and commitment towards attaining their aspirations, and personal satisfaction. A person with low self-efficacy toward that particular attainment in the same environment is more likely to experience feelings of self-devaluation and despondency. A person with high self-efficacy for a given task will therefore be more inclined to approach that difficult task as a challenge to be overcome, whereas a person with low self-efficacy may view the same difficult task as a threat worth avoiding. Within an environment where a person has little or no influence over the outcome, and thereby cannot easily effect change, a person with high self-efficacy is more likely to experience frustration and grievance, whereas a

person with low self-efficacy in the same environment is likely to experience feelings of resignation and indifference.

Bandura references research by Gibson and Dembo (1984), Melby (1995) and Ashton and Webb (1986) in describing the impact of teacher self-efficacy on the classroom environment and student outcomes. Gibson and Dembo (1984) demonstrated that teachers with high self-efficacy with regard to educating disaffected students from challenging home backgrounds believed their students to be teachable, given extra effort and appropriate techniques, and believed they could enlist family support for the students. Furthermore, these teachers dedicated more time to academic instruction and provided more guidance and praise. Those teachers with low self-efficacy on the other hand seemed to believe there was little they could do if students were unmotivated and had an unsupportive home environment. They were shown to spend less time on academic activities, give up easily and be more inclined to criticise the students for their failures. Melby (1995) adds to this, suggesting that teachers with low self-efficacy are more likely to feel stressed and angered by students' challenging behaviours, be more pessimistic about their students' abilities to improve and rely more on restrictive and punitive methods of discipline to manage their classroom. Ashton and Webb (1986) demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were predictive of their students' later academic outcomes. Those teachers with high self-efficacy viewed students as "*reachable, teachable and worthy of teacher attention and effort*" (Ashton & Webb, 1986, p. 72), whereas those with low self-efficacy blamed students' poor abilities for their lack of academic progress.

Ajzen's (1991) notion of 'perceived behavioural control', a concept Ajzen related to Bandura's self-efficacy, can be effectively applied to consider the impact of a teacher's attitude on their student's outcomes. Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour proposes a predictive model looking at the relationship between motivational factors, intentions and actual behaviour. Within this model, Ajzen suggests that perceived behavioural control, for example; a teacher's beliefs in their ability to engage in effective teaching techniques for students demonstrating

challenging behaviours, directly impacts on the teacher's resulting intentions as well as their actual behaviour; i.e. their actual use of the effective teaching techniques.

Bandura associates low self-efficacy of teachers with a greater likelihood of experiencing burnout, described as "*a syndrome of reactions to prolonged occupational stressors that includes physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of the people one is serving, and lack of any sense of personal accomplishment*" (Bandura, 1997, p. 242). Teacher burnout was further investigated by Hastings and Bham (2003) in their study of 100 UK primary school teachers. Their findings indicated a relationship between student behaviour and teacher burnout. Specifically, they found that emotional exhaustion was predicted by disrespectful behaviour from students, depersonalisation was predicted by disrespectful student behaviour and a lack of sociable student behaviour, and low personal accomplishment was predicted by a lack of sociable behaviour in the classroom. Hasting and Bham do, however, refer to additional factors involved in predicting burnout, including workload related to additional responsibilities. Their study methodology was not able to attribute cause between related factors of student behaviour and teacher burnout.

2.2.3 Interventions to address challenging behaviours in school and reduce exclusions

Systematic reviews of studies investigating interventions to address challenging behaviours in school and reduce exclusions have provided little comprehensive evidence to inform classroom practice. A systematic review of the effect of teacher-led interventions on social and emotional behaviour in primary schools by Whear et al. (2013) included 14 studies, only one of which came from the UK. These controlled trials investigated 8 interventions in total and demonstrated inconclusive results. Inconclusive results were also demonstrated by Harden, Thomas, Evans, Scanlon and Sinclair (2003) in their systematic review of support for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream primary schools. In Harden et al.'s systematic review, only randomised controlled trials (RCTs) undertaken between the years 1999

to 2002 were included. Their review did indicate that the leading approach within primary schools to support their students with SEBD involved working in a multi-disciplinary way with colleagues both within school and from external services.

In connection with Harden et al.'s review, a systematic review of the same subject area considering studies prior to 1999 was conducted by Evans, Harden, Thomas and Benefield (2003). This review included 28 outcome evaluation studies, 4 of which came from UK based research. Their review identified that, focusing on mainstream primary school contexts, interventions to support students presenting with emotional and social behaviour difficulties appeared to be underpinned by one of three theoretical bases; cognitive-behavioural models, behavioural models and systemic models. Primarily, the studies targeted off-task and disruptive behaviour. Some outcome measures from systemic and cognitive-behaviour based interventions also identified aggressive or socially inappropriate behaviour as outcome measures. Evans et al. noted that within the studies reviewed, little evidence demonstrated a shift away from a within-child conceptualisation of the challenging behaviours toward a greater awareness of the impact of context within a more holistic approach. Most of the studies were identified as taking a 'deficiency' model and seeking to lessen the impact of difficulties, additionally, most studies did not seek to include the views of the students within the research. Of the 28 studies included in their review, only 10 were deemed to be methodologically 'sound', highlighting the potential for bias within this area of research.

Interventions based on behavioural models provided support for the effectiveness of reward-based strategies, with reductions in off-task and disruptive behaviour being immediately evident and lasting for as long as the intervention was actively in place. Interventions based on cognitive-behavioural models demonstrated some efficacy of children's self-monitoring techniques for off-task and disruptive behaviour. The impact of counselling and peer-mentoring approaches on students' aggression and social skill development demonstrated immediate positive effects of the intervention but no long-term benefits. Of the studies investigating interventions based on

systemic models, a positive effect was found for changing the classroom seating plan, so students were sat in rows, rather than in groups, increasing their time on task.

Seven studies were identified as including a process evaluation which sought to understand the views of teachers and students on the interventions implemented. Teachers identified the simplicity and acceptability of the intervention as key, as well as consistent implementation across school without a top-down approach, whereby use of the intervention was directed by senior school leadership. Students indicated that feeling listened to and consulted felt important to them in helping to ensure the intervention was accepted by students. This review, however, reflects the interventions and views of staff and students from at least two decades ago.

Valdebenito et al. (2018) more recently published a systematic review of studies investigating school-based interventions for reducing disciplinary school exclusion, within both primary and secondary mainstream settings. This review considered studies undertaken as early as 1980, up to December 2015. This review included only RCT's. Such stringent inclusion criteria for the review perhaps limits the findings by causing the review to miss high quality real-world research conducted within the education sector using quasi-experimental methods. The complexities of conducting RCTs within school-based, real-world research are well documented (Mertens, 2015). Valdebenito et al.'s review included 37 studies from which a meta-analysis was conducted. Their results indicated that school-based interventions were able to produce small, statistically significant reductions in exclusion rates in the short to medium term, up to 6 months. This was particularly the case for permanent exclusion and internal exclusions. The interventions, however, demonstrated no impact on rates of FTE, nor were any of the positive short- or medium-term effects sustained at a longer-term follow up. Of the studies which demonstrated some positive short- and medium-term effects, the most effective interventions involved enhancement of students' academic skills, counselling, mentoring and skill building for teachers. Valdebenito et al.'s review indicated that some of the most stable positive outcomes came from interventions which took a more systemic approach by focusing on skill

building for teachers. This teacher skills training, investigated in 4 of the studies, focused on preventative strategies, helping to maintain classroom discipline, create supportive educational environments and increase the positive behaviour of students. Skills included facilitating mutual respect, establishing clear classroom rules and working with parents. This finding perhaps links with the theoretical insights described in section 2.2.2, suggesting that training may have increased teachers' self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control for actions likely to support students presenting with challenging behaviours.

In summary, 'challenging behaviour' is itself a term which attempts to move away from a within-child model to a context-based conceptualisation of the presenting difficulties within classrooms where students are at risk of exclusion. Theoretical insights and research into challenging behaviour and its impact on teachers has been discussed, along with reviews of studies investigating intervention to support students presenting with challenging behaviours and their teachers in the classroom. In line with the historical perspective of 'challenging behaviours' indicating within-child deficits, research into classroom interventions appears to demonstrate a deficit model and outcomes relate to behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approaches, as well as systemic models of intervention.

In line with systemic approaches to intervention, as encouraged by Hart (2010) and Beaver (2011), school staff supervision and group consultation will be discussed before introducing the CoA intervention, a form of group supervision. This intervention will be explored in detail and is employed as part of this thesis research study.

2.3 School staff supervision

Professional supervision provides a means of enabling the professional, in this case the teachers and school staff, to "*survive the negative attacks of the client through the strength of being held within and by the supervisory relationship*" (Hawkins, Shohet, Ryde, & Wilmot, 2012, p. 4). In the context of the current research, the

negative attacks of the client refer to the challenging behaviour of the target student. Hawkins and Shohet posit that school staff absorb the distress of their students. Through supervision these emotions can be contained, and the distress can be survived, reflected upon and learnt from. This reflects the notion that school staff must be supported if they are to support their students. It also gives support to Schon's (1982) ideas about 'reflection-on-action' in order to support effective 'reflection-in-action', facilitating school staff to learn from their experiences so that they may respond in the best way in future scenarios.

Hawkins et al. (2012) highlight that in some professions, supervision is forgotten once the professional has qualified. This may be considered the case for teaching staff, where time for regular staff supervision is rarely prioritised within busy teaching timetables, and the concept of supervision "*as a way of developing greater awareness of their own reactions and responses to young people and understanding the dynamics of their interactions with young people*" may be unrecognised (Rae, Cowell, & Field, 2017, p. 202). Hawkins et al. (2012) posit that a lack of supervision can lead to rigidity and defensiveness, especially in professions such as teaching, which require the school staff to 'give' a lot of themselves; their time, effort, physical, mental and emotional energy to supporting their students. Furthermore, they link extremes of staleness, rigidity and defensiveness to 'burnout', a phenomenon discussed earlier, in section 2.2.2. It is suggested that burnout can occur through a vicious cycle of teachers feeling drained and therefore dropping their standards; failing to support their students optimally, leading to feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Linked to the concept of self-efficacy, introduced above in section 2.2.2, Hawkins et al. (2012) propose that supervision enables professionals to learn and flourish, perhaps by facilitating their sense of self-efficacy.

Rae et al. (2017) in their study into supervision for school staff working in specialist schools for students with SEBD, found that the school staff lacked consensus with regard to what supervision involves and looks like, in 'real' terms. Nonetheless, their findings suggested that supervision helped to promote staff well-being and

performance. The teachers appeared to want supervision to involve, "*objective, solution-focused and confidential support and opportunities to reflect, offload and feel contained*" (page 212). Their study involved a small sample of eight teachers from two specialist schools, who undertook exploratory interviews and had their views analysed through thematic analysis. Given the research methodology, the results may not readily generalise and instead reflect the individual experiences of those teachers involved in the study.

2.4 Group consultation

Group consultation can be considered a form of intervention which fits with a systemic approach, by supporting the school staff team around target students in order to effect change within the school environment. Bennett & Monsen (2011) highlight that "*Educational Psychologists working collaboratively with teachers and school staff to develop their critical understanding of the psychological processes underpinning their work could potentially benefit the greatest number of children and young people*" (page 32). They emphasise that the main aims of group consultation are two-part; to problem-solve and to provide support.

Firstly, Bennett and Monsen (2011) assert that group consultation enables school staff to generate their own solutions to problem situations within their settings. Souter (2001) emphasises the benefit of these solutions being generated by the school staff themselves and therefore coming from within the school system, rather than solutions or advice being imposed (as might be the case through 'traditional' training sessions). Group consultation, as a systemic approach, can offer school staff an opportunity to explore a range of possible explanations for a students' presentation of challenging behaviour, within an environment where blame is removed, and the behaviour can be reframed. This links with notions of causal attributions discussed earlier, in section 2.2.2; by enabling staff to step back and look more objectively at the behaviour, their views of the causes underpinning the students' behaviour might be changed.

Secondly, group consultation empowers the school staff by building their capacity, developing their skills and boosting their confidence. This aim in particular links with the notion of self-efficacy also discussed in section 2.2.2; by empowering school staff to feel able to practice positive strategies for supporting students' behavioural presentations, their actual behaviour is more likely to change.

The work of Hanko (1999, 2002) has been influential in the development of group consultation within schools in the UK and is underpinned by psychodynamic principles. Hanko (1999) advocates an atmosphere of acceptance towards feelings of anxiety and uncertainty within learning environments in order to promote creative thinking and understanding. Hanko extends this from not only the school learning environment for students but also in reference to the learning environments needed for teachers, to reflect on and develop their knowledge and skills. Hanko (2002) sets out skills to be employed within group consultation including; "*asking answerable questions […] in a genuinely exploring, non-judgemental and thus supportive way*" (p.381) in order to generate insight about the target students' needs as communicated through their behaviour, and "*discovering the teacher's strengths and building on them*" (p.381) through a process of sharing and supplementing the equally-valued expertise of all in the group.

2.5 The Circle of Adults intervention

The Circle of Adults (CoA) intervention was developed by Wilson and Newton, and was described in detail within their 2006 book, whereby they position the intervention as "*a team approach to problem solving around challenging behaviour and emotional needs*" (Wilson & Newton, 2006, p. 1). Wilson and Newton recommend the CoA intervention within multi-disciplinary teams, emphasising its aim as a tool to facilitate their own problem-solving efforts and support the key staff working directly with the student by providing a means of group supervision. The CoA intervention emphasises the importance of active participation from the group members present at the intervention, enabling their ownership of the solutions generated.

The CoA intervention involves 10 distinct steps, takes up to 90 minutes and is facilitated by two practitioners, who take the roles of process facilitator and graphic facilitator. The process facilitator leads the group through the steps of the intervention with careful questioning. A key responsibility of the process facilitator is to keep the group to the structure and boundaries provided by the CoA intervention process itself. The graphic facilitator takes the role of capturing key elements of the group's discussion in-situ, in order to provide a visual representation of the discussion being had. To do this effectively, the graphic facilitator uses 'big paper' which typically covers a large section of wall and provides a point of focus for the group. The discussion is captured visually using words and pictures.

Wilson and Newton note the significant time and personnel requirements of the intervention, encouraging that it is best placed "*when things are serious; where people don't know what to do next, are feeling they have 'tried everything' and there is talk of permanent exclusion and / or segregated placements*" (Wilson & Newton, 2006, p. 6). The intervention fits with a systemic approach, advocating an understanding of challenging behaviour as an aspect of the relationship and interactions of the student and staff, rather than being a solely within-child problem. Features of the intervention also indicate it being underpinned by psychodynamic and humanistic approaches, as described further below.

An overview of the Circles of Adults process:

The 10 steps of the intervention, recommendations of time spent on each step and the objective of the step are taken from Wilson and Newton's (2006) guidance.

1) Agree GROUND RULES for the session to come
    - Suggested time: 5 minutes
    - Objective: to provide boundaries and enhance feelings of safety

2) PRESENT PROBLEM
    - Suggested time: 15 minutes

- Objective: to present as full a picture as possible of the target student

3) EXPLORE RELATIONSHIPS
    - Suggested time: 15 minutes
    - Objective: to describe the relationship between the target student and their key school staff

4) Consider ORGANISATIONAL/SYSTEMIC FACTORS that help or hinder the problem situation
    - Suggested time: 10 minutes
    - Objective: to reinforce the skills and strengths of the key staff involved in supporting the target student and to highlight features of the organisation which make supporting the student easier or more difficult

5) Listen to what the CHILD'S VOICE has to say
    - Suggested time: 2 minutes
    - Objective: to invite an intuitive and empathic insight from an adult who has listened to the preceding steps with the target student's perspective in mind

6) Listen to a SYNTHESIS of all that have been recorded so far
    - Suggested time: 2/3 minutes
    - Objective: to highlight aspects of the content of discussion which conflict or seem confusing

7) Generate HYPOTHESES that help make sense of what is happening
    - Suggested time: 10 minutes
    - Objective: for the group to suggest a range of possible theories and hypotheses about what might be happening with the target student

8) Generate STRATEGIES linked to the hypotheses

- Suggested time: 10 minutes
- Objective: to build on the theories and hypotheses generated with ideas for strategies which may be of use

9) Agree some FIRST STEPS the problem presenter can take in the very near future and appoint a coach to check these have been accomplished by an agreed time
    - Suggested time: 5 minutes
    - Objective: to identify clear, objective and actionable steps to be taken within the next week

10) The session closes with a summary comment from each participant – a 'Round of Words'
    - Suggested time: 2/3 minutes
    - Objective: to provide group members with closure by validating their experience of the CoA process

2.5.1 Systemic approach

The CoA intervention takes a systemic approach to intervention, positioning the target student's challenging behaviour as an aspect of their relationships and interactions with others and their context. In line with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), the intervention invites group members to consider the student holistically, within their home and school environments, and the quality of their relationships. Furthermore, the CoA intervention explicitly prompts group members to consider the helping and hindering factors of the school organisation.

Aims within the CoA, as set out by Wilson and Newton (2006), which demonstrate the systemic approach of the intervention include;

- To explore the 'whole-school' and organisational processes, including their impact on staff working to support the target student on a day-to-day basis.

- To provide emotional support and facilitate shared understanding of contextual factors impacting on the target student at an individual, family, school and community level.

By facilitating a multi-disciplinary intervention, the CoA aims to benefit from the collective capacity of an invested group, to identify hypotheses and link these to solutions, seeking to move the 'stuck' situation forward.

2.5.2 Psychodynamic approach

Wilson and Newton (2006) explicitly reference the psychodynamic underpinnings of the CoA intervention, having been influenced in particular by the work of Gerda Hanko. Within the intervention, the exploration of the target students' relationship with their key staff members in school is prioritised. Within this, attention is drawn explicitly to the emotions of both the student (using assumptions and suggestions) and the key staff, and how these underpin their behaviour. Specifically, the 'explore relationships' and 'child's voice' steps of the intervention reflect psychodynamic principles.

Aims within the CoA, as set out by Wilson and Newton (2006), which demonstrate the psychodynamic approach of the intervention include;

- To enable individuals to reflect on their own intervention methods and receive feedback from the group.

Building on the work of Hanko (1999, 2002), Wilson and Newton (2006) describe the need to help the key staff in the CoA intervention to understand the student's behaviours, in order that difficult emotions which the student may be experiencing and finding 'hard to bear' will be more empathically managed by staff. This is based on the idea that challenging behaviours demonstrated by students are most likely a reaction to something in the environment, a trigger which may or may not be obvious to staff, which relates to the student's past experiences and feelings. The CoA process also aims to help staff to understand the cyclical manner by which their own and the

student's behaviours interact, potentially fuelling a vicious cycle. This is further reflected by Cooper and Upton (1990), who emphasise the importance of teachers being able to offer an empathic response to challenging behaviour, describing that a lack of "*empathic understanding between teachers and students would seem…to be a major factor in the development and maintenance of behaviour problems*" (p. 318). By supporting staff to understand this cyclical interaction, staff may be more able to harness it in order to facilitate a virtuous cycle.

2.5.3 Humanistic approach

Wilson and Newton (2006) refer to the influence of person centred facilitation practices and tools, such as the PATH and MAP processes, from the work of Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Forest and John O'Brien (Forest & Lusthaus, 1990; Forest, Pearpoint, & O'Brien, 1996; O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010). This work comes from a basis in supporting and empowering individuals through inclusion, and the notion that "*everyone belongs*" (Forest & Lusthaus, 1990, p. 32) regardless of an individual's special or additional needs. This body of work sought to build on strengths, emphasising the value every individual can add to their community. It is inherently humanistic in its approach by emphasising the importance of authentic appreciation of a person's worth, value and need to strive towards fulfilling their potential.

Aims within the CoA, as set out by Wilson and Newton (2006), which demonstrate the humanistic approach of the intervention include;

- Appreciation of the knowledge, skills and value of each member of the problem-solving group, and the group's ability to find its own solutions, within a safe exploratory climate.
- That the school staff are valued and worthy of having sensitive information, problems, ideas and strategies shared collaboratively with them.

Along with emphasising the strengths of the target student, the CoA intervention aims to highlight and build on the strengths and skills of the key staff members working directly with the student. The inclusive nature of the CoA intervention and its

underlying values is further communicated through the graphic facilitation, a means by which everyone can feel included in the discussion and see their contributions as being listened to and recorded.

2.5.4 Importance of a 'circle' approach

Grahamslaw & Henson (2015) in their research into the use of 'circle' approaches to problem solving, identify the historical, cultural and symbolic importance of the circle. They emphasise the circle as representing co-operation, cohesiveness, equality between members of the group, acceptance and respect. Furthermore, they suggest that the physical layout of the circle promotes listening amongst group members. In their research they identified six key contributory factors of the 'circle' to a problem-solving process;

- *The circle is a non-hierarchical group, where all members' views and opinions are listened to and treated equally*
- *The circle group has a shared focus and unified purpose*
- *The aim of the circle is cooperative and collaborative problem-solving*
- *The circle creates a cohesive group identity, rather than being a collection of individuals*
- *The circle process aims for a "ripple" effect whereby the impact of the group is experienced beyond the discussions that take place within the circle*
- *The circle provides social support in a safe climate to those taking part*

(Grahamslaw & Henson, 2015, p. 112)

3. Critical Literature Review

This review of the existing literature will explore the quality and outcomes of research into the Circle of Adults approach used with school staff, focused upon students at risk of exclusion. Although this thesis research specifically aims to focus upon students aged 4 – 8 years, for whom exclusionary practices present a major concern for their educational and life outcomes (Lawrence, Hadyen, & Hayden, 1997), the critical literature review will include research studies using the CoA approach with any school-aged students. Working as scientist-practitioners, Educational Psychologists fulfil a support role to schools. A priority focus for their work includes students at risk of exclusion (Cole, 2015). As scientist-practitioners, it is key that EPs apply theoretical knowledge and interventions which are based on high-quality evidence (Birch, Frederickson, & Miller, 2015). As such, development of a sound evidence base to support the CoA approach is important in order to justify the use of the approach in schools across the UK.

3.1 Objectives of this review

This critical literature review aims to address the following questions:

Review Question 1;

What is the quality of the current evidence base supporting the use of a Circles of Adults intervention, focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?

Review Question 2;

How does the Circle of Adults intervention facilitate positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school?

Review Question 3;

What gaps can be identified in the research literature investigating the use of a Circle of Adults approach focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?

3.2 Method

A systematic approach has been taken to review studies focused upon the use of a CoA intervention to support the inclusion of students at risk of exclusion from school.

The current literature within this area of research is sparse, with most research coming from doctoral theses. These include primarily mixed method studies, with a few solely qualitative or quantitative studies.

This review will therefore take a pragmatic, narrative synthesis approach to systematically considering the methodological quality and analysis of all available research which fits within the inclusion criteria of the review. The use of a published checklist designed to support the quality review of qualitative research will be used to provide structure, and ensure a systematic approach to the critical review process in order to answer review question 1; '*What is the quality of the current evidence base supporting the use of a Circles of Adults intervention, focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?*'. Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence (WoE) model is then applied to consider each study's contribution to answering review question 2; '*How does the Circle of Adults intervention facilitate positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school?*'. The implications of this review will be explored in relation to an evidence-base to justify the use of the CoA approach in everyday EP practice and indicate, '*What gaps can be identified in the research literature investigating the use of a Circle of Adults approach focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?*', answering review question 3.

3.2.1 Justification of a pragmatic approach

Quantitative studies using randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are considered the 'gold standard' for scientific research. Systematic review of RCT's are thought to provide the most reliable and valid evidence-base within scientific enquiry (Cherry, Perkins, Dickson, & Boland, 2014). This methodology requires a high number of studies to provide the necessary statistical power to demonstrate that one group, the intervention group, produced significantly different results to another group, the control group, based upon quantitative measures. Such evidence is robust, however in gaining statistical power, the methodology loses idiosyncratic details of individual studies and the factors influencing change within their specific context. Systematic reviews of RCTs are useful for answering 'what works' questions (Cherry et al., 2014).

Qualitative research has value in providing a systematic approach to understanding the qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Such research seeks to answer questions of 'what works for whom, and why' (Cherry et al., 2014). Qualitative research explores far smaller data sets, taking account of the idiosyncratic, contextual features of each individual study. Debate exists within the research community about how qualitative studies are systematically reviewed, and how their data is aggregated, if indeed it should be (Noyes et al., 2019). Garside (2014) provides an overview of some of this debate, suggesting it is important, as with quantitative studies, to assess the quality of the qualitative evidence. By reviewing qualitative research critically, it is possible to consider the studies' contribution to the research evidence as a whole. Yardley (2017) adds to this with a description of broad criteria by which qualitative research should be reviewed. Yardley stresses the importance of using such criteria flexibly, emphasising the priority is to support researchers in reflecting upon and justifying their review methods.

As research within this area is sparse, the author took a pragmatic approach in order to review all existing literature investigating the Circle of Adults intervention. Following the argument set out by Garside (2014), the author chose not to exclude any research evidence based on a perceived lack of quality, but to attempt a review of each study's quality within its own terms. The author acknowledges this requires a high level of judgement and interpretation. The author therefore felt it would be inappropriate to extract the results from each study reviewed and attempt to aggregate them, as each study takes its own epistemological stance, influencing the study methodology and results presented. Instead, the researcher sought a method by which to rate, subjectively, the quality of each study and the relevance of each study to answering the current review questions. The researcher then takes this into account in a narrative synthesis, exploring results across studies.

3.3 Search strategy

Preliminary database searches were undertaken to explore the existing and relevant literature. These are documented fully in Appendix 9.1. Key search terms and synonyms were identified, however results demonstrated that specifying only 'circle of adults' or 'circles of adults' produced results focused upon use of the intervention in school, negating the use of 'school' or 'student' within the search terms. The researcher was keen to focus upon the use of CoA in school, focused upon students at risk of exclusion. However, it was also deemed unnecessary to specify 'exclusion' or 'expulsion' as the studies appeared to focus on the process or impact of the CoA intervention, often specifying SEMH needs and/or challenging behaviours of the focus students. These can be characteristics which increase a students' likelihood of becoming at risk of exclusion (Department for Education, 2019a). Figure 3.1 shows a flow diagram of the screening process used to identify studies to be included in the critical literature review.

Figure 3.1: Flow diagram of the screening process used to identify studies included within this critical literature review

The databases searched included; NUSearch (the University of Nottingham's library database) (which returned 16), Web of Science (returned 1), Scopus (returned 6), Taylor and Francis (returned 8), PsychINFO and Google Scholar. PsychINFO returned no results. Google Scholar returned 388 records over 2 searches. Once all relevant records returned from the other databases had been inputted into Mendeley referencing software, the Google Scholar records were screened by title and checked against the records already returned. Only 2 additional records were identified which were relevant to the specified criteria. These were then added to Mendeley Referencing software, making up the 33 records to be scrutinised.

Using the Mendeley function, and a further check to ensure accuracy, duplicates were removed. This left 15 records to further scrutinise for inclusion in the literature review. The inclusion criteria specify that studies to be included in the literature review must be peer reviewed papers or theses. Therefore, 2 book reviews were removed, leaving 13 records to be further screened in more depth.

These 13 records were then screened by title and abstract, resulting in the exclusion of 5 records. In the case of a thesis by Kirven (2009), this was excluded as, despite repeated attempts by the researcher, access to this thesis was not achieved. A paper by Lunsky and Benson (1999) has been excluded on the basis that this refers to an adult population and a different meaning of 'circles of adults'. Newton's (1995) paper has been excluded on the basis that a 20-year period was identified to ensure the relevance of records returned. Education is an ever-evolving industry, therefore research papers can become quickly out-dated. The researcher felt that 20 years appropriately included the year 2006, when Wilson & Newton (2006) published their book explaining the Circles of Adults approach. A paper by Norwich, Fujita, Adlam, Milton and Edwards-Jones (2018) was excluded at the abstract screen due to its focus being upon a multi-disciplinary approach known as 'Lesson Study' rather than focusing upon a CoA approach. Finally, a paper by Norwich, Richards and Nash (2010) was also excluded due to it not focusing on a CoA approach. Instead their paper looked specifically at the role of EPs with regard to working with children in care.

8 records were then read in full to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. A critical appraisal paper by Bennett and Monsen (2011) was excluded at this stage as it did not review a specific study of the CoA intervention and instead focused upon a review and critical appraisal of the literature and approach in principle. Lastly, a thesis by Hussain (2016) was removed following a closer reading of the paper, as it focused upon the impact of video enhancements to the CoA, rather than studying the use of the CoA intervention itself. In neither of the conditions of Hussain's research was the CoA conducted as described by Wilson and Newton (2006).

Following completion of this process, a further paper was published by Turner and Gulliford (2020). This builds on the thesis research conducted by Turner (2014), offering further discussion of Turner's original data, and has therefore been included within the critical literature review alongside Turner's thesis research.

3.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Type of paper – peer reviewed journal article or thesis
- Age of focus – Any school-aged students (4 – 25 years of age)
- Intervention – Focus on use of the CoA intervention as described by Wilson & Newton (2006)
- Type of study – qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies were included where their focus was on the study or evaluation of the CoA intervention
- Year published – as school culture and in particular inclusion policies are constantly evolving, this review considers only studies published within the last 20 years

Exclusion criteria:

- Year published – published over 20 years ago
- Accessibility – not available as an electronic record
- Age of focus – focus upon adults no-longer attending school
- Focus of paper – not considering the CoA intervention as a primary focus of the research paper
- Type of study - article not conducting a research study into the CoA intervention as described by Wilson and Newton in their 2006 guidance

3.5 Data analysis

Please see Appendix 9.2 for a full data-extraction table of all included studies. Methodologies between these studies vary considerably, therefore a summary table with pertinent methodological and outcome data is provided below, in Table 3.1.

Author, date, title	Study methodology	Key outcomes
Connor (2018) Using sequence analysis to explore the group interaction within a Circle of Adults: an exploratory study	Naturalistic enquiry study which captured interactions within 5 CoA interventions, coded using Interaction Process Analysis and analysed using Sequence Analysis.	8 of 27 event pairs captured within the whole data set occurred consistently within each CoA. CoA therefore facilitates predictable interaction sequences. Equal task and emotional interactional processes identified. Author concludes the clear structure of CoA and open dialogue allow participants to get what they ask for within a supportive context and feel contained with clear boundaries, enabling problem solving.
Dawson (2013) An interpretative analysis of key adults' and children's experiences of school and their relationship before and after a Circle of Adults intervention	Written questionnaire data gathered from 3 key adults, 6 weeks post-CoA. Semi-structured interview data gathered from 2 target students (aged 10 and 11 years) 1 day and 6 weeks post-CoA. Data analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.	Before the intervention, the students gained negative attention from their class teachers, and the class teachers felt frustrated and unable to manage and control the student's behaviours. The learning mentor felt more attuned and understanding of the needs of the student and frustrated instead with the class teachers and school system. Students had attention, security, identity and motivational needs, they relied on key adults for support around confused and uncomfortable feelings and responded best to humour, routines and boundaries. After the intervention, the relationships between students and class teachers improved through students receiving more positive attention and empathic responses from class teachers. Key adults felt more

		empowered and in control in the classroom. The key adults also reported a sense of hope and optimism, although this was short-lived for one adult. Students felt more accepted, more aware of their strengths and difficulties and one student felt more able to manage his emotions and behaviour.
Dempsey (2012) A mixed-method study investigating a Circle of Adults approach to group work in schools	School staff involved in up to 4 CoA interventions over a term, 8 weeks between pre- and post-CoA data collection. Using a non-matched, wait-list control group; pre- and post-CoA data gathered from 30 school staff measuring perceived causal attributions and perceived self-efficacy. Written questionnaire data gathered from 20 school staff post-CoA and analysed by thematic analysis.	Quantitative results indicate that the CoA intervention may impact on the perceived self-efficacy of school staff by preventing a reduction in personal belief in behaviour management abilities. Qualitative results indicate the school staff gained a deeper understanding of the students' needs and felt supported in problem-solving. They perceived the CoA intervention to be valuable and enjoyable, with some school staff perceiving the collaborative approach to be of greater value than more directive advice-giving. The high staffing and time commitment were noted as hindering factors.
Grahamslaw & Henson (2015) Solving problems through circles	Questionnaire data gathered from 31 participants immediately following a CoA intervention and 62 participants immediately following a Solution Circle (SC) intervention, analysed using Thematic Analysis.	Both CoAs and SCs support key features of using a 'circle' approach and both may be useful tools. CoA is more appropriate for problems requiring an in-depth exploration from participants involved in the problem situation. Facilitator skills are important for successful outcomes.
Syme (2011) An evaluation of the	Multiple case study approach as part of mixed-methods research, using quasi-	Repeated measures data results tentatively suggested a positive impact on reports of student behaviour immediately after the

impact of circles of adults	experimental and single-case experimental designs. Pre- and post-tests measured teacher causal attributions and their perceptions of the students' strengths and difficulties. Pre- and post-tests also measures students' self-perceptions of their own strengths and difficulties, their sense of school membership and their self-concept as a learner. Repeated measures were taken of students' daily behaviour incidents. Qualitative data was captured from school staff immediately post-CoA by written questionnaire.	CoA, which were not sustained. Quantitative results also tentatively suggested some changes to students' attitudes and school staffs' perceptions post-CoA. Qualitative data showed school staff reported that the CoA supported them in gaining strategies, confidence and understanding of the target student, helping them to employ more effective behaviour management.
Turner (2014) Evaluating the outcomes of the 'Circles of Adults' intervention on adults supporting Looked After Children at risk of exclusion. Turner & Gulliford (2020) Examining the Circles of Adults process for Children Looked	Mixed method study with quasi-experimental design using wait-list control group. 4 students were focus of CoA interventions, 2 students were focus of Pupil Education Plan (PEP) meetings as is usual practice, within the control group. Complimented by qualitative data gathered through focus groups. Pre- and post-test data measured school staff self-efficacy, attributions of student's behaviours and success of	No significant statistical differences in causal attributions or self-efficacy. CoA group rated their actions as more successful than PEP group. Qualitative data showed school staff reported positive effects of the intervention, including finding the CoA useful and thought-provoking, seeming to increase staff's self-reflection. School staff also noted some positive changes in staff members' own behaviour towards the target student.

After: the role of self-efficacy and empathy in staff behaviour change	target actions set during intervention.	

Table 3.1: Summary of studies included in critical literature review.

3.6 Method of quality assessment

This critical literature review assessed the quality of included studies in order to answer review question 1;

What is the quality of the current evidence base supporting the use of a Circles of Adults intervention, focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?

The methodological quality of the included research studies has been assessed using Cesario, Morin and Santa-Donato's (2002) checklist. This checklist was selected following its use in a study into Person-Centred Planning, specifically the use of the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) intervention (Claes, Van Hove, Vandevelde, van Loon, & Schalock, 2010 in; Wood, O'Farrell, Bjerk-Andersen, Mullen, & Kovshoff, 2019). The approach of Person Centred-Planning is referenced by Wilson and Newton (2006) as influential in their development of the CoA intervention. The checklist developed by Cesario et al (2002) is thorough and includes detailed prompts, providing a systematic method of rating quality across studies, whilst enabling the researcher to treat each study individually, assessing it within its own terms and in line with its chosen methodological and epistemological stance (Garside, 2014; Gough, 2007). As discussed earlier, in section 3.2.1, this method of quality assessment is subjective and demonstrates interpretation and judgement on the part of the author. The researcher acknowledges a discrepancy with using quality indicators designed for qualitative literature to review the quality of a wider methodological range of research, including aspects of quantitative research. Taking each study individually and assessing its quality within its own terms, as advocated by

Garside (2014) and Gough (2007), enabled the researcher to consider potential bias within quantitative and mixed-methods research.

Due to the complexities involved in systematically reviewing and aggregating results from qualitative and mixed-method studies, the researcher sought to evaluate the quality of each study, to provide an indication of its perceived value and contribution to the topic area. Following this, the researcher applied Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence model to consider the relevance of the study to answering review question 2 of this critical literature review. A narrative synthesis is then undertaken to highlight key findings within the research results.

Figure 3.2 shows an overview of Cesario et al.'s (2002) quality checklist. A further detailed explanation of the criteria within each category on the checklist, including prompts for the researcher to consider, can be seen in Appendix 9.3. These detailed criteria were used by the researcher when reviewing each of the studies within this review.

Read the qualitative study and score each of the categories listed using the quality rating scale of 0 through 3 described below. 1. DV = Descriptive Vividness 2. MC = Methodological Congruence a. RD = Rigor in Documentation b. PR = Procedural Rigor c. ER = Ethical Rigor d. C = Confirmability 3. AP = Analytical Preciseness 4. TC = Theoretical Connectedness 5. HR = Heuristic Relevance a. IR = Intuitive Recognition b. RBK = Relationship to Existing Body of Knowledge c. A = Applicability	SCORING SCALE 3 = Good = 75%–100% criteria met 2 = Fair = 50%–74% criteria met 1 = Poor = 25%–49% criteria met 0 = No evidence that criteria met = < 25% criteria met FINAL QUALITY OF EVIDENCE RATING The quality of evidence rating was based on the total scores for each of the five categories described above. A quality of evidence rating for each qualitative study was assigned using the legend below: QI: Total score of 22.5–30 indicates that 75% to 100% of the total criteria were met. QII: Total score of 15–22.4 indicates that 50% to 74% of the total criteria were met. QIII: Total score of less than 15 indicates that less than 50% of the total criteria were met.

Figure 3.2: An overview of instructions for evaluating qualitative literature, published in Cesario et al., (2002) and used within the current critical literature review.

The quality indicators highlighted by Cesario et al (2002) link with the 4 key dimensions stated by Yardley (2017) to be important for enhancing, evaluating and

demonstrating quality within qualitative research. These are; sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. This checklist was felt by the author to be appropriate for use within this literature review, given that there is no standard method for reviewing the quality of mixed method studies (Gough, 2007). As well as linking with dimensions stated by Yardley, the criteria set out by Cesario et al. (2002) can be related to the prompts for consideration presented by Garside (2014), as demonstrated below, in Table 3.2. Taking into consideration the recommendations put forward by Yardley (2017), to use quality indicators flexibly, the researcher felt that Cesario et al.'s (2002) checklist provides an appropriate basis for reviewing the quality of the studies included within this critical literature review, primarily made up of mixed method studies, given that each study is taken individually and assessed within its own terms.

Cesario et al.'s framework provides detailed prompts to support a systematic and rigorous review of studies assessed. The framework's focus upon rigor, particularly procedural rigor, enabled the researcher to take account of potential sources of bias within quantitative research. To utilise this evaluation tool to best effect within mixed methods studies, each category within Cesario et al.'s framework was considered twice. For example, Turner's 2014 research is clearly split into quantitative and then qualitative methods and findings. In order to assess the research within its own terms, the researcher first assessed the quantitative methodology and results, holding in mind the post-positivist paradigm within which this aspect of the research was positioned. Second, the researcher assessed the qualitative methodology and results, remaining mindful of the interpretivist paradigm within which this aspect of the research was positioned. The subjective rating given within each criteria of Cesario et al.'s framework, as shown below, takes account of both the quantitative and qualitative elements of evaluation in mixed method studies.

Cesario et al. (2002) Criteria for evaluating qualitative literature.	**Yardley (2017) Key dimensions for demonstrating quality in qualitative research.**	**Garside (2014) Suggested guidelines to consider the technical aspects of qualitative research, trustworthiness, theoretical and practical considerations.**
Descriptive Vividness	Transparency and coherence	
Methodological Congruence; a. Rigor in Documentation b. Procedural Rigor c. Ethical Rigor d. Confirmability	Commitment and rigor	Clarity and suitability of the research question to the methodology applied. Clear description of context, sampling, data collection and analysis.
Analytical Preciseness	Sensitivity to context	Trustworthiness
Theoretical Connectedness		Theoretical considerations
Heuristic Relevance a. Intuitive Recognition b. Relationship to Existing Body of Knowledge c. Applicability	Impact and importance	Practical considerations

Table 3.2: An overview of the links, presented by row, between quality indicators within qualitative research, as stated by Cesario et al. (2002), Yardley (2017) and Garside (2014).

3.7 Quality of evidence rating

Table 3.3 shows the quality ratings of each study within the critical literature review, as rated by the researcher. These ratings are acknowledged to be subjective. Appendix 9.4 provides an in-depth discussion of the application of each of Cesario et al.'s quality indicators across the studies included within this review.

Adapted from Cesario, Morin & Santa-Donato's (2002) Qualitative Research Quality Checklist.

Scoring Scale:

3 = Good (75-100% criteria met)

2 = Fair (50-74% criteria met)

1 = Poor (25-49% criteria met)

0 = No evidence that criteria met (<25% criteria met)

Final Quality of Evidence Rating:

QI = 22.5 – 30 (75%-100% total criteria met)

QII = 15 – 22.4 (50%-74% total criteria met)

QIII = 0 – 15 (less than 50% of total criteria met)

Quality Checklist	Dawson (2013)	Turner (2014) and Turner & Gulliford (2020)	Grahamslaw & Henson (2015)	Connor (2018)	Dempsey (2012)	Syme (2011)
1.Descriptive Vividness	2	2	2	1	3	2
2.Methodological Congruence 2a. Rigor in Documentation	3	3	2	1	3	2
2b. Procedural Rigor	2	3	2	2	3	1
2c. Ethical Rigor	3	3	1	3	3	3
2d. Confirmability (auditability)	3	2	2	3	3	3
3. Analytical Preciseness	3	3	1	2	3	2
4. Theoretical Connectedness	3	3	2	3	3	3
5. Heuristic Relevance 5a. Intuitive Recognition	3	3	3	3	3	3
5b. Relationship to Existing Body of Knowledge	3	3	3	3	3	3
5c. Applicability	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total Score: Quality indicator (I/II/III)	28: QI	28: QI	21: QII	24: QI	30: QI	25: QI

Table 3.3: An overview of the quality ratings of each study within the critical literature review, following Cesario et al.'s (2002) guidance for evaluating qualitative literature.

3.7.1 Descriptive Vividness

Descriptive vividness refers to the clarity and credibility of the study report. This rating links with Yardley's (2017) key dimensions of transparency and coherence. Ratings between 1 and 3 within this area reflect the comprehensiveness with which decisions undertaken within the research were explained. The rating also signifies a judgement on the clarity with which the research itself is described, with links to the theoretical and philosophical basis of research methods adopted.

3.7.2 Methodological Congruence

Methodological congruence includes consideration of rigor. Rigor in documentation refers to a clear and accurate presentation of all the elements of the research study, including explicit reference to the phenomenon being investigated, the philosophical basis of the research and the researcher's role within the study. Procedural rigor refers to the appropriateness of the methodology and sample, and efforts to reduce or acknowledge potential for bias, where appropriate, within the study process. Ethical rigor refers to the study making clear and explicit the steps taken to ensure the research process is ethical and that the participants and their rights are protected. Methodological congruence also takes account of confirmability, also referred to as auditability, and refers to a level of clarity and description within the report. This clarity would allow for decisions justified within the study to be scrutinised, or for a similar study to be undertaken. These considerations link with Yardley's (2017) key dimensions of commitment and rigor, as well as Garside's (2014) technical evaluation, including clarity and suitability.

3.7.3 Analytical Preciseness

Analytical preciseness refers to the extent to which the researcher's findings, their interpretations of the data or results concluded, correspond with the data gathered within their research. This links with Yardley's (2017) key dimension of sensitivity to context and Garside's (2014) consideration of trustworthiness. Ratings within this area reflect the clarity and transparency with which the analysis of data was reported, and potential risks of bias addressed.

3.7.4 Theoretical Connectedness

Theoretical connectedness refers to theoretical concepts within the report being clearly defined, and relationships between theoretical concepts clearly expressed and validated by data. This links with Garside's (2014) theoretical considerations. Given that five of the seven studies within this critical literature review are doctoral theses, this criterion was largely met to a high standard within the research reports. All of the theses discussed theoretical considerations within their research, reporting breadth and depth in the literature reviewed before focusing upon their specific research study. Findings were then related back to theory and literature in a way which is clear and explicit.

3.7.5 Heuristic Relevance

Within Cesario et al.'s guidance, heuristic relevance is broken down into three features; intuitive recognition, relationship to existing body of knowledge and applicability. Intuitive recognition refers to the study report demonstrating clear, explicit descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated, which are consistent with such descriptions of the same phenomenon in previous literature. Relationship to existing body of knowledge refers to the report making explicit where previous literature has been examined ahead of the research being undertaken. Applicability refers to the relevance of the findings for practice and further development of theory. The area of heuristic relevance links with Yardley's (2017) key dimension of impact and importance, as well as Garside's (2014) practical considerations.

In all of the studies examined within this critical literature review, a score of 3, indicating 'good' has been provided within the area of heuristic relevance. Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) study usefully draws conclusions which provide EPs with a helpful guide, indicating which of the CoA or Solution Circle approaches are best suited for particular contexts. Connor's (2018) research helpfully provides insights into the interaction processes within the CoA itself, not previously studied in

this way, and Syme's (2011) research provides useful insight into the possible immediate and medium-term impact of the CoA intervention.

3.7.6 Total Score of Quality Indication

Taken together, the total scores indicate that all of the theses assessed for quality provide a score between 24 (Connor, 2018) and 30 (Dempsey, 2012). This indicates that the reports are overall, of a high quality and meet 75% - 100% of the criteria set out by Cesario et al.'s (2002) quality guidance. Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) paper received a total score of 21, indicating that it met 50% - 75% of the criteria and is therefore of a medium quality.

An assessment of quality, using Cesario et al.'s (2002) guidance sought to address review question 1;

'What is the quality of the current evidence base supporting the use of a Circles of Adults intervention, focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?'

Although the quality judgements remain subjective, the researcher has followed Cesario et al.'s (2002) detailed guidance to ensure a systematic and thorough approach to quality assessment of the studies included within this critical literature review. These assessments were inputted into Gough's (2007) WoE model, under 'Weight of Evidence A', in order to further inform the contribution of each study to a narrative synthesis of the research area as a whole, seeking to address review questions 2 and 3.

3.8 Weight of Evidence

Gough's (2007) WoE model for reviewing literature involves the use of 3 ratings, A, B and C, to calculate a total score, D, which indicates the 'weight' each study holds in the final synthesis of results. The 'weight' is described using terms 'low, medium or high'. The focus of each rating is explained below, in Table 3.4.

Rating	Description
Weight of Evidence A	Generic, non-review-specific judgement of the quality, coherence and integrity of the evidence in its own terms.
Weight of Evidence B	Review-specific judgement of the appropriateness of the form of evidence, for example the methodology used, for answering the question posed by the current literature review.
Weight of Evidence C	Review-specific judgement of the relevance of the evidence, for example the sample, context or method of analysis used, for answering the question posed by the current literature review.
Weight of Evidence D	A judgement of the overall Weight of Evidence, calculated by combining A, B and C.

Table 3.4: An overview of Gough's Weight of Evidence model as applied in this critical literature review (Gough, 2007, p. 223).

Using Gough's (2007) WoE model, the studies included within this critical literature review have been judged based upon their appropriateness and relevance for answering review question 2;

'How does the Circle of Adults intervention facilitate positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school?'

Table 3.5 provides an overview of each studies' 'weight' within the model set out by Gough (2007). The ratings for 'Weight of Evidence A' come from the quality assessments conducted above, using Cesario et al.'s guidance. The ratings for 'Weight of Evidence B' and 'Weight of Evidence C' are discussed in greater detail below.

Study	Weight of Evidence A: Quality	Weight of Evidence B: Appropriateness	Weight of Evidence C: Relevance	Weight of Evidence D: Overall
Dawson (2013)	High	High	High	High
Turner (2014) and Turner & Gulliford (2020)	High	High	High	High
Grahamslaw & Henson (2015)	Medium	Medium	High	Medium/High
Connor (2018)	High	Medium	Medium	Medium/High
Dempsey (2012)	High	High	High	High
Syme (2011)	High	High	High	High

Table 3.5: An overview of the 'Weight of Evidence' of each study included within this critical literature review, as judged in line with Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence model.

3.8.1 Dawson (2013)

Dawson's (2013) study received weightings of 'high' for appropriateness and relevance to addressing review question 2. Dawson uses an IPA approach to investigate key school staff and students' lived experiences of school and their relationships within school. The IPA design is deemed to be highly appropriate to addressing the review question because it enables an exploratory approach to investigate *how* the CoA intervention impacts upon both staff and students. Dawson's study relates the findings to a psychodynamic theoretical basis, making reference to concepts such as 'transference', 'countertransference' and 'projection'. The study findings suggest that the CoA intervention impacts on key members of school staff by promoting their feelings of empowerment and control within the classroom.

Dawson used written questionnaire data and notes that the use of interviews may have provided a more in-depth, rich dataset. Dawson's evidence is considered

relevant as it explores the perceptions of both key school staff and the target student, focusing on primary aged students described as SEBD on their respective school's SEN register. The relevance of Dawson's evidence to answering review question 2 is judged to be 'high'. It is, however, noted that the key adult data was gathered after the CoA and therefore reflects a retrospective perspective following the participants experience of the intervention itself, as well as experiences since the intervention.

3.8.2 Turner (2014), Turner and Gulliford (2020) and Dempsey (2012)

Turner's (2014) study and Turner and Gulliford's (2020) paper, as well as Dempsey's (2012) study all received weightings of 'high' for both appropriateness and relevance to addressing review question 2. Both studies were driven by a theoretical basis; that the CoA may facilitate positive change to support students in 'at risk' school placements by promoting school staff members' self-efficacy and impacting upon the causal attributions they hold with regard to student behaviour. In this way, the research studies are highly relevant because they directly address review question 2, from a theoretical basis. The methodology applied within both studies is felt to be appropriate as they seek to measure quantifiable differences in self-efficacy and causal attributions pre- and post-CoA, as well as capturing from a qualitative perspective, the school staff's experiences of the CoA intervention.

3.8.3 Grahamslaw & Henson (2015)

Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) study received weighting of 'medium' for appropriateness and 'high' for relevance to addressing review question 2. The study methodology involved the use of written questionnaire data from participants immediately after either the CoA or Solution Circle (SC) intervention. Similar to Dawson's research, interview data may have generated richer data. The methodology captures post-intervention data and focuses to a greater extent on the similarities and differences between participants' experiences of the CoA and SC interventions. The data gathered within this research is relevant to addressing review question 2, as it seeks to capture the features of a CoA intervention which are key in facilitating positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school.

3.8.4 Connor (2018)

Connor's (2018) study received weighting of 'medium' for appropriateness and relevance in addressing review question 2. The study design focused on the use of Interactional Process Analysis to code audio data, recorded during 5 CoA interventions, and Sequence Analysis to analyse the pattern of coded data. This is effective in providing insight regarding the interactional patterns within the CoA itself. However, the methodology is limited in what can be concluded with regard to *how* the intervention facilitates positive change. The evidence gathered from this study is somewhat relevant to addressing review question 2, as it provides insight into the interactions within CoA interventions, used within school settings. By relating the study results to theoretical bases, Connor is able to suggest mechanisms by which the CoA may support school staff in order to facilitate positive change.

3.8.5 Syme (2011)

Syme's (2011) study received weighting of 'high' for both appropriateness and relevance in addressing review question 2. Similarly to Dempsey's (2012) and Turner's (2014) research, the study methodology was theory-led. Syme sought to use pre- and post- tests to quantifiably measure changes in school staff's causal attributions and their perceptions of the students' behavioural presentation within school. Pre- and post-tests also sought to quantifiably measure students' self-perception within school, investigating a possible indirect impact of the CoA intervention. In addition to these pre- and post-tests, the SCED design enabled repeated measures of students' behaviour to investigate if any behavioural change occurred. Qualitative post-CoA questionnaires were also used to gather school staff's experiences of the CoA intervention itself. Although rather complex, Syme's study design sought to gather data indicating both *if* the CoA intervention facilitated positive change for students at risk of exclusion from school, and led by theoretical insights, *how* the CoA facilitates positive change. This study is highly relevant in addressing review question 2 because it seeks to directly address the question, from a theory-led perspective.

3.9 Narrative synthesis

By following review guidance from both Cesario et al. (2002) and Gough (2007), the author has undertaken a systematic and thorough review of the quality of evidence within this critical literature review, and the 'weight' of each study's contribution to addressing review question 2;
'How does the Circle of Adults intervention facilitate positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school?'

These review processes conclude that the highest contribution comes from doctoral thesis studies conducted by Turner (2014), Dempsey (2012), Syme (2011) and Dawson (2013), and the later paper published by Turner and Gulliford (2020). These studies were theory-led, with both Turner and Dempsey investigating possible pre- and post-intervention changes in school staff's self-efficacy. These followed Bandura's (1977, 1997) proposal that self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to complete the actions necessary to attain a specified goal. Bandura suggested that self-efficacy influences behaviour, with high perceived self-efficacy increasing the likelihood that a person will persist in a particular behaviour, even in the face of challenge.

The concept of self-efficacy has been placed "*within a more general framework of the relations among beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviour*" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 184) with 'perceived behavioural control' as an aspect of Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Perceived behavioural control refers to a person's *"perceptions of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest*" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 183), and varies in different situations and in respect of different behaviours.

Together with a person's attitude towards engaging in a particular behaviour and their perceptions of the subjective norm, perceived behavioural control is predictive of both a person's intentions to engage in a particular behaviour and their actual behaviour. This suggests that theoretically, the CoA intervention may facilitate positive change by increasing school staff members' perceived ability to engage in

actions to support the target student, as measured by their self-efficacy. However, the findings from studies within this review provide no statistical evidence to support a change in staff's self-efficacy when measured pre- and post-intervention. Turner and Gulliford (2020) emphasise an outcome of the CoA intervention being increased *intention* to carry out actions to support the target student. Turner (2014) evidenced a statistically significant impact of the CoA in participants ratings of the success of their actions, as measured at 4-week follow-up, compared to the control group. Qualitative data also demonstrated participants having spent more time reflecting on the student following the CoA meeting than they felt was usually the case following a PEP meeting.

Led again by theoretical insight; Turner (2014), Turner and Gulliford (2020), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011) all investigated whether the CoA intervention facilitates positive change by impacting on the causal attributions school staff have regarding students' behaviour. This was based on research to suggest that the beliefs a person holds regarding the causal attributions of another's behaviour will impact their response to such behaviour (Miller, 1995; Weiner, 1980, 2010). However, no consistent changes were found in measures of causal attributions pre- and post-intervention across the studies. Turner and Gulliford (2020) highlight the possibility that changes in individuals' causal attributions may be difficult to measure using a statistical approach within small scale research. Turner and Gulliford propose the use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955) as an alternative methodological approach to explore any potential changes in causal attributions in future research.

Syme's research also used pre- and post- intervention measures directly with students. Syme investigated the possibility of the CoA intervention facilitating positive change to support students, through indirect impact upon their self-perceptions, caused potentially by changes in the behaviour of their school staff. Syme demonstrated some indication of students perceiving changes in their behaviour, as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997), however, these changes were only significant for one student.

Syme also investigated actual changes in student behaviour, through repeated measures of students' positive and negative behaviour logs. Although changes were not consistent or sustained, in all cases Syme appeared to note an immediate increase in positive behaviours and/or decrease in negative behaviours following the CoA. However, this finding is subject to the potential of bias in the reporting of student behaviour on a daily log, and therefore may not reliably demonstrate actual behaviour change.

Qualitative findings from Dawson's (2013) study support the suggestion from Syme of indirect impact upon student's self-perception and behaviour. Dawson's research indicated improved relationships between school staff and students following the CoA intervention, evidenced by more positive attention and empathic responses from staff. Students interviewed in Dawson's study reported feeling more accepted, more able to manage their emotions and behaviour, and more aware of their strengths and difficulties. This could explain some of the changes found in Syme's research using the SDQ measure. Additionally, Dawson found that following the CoA intervention, school staff reported feeling more empowered, more in control within the classroom and more optimistic. This could explain some of the immediate changes in staff's recording of student behaviour as found in Syme's research, potentially indicating staff being more successful in achieving control within the classroom immediately following the CoA intervention.

Dawson's finding of more empathic responses from school staff is further supported by Grahamslaw and Henson's finding, that the CoA intervention is effective in evoking empathy from the school staff involved. Furthermore, the CoA seems effective in facilitating positive change to support students by helping school staff to gain a greater understanding of the target student, a finding reported by Turner, Syme, Dawson, Grahamslaw and Henson, and Dempsey.

Another means by which the CoA intervention may facilitate positive change is by helping the school staff to feel supported. The collaborative and cooperative aspects

of the intervention, enabling staff to access a range of perspectives and feel supported, is referenced in a number of the research studies. This support may enable school staff to feel more confident, as is indicated in Syme's research. Connor's research usefully identifies how the interactions taking place with the CoA may facilitate school staff feeling supported. Connor's findings demonstrate an equal balance of task and emotional interaction processes. Connor identifies that the structure of the CoA provides boundaries and enables containment for school staff involved. Additionally, school staff appear to receive the information they ask for during the CoA intervention, indicating the intervention facilitates clear, direct communication.

3.10 Discussion

This critical literature review has assessed all of the available literature investigating the use of a Circle of Adults intervention, used as described by Wilson and Newton (2006), in schools to support students whose educational placements may be at risk. In explicitly assessing the quality of the research evidence, quality guidance from Cesario et al. (2002) has been applied. Research quality was then taken into account when using Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence model to assess the appropriateness and relevance of each study for addressing a specific review question under investigation. Following this, a narrative synthesis has been provided which seeks to answer review question 2;

'How does the Circle of Adults intervention facilitate positive change to support students at risk of exclusion from school?'

This narrative synthesis has demonstrated consistent findings within research investigating the CoA intervention, suggesting that one of the ways in which the intervention facilitates positive change is through enabling school staff to feel supported. This is perhaps related to the collaboration and cooperation between staff within the intervention itself, which was identified by a number of studies. Furthermore, another common finding refers to the CoA intervention facilitating school staff to develop a better understanding of the target student, a finding which

may then link with the evoking of empathy, as described in Dawson and Grahamslaw and Henson's research.

Despite theory-led approaches to the research being undertaken by studies rated as highly weighted in addressing review question 2, (Dempsey (2012); Turner (2014); Turner and Gulliford (2020); Syme (2011)), these studies did not demonstrate quantifiable evidence to support the theories. Within such small-scale research, as has been included within this review, achieving statistically significant results within real world research is a challenge. The lack of quantifiable evidence may therefore reflect issues with generating sufficient statistical power to avoid type II errors, or issues with the reliability and validity of measurement; such as the reliability of the instruments used to capture the true phenomenon. For instance, in attempting to measure causal attributions, vignettes were used alongside a questionnaire. The ecological validity of using vignettes has been questioned by researchers such as Grey, McClean and Barnes-Holmes (2002). Furthermore, the construct validity of measures of teacher self-efficacy, as were employed in the above studies, has been questioned by researchers such as Henson (2001).

The findings most consistently demonstrated through the research studies included in this review therefore come from qualitative elements of the studies. Despite often receiving equal weight within the conclusions drawn in the research papers, the qualitative elements of research within mixed-method studies in this review appear to have been given less focus than the quantitative elements of the research. From all of the qualitative evidence gathered, only Turner's (2014) study utilised an interview method in order to gather rich data from school staff participants. Dawson's (2013) research utilised interview methods with students but requested written feedback from school staff. As reflected in Dawson's (2013, p. 158) limitations, semi-structured interviews are able to provide a richer and more detailed picture of participants' experiences. This rich data also enables a more robust research design.

All of the qualitative data gathered in studies within this review has been analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA), aside from Dawson (2013), who used Interpretative Phenomenal Analysis (IPA), a method which does involve some aspects of analysis by themes. Dawson's use of IPA enabled an in-depth level of analysis, using an inductive approach of searching for themes from within the data. This IPA method involved a latent level of analysis, defined by Braun & Clarke (2013) as identifying implicit meanings within the data. This enabled Dawson to apply conceptual and theoretical frameworks to seek to better understand the data gathered, given individual features of the participant from whom the data was gathered and their context. One of the most prominent limitations of Dawson's research comes from the use of written feedback. Using written questionnaires forbade Dawson from asking for clarification from her participants, or for further detail when vague or ambiguous comments were made. Whilst Dawson links the research findings to a psychodynamic theoretical basis, the integrity of the author's interpretations may have been improved by participant validation checks, also known as member checks (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

In research by Grahamslaw and Henson (2015), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011) the qualitative written data, and for Turner (2014), and Turner and Gulliford (2020) the qualitative focus group data, has been gathered after the CoA intervention and has been analysed using Thematic Analysis. The research papers ranged in the level of detail included regarding the TA process, however, all of the papers used only a sematic level approach to analysis. The semantic level approach is defined by Braun and Clarke (2013) as referring only to the semantic meaning of the data. This limits the researcher to analysing only the words presented by the participants, without a greater depth of analysis seeking to consider implicit meanings of the comments, taking account of the participant's individual context.

In these analyses, the researchers collected comments from school staff in a range of management, teaching and support roles within school. Their comments therefore reflect a range of perspectives with regard to the target student, their involvement with the student on a day-to-day basis, and the extent to which they are responsible

for the students' academic or social outcomes. The findings which can be concluded from the qualitative elements of much of the research included within this critical literature review therefore reflect a breadth of perspectives, without any clear in-depth insights into the ways in which the CoA intervention facilitates positive change for school staff from any specific role in school.

Review question 3 asks;
'What gaps can be identified in the research literature investigating the use of a Circle of Adults approach focused upon students at risk of exclusion from school?'

Following a narrative synthesis, attention will be given to identification of gaps within the research literature. As has been mentioned above, the conclusions drawn from qualitative elements of the existing research literature may reflect a breadth of experiences, providing space for future research to conduct a more in-depth exploration. Firstly, this relates to the richness of the data gathered, secondly, it relates to the depth of analysis, and thirdly it relates to the range of participants' roles and associated levels of responsibility for the target student within school.

In general, the research literature does not provide insight as to the long-term impact of a CoA intervention. Turner's (2014) study employed a 4-week follow-up. Dempsey's (2012) research provided some insights from up to an 8-week period. However, the information gained at this time point was mixed, pertaining to CoAs conducted immediately prior to the questionnaire, and anything up to 8 weeks prior. Only Turner's study therefore sought to specifically gather follow-up data, which at 4-weeks post CoA, might be considered medium-term.

Whilst quantifiable evidence to support theoretical insights linked to attribution theory or self-efficacy theory may not have been obtained, Turner (2014, p. 137) and Turner and Gulliford (2020, p. 43) suggests changes to school staff's perceptions of the target student perhaps being impacted upon by the CoA intervention. Turner evidences this suggestion within the Thematic Analysis of focus group data, under the

subtheme of ‘effect on staff professional practice’. Turner links this to Wilson and Newton's (2006) proposal that CoA evokes empathy from school staff towards the target student; a finding supported by Grahamslaw and Henson (2015) and Dawson (2013). Insights into the way in which school staff construe their students at risk of exclusions has, however, not been investigated within the studies included in this review outside of a specific theory-led measurement of causal attributions. Turner and Gulliford (2020) propose the use of PCP (Kelly, 1955), perhaps utilising repertory grids, a structured tool which facilitates sensitive measurement of change within participants’ individual constructs.

3.11 Limitations of this review

Limitations of this review come from the subjective nature of judgements, as is unavoidable within review of qualitative and mixed-method research, and to some extent all literature review. The author has attempted to add rigor and transparency to the judgements made, by taking a very systematic approach and following thorough guidance, specifically in reference to the use of Cesario et al.’s framework and the Weight of Evidence A rating. The researcher acknowledges the limitations of using solely subjective interpretation of the studies in weighting the evidence for the B and C ratings within the WoE model. Furthermore, the use of guidance designed for qualitative research has been used as a guide to critique a wider range of research methodologies. This decision has been explained through application of a pragmatic approach and justified within section 3.2.1 of this review.

3.12 Conclusion

In conclusion, this critical literature review has demonstrated a generally high quality of research reports investigating the use of the CoA intervention, as described by Wilson and Newton (2006). The studies conducted have utilised a range of research methodologies and therefore been assessed for quality within their own terms, with regard to the methodological and epistemological stance of the individual study. Assessment of the studies’ appropriateness and relevance for answering a review question focused upon *how* the CoA intervention facilitates positive change for

students at risk of exclusion from school, has demonstrated the weight of evidence from each study to range from medium to high. A narrative synthesis has suggested that the most consistent and reliable findings from the review pertain to school staff feeling supported, valuing the collaborative and co-operative nature of CoA interventions and feeling that they better understand the target student after the intervention, perhaps evoking a more empathic response in future interactions with the student.

3.13 Rationale for the current research

The rationale for the current study involves addressing some of the gaps within the existing literature by further exploring the context within which the CoA intervention is undertaken and upon which it seeks to have an impact. Some information regarding the context of the school environment, the student-teacher relationship and the staff member's perceptions of the target student prior to, and following, the intervention were captured within Dawson's (2013) research. By gathering data through written questionnaires from individuals in both teaching and teaching assistant roles, Dawson's findings perhaps demonstrate a level of breadth in the experiences reflected upon by participants within the research. Further depth may have been supported by the use of interviews to gather rich data. As discussed, Dawson's data was also gathered *following* the CoA intervention, making these retrospective recollections. In contrast, the current study aims to gather rich, detailed qualitative data *prior* to the CoA intervention to develop an understanding of the context upon which the intervention seeks to impact. This study also aims to explore the class teachers' views of the CoA intervention itself and its potential impact by gathering further rich, detailed qualitative data *following* the CoA intervention.

The existing literature also captures and reflects the surface-level perspectives of a range of school staff members involved with the target student to varying degree. In contrast, the current research seeks to explore, in depth, the perspectives of a specific group of participants; class teachers, in a specific situation; being responsible for teaching a Key Stage 1 student who is at risk of exclusion from school, both prior

to and following involvement in a CoA intervention. This experiential, qualitative data does not seek to provide generalisable insights, as each person's experience is unique. However, a degree of transferability can be established within research by focusing the study on a specific, homogenous group of participants, within a specific situation. By clearly describing the participants and the context within which this research is undertaken, the reader can decide whether any findings may be transferable to their own context (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Previous research has used primarily written questionnaire data and analysed this using a semantic approach. Gathering data using written questionnaires is likely to limit the richness of data, especially where the questionnaires may be viewed by participants as a quick feedback form. When these are completed immediately after a CoA intervention, which itself can last at least 75 minutes, and has often taken place after the school day has finished, it is possible that participants might be keen to complete the questionnaire quickly, if at all. Aspects such as the size of boxes or number of lines available for comments could also impact on the level of depth a participant might go into in their written response. Furthermore, written responses do not allow for further questioning or prompting of the participant to elaborate on interesting or insightful comments made. Written responses perhaps lend themselves better to semantic analysis as written data may be more easily misinterpreted and does not offer the researcher an opportunity to gain clarification. The use of semantic level analysis may, however, limit the data analysis and consideration of ways in which the participants' comments may be impacted upon by features of the wider school or social context. The current research project therefore aims to gather rich data from a number of class teachers, using strategies taken from Personal Construct Psychology (discussed further in section 4.2) to facilitate further questioning, and clarification of their meaning and individual perspectives. The current research project also seeks to use both a semantic and latent level of analysis in order to interpret the data with regard to the wider contextual influences of the school and social climate.

In seeking to explore how the CoA intervention facilitates positive change for students at risk of exclusion, existing literature from Turner (2014), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011) has been driven by theoretical insights and sought to support these with quantifiable evidence. By taking an inductive approach to analysing rich, interview data the current study seeks to explore the possibility of other mechanisms of change facilitated by the CoA, which could have been previously overlooked.

3.14 Research Questions

The current study seeks to address the following research questions:

Research question 1;

From the perspective of the class teacher, what can be understood about the context within which the Circle of Adults intervention intends to have an impact?

Research question 2;

What are the perceptions of class teachers on the Circle of Adults process?

4. Methodology

This research project is exploratory in nature, seeking to develop an understanding of how class teachers construe the school context ahead of a CoA intervention. Following the intervention, this research aims to explore the views of class teachers on the CoA intervention itself and its perceived impact. This research is undertaken during a time at which the target student, a Key Stage 1 student, is considered to be at risk of exclusion from school due to their challenging behavioural presentation.

Class teachers' views were captured at Time-1 using semi-structured, audio recorded interviews and later analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. This research project utilised the CoA intervention as a means of school staff supervision and group problem-solving, following this up with a further interview at Time-2 with class teachers to gather their views on the process of the CoA itself and its' perceived impact. This data was also analysed using Reflexive TA. The following chapter provides a detailed account of the methods and procedure of the research undertaken, preceded by an explanation of the philosophical stance adopted.

4.1 Philosophical basis of this research

4.1.1 Paradigm

A paradigm is defined by Mertens (2015) as "*a way of looking at the world […] composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action*" (page 8). This research is positioned within a 'Big Q' qualitative research paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kidder & Fine, 1987). This reflects the use of qualitative methods applied consistently, in line with the epistemological and theoretical assumptions of a qualitative paradigm. Mertens (2015) argues that "*qualitative is a type of methodology, not a paradigm*" (page 8). By Merten's (2015) definition, this research could equally be described as positioned within a constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm considers reality as socially constructed.

Assumptions of the qualitative, or constructivist, paradigm include the subjectivity of the data analysis and an appreciation that the data gathered, and results concluded within this research reflect the researcher's influence and interpretations. This reflexive approach is discussed below, in section 4.1.4. A further assumption pertains to the contextualisation of data, reflecting that the data gathered from participants is specific to the individual and influenced by their environment and cultural factors. Interpretation of such language-based data is then impacted by the contextual and cultural factors influencing the researcher. This research therefore makes no attempts to generalise the findings and seeks to provide sufficient detail that the reader can assess the transferability of findings to their own context, as discussed above, in section 3.13.

By embracing a qualitative paradigm, or a constructivist paradigm employing a qualitative methodology, this research rejects the assumptions which underpin positivist paradigms. A positivist paradigm assumes that research can be conducted in entirely unbiased ways by researchers who are neutral and do not impact directly on the outcomes of research. Within a positivist paradigm, a researcher would seek to uncover an 'absolute truth' in the phenomenon under study which itself exists independently of the researcher. Such assumptions are therefore actively rejected within this research.

4.1.2 Axiology

Axiology refers to the ethical basis of research and acts to ensure research is conducted in line with ethically and morally sound principles and practices for the betterment of society (Mertens, 2015). Within a qualitative, or constructivist, paradigm, ethical principles advocated by Guba & Lincoln (1989) and Lincoln (2009) include the need for research to be authentic, trustworthy and reflexive. This is discussed further in section 4.7.1.

The qualitative research paradigm has been associated with a "*purposeful pursuit of social justice*" (Miller, 2008, p. 4) which is reflected in this research. The social justice

agenda underpinning this research is one seeking to support vulnerable education placements of potentially vulnerably students, in order to avoid the negative outcomes commonly associated with school exclusion.

4.1.3 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology refers to the nature of reality, whilst epistemology refers to the nature and theory of knowledge. Within a qualitative, or constructivist, paradigm, the ontological and epistemological position is held that reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 2015). Put in a different way, "*knowledge of how things are is a product of how we come to understand it*" (Braun & Clarke, 2013; p.75). This research is positioned within a social constructionist epistemology and is therefore in agreement with the following key assumptions outlined below (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 1985).

Adoption of a critical stance which actively contextualises data

A critical approach has been adopted, whereby the researcher sought to explore, interrogate and interpret the data gathered through interviews with class teachers, taking account of contextual, cultural and historical influences. This stance espouses that every individual perceives and construes the world and their experiences within it in ways unique and personal to them. An active approach is therefore taken by the researcher to avoid assumptions impacting upon the data being unacknowledged. This is achieved through reflexivity; an attempt by the researcher to make influences upon their interpretation of the data explicit, this is discussed in greater detail below.

Knowledge is constructed through social discourse

The assumption that knowledge is a product of social processes and interactions is accepted. The development and sharing of knowledge as it is constructed by an individual is mediated by language. This assumption is directly addressed in the current research through the use of tools developed in Personal Construct Psychology, discussed in section 4.2. These tools are employed in an attempt to support participants in elucidating as clearly and comprehensively as possible, their individual construing of the school context in which they teach.

4.1.4 Reflexivity

The researcher acknowledges the importance within qualitative research, of making explicit, as far as possible, the underlying assumptions and theoretical stance of the researcher in interacting with their interpretation of the data. As stated by Braun and Clarke (2013), "*Reflexivity is an essential requirement for good qualitative research*" (p. 111).

The researcher acknowledges the subjectivity of qualitative research within a social constructionist paradigm and therefore actively highlights that the interpretation of the data presented within this analysis reflects the data as interpreted and analysed by one individual, the researcher. The researcher's own psychological approach perhaps sits most closely with a humanistic paradigm and a passion for social justice. These are therefore likely to be influential in underpinning some of the assumptions inherent in the researcher's analysis of data. This research is positioned away from a positivist or realist approach and does not seek to uncover unknown 'truths' or the 'true reality' of the phenomenon under study but seeks to explore the perspectives of the class teachers interviewed who work day-to-day within a school context with a student at risk of exclusion.

4.2 Data collection methods

Use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) techniques within semi-structured interviews

The researcher chose to gather data using semi-structured interviews as this provided an opportunity to gather rich data, defined by Braun and Clarke (2013) as having the quality of being able to "*reach below the surface, and allow the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the topic of interest"* (p. 82). This research sought to delve beyond the semantic level analysis of written feedback and group-based feedback provided by existing research. In doing so this research aspired to develop a greater understanding of the school context before a CoA intervention from the class teacher's perspective, as well as their views on the intervention itself.

Within the social constructionist paradigm of this research, techniques from PCP (Kelly, 1955) have been utilised within semi-structured interviews in an attempt to protect from presumptions about the shared meaning of linguistic terminology used by the class teachers. PCP posits that to understand the meaning of a term as used by an individual, it is helpful to understand the bipolar construct within which that term is positioned. Winter and Reed (2015) emphasise that as individuals "*we abstract our OWN meanings from the swirl of events confronting us and thereby impose our OWN meanings on the world. Constructs are indeed personal [and] bipolar*" (p. 2).

This study therefore used techniques based in PCP as tools to support the research participants elucidate their meaning when speaking on the topic from their own perspective. The research is not positioned as a PCP-based research project in its own right.

4.2.1 PCP tools and the use of repertory grids

The use of repertory grids (Fransella, 2005) was considered; however, this level of analysis was felt to be beyond the scope of the current research process. Remaining true to the exploratory nature of this research, the use of open questions allowed participants to highlight their ideas. By taking note of the key terms each participant used and reflecting these terms back to participants, this acted as a member check, providing a level of authenticity to the researcher's interpretation of the key terms used to describe the student and the way the student makes the class teacher feel. Appendix 9.5 presents the interview schedule with additional prompts, used by the researcher during the interviews. These additional prompts include open questions, such as; 'When you say…I'm wondering what that means to you?'. Pyramiding (using questions such as, 'what does that look like in your classroom?') and laddering (using questions such as, 'why is that important?'), are strategies taken from PCP (Burnham, 2008), which were used to explore exactly what the class teacher meant by the words and phrases they used; what these meant specifically to the individual being interviewed, specifically in relation to the student being discussed. This enabled a

greater depth of understanding to be fostered and respected the personal and unique narrative of the individual. It was felt that repertory grids would add a level of structure to the interview process which would distract from the individual's personal narrative and reduce the opportunity for discussion during which the importance of the terms used could be explored.

4.3 Pilot

Pilot interviews were used to practice and refine the semi-structured interview and use of tools taken from a PCP approach. These were undertaken with teachers known to the researcher who consented to take part and discussed a student they had previously worked with, using a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. During the pilot interviews, a pre-interview script was created and important factors for practice highlighted, such as ending the interview on a positive note. Pilot interviews were also used to ask participants how they found the interview process. The researcher was mindful of ensuring no harm could be done by using PCP approaches to facilitate in-depth reflection without offering sufficient time to discuss those reflections and leave the participant in a state of calm. The participants stated that the interview questions made them think and felt reflective. One participant stated that she often talks in depth about her students, so the interview did not feel out of the ordinary for her. Nonetheless, the researcher created a small slip to leave with participants following the interview, containing contact details in case the interview had stirred up any reflections which left participants feeling unsettled.

The pilot interviews also highlighted possible limitations of this research, one participant stating that it highlighted her own reactions within daily interactions in school more explicitly and made her wonder if they could be changed for the better. This exemplifies the risk of using pre-CoA interviews within such a research project, as it is possible that the interview itself could have an unintended impact of 'priming' the class teachers through promotion of in-depth reflection. By using open questions, the researcher sought to gather insight into the way in which participants construed the school context, the target student and the CoA intervention, without adjusting or

actively changing their constructs within the interview itself. It is possible, therefore, that any impact of the CoA intervention may also involve potential effects of the Time-1 interview. Appendix 9.5 contains the researcher's interview schedule which contains additional prompts, as developed following pilot interviews, to support the researcher during semi-structured interviews.

4.4 Change to pre-interview script

A further addition to the pre-interview script was considered appropriate following the initial class teacher interview and CoA meeting. The researcher took on the role of graphic facilitator of the CoA meetings, a more distant role than that of the process facilitator. This was a conscious decision to enable the researcher to remain objective and within the researcher role, rather than stepping into her practicing trainee EP role. Following the first CoA, the researcher considered that the class teachers being interviewed at Time-1 are unlikely to have a clear picture of what to expect from the CoA process, having not been involved in a CoA before, and may not realise that their discussions within their interview will not feature or be mentioned in any capacity within the CoA meeting itself. The pre-interview script was therefore extended to include; "Our discussions today are solely for research purposes and the content of our discussions will not be shared with anybody else in a way by which you could be identified. My role in the Circle of Adults meeting will be to produce a visual representation of the meeting, I will not play an active role in the meeting, and not knowing the child or school, will not be contributing to the discussion. I therefore ask that you try to be as honest as possible today, remember there is absolutely no judgement and there are no right or wrong answers."

4.5 Method of data analysis

Integral to this research thesis was a method of data analysis which would enable the researcher to approach data in an exploratory fashion. This required a means of analysis which is inductive in nature, seeking to understand the school context and experience of a CoA intervention from the perspective of class teachers. This contrasts previous research by Turner (2014), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011)

which have applied theory-driven research methods when investigating the CoA intervention.

4.5.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is a qualitative research methodology which seeks to explore how individuals make sense of their experiences, respecting the idiographic nature of their personal experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Double hermeneutics are applied to acknowledge that the data analysis presents the researcher's attempts to make sense of the participants attempts to make sense of, and communicate, their lived experience. As a phenomenological approach, IPA focuses upon attempts to understand and interpret the experience of the participant.

IPA was considered as a methodology for this research as a means to understand the class teachers' experiences of teaching a student at risk of exclusion, both before and after a CoA intervention. This is the approach to research taken by Dawson (2013), although Dawson used written questionnaires to gather data. Dawson's data was gathered from school staff after the CoA intervention and therefore demonstrates a retrospective perspective on the experiences of staff before the CoA.

Within the current study, the researcher felt it would be valuable to gather insight into the class teachers' experiences of teaching students at risk of exclusion through exploring the school context upon which the CoA intervention intends to impact. The researcher felt that interviewing class teachers before the CoA intervention would be the best means of accessing their perspectives on the school context at that point in time. As the researcher intended to explore the class teachers' narratives across time, before and again after the intervention, adoption of an IPA approach would have led to loss of Time-1 interview data where the participant did not attend the CoA intervention itself or was unable to engage with a further interview at Time-2.

4.5.2 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is a theoretically flexible approach to data analysis which can be employed in a number of different ways to provide a method of analysis which is responsive to the theoretical and epistemological assumptions of the research paradigm. The approach seeks to construct patterns of meaning which address a research question based on the development of themes across a dataset. It is a method of data analysis which has undergone scrutiny within the research community and was described by Braun & Clarke in 2006 as a "*poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method within psychology*" (p.1). Braun and Clarke are proponents of TA and have since published a wealth of literature seeking to raise awareness of the different features of TA when applied within a variety of paradigms, and ultimately increase the quality of data analyses using a TA method. Their 2006 paper has been widely cited and TA has since been recognised to a greater extent as a method "*in its own right"* (Joffe, 2012, p. 210).

Following this, Braun and Clarke have developed Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2018). Reflexive TA is considered something between a method and a methodology because it encompasses a number of epistemological orientations as core features. Reflexive TA is positioned within a 'Big Q' qualitative paradigm and fits very well with the social constructionist epistemology adopted within this research.

Integral features of Reflexive TA include;

- An inductive approach to data analysis; seeking to explore and interpret the data gathered, and from this construct themes which demonstrate shared meaning across the dataset.
- A critical orientation, allowing for the researcher to interrogate and question the data, striving to explicitly acknowledge as far as is possible, the researcher's own assumptions and interpretations (reflexivity).

- A constructionist theoretical perspective which seeks to develop an understanding of the topic under study from the perspective of the research participants.

Within this research, Reflexive TA was selected as the method of data analysis. Reflexive TA enabled the researcher to explore, in depth, the class teachers' perspectives of the school context they were embedded within at the time of the interview. The use of this approach allowed for all of the Time-1 data to be treated as one dataset and analysed to address research question 1. The Time-2 data was then analysed as a separate dataset, before taking account of links between both Time-1 and Time-2 data to address research question 2. A detailed account of the use of Reflexive TA within this research is provided below, in chapter 5.

4.6 Practical considerations

4.6.1 Recruitment

Recruitment of subjects within this particular population raises a number of difficulties. Working with students at risk of exclusion poses the fundamental risk of students being excluded between the time at which the study is discussed with senior leaders at the school and the time it takes to gather consent and organise the CoA meeting, as well as the class teacher interviews. Of those students who remain in school, given the challenges inherent in supporting such students, their staff members are more likely to change, as are their arrangements within school. Attempts to recruit towards the end of autumn term were particularly unsuccessful, one student identified as appropriate for the research experienced exclusion whilst another experienced a change of provision into alternative, out of school provision. Changes in the arrangements of staff support for the students identified for this research were difficult to predict or control for. Three of the class teachers involved in this research were not directly teaching the target student as part of their class group at the time of the first interview.

In order to be involved in this research, students needed to be known to the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). This meant consent had already been given for EP involvement, enabling these students to be identified to the researcher.

In order to recruit participants, the researcher initially contacted EPs within the LA, informed them of the project and asked them to consider any students known to them who may fit the inclusion criteria;

- Students in Key Stage 1 (Foundation Stage 2/Reception – Year 2) in the academic year 2019/20
- Perceived by the school to be at risk of exclusion (permanent or repeated FTE) as a result of challenging behaviours
- Perceived by the EP as likely to benefit from a CoA intervention
- Students with identified medical needs contributing to their behaviour were not included within the scope of this research

On identification of a student, the researcher then wrote to the headteacher of the relevant school to inform them of the study and seek their consent as a key stakeholder. With their consent for the study to go ahead in their school, and a willingness to commit the necessary staff time, information and consent forms were then sent to the relevant class teacher. In this research, the class teacher was considered the participant as they would be agreeing to engage in two interviews as well as the CoA intervention itself. On their consent being given, informed consent was sought from the parents/carers of the student identified as meeting the inclusion criteria. The research process sought to provide indirect support for the identified student, through use of a CoA intervention aimed at facilitating problem-solving and providing support through group supervision. Information letters and consent forms can be seen in Appendix 9.7 and contained direct contact details for the researcher, encouraging all parties to make contact to discuss the project. The information letters and consent form also emphasised the rights of any of the parties to withdraw consent at any time and without giving reason.

4.6.2 Attrition

Research such as that by Hastings and Bham (2003) demonstrates a link between student behaviour and teacher burnout, the researcher was therefore mindful of the potentially high stress levels experienced by teachers within this research project. For one such teacher, the headteacher indicated on the day of the CoA intervention, that she had been given additional time off to prioritise her well-being and would therefore not be attending the CoA intervention meeting. This teacher's interview data from before the intervention has been included in this project, however the researcher did not follow-up on a further interview with this class teacher after the intervention.

4.6.3 Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

At the time of the initial interviews and the CoA interventions being undertaken, the UK was yet to be significantly impacted by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. This did, however, significantly affect the everyday functioning of the UK during the period between having run the CoA interventions and following these up with a second interview. Schools were closed to most students and face-to-face contact unethical and restricted when the Time-2 interviews with class teachers were due to go ahead. Ethical approval was gained for interviews to be conducted remotely, as can be seen in Appendix 9.6. Two of the class teachers therefore took part in a second interview by phone, and one class teacher was uncontactable during this time. Given the upheaval and unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the data gained in the second interviews is perhaps less rich than it might have otherwise been, as the class teachers understandably felt their focuses had shifted since the intervention took place.

4.7 Methodological considerations

4.7.1 Reliability, validity, reflexivity, trustworthiness and authenticity

Within the qualitative paradigm within which this research is positioned, reliability and validity are considered less relevant terms (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As stated in

section 4.1.4, this research instead seeks to be reflexive and as explicit as possible about underlying assumptions which impact on the researcher's interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Lincoln, 2009). The analysis is subjective and using TA, another researcher may construct a different thematic pattern within the same dataset. The researcher did, however, make use of participant validation checks within the interviews by reflecting back to the participant regularly the terms they had used to check these provided an accurate reflection of their views as captured by the researcher.

Throughout the research project, the researcher regularly reflected upon the qualitative paradigm and social constructionist epistemology within which it is positioned. Within the setting up of the research project, the interview process, data analysis and writing up of this project, the researcher has actively sought to provide clear, coherent and explicit detail to enhance trustworthiness and demonstrate through language the authenticity of the project to its research paradigm.

4.8 Ethical considerations

4.8.1 Ethical approval

Ethics Committee approval was granted by the School of Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham. The approval letter can be seen in Appendix 9.8. Alongside this ethics approval, the researcher spoke about the research project with key senior members of staff within the EPS within which the research was due to be undertaken. Their approval for the project was also granted. Following changes to the research prompted by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, discussed in greater detail above, further ethical approval was granted for the Time-2 interviews to be undertaken virtually. This is provided within Appendix 9.6.

4.8.2 Consent

In order to ensure consent was in place from all relevant parties, gathering consent involved a 3-stage process. The recruitment process has been described in detail above, in section 4.6.1. Any students being recommended for inclusion in the

research needed to be known to the EPS and therefore have consent for discussion amongst EPs already in place.

The researcher then sought consent from the school headteacher, class teacher and the parents or carers of the student being identified. Detailed information letters accompanied the consent forms, and these contained contact details for the researcher, encouraging stakeholders to get in touch to discuss any questions they may have. The information letters and consent forms also emphasised the rights of any of the parties to withdraw consent at any time and without giving reason. Furthermore, the information letters clearly stated that choosing not to engage in research would not in any way limit or impact on the level of support offered to schools, which would continue as normal, and this may involve the suggestion of a CoA intervention as a part of typical EP support.

4.8.3 Anonymity

Information letters and consent forms for all participants and stakeholders in the research were clear that protection of anonymity would be of paramount importance. This refers to the anonymity of the class teachers who engaged in interviews, the student about whom they spoke and their families, their colleagues and their school setting. In order to ensure this, all names were replaced with pseudonyms and any potentially identifiable details were amended when audio recordings of the interviews with class teachers were transcribed. It should, therefore, be noted that this report uses pseudonyms throughout.

4.8.4 Exclusion of parents/carers from the CoA intervention

The Children and Families Act 2014 highlights the importance of parents, carers and students' voices being heard and them being equal parties in discussions and decisions affecting their lives. This is further emphasised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) which emphasises children's rights to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and taken seriously in all matters affecting them. The researcher therefore considered the appropriateness

of excluding these parties from the CoA intervention. The CoA intervention has its underpinnings partly in other Person-Centred Planning tools, such as the PATH and MAPs (O'Brien & Pearpoint, 2002; O'Brien et al., 2010) which facilitate problem-solving. A key difference in the CoA is in the influence of staff supervision, from researchers such as Hawkins et al. (2012). In providing a safe space for school staff supervision, where honesty and confidentiality are vital, inviting the young person or their parents and carers into the meeting is highly likely to impact the dynamics of the group. Wilson and Newton (2006) discuss their decision not to include the young person or their parents and carers, stating the aim of the intervention is to provide "*direct support to the child's front line worker*" (page 37). In order to demonstrate fidelity, this research ran the CoA intervention as described by Wilson and Newton (2006).

4.9 Fidelity

A fidelity checklist was used for each Circle of Adults as a means by which to ensure the intervention was carried out as described by Wilson and Newton (2006), and any departures from this recorded. Immediately following each CoA meeting, the researcher, who took on the role of graphic facilitator, and the EP who facilitated the meeting, discussed the meeting section by section, capturing evaluative comments. A sample of these evaluations can be seen in Appendix 9.9.

Overall, each CoA meeting remained true to the description of the CoA intervention presented by Wilson and Newton (2006). The 'present problem' section has been renamed 'the story' by the EP facilitator due to her discomfort with the term problem within this context. The synthesis section also was undertaken often by a member of the group rather than the researcher, this enabled the researcher to remain further detached from the CoA group itself. All of the CoA interventions within this research were conducted by the same EP, as process facilitator, and trainee EP as graphic facilitator. The EP who led the interventions is an experienced practitioner who is very familiar with the CoA intervention, using it regularly in her practice and providing annual training in the approach to trainee EPs.

4.10 Participants

Three CoA interventions were undertaken as part of the research project. In total, this involved three target students for whom each had one CoA attended by varying numbers of school staff and external support staff. The Time-1 interviews were undertaken with four class teachers, as one of the students accessed two classes at different times in the week. A brief description of the participants involved in the research, the target student with whom they worked and significant contextual details will be provided below. Please note that throughout this thesis, pseudonyms are used, and all potentially identifiable details have been removed or amended to ensure anonymity of the participants. The research took place in three primary schools, in a Midlands county LA in the UK.

4.10.1 Mrs A, Mrs J and Marcus

Marcus is a little boy who was aged 7 years at the time of the CoA intervention and in Curriculum Year 2. Marcus was considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from his primary school due to violent, disruptive behaviours. Marcus was part of a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, and accessed the Year 2-only class for specific lessons. At the time of the CoA intervention and both Time-1 and Time-2 class teacher interviews, Marcus had been withdrawn from the classroom completely and attended school part-time, accessing alternative provision two afternoons per week. When in school, Marcus was accessing education on a one-to-one basis with a teaching assistant, with work provided by his class teachers.

Both of Marcus' class teachers chose to take part in the research and engaged in separate, individual semi-structured interviews which lasted 40-50 minutes, 2 days before the CoA.

Mrs A is Marcus' class teacher and leads the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class. Mrs A attended the CoA intervention and took part in a Time-2 follow-up interview 4 weeks after the CoA. This was conducted over the phone and lasted approximately 30

minutes. Mrs J leads the Year 2 class. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen personal circumstances, Mrs J was unable to attend the CoA intervention session and therefore did not take part in a follow-up interview at Time-2.

Marcus' CoA intervention itself was attended by 10 members of school staff including the headteacher, as well as colleagues from the Behaviour Support Service (BSS) and Marcus' Alternative Provision.

4.10.2 Mrs T and Rebecca

Rebecca is a little girl who was aged 6 years at the time of the CoA intervention and in Curriculum Year 1. Rebecca had joined her primary school towards the end of the Reception year from another nearby school. Rebecca was considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from her primary school due to aggressive behaviours towards adults and absconding from the classroom. At the time of the CoA intervention and Time-1 class teacher interview, Rebecca had been assigned a full-time one-to-one teaching assistant within class. At Time-2 Rebecca had been engaging well in the classroom, with both her peers, teaching assistants and Mrs T prior to school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mrs T chose to take part in the research and engaged in semi-structured interviews at both Time-1 and Time-2. Mrs T's Time-1 interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and took place 2 days before the CoA. Mrs T's Time-2 interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and took place 7 weeks after the intervention. Mrs T had been Rebecca's class teacher during her Reception year and was not Rebecca's class teacher at the point at which the Time-1 interview was undertaken. The Year 1 teacher at that time was due to leave the profession only a few days after the CoA intervention and Mrs T would be taking over the Year 1 class and resuming responsibility for Rebecca as part of her class.

The CoA intervention therefore took on an additional function in Rebecca's case, supporting discussions around transition between class teachers. The CoA was attended by 6 members of school staff and colleagues from the BSS.

4.10.3 Mrs K and Logan

Logan is a little boy who was aged 5 years at the time of the CoA intervention and in Foundation Stage 2 (Reception Year). Logan was considered to be at risk of permanent exclusion from his primary school who were actively seeking support from both the EPS and BSS, as well as considering implementation of a part-time timetable. The relationship between Logan's parents and school staff was particularly fraught at the time of the CoA intervention. Logan's parents were being contacted and requested to collect him early from school following an incident of aggressive or challenging behaviour on multiple occasions each week.

At the time of the CoA intervention and Time-1 class teacher interview, Logan's school was undergoing substantial changes to become part of a multi-academy trust. This involved changes to the school's senior leadership team and a number of training and audit-related activities in which the teachers were involved. Scheduling time for the Time-1 interview was particularly challenging and the interview with Mrs K was therefore half as long as other interviews, lasting approximately 25 minutes, and undertaken immediately before the CoA intervention. Mrs K was unfortunately unreachable for a follow-up interview at Time-2.

Logan's CoA intervention was attended by only 3 school staff members. Although the headteacher had hoped to join the CoA, she had to leave within the first few minutes and did not re-join.

4.11 Procedure

The researcher liaised directly with the schools following consent being provided at all three stakeholder levels; headteacher, class teacher and parent/carer. The Time-1 interview lasting no more than 1 hour was scheduled for 2-3 days before the CoA

intervention and the Time-2 interview was scheduled for 3 weeks after the intervention. Due to the complexities of conducting real-world research, this scheduled timescale was not consistently possible. The actual timescales for each CoA are provided above, in section 4.10.

Time-1 interviews were conducted in a quiet room containing only the class teacher and the researcher, to ensure the conversations would not be overheard. The interviews were recorded on a laptop and saved securely within password-protected folders. The interviews were conducted either during the last period of the school day or immediately after school to ensure the class teacher would not have to return to teaching after the interview.

No data from the CoA interventions themselves were collected as part of the research, but fidelity checks were undertaken, and reflections captured immediately after each CoA as discussed in section 4.9. Each CoA intervention was facilitated by an experienced EP who is well practised in using the CoA intervention and uses the approach regularly in her EP practice. For each CoA the researcher took on the role of graphic facilitator and remained within a researcher role. By conducting the research in schools not previously known to the researcher, this helped to ensure no overlap between the researcher role and practicing trainee EP role.

Time-2 interviews could not go ahead as scheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and school closures. Where the class teachers could be contacted and the Time-2 interview rescheduled, these took place over the phone and were again voice recorded using a laptop, with recordings being saved in password protected folders. To ensure privacy for the duration of the interview and protection of the student's details, participants were asked at the start of the phone call to ensure they were in a private space where they could not be easily overheard and would not be disturbed.

4.12 Data analysis

In this research, data was analysed using Reflexive TA (Braun, Clarke, & Hayfield, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2018). In particular, Braun and Clarke (2013) provided a detailed reference text which guided the researcher within this analysis. Reflexive TA, positioned within a qualitative paradigm enabled the researcher to actively construct the research findings through the stages of data analysis. Chapter 5 therefore provides a detailed account of the research findings, taking the reader through each stage of the Reflexive TA process under the headings of familiarisation, coding and constructing themes. Within each stage of this analysis, reference will be made to examples of the decisions made by the researcher, exemplified by data extracts. The final themes will then be presented and defined.

Within this research, the data analysis was undertaken in two parts. First, the semi-structured interview data gathered *before* the CoA intervention at Time-1 was analysed, seeking to address research question 1. Each theme was defined, and links between themes identified.

Second, and following completion of the analysis of all Time-1 data, the researcher followed the same process with the semi-structured phone interview data gathered *after* the CoA intervention at Time-2, seeking to address research question 2. In defining each theme, links were also drawn between the Time-1 and Time-2 data in order to address research question 2.

5. Findings

5.1 Familiarisation

The researcher conducted and transcribed all interviews and therefore re-read and re-listened to each interview within the familiarisation stage, making notes onto the interview transcripts of anything they noticed about the data. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013) this was undertaken as an active, analytic and critical process. The researcher bore in mind questions such as, “how does the participant make sense of their experience?” and “what assumptions does the participant make?”. This was in addition to actively remaining aware of the researcher’s own assumptions in order to be reflexive. The questions borne in mind included, “what assumptions am I making?” and “how would I feel in their situation?”.

In taking a critical approach to data analysis, Braun and Clarke (2013) recommend reading each transcript first at a semantic level before reading it again being mindful to consider a latent level of analysis. The researcher added to this by re-listening to the transcripts to add any further details noticed from the participants intonations, volume and emphasis.

In addition to notes on the transcript, the researcher used a research diary to take note of the most prominent messages being noticed within each transcript, at either a semantic or latent level. These are presented in table 5.1 for Time-1 data, and table 5.2 for Time-2 data. These were later used as a means of checking that the eventual themes constructed from the data matched with the messages being most strongly communicated at the point of initial reading. This check led to a re-working of some initial themes, as discussed in greater detail below.

Mrs A; Marcus	• Use of teacher resources – time, effort, emotion, attention • Responsibility • Constant/unrelenting • Feeling of being pulled in 2 • Marcus not fitting the mould • Marcus as selfish/monopolising resources • Personal morals • Control • Exclusion/isolation – both Marcus and Mrs A
Mrs J; Marcus	• Future/bigger picture/life skills • Competence • Lack of support/Mrs J vs. other staff • Responsibility • Control / mismanagement / decisions being out of Mrs J's and Marcus's control • Distancing herself • Hopeless/too late/ damage done • Adults as keepers and providers of opportunities • Failure • Children should be independent learners • Mrs J not heard / valued / included
Mrs T; Rebecca	• Feeling stuck • Sense of optimism/hope • Potential for solutions • Resources • Bigger picture / life skills / interaction with the wider world • Predictability • Children's sense of safety

Mrs K; Logan	• Logan as a threat • Risk of harm • Mrs K as a victim / on the front line

Table 5.1: An overview of the prominent messages within each Time-1 transcript, noticed by the researcher during the familiarisation stage of analysis.

Mrs A; Marcus	• Punctuation point • Gaining the child's perspective • Mainstream education is not appropriate • 2 sides to thoughts on CoA; • CoA – useful, collaborative • Action needed to make investment of time worthwhile • Need to move forward
Mrs T; Rebecca	• Useful – transition purpose • Learning and adapting strategies from other staff • Understanding impact on TAs • Changing role of TAs • Understanding Rebecca's behaviours better • Social difficulties for student • Emphasis on Rebecca learning self-regulation • CoA gave voice/opportunity for TA to be heard

Table 5.2: An overview of the prominent messages within each of the Time-2 interview transcripts, noticed by the researcher during the familiarisation stage of analysis.

During the familiarisation stage, the researcher noted any of their own assumptions that could have influenced their interpretation of the data. This included, for example, an underlying belief that children's behaviour demonstrates communication of need. Patience, along with curious observation is needed by teachers to consider what a student is communicating. It follows that the researcher believes challenging behaviours are demonstrated in response to a trigger of some sort in the environment which impacts the internal state of the student, leading to a fight, flight or freeze reaction. The researcher made a note of their personal assumption in order to acknowledge and make it explicit.

5.2 Coding

The next stage of Reflexive TA involved assigning codes to excerpts of data, highlighting and coding any sections of data relevant to the research question. This was an iterative process and involved repeated reviewing of each interview transcript. The researcher initially used pen and paper to complete this exercise, however, it became clear that using a computer program would better enable the researcher to structure and organise the data. The coding exercise was therefore repeated using NVivo 12 Pro software (released 2018). An image of the coded data, initially using pen and paper, can be seen in Appendix 9.10. This image shows lines 148 – 162 of Mrs A's Time-1 interview transcript, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

The coding process enabled repeated coding of sections of data for different purposes, whilst data not relevant to the research question did not need to be coded. The researcher coded data for both semantic and latent meaning, taking a critical orientation and interrogating the data. To demonstrate with an example from Mrs A's transcript, shown in Appendix 9.10; "*they got to understand that bit there in order to progress their learning they've got to have the building blocks in order to be able to move up (.) erm (.) yeah (.) their knowledge*" (lines 150-151). This phrase has been coded (by a blue underline on the pen and paper version) at code 17; 'emphasis on need to progress/develop/move forward'. This reflects a semantic level analysis as

the code directly links to the semantic content of the extract. The section of the extract, "*they've got to have the building blocks in order to be able to move up"* has also been coded (by a purple underline on the pen and paper version) at code 18; 'responsibility of teacher to build student's knowledge'. This reflects a latent level analysis as the extract does not directly state this, instead it has been interpreted that the teacher feels a sense of responsibility towards building students' knowledge. The researcher made this interpretation based on ideas about the teacher's sense of responsibility as an educator and the expectations upon the teacher to develop their students' knowledge. Mrs A goes on to mention "*SATs*" (line 155) which is a means by which students' knowledge is examined. Students' results within these examinations reflect upon Mrs A and her effectiveness as a teacher, as well as potentially directly affecting her likelihood of accessing a pay increase (Department for Education, 2019b). It therefore seems a reasonable interpretation that Mrs A is likely to feel a sense of responsibility within her role as teacher, to build students' knowledge in order that they may progress academically.

Appendix 9.10 also demonstrates how initial notes made during the familiarisation stage became extremely useful when coding, with the notes often being made into codes. For example, the latent code described above can be seen as initially a note on the transcript; 'teacher as builder of knowledge in students'. During the coding process, the notes were also used as a means of checking that important features of the transcript had not been overlooked.

After coding all 4 of the Time-1 interview transcripts, each code was reviewed to ensure the data excerpts reflected a coherent and distinctive feature of the data, and these included both semantic and latent features. During this process, some codes were merged where they reflected the same meaning within the data, and other codes were disregarded where they did not reflect a coherent idea within the data. One such example includes the code 'assumption that all children need a safe environment in order to flourish'. Initially a further code existed; 'emphasis on importance of safety'. On reviewing the codes, it became clear that many of the data

extracts overlapped. The notion being identified within both codes was that safety is of paramount importance and necessary in order for children to develop healthily. It was decided that the two codes were not distinct from one another and they were therefore merged, adding only 6 additional data extracts to the remaining code.

This coding process ultimately resulted in 159 codes across the 4 semi-structured Time-1 interviews. Appendix 9.11 provides a table to show in a hierarchical structure, all of the final themes; this includes all of the codes with a data extract to exemplify each. During analysis, the name of each code and details of its frequency across the dataset was written onto a small slip of paper to assist in the process of constructing themes.

The same process was followed for the Time-2 interview transcripts. The Time-2 dataset contains less data than was captured during Time-1. The challenges faced at the point of Time-2 data collection are discussed further in the study limitations, section 6.3. As previously, a process of checking each code for coherence and distinctiveness was undertaken. One of the codes deleted during this stage was 'collaboration with parents', as the researcher felt it did not address the research question. This code contained only one excerpt of data which pertained to Mrs T's communication with Rebecca's father. The researcher felt that this reflected Mrs T's increased communication with Rebecca's parents as a result of becoming Rebecca's class teacher, rather than as an outcome of the CoA.

Ultimately, this analysis resulted in 75 codes across the 2 semi-structured Time-2 phone interviews. Appendix 9.12 contains a table showing the hierarchical structure of themes and codes, with data extracts to exemplify each code. As with the Time-1 data, the name of each code and its frequency across the dataset was written onto a small slip of paper to assist in the process of constructing themes.

5.3 Constructing themes

Working primarily with the codes (and returning to the data for clarification when needed), the researcher then undertook a process of analysis whereby patterns of meaning across the whole dataset were identified. This stage of analysis was again iterative, and the researcher became immersed in the data and actively engaged with the codes by physically moving the small slips of paper to reflect larger patterns of meaning. This process of analysis enabled the researcher to interrogate and interpret the data in order to construct candidate themes across the data set. Braun and Clarke (2013) state the presumption that "*ideas which recur across a dataset capture something psychologically or socially meaningful*" (page 447).

As part of the process of developing themes, the researcher moved codes into various code clusters to give voice to elements of meaning across the dataset. These are shown within the tables in Appendix 9.11 and Appendix 9.12. Code clusters reflected patterned meaning across the data which were then brought together to form insightful and valuable themes. These code clusters, as well as individual codes, were moved and shaped in a number of different ways during what was an active process of analysis until the researcher felt confident about the narrative being created. The term 'candidate themes' was applied as an active reminder to the researcher of the impermanence of themes until data analysis was completed.

During this process, the researcher remained aware of the epistemological basis of the qualitative research paradigm within which this research is positioned. The researcher therefore sought to construct an analysis of the data which reflected their subjective interpretation of the perceptions of class teachers. In doing so, the researcher actively rejected the positivist perspective that an absolute truth could be extracted from the data through analysis. The themes constructed reflect the researcher's interpretation of the data and seek to capture the ideas and meaning communicated from the class teachers interviewed in a way which is authentic and credible.

Several iterations of the process of constructing themes were undertaken. An aspect of this stage of analysis involved drafting a short definition of each theme, considering what the theme's central organising concept is, how and in what ways it reflects meaning across the dataset, and how the themes might relate to each other. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show an overview of themes, subthemes and code clusters from an earlier construction of themes, and the final construction of themes for the Time-1 dataset. Additional details of the codes and data extracts for each code are provided within the appendix.

Of particular note in table 5.3 is the theme 'hope' (shown in grey). The code clusters of 'teacher's job to notice and nurture student's strengths', 'teacher's job to support student to develop holistically and learn self-sufficiency' and 'belief in student's capacity to succeed' were originally conceptualised together to reflect the teachers' will for the students to succeed, terming this 'hope'. However, on returning to the prominent messages noted during the familiarisation stage, provided in table 5.1, the researcher felt this theme did not fit and struggled to link to other themes. A message which had struck the researcher when reading Mrs J's transcript, was her conceptualisation of teachers as gatekeepers of opportunities. This led to a re-working of code clusters and themes, as shown in table 5.4. The researcher felt the code clusters within the theme 'hope' more accurately depicted the teacher's sense of espoused responsibility to enable student's learning opportunities, centred in the teacher's moral and ethical values. A new theme was therefore developed (shown in yellow) titled 'teachers' responsibilities as the keepers of opportunities'.

Theme:	**Constructions of the child as complex**
Subtheme:	Construing the child as a threat
Code clusters:	*Life skills*
	Student opposes norms
	Idealistic view of teaching
	Sense of having failed
	Academic challenge
Subtheme:	Construing the child as a victim
Code clusters:	*Student not having accessed a safe environment in which to flourish*
	Students' vulnerability and survival behaviours
	Student having been failed by those who should look out for them
Theme:	**Teachers feeling hard done by**
Code clusters:	*Challenges which face the teacher*
	Pressure and responsibility on the teacher
	Construing teacher as the victim
	Emotional impact on the teacher
	Teacher feeling abandoned and unsupported
	Teacher left feeling dejected and disempowered
Theme:	**Disharmony in school**
Code clusters:	*Sources of resentment towards the student*
	Teachers' confidence in their competence
	Threat of falling short of espoused morals and values (internal conflict)
	Lack of confidence in competence of colleagues
	Mismanagement
	Teacher feeling part of a team (contradiction)

Theme:	**Hope**
Code clusters:	*Teachers' job to notice and nurture students' strengths*
	Teachers' job to support student to develop holistically and learn self-sufficiency
	Belief in students' capacity to succeed
Theme:	**Relationship**
Code clusters:	*Distance*
	Transference

Table 5.3: An overview of an earlier construction of themes ahead of re-working by the researcher. The table presents the themes, subthemes and code clusters constructed through Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Time-1 interview data addressing Research Question 1.

Theme:	**Unrelenting challenge**
Code clusters:	*Challenges which face the teacher*
	Pressure and responsibility on the teacher
	Construing teacher as the victim
	Emotional impact on the teacher
	Teacher feeling abandoned and unsupported
	Teacher left feeling dejected and disempowered
Theme:	**Complex constructions of the child**
Subtheme:	Construing the child as a victim
Code clusters:	*Student not having accessed a safe environment in which to flourish*
	Students' vulnerability and survival behaviours
	Student having been failed by those who should look out for them
Subtheme:	Construing the child as a threat
Code clusters:	*Idealistic view of teaching: Idealistic view of the classroom*
	Idealistic view of teaching: Student poses a risk to idealistic view of the classroom
	Student opposes norms
Theme:	**Disharmony in school**
Code clusters:	*Sources of resentment towards the student*
	Teachers' confidence in their competence
	Lack of confidence in competence of colleagues
	Mismanagement
	Teacher feeling part of a team (contradiction)

Theme:	**Teachers' responsibilities as the keepers of opportunities**
Code clusters:	*Life skills: Students' life skills*
	Life skills: Teacher being able to reflect and see the bigger picture
	Threat of falling short of espoused morals and values (internal conflict)
	Teachers' job to notice and nurture students' strengths
	Teachers' job to support student to develop holistically and learn self-sufficiency
	Sense of having failed
	Belief in students' capacity to succeed
	Academic challenges
Theme:	**Insecure attachments in the classroom**
Code clusters:	*Distance*
	Emotional states as contagious
	Sense of connection/relationship

Table 5.4: An overview of the final construction of themes, subthemes and code clusters constructed through Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Time-1 interview data addressing Research Question 1.

The researcher was careful to avoid summary themes which simply collated excerpts of data relating to a particular idea. Where it seemed a candidate theme was perhaps a summary, the codes were separated and a fresh analysis undertaken. Each candidate theme was reviewed by going back to the coded data extracts to ensure coherence within the theme, as well as distinctions between themes. This led to extractions of pertinent data excerpts which demonstrate the theme in an authentic and compelling way, these are provided below. At this stage the researcher also

created a thematic map, as can be seen in figure 5.1 and figure 5.2, to visualise the themes, and returned to the original transcripts to ensure the analysis provides an authentic reflection of the class teacher's views.

Within the Time-1 dataset, all five themes are demonstrated across each of the four interview transcripts. The theme of 'Insecure attachments in the classroom' is the least frequently coded theme across the dataset. Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasise the importance of patterns across the dataset demonstrating *meaning*, which takes priority over frequency.

5.4 Research Question 1;

From the perspective of the class teacher, what can be understood about the context within which the Circle of Adults intervention intends to have an impact?

In addressing research question 1, Reflexive TA resulted in 5 themes and 2 sub-themes. These are represented below within a thematic map, in figure 5.1. Additionally, Appendix 9.11 contains a complete data analysis table, structured hierarchically, which shows the themes, sub-themes, code clusters and codes, as well as a data extract which exemplifies each code. The themes will be briefly defined in turn and discussed more fully within chapter 6, with reference to related theory and previous research literature.

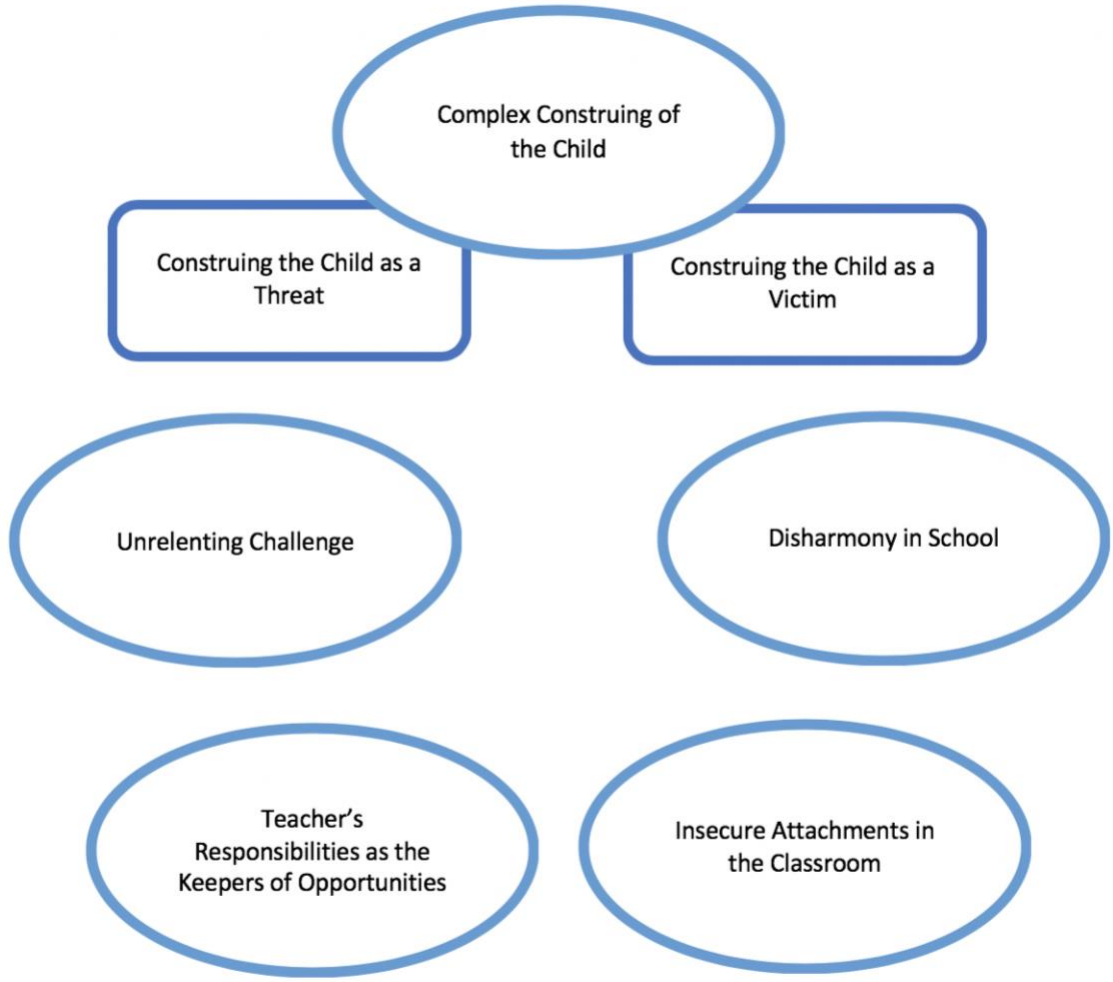

Figure 5.1: Thematic Map of 5 themes and 2 sub-themes resulting from Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Time-1 interview data addressing Research Question 1.

5.4.1 Complex Construing of the Child

The first theme identified relates to how class teachers construe the child. The two sub-themes which make up this theme consist of 'Construing the Child as a Threat' and 'Construing the Child as a Victim'. These themes do not reflect an either/or nature of Class Teacher's constructs, but instead a complex and discordant interplay of ways in which the class teachers construe the specific Key Stage 1 student in their class who was the focus of discussion, due to being at risk of exclusion.

In discussing Marcus, Mrs A stated; "*there is that really (.) affectionate side to him (.) but then on the opposite side of that there's the really aggressive side (.) which (.) comes out of nowhere (.) which is (.) very hurtful*" (lines 254-255). Here, Mrs A directly reflects the dichotomous nature of her constructs with regard to Marcus. The affectionate child and the aggressive child are presented as 'sides' to Marcus. This theme can be understood in greater depth by exploring the two sub-themes which make it up.

5.4.1.1 Construing the Child as a Threat

This sub-theme reflects a pattern across the data which demonstrated class teachers appearing to hold personal constructs of the target student as a threat to their otherwise idealistic view of the classroom and of teaching. The data suggested they viewed the student in opposition to their ideas about societal norms, in that the student did not fit with these norms and indicating that the problem lies with the child, not the environment. With regard to Marcus, Mrs A expressed that Marcus stands out from his peers in the classroom; "*you'd notice him […] You would see (.) I wouldn't have to point him out to you*" (lines 565-569). This demonstrates emphasis on Marcus being different from his peers. Mrs J similarly expresses the contrast between Marcus and his peers, suggesting that he does not behave "*how you would expect a child to behave*" (lines 114-115).

5.4.1.2 Construing the Child as a Victim

This sub-theme provides the other 'side' of the child and reflects a pattern across the dataset of class teacher's constructs of their student as victimised, being failed by those with caring responsibilities and being vulnerable. Sympathy for the child is demonstrated within this sub-theme. Here the idea is constructed of the child being fundamentally the same as their peers, however challenging life circumstances over which the child has no influence have led to the demonstration of survival behaviours beyond the child's immediate control. Mrs T reflects this in the following extract, discussing Rebecca; "*she hasn't had that safe environment to flourish in (.) so actually I can understand why sometimes things might just kind of cause her to lash out or she*

<u>might</u> not be where the other children who have had different experiences can be so I can appreciate that" (lines 676-678). Here, Mrs T makes reference to children needing a safe environment in which to flourish and this theme highlights class teachers' construing their students as victims who have not necessarily had access to such opportunities.

5.4.2 Unrelenting Challenge

Across the dataset, a recurring pattern demonstrated the seemingly unrelenting challenges faced by class teachers of students in Key Stage 1 at risk of exclusion. In particular, this theme was developed to give voice to the emotional impact the context has upon the class teacher who feels unsupported and disempowered under the weight of a lot of pressure and responsibility. In discussing the physical tension caused by Marcus, Mrs A reflected feeling that; "*this is ridiculous that a child is doing this (.) that a child is doing this to me*" (line 874). The sense is given by this extract of Mrs A feeling like the victim in the situation.

5.4.3 Disharmony in School

The theme of disharmony in school has been developed to reflect patterns of conflict and resentment across the dataset between the class teacher and other individuals, be that colleagues, senior management or the target student. This theme provides insight into the wider context of school and interpersonal relationships impacting upon the class teacher. Discussing the strategies employed and decisions undertaken by colleagues and senior management, Mrs J stated; "*I mean I've taught children like [Marcus] before I've had them I've introduced them back into school from PRU and everything and (.) I don't think we did it well […] and it was nothing to do with me because I wouldn't have left it like that*" (lines 263-269). In this extract Mrs J demonstrates disagreement with the decisions made by colleagues and indicates tension regarding her views having not been valued, despite her role as one of Marcus' class teachers, her competence and her experience. This theme also contains within it a contradiction, whereby the class teachers reflect the sense of feeling

supported and sharing the responsibility for the target student with a wider team around the child.

5.4.4 Teachers' Responsibilities as the Keepers of Opportunities

This theme provides insight into the class teachers' constructs of their own role as shaped by their own moral and ethical values. Despite the difficulties inherent in the school context, this theme reflects the class teachers' sense of it being their responsibility to nurture students' strengths and skills, believe in the student's capacity to succeed, provide opportunities for the student to learn and support students to develop the life skills to independently engage with society. Included within this theme is the teacher's internal conflict with regard to failing the student and falling short of their espoused morals and values. This is aptly reflected by the following excerpt from Mrs J; "*basically (.) as teachers (.) our job is to train them for adulthood (.) and we do that from the first day they walk in here (.) until they leave school (.) and hopefully by then they have learnt all the education they need to put them and be able to stand as an adult in society and be accepted (.) and if they're not then we failed them*" (lines 120-123). Here, Mrs J captures the notion that class teachers carry a responsibility to see the 'bigger picture' and seek to provide opportunities for their students' holistic development above and beyond their academic achievement.

5.4.5 Insecure Attachments in the Classroom

This final theme has been constructed to provide insight into the way in which the class teachers relate to their student at risk of exclusion. The naming of this theme as 'Insecure Attachments in the Classroom' reflects the way in which the class teachers appear to distance themselves from the student, seemingly keeping them at arm's length whilst simultaneously reflecting a sense of connection to and relationship with the student to whom they have an emotional investment. This mirrors characteristic behaviours between children and primary caregivers whereby their attachment might be described as 'insecure' from within a psychodynamic, attachment theory perspective. Discussing the feelings of anxiety generated following an incident of

aggression from Logan, Mrs K reflected on the contagious nature of emotional states; "*the mood you're in reflects it it goes throughout the classroom doesn't it so for you to do your best you can for those kids (.) you've got to feel (.) in a good place or not got to but got to leave your worries behind haven't you an and go in and feel alright*" (lines 330-332). The concepts of closeness, distance and the contagious nature of emotional states within the relationship furthermore link to psychodynamic principles of transference, encapsulated within this theme.

5.5 Research Question 2;

What are the perceptions of class teachers on the Circle of Adults process?

Analysis of the Time-2 interview data, to address research question 2, led to the construction of 2 themes and 1 sub-theme which links these. Figure 5.2 shows a thematic map, and Appendix 9.12 contains a table of the themes, sub-theme, code clusters and codes, with a data extract to exemplify each code. Each theme will be briefly defined below, along with charts to demonstrate the differing frequencies with which each theme was captured in each of the Time-2 interview transcripts.

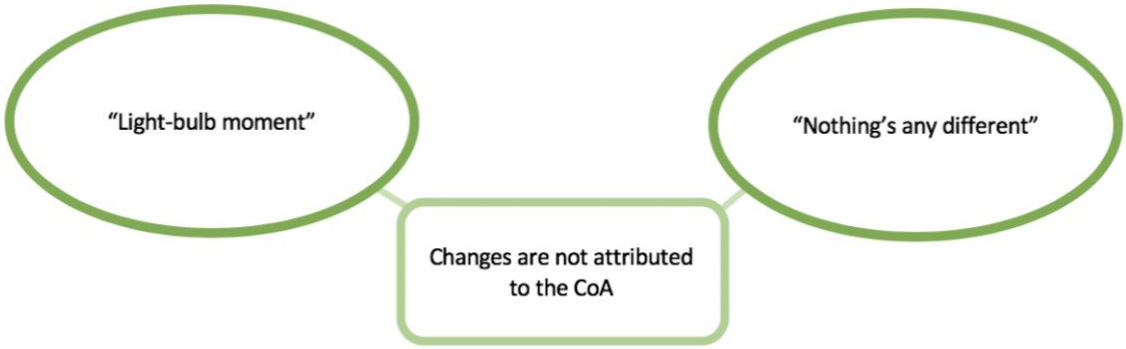

Figure 5.2: Thematic Map of 2 themes and 1 sub-theme resulting from Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Time-2 interview data addressing Research Question 2.

5.5.1 "Light-bulb moment"

The theme "light-bulb moment" (taken from Mrs A's Time-2 transcript, line 43) has been developed to convey the way in which the CoA provided a punctuation point to the school 'system'. Taken from systems theory (Dowling & Osborne, 1994), the idea of a punctuation point appropriately exemplified the way in which the CoA caused participants to reassess their view of the situation and consider an alternative perspective. The CoA did this by providing an opportunity for individuals involved in supporting the student at risk of exclusion to share their views and be heard, and for their feelings to be validated as part of a team.

For Mrs A, the alternative perspective which impacted on her most was that of Marcus, the student at risk of exclusion. Consideration of his perspective was novel and enlightening for Mrs A. Mrs A described the moment at which this struck her during the CoA; "*I think the greatest one was erm when our deputy head erm took the voice of [Marcus] and (.) he kinda came back and said 'I'm confused' an- and that was a bit of a light bulb moment for me (.) because I'd never thought of it from [Marcus]' point of view (.) it- erm you know that (.) he could find all this completely overwhelming*" (lines 42-44). Mrs A went on to say "*This poor little kid (.) you know who is in charge who is (.) his main (.) thing and all of a sudden he's taken out of the classroom and he's working now with a one to one with a TA who wasn't even our classroom TA and there was so much change*" (lines 80-82). These extracts demonstrate Mrs A reviewing the context of school as she had previously construed it and expressing a greater sense of empathy for Marcus. This extract particularly contrasts with Mrs A's statement at Time-1 whereby she emphasised the unequal use of school resources by Marcus having a one-to-one TA "*provided from in school*" (line 24).

For Mrs T, the alternative perspective gained through the CoA was that of the teaching assistant who had been working with Rebecca. Mrs T's reconstruing of the school context therefore reflected greater empathy towards the teaching assistants and an appreciation of the emotional impact that working with Rebecca can have on

them. The following extract comes from Mrs T; "*I think it just made me understand kind of more (.) how I could support her not just the teaching assistant dealing with her (.) how I could take other people the way other people are dealing with her and kind of put that in my practice*" (lines 213-215). The theme "light-bulb moment" also includes the class teachers gaining insight and accumulating ideas and strategies from other staff members with an opportunity to reflect on how these might impact on their own practice. The extract above demonstrates changes to Mrs T's practice, including a sense of greater confidence to take on more responsibility for directly supporting Rebecca. This may in part have been driven by the realisation, during the CoA, of the impact Rebecca had on teaching assistants, motivating Mrs T to change her practice.

5.5.2 "Nothing's any different"

The theme "nothing's any different" (taken from Mrs A's Time-2 transcript, line 424) has been constructed to demonstrate the message conveyed by participants, that the CoA has produced insufficient impact. This was more emphatically communicated by Mrs A, who appeared frustrated by a lack of action following the intervention. She stated, "*So that's just one example there's things they have said that that haven't been actioned on (.) erm and we're four weeks down the line (.) an an that's (.) that makes it feel like a waste of time*" (lines 451-452). Whilst Mrs A had described the CoA intervention as "*useful*" (line 299) and "*powerful*" (line 105), it appears its value was undermined by a lack of concrete action following the meeting. Mrs A further stressed this point with reference to the financial cost of the intervention; "*me I want a bit more action than that if we're all going to sit there (.) because if you equate it to how many thousands of pounds were sat in that room*" (lines 333-334).

Development of this theme further captures the continued difficulties experienced within school, from staff supporting the student at risk of exclusion. This is highlighted by Mrs T's description of feeling "*frustrated maybe cause (.) let's just say she picks her times ((laughs))*" (line 168). This statement draws a stark contrast to Mrs T's description of her feelings towards Rebecca captured at Time-1 prior to the CoA;

"*Hmmm ((pause)) ((sigh)) I don't know ((laughs)) hmmm (.) I wouldn't say frustrated because she doesn't make me feel frustrated it's a confusion as to 'why is she acting like this' and actually 'what can I do to help her' erm ((pause))"* (lines 624-625). Whilst this contrast highlights the continuing challenges presented by Rebecca, it is also likely to reflect Mrs T's changing role as she was not directly responsible for Rebecca at Time-1, and was at Time-2.

5.5.3 Changes are not attributed to the CoA

This sub-theme links both themes presented above and is reflected to a greater degree by Mrs T. It is interesting to note that where positive changes have been demonstrated between Time-1 and Time-2 interviews, the teachers have not directly attributed these to the CoA intervention. Shortly after the CoA intervention, Mrs T became Rebecca's class teacher. When considering changes seen in Rebecca and the school context since the CoA, Mrs T stated "*Um (.) well (.) it's a bit kind of hard to compare with itself because [Rebecca] is different now in the sense that she's only kind of actually walked out the classroom once since I've been in there*" (lines 67-68). Mrs T goes on to further describe positive changes to Rebecca's behaviour and seems to attribute these to her change of teacher. At the same time, Mrs T describes changes to her teaching behaviours and use of strategies with Rebecca, captured in the "light-bulb moment" theme. However, Mrs T does not draw these together and directly reference the CoA as being responsible for producing change.

Similarly, Mrs A reflects positive change in the school context with regard to Marcus, "*although we have got him going out at play times now […] One would assume that that would have continued and we try and build up his his time back in (.) you know with the class an and things like that*" (lines 149-158). This extract reflects a positive attitude towards reintegrating Marcus with his peers, which was reflected by Mrs A as an impossible task in the Time-1 interview; "*I'm gonna hand my notice in (.) because I can't work with that because I can't (.) I can't square this circle*" (lines 643-644). It is noticeable that Mrs A talked about herself as 'I' at Time-1, whereas she talked about the collective 'we' at Time-2. This change may reflect the CoA's impact

in facilitating a sense of 'team' around a student, within which teachers and teaching assistants are heard and their feelings validated, making challenges more manageable. However, Mrs A makes no direct reference to the CoA as being responsible for producing this change.

Within the Time-2 dataset, both themes are demonstrated across each of the interview transcripts. However, these demonstrate a high level of variation, as has been referenced above. These differences can be noted by comparing the frequency charts in figures 5.3 and 5.4. The visual frequency charts have been created using NVivo software and titles are not easily readable. Table 5.5 provides an overview of the themes, sub-theme and code clusters (or codes), making use of colour-coding to easily link these to the frequency charts. Additional details of the codes and data extracts for each code are provided within the appendix.

The frequency charts in figures 5.3 and 5.4 demonstrate that Mrs A made more reference to the insufficient impact of the CoA, whilst Mrs T more frequently made reference to the value of the CoA in punctuating the school system. This perhaps reflects the teachers having different perceptions of the utility of the CoA in their specific circumstance.

Shown in orange:	
Theme:	**"Nothing's any different"**
Code clusters:	*Insufficient outcomes*
	CoA having little impact
	Value of CoA undermined by lack of action
	Continuing difficulties
	Inclusion inappropriate – reflection of societal issues
	CoA itself not an efficient use of time
	Resistance to take responsibility for effecting change
Shown in blue:	
Theme:	**"Light-bulb moment"**
Code clusters:	*Giving voice/being heard/hearing others/sharing perspectives*
	CoA promotes understanding and empathy for student
	Opportunity to upskill
	Understanding provides punctuation point
	CoA promotes change
	Opportunity for reflection
	CoA facilitates collaborative team
Shown in grey:	
Sub-theme:	Changes are not attributed to the CoA
Codes:	*Positive change in the student*
	Change not attributed to CoA
	Change in school provision arrangements

Table 5.5: An overview of the themes, sub theme and code clusters (or codes) constructed through Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Time-2 interview data addressing Research Question 2.

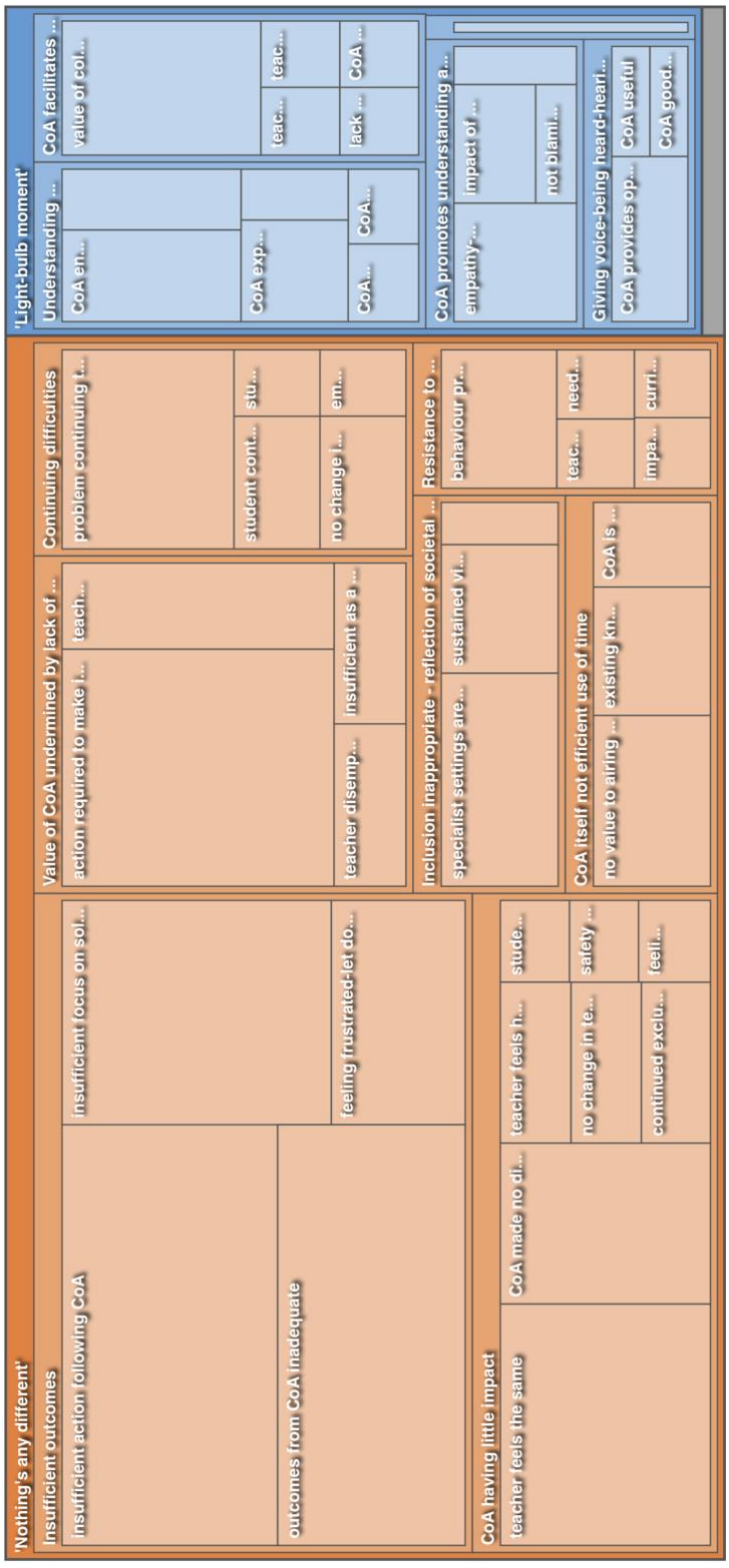

Figure 5.3: Visual chart depicting the frequency of themes constructed at Time-2 within Mrs A's semi-structured Time-2 phone interview transcript.

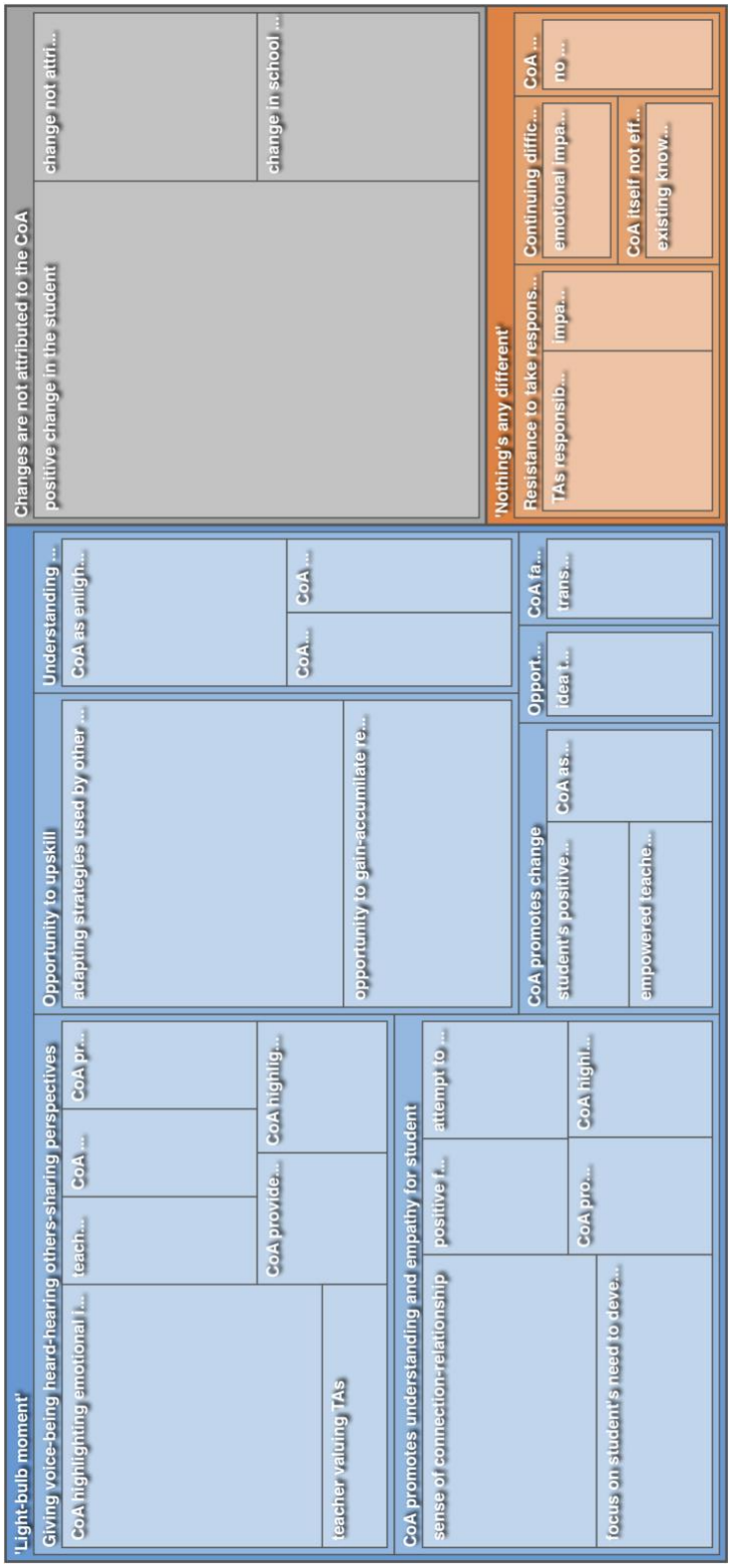

Figure 5.4: Visual chart depicting the frequency of themes constructed atTime-2 within Mrs T's semi-structured Time-2 phone interview transcript.

In summary, data analysis using Reflexive TA at both Time-1, before the CoA intervention, and Time-2, several weeks after the CoA intervention, has demonstrated that from the perspective of class teachers, the school context prior to the CoA largely reflects a fractured and disharmonious system. Themes have been constructed to demonstrate the teachers' feelings of being unsupported and solely responsible for managing the student and their behaviours, which presents an unrelenting challenge. The class teachers appear to both actively distance themselves from the student, who is perhaps seen as a threat to their idealistic classroom environment, whilst simultaneously investing emotionally in the student. Seeing the student as a victim of circumstance, the teachers communicate a sense of moral responsibility for supporting the student to flourish by providing safety and opportunities to learn both academically, socially and emotionally. The CoA intervention appears to effectively punctuate the fractured school system, providing an opportunity for the class teachers to be heard, have their feelings validated and feel valued as part of a bigger team around the student. This punctuation point also enables the class teachers to reconstrue the school context, taking into consideration alternative perspectives and making changes to their practice based on strategies shared by other staff members. However, changes within the student are generally not attributed to the CoA and its value as an intervention appears undermined when concrete actions do not clearly follow the meeting itself.

6. Discussion

The following chapter will discuss the findings of this research, considering links across themes, as well as contradictions within themes. The findings presented here will be related back to previous theoretical insights and research literature. Research question 1 will be addressed first, focusing on Time-1 data. This is followed by discussion addressing research question 2, taking account of both Time-1 and Time-2 data. Limitations of the research undertaken will be presented, followed by consideration of the implications of this study for both future research and practice.

6.1 Research question 1;

From the perspective of the class teacher, what can be understood about the context within which the Circle of Adults intervention intends to have an impact?

6.1.1 Cross-theme links related to the student being construed as a threat

Difficulties construed as within-child are believed to be more stable and therefore less resolvable

In construing the child as a threat, links can be made between this theme in the Time-1 data and conceptualisations of students presenting challenging behaviours as a within-child difficulty. This is captured within the code, 'student as different to peers', exemplified by the following extract from Mrs A's Time-1 interview transcript, "*that doesn't seem to be his same baseline*" (line 329), a comment made to compare Marcus' basic values with that of her own and other students. Conceptualisations of the child as a threat, who opposes social norms by being 'different' to their peers, and threatens the teacher's otherwise idealistic view of the classroom, draws links to causal attribution research by Poulou and Norwich (2002). In their research, within-child conceptualisations of challenging behaviour were seen as more stable, and therefore more difficult to resolve. Their findings demonstrated that more feelings of stress and helplessness were associated with within-child attributions of the challenging behaviour. In line with the sequential model proposed by Weiner (1980),

teachers' causal attributions and views of the resolvability of the student's difficulties impacted on their feelings, which influenced their intentional behaviours.

Challenging behaviours as within the student's control

Attributions of the challenging behaviour as reflecting within-child difficulties is associated with Weiner's (1980, 2010) dimensions of causality, locating the problem as internal and personal to the child, and stable. This also links with the theme constructed within the Time-1 data of 'disharmony in school', whereby conflict between the class teacher and student is captured within the code cluster of 'sources of resentment towards the student'. In particular, the code 'student responsibility for own behaviour/behaviour is a choice' reflects teachers attributing challenging behaviours along another of Weiner's dimensions of causality; being controllable. By perceiving the student's challenging behaviours as a choice, and within the student's power to control, tension is created in the teacher-student relationship. This is shown in the following extract from Mrs A discussing Marcus' aptitude for learning and ability to understand concepts and instructions, but refusing to follow Mrs A's instructions;

> "*that's what [Marcus] has got if you do give him that couple of minutes (.) and he can do it and that's what's frustrating because he's 'I won't do it'*" (lines 185-186).

Resulting feelings of stress and helplessness for the teacher are perhaps captured by the Time-1 theme, 'unrelenting challenge'. The emotional impact on the teacher of feeling disempowered and victimised by the student is reflected in extracts such as the following from Mrs A:

> "*I was really really stressed (.) because (.) the outbursts were unpredictable (.) I didn't know when they were coming I was fearful (.) of somebody (.) being hurt (.) I thought he was gonna hit me (.) I thought he was gonna hit another child (.) every conversation (.) that was round school with other people (.) always seem to centre on him (.) and whilst he is in my class he's only one of twenty-eight (.) yes he's on the SEND register but so are other children in this class (.)*

and I got really cross and angry at the amount of time that was being taken up by [Marcus] […] In terms of the classroom time in terms of (.) my time in ti- in terms of meeting time (.) just in terms of everything".

Unrelenting challenge faced by the teacher

Teachers' feelings of being unsupported and unappreciated by colleagues can leave the class teacher feeling solely responsible for the student. This includes holding the responsibility for ensuring the safety of the student themselves, their peers and other staff in the classroom, as is also captured within the theme 'unrelenting challenge' and exemplified by the following extract from Mrs K. Here, Mrs K discussed the impact of Logan being violent in the classroom;

> "*it compromises the safety doesn't and it compromises not only their safety but his safety specially when he's throwing things erm around the classroom and e e he has cut another child's hand open (.) and he has er bruised (.) adults erm (.) so there's a limit isn't there of what you er what can happen in classroom there's boundaries and rules and and that's (.) crossing them*" (lines 104-107).

The theme of 'unrelenting challenge' links directly with the theme 'disharmony in school' by reflecting sources of conflict within school, including conflict between colleagues. The following extract from Mrs J shows a sense of disharmony between her and other staff in school. Mrs J voices her view that the school's management of Marcus' challenging behaviour has not been appropriate and also indicates that she feels her own experience and competence as a teacher who has previously worked successfully with students presenting with challenging behaviours, was dismissed;

> *"I think we dealt with it in the wrong way and I'm disappointed that (.) a couple of people ran off with (.) ways they thought were good to deal with things without (.) erm talking to the staff involved (.) is really I think that's quite disappointing erm because for something like this the strategy needs to be discussed in a staff meeting with the people involved or during some time erm to look at it with everyone who's with that child (.) and what everyone's*

experience is drawn on to see what would be the best strategy to use […] Not someone who had nothing to do with him as opposed to erm I think (.) yeah I just think it was taken out of the hands of the people who could actually (.) do something (.) to help him (.) as opposed to create (.) and fuel (.) some negative behaviour (.) which is a shame" (lines 570-580).

Taken together, the themes of 'unrelenting challenge' and 'disharmony in school' perhaps link to previous self-efficacy research literature regarding teacher burnout (Bandura, 1997; Hastings & Bham, 2003). Hastings and Bham (2003) expressed increased risks of burnout from teachers facing disrespectful and unsociable behaviour from students, as well as additional organisational factors which impact upon teacher well-being. Hawkins et al.'s (2012) literature on teacher burnout states that burnout can be a consequence of emotional exhaustion reducing the quality of teaching and leading to feelings of guilt and inadequacy. This idea is captured in the current research findings within the theme of 'teacher's responsibilities as keeper of opportunities', specifically within the code cluster of 'threat of falling short of espoused morals and values'. The following extract from Mrs A reflects her sense of responsibility towards providing students with a safe environment within which to flourish, whilst recognising that the target student, Marcus, was at the time excluded from her classroom for the foreseeable future;

"*you know he's had to be removed from the classroom situation and things […] So that's kind of not fair really*" (lines 428-432), "*it's just that (.) nurturing (.) environment (.) because that's what education is about it's not just the academic side it <u>is</u> the other <u>social</u> side of things which is <u>so</u> big especially down in the infants*" (lines 456-457).

As described, the teachers' perceptions of the school context prior to a CoA intervention therefore reflect a system within which the teacher is under immense and unyielding stress. This stress and a sense of helplessness is perhaps related to conceptualisations of the student's behaviours as controllable, that the student is choosing to behave in ways which present serious challenge to the teacher and their

ability to fulfil their responsibilities. The themes constructed from Time-1 interview data indicate teacher's perceptions of the school context as one in which they are largely isolated and left to manage the stress without support from colleagues. However, within the theme of 'disharmony in school' a contradiction was identified, whereby teachers reflected a sense of feeling supported by colleagues and part of a team. Data extracts within this theme demonstrate the effective support provided to teachers when colleagues are available to discuss the difficulties faced by the teacher and perhaps engage in problem-solving dialogue. This is demonstrated by the following extracts. Firstly, Mrs A refers to a discussion with Marcus' previous teacher within which ideas were shared about the possible causes underlying Marcus' challenging behaviours. These such conversations demonstrate opportunities for teachers to share their experiences with colleagues who have also experienced some similar situations and are able to validate feelings of stress and helplessness;

> "*erm the teacher from (.) that he had last year said that they think as he's moved older he's realised in himself that he can't do the work (.) his perception is (.) 'this is hard' because the year two ramps up a lot from year one (.) erm and so he backlashes against that in order to avoid doing the work in order to feel (.) failure […] Erm which could explain some of it*" (lines 548-555).

In addition, a further extract from Mrs T refers to the availability of senior colleagues and the student's parents for conversations within which the teacher can engage in problem-solving dialogue. Such conversations may support the teacher to not feel solely responsible for resolving the student's difficulties; "*Maybe headteacher (.) or maybe our SENCo (.) maybe even parents if you thought maybe they've got suggestions (.) maybe having them in for a meeting and saying what do <u>you</u> suggest*" (lines 760-761). A later comment from Mrs T, however, reflected that these supportive and perhaps problem-solving discussions are not undertaken regularly, as might be expected within some professions where frequent opportunities for supervision are prioritised and scheduled on a regular basis. Instead Mrs T expressed that, "*I wouldn't go to them if I didn't have (.) not a problem but a concern or a question of 'how do I deal with this'*" (lines 803-804). This could demonstrate the

sense that although teachers may work as part of a team, there is an expectation of teachers to work with autonomy. In times of stress and in school contexts where teachers do not feel able to actively seek out support and supervision, systems of interaction could persist which further entrench a teacher's sense of isolation.

Summary

In summary, based on interpretations of the class teachers' perspectives, it can be understood that there are ways in which the Key Stage 1 student at risk of exclusion may be construed as a threat to the teachers' otherwise ideal classroom due to their challenging behaviours, considered as a problem within the child.

- Insights from Weiner (1980, 2010) and Poulou and Norwich (2002) suggest that construing the challenging behaviours presented by the student as within-child difficulties is associated with teachers' beliefs of the problems not being resolvable.
- Teachers' causal attributions of the challenging behaviours as internal and personal to the child, stable and within the students' power to control are more likely to be related to feelings of stress and helplessness, and less likely to lead to helping responses.
- Hawkins et al. (2012) argue that reduced motivation to engage in helping behaviours may create a sense of internal conflict for teachers who hold clear ideas about their role and responsibility for supporting the student's development. Research from Hastings and Bham (2003) link teachers' feelings of falling short of their espoused morals and values with an increased risk of teacher burnout.
- An additional factor in predicting teacher burnout is organisational factors impacting on teacher wellbeing. Findings within this research suggest that teachers may feel unsupported by colleagues whilst they manage the challenges and safety risks presented by the student's behaviours, adding to the sense of challenge and fuelling tensions between colleagues.

- Although findings within this research evidence teachers' engagement in supportive, problem-solving discussions with colleagues and parents, these appear to require the teacher actively seeking out such support.

6.1.2 Cross-theme links related to the student being construed as a victim

Construing challenging behaviours as resolvable

Within the theme of 'complex construing of the child', constructions of the child as a victim suggest that the challenging behaviours with which the teachers are presented are located outside of the child and reflect the child expressing 'fight, flight or freeze' survival behaviours, largely as a result of their own challenging background or home circumstances. The suggestion within this construction of the child's behaviours as external to the child, is that the behaviours can be changed when the child has consistent access to a safe environment within which they are able to learn and flourish. This is demonstrated within the code, 'behaviour a reflection of not knowing any better' and exemplified by the following extract from Mrs T expressing the importance of school staff providing a safe and predictable learning environment for Rebecca;

> "*It creates consistency and a routine for her (.) and actually she then starts to learn kind of what's right and wrong and her expectations what they should be*" (lines 919-920).

This construction therefore links to Poulou and Norwich's (2002) findings regarding the teacher's intentional behaviours being predicted by their feelings of the resolvable nature of the difficulties, their perceptions of their responsibility for effecting a solution and their self-efficacy. Within the current study, teachers' feelings of being responsible for finding solutions were identified within the code cluster of 'pressure and responsibility on the teacher', adding to the sense of 'unrelenting challenge' faced by teachers. The following extract is taken from Mrs T's Time-1 transcript and reflects a lack of confidence with regard to Mrs T's ability to manage Rebecca's behaviour and keep her on task;

> "*sometimes you've got to hold your hands up and say I honestly don't know what more I can do to support that child erm (.) and it can also be (.) kind of 'why why are you' I used to find something something that would affect her one day wouldn't affect her the next (.) and vice versa you could do something one day and she would love it the next day she wouldn't be interested and it was all about finding new ways to kind of control that behaviour and keep her kind of (.) on task as possible (.) erm (.) so yeah it's just what do you do ((laughs))"* (lines 729-734).

This lack of confidence perhaps links to self-efficacy, as referenced by Poulou and Norwich (2002), and investigated by Bandura (1997) and Ajzen (1991). Within the theme of 'unrelenting challenge' developed within this research, low self-efficacy of the teachers is reflected in the code cluster 'teacher left feeling dejected and disempowered'. The construction of this code cluster demonstrates the teachers' sense of being disempowered, "*deflated*" (Mrs T, line 1113) and out of ideas, perhaps demonstrating an increased risk of teacher burnout. In the following extract, Mrs K emphasises a lack of confidence and knowledge in her own skills, stating a need for professional guidance;

> "*Well yeah and having the tools to do that not just your mind isn't it it's knowing erm what you're gonna do step by step to stop to keep everybody safe (.) whereas at the moment we're a little bit like erm not really had a lot of advice so (.) we need a bit of step by step 'this is what you're going to do if that doesn't happen (.) then you're going to do this' (.) then we'll probably all feel a little bit better about the situation I mean he would as well [Logan] would as well*" (lines 341-345).

Emotional impact on teachers of feeling responsible for resolving challenges

In line with teachers construing the child as a victim, and their challenging behaviours as external, unstable (resolvable) and beyond the child's own control; the teacher's own sense of responsibility for providing a safe, consistent environment within which the student can flourish is perhaps emphasised. This is captured in this research

within the theme ‘teachers’ responsibilities as the keepers of opportunities’. This theme captures the teachers’ comments regarding their sense of responsibility for fostering a student’s strengths, helping them to overcome challenge, and develop skills which will enable future success in life, over and above academic attainment. This is exemplified by the following extract from Mrs T, emphasising the importance of Rebecca learning emotional regulation and social skills in order that she “*can kind of keep up with (.) well society*” (line 247). The importance of students’ development of life skills was a frequent theme across the Time-1 dataset. This is further emphasised by the following extract from Mrs K, expressing the importance of Logan developing an understanding of social norms and rules regarding acceptable behaviours; *“it’s society isn't it society is (.) has got rules that you do have to follow*“ (line 148).

Notably, Poulou and Norwich (2002) found that when teachers attributed the cause of difficulties as being due to school factors, they then reported feelings of anxiety, stress and helplessness without related responsibility or control to be able to provide a solution. This finding particularly links with the theme constructed in the current study of ‘disharmony in school’. Captured within this theme are the teachers’ ideas regarding the child’s behaviours being due to factors within the school system which they are personally powerless to influence. This was emphatically the case for Mrs J, whose feelings of stress and disempowerment were such that she became upset during the interview whilst discussing the topic. Bandura (1997) proposed that within an environment where a person has little or no influence to be able to effect change, a person with high self-efficacy is more likely to feel frustrated and aggrieved, as was demonstrated by Mrs J. The following extract provides a section of Mrs J’s Time-1 interview transcript whereby she demonstrated concern and upset about the student Marcus having been failed by the school. Mrs J reflects an inability to influence the strategies put in place for Marcus in school, and a sense of failing in her responsibility as a teacher to support Marcus to develop life skills above and beyond academic attainment:

> "*Because you care about them you don't want a child at this age falling so far behind that they're gonna dread school for the rest of their life they're not gonna (.) because (.) if they're doing it now and they start not liking school because they don't understand (.) which is usually the case (.) so therefore when they go into the next year group there's going to be more they don't understand and so that negativeness would (.) it breeds and it becomes something that's quite big and then (.) then (.) if your attitude once again is wrong (.) then you're not going to get the chance to succeed and therefore it's the rest of their lives it's not (.) because if they don't get the qualifications when they're at school (.) um or the experience of being able to talk to people and they're fighting a system then that means that will continue into adult life and that's (.) just really (.) you know it begins at school and if we can get children to have the right (.) erm wanting to learn (.) and enjoying education then you know we've done a really good job (.) they have enough to deal with when they get to secondary school (.) you know if primary school can make it as good as it can be and they learn and they feel that they can achieve then they will (.) if we give them the wrong (.) we don't let them have the opportunity now and we fail them then (.) it's really sad ((Mrs J becomes upset))"* (lines 492-504).

The theme 'insecure attachments in the classroom' links to the teachers' feelings of stress and helplessness, perhaps by demonstrating the teacher purposefully seeking distance between themselves and both the individual student and their situation, in order to protect the teacher's own emotional well-being. The above extract from Mrs J demonstrates an emotional investment in Marcus. However, the code cluster 'distance' simultaneously reflects the class teachers demonstrating a 'matter of fact', unemotional stance towards the student and their behaviours, or a sense of relinquishing responsibility for the student. This notion is captured by further extracts from Mrs J's transcript. Here, it is of note that Mrs J seems to actively distance herself from Marcus, reinforcing her lack of influence over his provision by emphasising that

she is not informed, whilst voicing her disapproval of the strategies which have been put in place for him;

> "*And it was nothing to do with me because I wouldn't have left it like that*" (line 269), and;
>
> "*But I'm not going to lose sleep over it (.) because it's the other kids that I'm more concerned about (.) because it's their education that's important (.) [Marcus] doesn't seem to care about his (.) and he's got one on one with a TA all the time (.) so when he's here I don't even know if he's here for a full day any more or not I don't even know what he's doing (.) erm I know they made him a little room to sit in*" (lines 343-346).

Furthermore, the theme 'insecure attachments in the classroom' draws additional links to Dawson's (2013) findings. Dawson drew on psychodynamic principles, suggesting that teachers and students both share uncomfortable feelings ahead of the CoA intervention, and may project these onto each other through a process of transference and countertransference. It follows from Hanko's (1999, 2002) research that children may project feelings they find 'hard to bear' onto the school staff supporting them. The potential impact of this on the school staff is described in the following extract from Greenhalgh (1994); "*when working with disturbed children, one might find oneself feeling hurt, abused, angry, frustrated, intolerant, anxious, de-skilled and even frightened. One of the reasons that working with children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties is so disturbing is that such intense and painful feelings are somehow pushed into the staff*" (p.75). Provocation of these feelings in teaching staff risks fuelling vicious cycles of negative interaction between the student and teacher, demonstrating the contagious nature of emotional states.

This is demonstrated in two different ways from the Time-1 transcripts. Captured within the code 'emotional states as contagious'; in the following extract Mrs A describes engaging in negative interactions with Marcus during which she became dysregulated and lost her temper; "*because I would shout (.) if he pushed me so far (.)*

I will shout and then that's when I feel real failure in me because (.) I don't shout (.) because to lose your own temper (.) is the worst thing to do" (lines 758-759). A negative cycle between Mrs A and Marcus may then be further fed by countertransference of Mrs A's feelings of failure onto Marcus.

Interestingly, this is reflected in a different way within Mrs T's Time-1 transcript, captured within the code 'teacher mirroring child'. Describing Rebecca's physically aggressive behaviours, Mrs T explained; "*it always followed almost like a temper tantrum (.) stomping feet (.) shouting (.) screaming erm there was never any tears it was almost (.) quite unemotional from that level so there wasn't any sadness or anything like that*" (lines 263-265). Elsewhere, Mrs T described difficulties engaging Rebecca in interactions, stating that Rebecca; "*didn't really want staff near her (.) didn't want staff talking to her and she'd kept going to a little ball (.) at the back of my classroom and just refuse*" (lines 117-118). It is of note that Rebecca's behaviours are described as unemotional, as Mrs T's interview transcript was repeatedly noted by the researcher as being 'matter-of-fact' and reflecting little sense of emotional investment. This may suggest Rebecca and Mrs T's engagement in an interactive cycle feeding feelings of dissociation from heightened emotional states.

Summary

In summary, based on interpretation of the class teachers' perspectives, it can be understood that there are ways in which the Key Stage 1 student at risk of exclusion may be construed as a victim, whose challenging behaviours are resolvable.

- In line with this view, causal attributions (Miller, 2003) for students' challenging behaviours relate to a student having not had consistent access to a safe, supportive environment within which they could learn pro-social behaviours, and within which they could flourish.
- Taking Weiner's (1980,2010) dimensions of causality into account, student's challenging behaviours are construed as external to the child, beyond their individual control and temporary (unstable), with access to opportunities to

learn within a safe environment the means by which to change the behaviours.

- Links to research by Poulou and Norwich (2002) reflect teachers' increased feelings of responsibility for finding solutions to support the students' behaviours when those behaviours are considered resolvable.
- The current study demonstrated teachers' low sense of self-efficacy to find solutions for the difficulties presented by their student at risk of exclusion. This links with research from Bandura (1997) and Ajzen (1991), which found associations between low teacher self-efficacy and reduced positive outcomes for students presenting with challenging behaviours.
- Their findings also emphasise teachers' increased feelings of anxiety, stress and helplessness when the cause of students' challenging behaviour is attributed to school factors that the teacher has no ability to influence. Low teacher self-efficacy within an environment whereby the teacher has little control, has been associated with feelings of resignation and indifference (Bandura, 1977). This was perhaps captured in the current study within the code cluster of 'teachers left feeling dejected and disempowered'. In contrast, Mrs J demonstrated a greater sense of self-efficacy based on previous successful work with students presenting with challenging behaviours. In addition to disempowerment, she demonstrated frustration at feeling the student was being failed by the school system.
- The conflict between teachers' feelings of responsibility for supporting students and helplessness with regard to their ability to do so, may be a factor in the teachers' seeming to attempt to distance themselves from the student. This is reflected in theme of 'insecure attachments in the classroom' which also demonstrates potentially vicious cycles of interaction between teacher and student based on psychodynamic principles of transference and countertransference.

6.2 Research question 2;

What are the perceptions of class teachers on the Circle of Adults process?

6.2.1 Cross-theme links related to punctuation of the school system

CoA promotes collaboration and collective responsibility

The theme 'light-bulb moment' has been constructed to demonstrate a range of means by which the CoA appears to have effectively punctuated the system of the school context, from the perspective of class teachers. Firstly, captured by the code cluster 'CoA facilitates collaborative team', the class teachers' Time-2 transcripts demonstrate the CoA intervention meeting itself reinforcing a sense of team and supporting the teachers to feel part of a collective effort to improve the target students' outcomes. This is exemplified by the following extract from Mrs A;

> "*but just to see so many people working (.) with him and the family was quite (.) was quite moving really […] That everybody wants to do the best for this child and this family and to enable them to cope with society as it is*" (lines 52-57).

This links with previous findings from Grahamslaw and Henson (2015) regarding an impact of the CoA including the promotion of group cohesiveness and collective responsibility. This is further supported by the change noted in Mrs A's language; using "I" at Time-1 to talk about working with Marcus, and "we" at Time-2. It is also of note that within the Time-2 transcripts, whilst references are made to frustration around a lack of action and continued difficulties with the student, the data no-longer demonstrate references to conflict between colleagues shown at Time-1 within the 'disharmony in school' theme. This perhaps demonstrates a greater sense of collaboration and shared responsibility amongst the staff team following the CoA.

Teachers' causal attributions

Previous research by Turner (2014), Turner & Gulliford (2020), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011) sought to evidence a theoretical suggestion that the CoA intervention

may facilitate positive change by impacting on teachers' causal attributions for the challenging behaviours demonstrated by students. Based on research by Miller (2003), Poulou and Norwich (2002) and Weiner (1980); theoretically, teachers' likelihood of engaging in helping behaviours and their emotional responses towards the students presenting with challenging behaviours may be ameliorated if they attributed the behaviours as external to the child, temporary (resolvable) and beyond the students' control. However, using quantitative methods, Turner, Dempsey and Syme were not able to demonstrate measurable changes in the teachers' causal attributions before and after engagement in a CoA intervention.

Based on the findings from the current study, the Time-1 theme 'complex construing of the child' demonstrates that even before the CoA, teachers' causal attributions for students' challenging behaviour reflect a discordant interplay of within-child, stable, controllable attributions (developed into the sub-theme of child construed as a threat) and external to the child, unstable, uncontrollable attributions (developed into the sub-theme of child construed as a victim). The Time-2 transcripts do not provide evidence to suggest any change to this following the CoA. Instead, the code clusters 'understanding provides punctuation point' and 'CoA promotes understanding and empathy for student' demonstrate teacher's developing a greater understanding of some of the reasons underpinning students' behaviours and their attempts to address these in their interactions with the student. For example, the following extract from Mrs T describes her support for Rebecca on her first day as Rebecca's new teacher. Here, Mrs T reflects an understanding of Rebecca's challenging behaviours as being perhaps based in anxiety about change and the potential loss of familiar and comforting 'things' in the classroom. Rather than addressing Rebecca's presenting behaviours, Mrs T's description of her approach demonstrates an appreciation of the potential factors underpinning Rebecca's behaviour and attempts to connect with Rebecca to address them:

> "*on the first very first day she refused to come into the classroom and just kind of refused to even participate for about the first half an hour (.) and it wasn't until I kind of sat her down and said 'look everything in this classroom is still*

exactly the same I've just changed it a little bit' and kind of had to explain all of the things that she has in that classroom are still there (.) and after that she was absolutely fine I don't know whether she just kind of thought 'this teacher's come in and moved all my things and I don't know where everything is' and I think she thought I'd taken everything away (.) I haven't and it's still there for [Rebecca] to access she just doesn't actually access it as much as what I think she was previously" (lines 127-133).

Despite extracts demonstrating class teachers' perceptions of having gained a greater understanding of the student through the CoA intervention, the Time-2 transcripts also reflect continued conceptualisations of the challenging behaviours being attributed to within-child problems. These are shown in extracts expressing the continued difficulties faced by the teachers. Mrs T suggests Rebecca has an element of control over her behaviour in the following extract; "*let's just say she picks her times ((laughs))*" (line 168). Furthermore, Mrs A implies Marcus' lack of engagement is purposeful in the following extract, "*he's not sent me anything […] it's just that constant reaching out to this child (.) but there's nothing coming back again*" (lines 239-242). It could therefore be suggested that the CoA may not impact on the causal attributions of class teachers in a measurable way because their constructs of the child reflect both internal, controllable and external, uncontrollable attributions of behaviour both before and after the CoA intervention. In their discussion, Turner and Gulliford (2020) propose the use of repertory grids, a tool from within a PCP approach, to provide a sensitive measure of causal attribution changes. The findings presented here suggest that changes to causal attributions of students' challenging behaviours, as measured by teachers prior to and following a CoA intervention, may be small and may not be stable. Instead, teachers' causal attributions may vary throughout the day in different situations.

Teachers' confidence, optimism and self-efficacy

Captured within the theme "light-bulb moment", the Time-2 transcripts reflect the class teachers feeling empowered and more confident to adapt the strategies used by

their colleagues. This demonstrates the utility of the CoA intervention, from the perspective of class teachers, in providing an opportunity to build on their skills and accumulate ideas, resources or strategies from their colleagues. It also affords teachers the opportunity to simply reflect upon their own and others' interactions with the student, making the strategies employed more explicit and better understood. This links with Schon's (1982) ideas about 'reflection-on-action' in order to better enable 'reflection-in-action'. This is indicated in the following extract from Mrs T;

> "*I think it just made me understand kind of more (.) how I could support her not just the teaching assistant dealing with her (.) how I could take other people the way other people are dealing with her and kind of put that in my practice*" (lines 213-215).

This increased confidence further links with research literature on teachers' self-efficacy, suggesting that greater self-efficacy is more likely to lead to teachers employing effective support strategies because of their greater belief in their ability to do so (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1997). Teacher self-efficacy was measured in previous research by Turner (2014), Turner and Gulliford (2020), Dempsey (2012) and Syme (2011), however, no statistically significant measurable differences were evidenced. Class teachers' perceptions of the CoA process, as reflected within Time-2 transcripts, reflect a greater sense of optimism through the CoA intervention being seen as a means of becoming unstuck. This can be seen in the following extract from Mrs T; "*kind of breaking it open kind of what everyone's doing and what I could then take from that and what I thought kind of were next steps*" (lines 44-45). It could perhaps be suggested that whilst the CoA promotes change through actions enabling a 'stuck' situation to be moved forward, this does not necessarily equate to the teachers having an increased sense of individual self-efficacy.

Impact of the CoA on the system of the school context as a whole

Previous literature focused on professional supervision has expressed the notion that teachers may be less able to effectively support their students whilst they themselves

feel unsupported (Hawkins et al., 2012). The emotional and physical exhaustion which teachers supporting Key Stage 1 students at risk of exclusion face is clearly expressed within the Time-1 interviews, demonstrated within the theme 'unrelenting challenge'. The Time-2 interviews exploring the class teachers' perceptions of the CoA process, suggest that the CoA provides an opportunity for the class teachers and other staff involved in supporting the student to feel heard, share their perspectives and experiences, and have their feelings validated by a supportive team group. This partially reflects the aims of professional supervision promoted by Hawkins et al. (2012) and Rae et al. (2017). As a form of group supervision, this research demonstrates support for the idea that the CoA intervention punctuates the system of the school context, perhaps leading to change in the system itself which is ultimately beneficial for the student through a plethora of direct and indirect actions.

For example, the following extract from Mrs T reflects her views on the benefits of the CoA giving a voice to the TA working with Rebecca; *"I think it really really give her kind of a voice and a time to kind of say what she said don't know whether she would have necessarily had that time"* (lines 238-239). Mrs T adds to this, reflecting a sense of motivation to take greater responsibility for Rebecca's support whilst respecting and valuing the work of the teaching assistants; "*I think at the minute I'm kind of trying to bring my way into dealing with it but also having (.) to like (.) bearing in mind that they've been dealing with it a lot longer (.) and I don't kind of want to go in and say 'right this is what we're doing now'*" (lines 252-254). Previous research by Dawson (2014) found that following the CoA, staff were more empowered, felt more in control and more optimistic. Additionally, teachers' interactions with students demonstrated more empathic responses, a finding supported further by Grahamslaw and Henson (2015) and Syme (2011). Syme's research also indicated improved student-teacher relationships, with students reporting that they felt more accepted. Such research findings perhaps indicate that the CoA impacts upon the system of the school context and interpersonal relationships within school, leading to a wide range of small changes. This range of small changes may be difficult to measure using quantitative techniques but together work to punctuate and change the system as a

whole. These changes perhaps include amelioration of the impact of the students' challenging behaviours on the class teachers, potentially protecting against burnout.

This array of possible direct and indirect actions as an impact of the CoA include; a greater sense of collective responsibility between staff, greater understanding and more empathic responses in staff interactions and teacher-student interactions, greater confidence, optimism, availability of strategies to adapt and employ when supporting the student at risk of exclusion and reduced impact of emotional and physical exhaustion through being listened to and validated. A possible explanation for previous difficulties identifying the mechanisms of change within a CoA intervention through quantitative measures could therefore be that such changes are individually small and perhaps imperceptible, but impact on the system as a whole. It could provide a possible explanation for the subtheme constructed within Time-2 reflecting that 'changes are not attributed to the CoA', because the impact is in interpersonal interactions within the system of the school context, and thereby difficult for school staff to identify specifically.

Lack of concrete action undermines the perceived effectiveness of the intervention

Lastly, it is of note that where concrete actions did not clearly follow the CoA, class teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness as an intervention were undermined, as demonstrated by the theme "nothing's any different". This is particularly the case where actions specifically suggested by the class teacher during the CoA were not acted upon. The following extract from Mrs A refers to an adjustment to simplify a 5-step emotion scale for Marcus, an action which Mrs A recommended in the CoA;

> "*Then that will be a good step for him (.) that was that was a good positive solution that (.) was agreed as far as I know erm that would happen (.) and it hasn't happened*" (lines 441-442).

It is interesting that within this theme, a cluster of codes have been developed to show 'resistance to take responsibility for effecting change'. This perhaps links to the themes of 'unrelenting challenge', and 'insecure attachments in the classroom'

developed at Time-1, implying that the CoA intervention does not enable the class teacher to entirely move on from the emotional impact the student had upon them, nor their potential inclination to put distance between the student and themselves. Even with support from colleagues, the class teacher may not feel able, or may feel unwilling to take on the responsibility for effecting change themselves. This theme also relates back to Wilson and Newton's (2006) description of the CoA intervention and their emphasis on the 'first steps' being clearly identified, achievable actions which can be undertaken by a specific individual within a specified time frame.

Summary

In summary, class teachers' perspectives of the CoA process, as interpreted by the researcher from Time-2 interview transcripts, reflect the CoA intervention demonstrating a means of punctuating the system of the school context.

- The CoA intervention provides a means by which class teachers can access group supervision, feeling heard and having their feelings validated by a collaborative group, fostering a sense of shared responsibility.
- The CoA provides an opportunity to accumulate ideas and strategies from colleagues, as well as an opportunity to stop and reflect. This perhaps enables class teachers to feel more optimistic and empowered to support the student at risk of exclusion.
- Changes to the system perhaps promoted by the CoA may be difficult to measure because they act as a ripple effect, involving a plethora of small changes, such as increased empathy, evident in interpersonal interaction between teacher and student, and between colleagues.
- Group supervision provided by the CoA intervention reflects the aims of supervision espoused by Hawkins et al. (2012) and Rae et al. (2017) and may be effective in ameliorating the emotionally and physically exhausting impact of supporting a Key Stage 1 student at risk of exclusion.
- In the absence of clear actions following the CoA meeting, the value of the CoA intervention has been shown to be undermined and positive changes in school attributed to factors other than the CoA.

6.3 Limitations

Adoption of a qualitative paradigm could be argued to limit the outcomes of this research because causation cannot be established and findings cannot be generalised, nor substantiated through tests of statistical significance. The researcher, however, refutes such limitations and argues for the value of the potential insights provided by a qualitative paradigm enabling exploration of rich, enlightening and multi-faceted interview data. The subjective nature of Reflexive TA is therefore embraced, and the researcher acknowledges that the above findings and discussion provide one possible interpretation of the data gathered within this research.

With regard to procedures employed within this research, the researcher was careful to use schools and class teachers for the research who had no prior relationship with the researcher through her role as trainee EP. This ensured clear boundaries between the researcher and practice roles, it also enabled the researcher to remain objective and detached from the emotive aspects of supporting a student with challenging behaviours in school. However, this had the implication of meaning the researcher had no prior rapport with interviewees. The pre-interview script contains reference to there being no judgement, and to there being no right or wrong answers, the researcher also tried to engage interviewees in casual conversation to put them at ease, such as commenting on the weather or aspects of the school environment such as children's art on display. The lack of trusting relationship may have impacted the teacher's willingness to be vulnerable and completely honest. The interview process and lack of relationship may have led teachers to try and represent themselves in the most favourable light and may not demonstrate a completely transparent picture of their feelings towards the target student. This was felt to be the case more so for Mrs T than for the other class teachers.

A further limitation of this research is demonstrated by the omission of student, teacher and school descriptive and statistical data. This research may be better

contextualised by the inclusion of data such as the school Ofsted rating, number of students on roll, proportion of students in receipt of free school meals and proportion of students on the SEND register. The inclusion of descriptive data to provide insight into teacher's age, years of teaching experience and racial identity as well as the racial identity of students in the study would also provide a richer and more detailed contextual picture. Unfortunately, this data was not gathered. In future studies the researcher encourages the collection of such data in order to position the interpretation of teacher's narratives more firmly within their specific context.

It is acknowledged as a limitation of this research that the data gathered at Time-2 was of a reduced quantity and richness to that gathered at Time-1. This reflected both the difficulties related to attrition of participants within real-world research and the challenges presented by conducting interviews over the phone during the Covid-19 pandemic. Conducting the interviews over the phone, rather than being face-to-face impacted on the researcher's ability to build a rapport with participants and be guided by their narrative, exploring their constructs in as much depth as was possible in a face-to-face scenario. The challenges faced by the teachers at the time, due to the Covid-19 pandemic included a high level of ambiguity regarding when and how their usual teaching roles would resume. The closing of schools to most students in the UK occurred in March 2020 with little notice, and many teachers were required to prepare home learning packs for their students. Due to the risk of illness, one of the teachers interviewed had been required to self-isolate at home before schools closed, whilst the other teacher interviewed had experienced a period of self-isolation with an unwell child shortly after schools closed. The difficulties presented by the target students at risk of exclusion within the typical day-to-day of school life, and the discussions about these in each student's CoA were therefore unlikely to have been at the forefront of either teacher's mind. The researcher believes the circumstances under which the Time-2 data were gathered are likely to have limited the richness of the data.

6.4 Implications for research

Implications for research, highlighted by the current study indicate the potential value of conducting a similar but more in-depth study on a bigger scale. Utilising IPA or discourse analysis methods, a comparison of participants' narratives regarding the school context and interpersonal relationships both before and after a CoA intervention could be conducted. Such a project may benefit from inclusion of a number of homogenous participant groups. Patterns across time for groups of teachers, teaching assistants, school leadership staff, parents and carers and the students themselves could then be investigated. Analysing patterns within and across these groups may enable further insights into the possible range of changes occurring within the school system to facilitate positive outcomes for the student at risk of exclusion and the staff involved in supporting that student.

Additionally, building on the suggestion of Turner and Gulliford (2020) use of repertory grids (Fransella, 2005), taken from a PCP approach (Kelly, 1955), may provide a sensitive measurement of the constructs held by teachers with regard to their student at risk of exclusion. It may be effective to apply a repertory grid technique before the CoA, immediately afterwards, and at a short-and long-term follow up. By using a relatively large sample size to provide statistical power, this method may shed light on any changes to the constructs held by teachers over time. The current study provides evidence to suggest that teachers' constructs are complex, not construing their student as simply a victim whose challenging behaviours are external and uncontrollable, nor as a threat whose behaviours are controllable and represent a within-child problem. Repertory grids, using a graded scale between contrast poles, may be able to quantitatively capture this complexity.

This research has highlighted the complex way in which class teachers appear to construe a Key Stage 1 student at risk of exclusion, suggesting that their constructs reflect a mixture of both internal, controllable and external, uncontrollable attributions. It may be interesting to explore whether this could be related to the students' age, and whether class teachers' constructs become more fixed or rigid

when the student is older. The highest exclusion rates in the UK are noted within National Curriculum Year 10, this age group (13-14 years) may therefore be a valuable age group on which to focus.

The CoA intervention perhaps attempts to impact on the attributions held by teachers by providing a means by which teachers can develop greater understanding of factors underpinning the students' behaviours. Research has supported Newton and Wilson's (2006) proposal that greater understanding may promote more empathic interactions between teacher and student (Dawson (2013), Grahamslaw & Henson (2015), Syme (2011)). The current study provides further support for the idea that this increased empathy may impact on interpersonal interactions throughout the school context, promoting a plethora of small changes. This fits with findings from Syme (2011) and Dawson (2013) of students reporting feeling more accepted and, in some cases, seeming to demonstrate greater self-esteem. Further research may be needed to ascertain whether development of greater understanding about a student's background and past or current home/school experiences is sufficient to produce a change in teachers' causal attributions, or whether causal attributions and generation of greater empathy demonstrate different and more independent phenomena.

On a day-to-day basis, phenomena such as empathy, causal attribution, physical tension and exhaustion, self-efficacy, motivation to support the student and sense of being supported by colleagues appear to perhaps play a role in creating a sense of internal conflict for teachers of students presenting with challenging behaviour. A diary study which seeks to capture a teacher's feelings at various times of the day may provide insight into the stability of such phenomena and perhaps capture this internal conflict. Such a study could then be extended to take into account the impact of various modes of support on a day-to-day basis, such as informal peer support with a colleague, professional supervision with a senior staff member or individual self-care and reflection strategies such as the availability of a break-out space and mindfulness techniques.

To further build on the research conducted by Turner (2014), and Turner and Gulliford (2020), further studies into the impact of the CoA intervention could perhaps employ Target Monitoring and Evaluation (TME) procedures (Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai, & Monsen, 2009) as well as organised review meetings. Following a lack of action reported within the current study following the CoA, TME procedures may support a greater adherence to the actions agreed during the CoA meeting itself. Comparisons could also be undertaken between the CoA as a stand-alone intervention utilising TME, compared against CoA with review meetings, perhaps in the form of 30-minute Solution Circles, again utilising TME. The knowledge of further review meetings may perhaps promote greater change within the school system.

Through the theme 'teachers' responsibilities as the keepers of opportunities', the current study demonstrated teachers' sense of responsibility for supporting students to develop holistically and increase the students' opportunities for achieving positive outcomes. This sense of responsibility appeared to be retained despite difficulties within the school context. Links can be drawn here between this and literature from Hendry (2009) and Hatton (2013) which emphasises the importance of teaching staff genuinely believing in each student's capacity to succeed. The theme constructed in this research also draws links with a Humanistic approach and every student's right to have the opportunities to achieve self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). Such rights are further emphasised in policy, such as articles 6 (life, survival and development), 28 (right to education), 29 (goals of education) and 31 (leisure, play and culture) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). Future research might seek to investigate this basis of teacher motivation and how it can be better utilised to support teachers to ensure their work (their theory-in-use) matches with their values (their espoused theory) as is identified in this research as a potential source of internal conflict (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

6.5 Implications for practice

This research has sought to develop a greater understanding of the school context ahead of a CoA intervention, the experience of taking part in a CoA intervention and the impact of the intervention, from the perspective of class teachers. In doing so, a number of implications for future practice have been raised.

School Leadership:

Support for teachers

One of the key areas of learning within this research has been the clarity within which the current study has highlighted the emotional impact which supporting a Key Stage 1 student at risk of exclusion can have upon their class teacher and teaching assistants. Highlighted primarily within the theme 'unrelenting challenge', and further within the theme 'disharmony in school', this study has clearly identified the class teachers being at risk of burnout (Bandura 1997) as well as physical illness as a result of constant stress. The implication for school leadership is therefore to consider how teachers may be better supported.

The CoA appears effective as a means of group supervision to facilitate a staff team developing a better sense of cohesion and shared responsibility. However, the CoA has been recommended by Wilson and Newton (2006) as an intervention most suited for "*when things are serious*" (p.6). It is noted from the findings of this study, that teachers and teaching assistants are likely to benefit from emotional and practical support at a much earlier stage. Returning to the notion promoted by Hawkins et al. (2012); teachers must be supported if they are to effectively and consistently provide support for their students. The CoA intervention may prove too great a demand on time and personnel to be a helpful means of support for teachers on a regular basis but could perhaps be undertaken at an earlier stage of facing difficulties. Regular, scheduled opportunities for professional or peer supervision are therefore recommended following this research in order to better support the mental and physical health of teachers, and to avoid unhelpful systems which potentially reinforce a teacher's sense of isolation. Models of more regular supervision could be

taken from research on the Staff Sharing Scheme (Bennett & Monsen, 2011; Jones et al., 2013), or make use of less time-consuming intervention models more frequently, such as Solution Circles (Grahamslaw & Henson, 2015). In considering the content of regular supervision, guidance may be taken from Rae, Cowell, and Field (2017) to ensure key elements of containment, reflection and problem-solving are included.

Teachers:

Promotion of support seeking within school systems where this is not readily available

Within this research, the CoA appeared effective in punctuating the school system with a reduction in conflict between staff noted by loss of support for the Time-1 theme 'disharmony in school'. Accessing the CoA as a means of group supervision seemed to help teachers to benefit from the support offered by colleagues, including being listened to and being able to share experiences, ideas and strategies. In the UK, supervision for teachers does not appear to be prioritised and teachers are perhaps at risk of feeling they must persevere with challenges in isolation, until a point of burnout. Instead, the findings of this research actively encourage teachers to seek opportunities for peer supervision where these are not readily available within their school system. Finding opportunities to reflect-on-action (Schon, 1982) and share with colleagues (Hawkins et al., 2012) may support amelioration of the challenges by better enabling teachers reflection-in-action in future challenging interactions and greater confidence in their sense of 'team'.

Teacher training providers:

Training for teachers regarding survival behaviours (fight, flight, freeze) and the impact of stress, trauma and loss on children's brain development

Such training may help teachers to feel better equipped to understand the challenging behaviours of children who may not have had access to a safe, nurturing home environment within which to learn and flourish. Proving this input in initial teacher training may also help teachers to expect the uncomfortable feelings of shame, inadequacy, isolation, anxiety, anger or fear that children cannot bear and may instead generate within the staff supporting them. Greater awareness may act as

a source of protection for teachers and promote reflective practice to avoid entering into a vicious cycle of transference and countertransference (Hanko, 2002). Furthermore, greater awareness may encourage teachers to actively seek out peer support and supervision, or to actively offer such support to their colleagues.

In schools where teachers have completed their initial training, engagement in the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) network (Shotton & Burton, 2019) may provide a means of support and continued professional development for the staff team. A further benefit of involvement in the ELSA network is an assurance of regular opportunities for professional group supervision for the individual ELSA. In light of the findings of this research, it is perhaps expected that teachers may construe their student presenting with challenging behaviours as both 'threat' and 'victim'. The additional training and continued support of supervision may support teachers to construe the student more often or to a greater extent as a victim, whose behaviours are unstable (resolvable), external and uncontrollable (not within the child's power to control).

Training in specific techniques such as emotion coaching as a helpful tool to address challenging behaviours

One of the messages communicated by teachers within this research pertained to a sense of being stuck, out of ideas and in need of further tools and guidance. Emotion coaching (Digby et al., 2017; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996) may be a helpful 'tool' for school staff to learn and integrate into their practice. Emotion coaching was mentioned as an outcome in all three of the CoA interventions conducted within this research. Emotion coaching provides guidance to school staff in supporting students whose behaviours are challenging perhaps as a result of unsettled and confusing emotions, an idea supported by previous findings from Dawson (2013). Adoption of a school-wide emotion coaching approach may support teaching and support staff in two ways. Firstly, the focus of emotion coaching is in meeting the emotional needs of the student through connection and co-regulation whilst supporting the student in the long-term to develop better skills in independent emotional regulation. This

would enable teachers to feel they are meeting their responsibilities to support their students' needs and holistic development. Furthermore, by providing guidance for teachers around connecting with and co-regulating their students, emotion coaching may provide a source of support for the internal conflict highlighted by this research, within the theme of 'insecure attachments in the classroom'. Secondly, the use of emotion coaching across a whole school may provide a legitimate grounding for scheduling regular supervision meetings, perhaps in both large and small groups of staff and perhaps facilitated by an EP using 'big paper' visual methods to capture the discussion. The adoption of emotion coaching as an explicit approach has been well supported in research by Digby et al. (2017) and may provide a common goal for school staff, to facilitate their sense of cohesion and collective responsibility.

Educational Psychologists:

Awareness of systems theory, systems in schools which reinforce teacher isolation and effective action to punctuate such systems

The research has evidenced the CoA's utility as a means of punctuating the system of the school context and in doing so, highlighted the potential impact of the system in reinforcing vicious cycles of interaction. Dowling and Osborne (1994) emphasise the role of circular causality evident within systems of interaction. The implication for EP practice highlighted within this research is therefore in promoting the EP's use of systems theory in their work in schools where students are facing a risk of exclusion. EPs involved in supporting the student, family and school staff at an earlier point may be able to identify some of the self-reinforcing systems which are maintaining challenging behaviour, conflict between colleagues and isolation of the class teacher. This research appears to support the CoA intervention's effectiveness in punctuating the school system, however further attention must be given to ensuring actions identified in the meeting are undertaken.

CoA outcomes

The Time-2 theme of "nothing's any different" developed within this research clearly highlighted the importance of concrete actions following a CoA intervention meeting,

and the risk of undermining the intervention when actions are not carried out. This research therefore emphasises Wilson and Newton's (2006) 'first steps' stage and the criticality of identifying actions which are visible and achievable within the days following the CoA. Identification of specifically who will undertake each action, who will support them to do so and when this will be reviewed is perhaps vital to the CoA intervention not being undermined. In practice, arrangement of a follow-up meeting may further increase the likelihood of concrete action following the meeting.

Extracts from participants, particularly Mrs A, demonstrate an argument that the meeting should focus to a greater extent on the development of solutions (the second half of the CoA) and to a lesser extent on discussion of the student's story and relationships (the first half of the CoA). Whilst the researcher recognises the importance of ensuring sufficient time for exploration of possible solutions, this research has indicated that it is through the first half of the CoA intervention that changes to the system of the school context seem to be triggered. Building on the research of Grahamslaw and Henson (2015) studies comparing the CoA with a more solution focused approach such as Solution Circles could investigate whether differences are seen in the system of the school context following intervention.

Importance of recording outcomes in order to demonstrate impact

Lastly, the role of EPs within LA or independent practice continues to be an area of discussion and development within the profession, particularly in a socio-economic climate whereby EP services are traded to schools (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010; Lee & Woods, 2017). This research therefore recognises the importance of EPs demonstrating the impact of their work through measurable outcomes. This research usefully highlighted a challenge in doing so, when interventions seem to produce changes within the system of the school context which are not necessarily recognised explicitly by school staff. This perhaps provides further support for the CoA intervention to utilise TME measures to monitor outcomes and provide evidence of impact.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has sought to investigate the school context whereby a student in Key Stage 1 is at risk of exclusion from education, from the perspective of their class teacher. Using a CoA intervention as a means of group supervision, this research has sought to develop an understanding of class teachers' experiences of the CoA intervention and its perceived impact. This research employed semi-structured interviews in order to gather data from class teachers, using techniques taken from PCP to facilitate an authentic understanding of class teachers' perceptions ahead of the data being interpreted by the researcher through Reflexive TA.

The findings have provided evidence to suggest that the class teachers hold complex constructions of the student and their behaviours. These demonstrate the student being perceived as a threat to the teacher's otherwise idealistic view of their classroom, at the same time as they are viewed as a victim in need to support. In contrast to previous research into the CoA which perhaps anticipated teachers' constructs to change in response to the CoA, this research has suggested that the teachers' constructs demonstrate conflict and complexity both before and after the CoA. Additionally, this conflict extends to the teachers' sense of responsibility for supporting their student and feeling of being supported by colleagues. The research presented here found patterns of meaning across Time-1 data which indicated that prior to a CoA intervention, the school context perhaps reinforced a system of interaction maintaining the students' challenging behaviours through a lack of support being readily available for class teachers who instead experience isolation, disempowerment and increased risk of burnout. Their interactions with the student appear to demonstrate both emotional investment in the student's positive outcomes, and active distancing and relinquishing of responsibility for the student. Time-2 data appeared to demonstrate the CoA intervention effectively punctuating the system of the school context, providing class teachers with emotional and practical support, a boost of confidence and a greater sense of collective responsibility for supporting the student. Descriptions of interactions between teaching staff and between the teacher and student indicate more empathic

responses and less indication of conflict between colleagues. Positive changes in the school context and behaviours of the students were not, however, directly attributed to the CoA by class teachers. Frustration was evident where specific actions identified in the CoA had not been followed through and this led to the value of the CoA itself being undermined from the perspective of class teachers.

Future research might seek to conduct in-depth exploration of the narratives of different individuals before and after a CoA, to identify further the plethora of changes to the system of the school context perhaps prompted by the intervention. Implications for future practice highlight the importance of EPs addressing the systems of interaction within the school context and considering the use of measures to promote actions identified in the CoA being undertaken and impact evidenced. Further implications for practice highlight the need to support teachers at a much earlier stage, perhaps through initial training, ongoing CPD and prioritisation of regular supervision. This is important in order to reduce the risk of teachers experiencing burnout and students' challenging behaviours being reinforced, increasing their risk of exclusion.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Critical Literature Review; search strategy

Topic: Circle of Adults intervention used with students at risk of school exclusion

Rationale: concern regarding children being excluded from mainstream school, circle of adults as an intervention to promote inclusion

Key search terms & synonyms:

circle of adults	exclusion	school
circles of adults	expulsion	student
CoA		

INITIAL

'Circle of adults'

'circles of adults'

Search criteria:

Peer reviewed papers

Theses

1999 – 2019 (20 years)

#	Search terms	Results	Added to Mendeley
	08/08/19 - nusearch		
1	'circle of adults'	10	Y
9	'circles of adults'	6	Y
	08/08/19 – google scholar		

2	‘circle of adults’	283	N / 1 Y
3	‘circles of adults’	105	N / 1 Y
	08/08/19 – Web of Science		
4	TS="circle* of adults"	0	
11	TS=”circles of adults”	1	Y
	08/08/19 - PsychINFO		
5	‘circle of adults’	0	
12	‘circles of adults’	0	
	08/08/19 - Scopus		
6	"circle of adults"	3	Y
10	“circles of adults”	3	Y
	08/08/19 – Taylor & Francis		
7	‘circle* of adults’	3	Y
8	‘circles of adults’	5 (2 book reviews)	
	Total	419	
	Total exported to Mendeley as potentially relevant based on title	33	
	Total after duplicates removed	15	
	Total meeting criteria as peer reviewed paper or thesis (book reviews removed)	13	

Google scholar results analysed by title and compared against results added to Mendeley via all other database searches, only 2 results were both relevant and new, these were therefore added to Mendeley individually.

Studies – Filtering In/Out:

#	Author	Date	Title	Title	Abstract
1	Bennett & Monsen	2011	A critical appraisal of four approaches which support teachers' problem-solving within educational settings	In	In
2	Connor	2018	Using sequence analysis to explore the group interaction within a Circle of Adults: an exploratory study an exploratory study	In	In
3	Dawson	2013	An interpretative analysis of key adults' and children's experiences of school and their relationship before and after a Circle of Adults intervention	In	In
4	Dempsey	2012	A mixed-method study investigating a Circle of Adults approach to group work in schools	In	In
5	Grahamslaw & Henson	2015	Solving problems through circles	In	In
6	Hussain	2016	Exploring the influence of video on staff attributions and perceptions regarding challenging behaviour: an innovative approach to group consultation	In	In
7	Kirven	2009	Can the Circle of Adults process be employed to promote more successful outcomes for children attending a social skills group?	In	Not able to access

8	Lunsky & Benson	1999	Social Circles of Adults with Mental Retardation as Viewed by Their Caregivers	Out	Out
9	Newton	1995	Circles of Adults: Reflecting and Problem Solving Around Emotional Needs and Behaviour	Out (over 20 years old)	Out
10	Norwich, Fujita & Adlam	2018	Lesson study: an inter-professional collaboration approach for Educational Psychologists to improve teaching and learning	In	Out
11	Norwich, Richards & Nash	2010	Educational psychologists and children in care: practices and issues	In	Out
12	Syme	2011	An evaluation of the impact of circles of adults	In	In
13	Turner	2014	Evaluating the outcomes of the 'Circles of Adults' intervention on adults supporting Looked After Children at risk of exclusion.	In	In
	Total			11	8

9.2 Critical Literature Review; data-extraction tables

Author, date, title
Dawson (2013) An Interpretative analysis of key adults' and children's experiences of school and their relationship before and after a Circle of Adults intervention. Doctoral Thesis. University of Sheffield.
Study type
IPA – looking at children's and key adults' perception of their lived experience and relationships of a particular context/phenomenon (school before and following a 'Circle of Adults' intervention). Ontological position: a person's experience is real to the person experiencing it, and may be perceived differently by another person in the 'same' situation/environment. A person's experience is subject to their interpretation, and the researchers' interpretation of it. Epistemological position: interpretative phenomenological – while experience is always the product of interpretation and, therefore, constructed (and flexible) rather than determined (and fixed), it is nevertheless 'real' to the person who is having the experience (Willig, 2008, p.13)
Quantitative measures
• N/A
Qualitative measures
• Student semi-structured interviews: 1 day and 6 weeks after the Circle of Adults intervention • Staff reflective written accounts: 6 weeks after the Circle of Adults intervention, reflecting on their experiences before and after the intervention took place
Intervention
• Circle of Adults • 2 students – male, Y5 (aged 10 years), described as on the SEN register for SEBD from different schools

- 3 key adults – 2 male class teachers and 1 female learning mentor

Outcomes

Qualitative

- Detailed analysis of the students' and key adults' experiences of being in school and of the student/key adult relationship
- Use of psychodynamic principles to hypothesise influences on student/key adults relationships. Including transference, counter-transference and projection
- Psychological analysis of the impact of the CoA intervention on the students' and key adults' experiences in school, relating their reflections to their behaviours, both informed by information captured by semi-structured interview (students) or written reflective accounts (key adults)
- Pre-CoA, the students gained lots of negative attention from their class teachers, and the class teachers felt frustrated and unable to manage/control the students. The learning mentor felt more attuned and understanding of the needs of the student and frustrated instead with the class teacher and the system.
- Pre-CoA, students had attention, security, identity and motivational needs, they relied on key adults for support around confused and uncomfortable feelings and responded best to humour, routines and boundaries.
- Post-CoA, the relationships between students and class teachers improved through students receiving more positive attention and empathic responses from class teachers. Key adults felt more empowered and in control in the classroom. The key adults also reported a sense of hope and optimism, although this was short-lived for 1 adult.
- Post-CoA, students felt more accepted, more aware of their strengths and difficulties and one student felt more able to manage his emotions and behaviour.

Implications

- Promotion of collaborative problem-solving processes such as CoA to facilitate positive change
- Needs to develop tools to evaluate outcomes and evidence value (from perspective of both key adults and students
- Role of EPs in providing training around attachment and psychodynamic principles

Author, date, title
Turner (2014) Evaluating the outcomes of the 'Circles of Adults' intervention on adults supporting Looked After Children at risk of exclusion. Doctoral thesis. University of Nottingham. Turner & Gulliford (2020) Examining the Circles of Adults process for Children Looked After: the role of self-efficacy and empathy in staff behaviour change. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *36*(1), 32–51.
Study type
• Mixed method design, quasi-experimental complemented by qualitative element, using wait-list control group • Focused on attributions; problem of student background being 'blamed' for challenging behaviour, and self-efficacy; school staffs' lack of confidence. • Paradigm: pragmatic approach • Post-positivist informed quantitative element • Interpretivist paradigm informed the qualitative aspect • Concurrent design, data gathered concurrently and analysed separately then synthesised.
Quantitative measures
• Attribution Inventory (adapted from Poulou & Norwich, 2000) • Teacher Efficacy in Classroom Management and Discipline scale (adapted from Emmer & Hickman, 1991) • Target Monitoring and Evaluation (Dunsmuir et al., 2009) • Some limitations to statistical analyses of the data given their use of Likert scales whereby the interval between each point on the scale is individually subjective.

Qualitative measures
• Focus group for experimental group participants whose data is analysed through thematic analysis, using only semantic level analysis
Intervention
• Circle of Adults or Pupil Education Plan (PEP) meeting (control group) with regard to 6 students in 4 secondary schools.
Outcomes
Quantitative • No significant statistical difference in causal attributions at pre- and post-test. • No significant statistical difference in overall self-efficacy, 'external influences' factor or 'personal belief in classroom management/discipline' factor of self-efficacy at pre- and post-test. • No significant statistical differences between group (experimental CoA or control PEP) in ratings of success of actions at Time 2 and Time 3. • Significant statistical difference in participant ratings of success between Time 2 (immediately after PEP/CoA) and Time 3 (4 weeks post-test) for the experimental CoA group. **Qualitative** • Lack of clarity regarding focus group research, including how many participants took part in each focus group and their role in relations to the focus student. • CoA described as useful and thought-provoking. Participants appreciated the visual aspects of the process as well as the clear structure and opportunities to consider organisational factors. Contradictory views were gained with regard to the 'child's voice', both an appreciation of this section as helpful to consider the student's feelings and concerns regarding assumptions being made about the pupil. Staff reported feeling supported by colleagues, benefitting from hearing a range of perspective and being able to develop a holistic view of the student. Some adults reported positive

changes in their own behaviour towards the target student. Practical aspects of the CoA process, including the time required, availability of key staff and significant changes to the student's circumstances beyond the staff members' control were highlighted as difficulties.

Author, date, title
Grahamslaw & Henson (2015) Solving problems through circles. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 31, 2, 111-126.
Study type
• Investigation of the views of school staff who have taken part in CoA or Solution Circle (SC) intervention. • Research aimed to explore participants perceptions of the interventions. Research sought to identify similarities and differences in participants' experiences of the interventions. • Thematic analysis used to compare the two interventions. • Two separate researchers identified codes and themes within the CoA or SC data separately, before coming together.
Quantitative measures
• N/A
Qualitative measures
• Provided written questionnaires consisting of 1 closed and 5 open questions to participants following either CoA (4 CoAs, 31 participants) or Solution Circle (SC) (10 SCs, 62 participants.
Intervention
• Circle of Adults or Solution Circle • Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire immediately after the CoA/SC
Outcomes
Qualitative

- Data from both CoA and SC interventions support the key features of using a 'circle' approach to problem solving; ie. (1) Equality of circle participants and their views, (2) shared focus and unified purpose, (3) cooperative and collaborative problem solving, (4) cohesive group identity, (5) ripple effect beyond the circle itself, (6) social support within a safe space
- Both CoA and SCs may be useful tools
- CoA: greater reference to understanding the complexity of a child's needs and evoking of empathy or care, group cohesiveness and collective responsibility, more emphasis on external facilitators 'expert' roles,
- SC: greater emphasis on strategies and solutions, greater consideration of wider impact of the process for themselves and possibilities for other uses in different settings,
- CoA more appropriate for problems requiring an in-depth exploration from participants involved in the problem situation. Skills of facilitators felt to be key.
- SCs suitable for wider range of problems and participants/settings, may be more appropriate where participants are not directly involved. Skills of facilitators felt less important.

Author, date, title
Connor (2018) Using sequence analysis to explore the group interaction within a Circle of Adults: an exploratory study. DAppEdPsy thesis, University of Nottingham.
Study type

- Exploratory study of interactions within 5 CoAs, audio recorded and coded using Bales' Interaction Process Analysis. Data analysed using sequence analysis.
- Research takes a pragmatic approach, using naturalistic enquiry.
- Epistemological stance: post-positivist
- Ontological stance: critical realism

• Explores *how* professionals collaborate during the CoA and *why* the CoA intervention may be perceived to be successful.
Quantitative measures
• Interaction Process Analysis used to code audio data recorded during 5 CoAs • Sequence Analysis used to analyse the pattern of coded data and identify event pairs whereby one code predictably leads to another
Qualitative measures
• N/A
Intervention
• Circle of Adults interventions, offered by the host EPS free of charge and delivered by one of the EPs in that service who all received the same training.
Outcomes
Quantitative • 27 event pairs occur within the whole data set, 8 of which occur consistently within each separate CoA • Event pairs appear functional; when something is asked for, it is given. The CoA therefore appears to facilitate clear, direct communication between participants. • Both task and emotional interactional processes identified relatively equally. • Author concludes, in line with a systems perspective, that the clear structure of a CoA is key in facilitating effective collaboration amongst group members in the intervention, by offering boundaries which result in containment. • Author concludes, in line with Social Exchange Theory, that the CoA facilitates open dialogue and rewards group members by giving them what it is they ask for within a supportive context. **Qualitative**

• N/A

Author, date, title
Dempsey (2012) A mixed-method study investigating a Circle of Adults approach to group work in schools. Unpublished DAppEdPsy Thesis, University of Nottingham.
Study type
• Mixed method study using non-matched wait-list control group • Philosophical stance of pragmatism
Quantitative measures
• Measures of perceived causal attributions and perceived self-efficacy taken at pre- and post-test from experimental and control groups. Participant roles were rather different in experimental to control groups. • Teacher efficacy in classroom management and discipline scale, adapted from that developed by Emmer and Hickman (1991) using a Likert scale. • Causal attributions were captured using a vignette and attribution inventory, which participants scored using a Likert scale, this was adapted from Poulou and Norwich (2000)
Qualitative measures
• Open question, written questionnaire to 20 participants involved in CoAs. • Data analysed using deductive reasoning (led by the research question) and a semantic approach.
Intervention
• Slight variation of the use of CoA compared to other research studies. This research planned to conduct 4 CoAs within one school term in each school and invited school staff to come to the meeting with a potential student in mind to discuss. Not all staff may therefore be involved with each student and the groups did not include relevant staff from external agencies. Although staff were encouraged to think about students with challenging behaviour, there may have been greater variation in the types of issues discussed.

Outcomes
Quantitative • Use of parametric tests, treating likert scale data as interval • No change in overall self-efficacy for experimental group, statistically significant reduction in overall and specifically 'perceived personal belief in classroom and behaviour management' self-efficacy for control group. • 'Perceived external factors influencing student behaviour' reduced slightly (non-significant) for experimental group and increased (small effect size) at post-test for control group. • Causal attribution data; increase (non-significant) for experimental group and decrease (medium effect size) for control group in perceived parent factors. • Causal attribution data; slight (non-significant) decrease for experimental group and slight (non-significant) increase for control group in perceived child factors. • Causal attribution data; decrease (non-significant) for experimental group, no change for control group in perceived teacher factors. • Causal attribution data; slight (non-significant) decrease for experimental group, increase (small effect size) for control group in perceived school factors. **Qualitative** • Participants felt the strategies section needed more attention • Seemingly mixed responses • Responses capture both long- and short-term reflections of the approach as participants have taken part in between 1 – 4 CoAs.

Author, date, title
Syme (2011) An evaluation of the impact of "Circles of Adults". Unpublished DAppEdPsy Thesis, University of Nottingham.
Study type

- Pragmatic approach
- Multiple case study approach as part of mixed methods research
- Single-Case Experimental Design (SCED) and quasi-experimental design

Quantitative measures

- Pre- and Post-tests;
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Myself As a Learner Scale (MALS) – Such questionnaires may highlight to the student their individual strengths/difficulties and perceptions of themselves as a learner. They may become more consciously aware and therefore seek to make changes to their behaviour due to the pre-measures
- 'Ideal school' rating scale (in pilot phase) (adapted from Moran (2001)) - as a PCP technique, this in itself can act as an intervention, helping the young person to become more aware of their perceptions of the school, the way they relate to it and their identity within it. Following this pre-test measure, the student may seek to make changes as an individual.
- Psychological Sense of School Membership scale (PSSM)
- Teacher Attribution Questionnaire (TAQ) (adapted from Poulou and Norwich (2002) – changes in the data for child 1 reflect most strongly the opinions of 1 member of staff whose scores changed most dramatically, producing potential outliers within the data. Of 6, 3 participants produced incomplete data sets. Similar difficulties in averaging and interpreting the TAQ data are apparent for child 5.
- Frequency counts of reported behaviour incidents from school's behaviour monitoring system (repeated measure) – Could be considered a particularly subjective measure open to bias. Author briefly discusses potential for bias through staff 'looking for' the positive behaviours, whether involvement in the intervention may have influenced staff to seek out more positive behaviours or view negative behaviours differently - changes may therefore reflect staff perception rather than/in addition to positivist objective changes in students' behaviour.

Qualitative measures

- Post-intervention questionnaire (low response rate in one of the schools) analysed by thematic analysis.
- – Analysis contains semantic level analysis, the author does not indicate whether inductive or deductive reasoning was used.
- – After 2 CoAs, post-CoA data was not obtained, however the reasons for this omission are not provided.
- - At times the themes appear to mirror the questions asked and therefore it is presumed a deduction reasoning approach was used within TA. No supporting data is presented to describe the process of TA.

Intervention

- CoA intervention as manualised by Wilson and Newton (2006)
- Sample included students with additional learning difficulties and attendance issues

Outcomes

Quantitative

- Participant 2: Staff's rating of Prosocial behaviour on SDQ increased at post-test
- All participants repeated measures data appeared to indicate an immediate positive impact from the CoA intervention, but these were not reliably maintained, although Participant 5's data did indicate an upward trend for positive comments and a downward trend for negative comments
- Pupil's seemed to perceive changes in their behaviour as indicated by their SDQ scores, only for participant 5 were these changes significant
- Indication of improved academic self-concept for 2 of the 5 students
- Indication of decreased academic self-concept for 1 student

Qualitative

- Staff consistently expected the CoA to provide them with an improved understanding of the student and strategies to support the student and

change student behaviour. An opportunity to share experiences was also expected from 2 of the schools.

- Staff consistently perceived the CoA to have helped them gain a better understanding of the student
- For Participant 2, staff felt the CoA supported them to change the student's behaviour and gain involvement from other services
- School staff appreciated the graphic facilitation of CoA
- Some staff provided positive comments about the CoA's process facilitation, atmosphere and collaborative working.
- Negative comments included a lack of knowledge about the process, barriers within the school system, aspects of the process including the graphics and synthesis of ideas, time pressures, a lack of solutions and a lack of ownership of the process.
- A third of staff rated the CoA as achieving its outcomes
- Just over half of staff (54%) rated the CoA as being effective in supporting the target student
- In 2 cases where confidence scores were provided, between 60-100% of staff rated greater confidence after the CoA.

9.3 Detailed explanation of Cesario et al.'s quality indicators

TABLE 3
Detailed Explanation of Criteria

Category I: Descriptive Vividness
- Is essential descriptive information included?
- Is there clarity in the description of the study?
- Is there credibility in the description of the study?
- Is there adequate length of time spent at the site to gain the familiarity necessary for vivid description?
- Does the researcher validate findings with the study participants?
- Is the descriptive narrative written clearly? (vividly?)

Category II: Methodologic Congruence

A. Rigor in documentation
- Are all elements or steps of the study presented accurately and clearly?
  1. Introduction
     - Phenomenon is identified
     - Philosophical base of study is made explicit
     - Purpose and type of qualitative study is stated
     - Study questions or aims are identified
     - Assumptions are identified
  2. Literature review
  3. Statements of methods
     - Access to site, sample, and population
     - Researcher's role and interview structure
  4. Data collection
  5. Data analysis
  6. Conclusions/findings

B. Procedural rigor
- Has the researcher asked the right questions? Does the researcher tap the participant's experience versus her or his theoretical knowledge of the phenomenon?
- Did the researcher describe steps taken to ensure that the participant did not misrepresent herself or himself, or misinform the researcher?
- Did the researcher describe steps taken to deter the informant from substituting supposition about an event rather than recalling the actual experience?
- Did the researcher eliminate the potential for "elite bias" by placing equal weight on high-status or elite informant data and low-status or less articulate informant data?
- Did the researcher describe steps taken to avoid influence or distortion of the events observed by her or his presence? (like the Hawthorne effect)
- Were sufficient data gathered?
- Was sufficient time spent gathering data?
- Were the approaches for gaining access to the site or participants appropriate?
- Was the selection of participants appropriate?

C. Ethical rigor
- Were participants informed of their rights?
- Was informed consent obtained from the participants and documented?
- Were mechanisms developed and implemented to protect participants' rights?

(continued)

TABLE 3
Continued

D. Confirmability (auditability)
- Was the description of the data collection process adequate?
- Were the records of the raw data sufficient to allow judgments to be made?
- Did the researcher describe the decision rules for arriving at ratings or judgments?
- Could other researchers arrive at similar conclusions after applying the decision rules to the data?
- Did the researcher record the nature of the decisions, the data on which they were based, and the reasoning that entered into the decisions?

Category III: Analytical Preciseness
- Did the interpretive theoretical statements correspond with the findings?
- Did the set of themes, categories, or theoretical statements depict or describe a whole picture?
- Can the hypotheses or propositions developed during the study be verified by data?
- Were the hypotheses or propositions presented in the research report?
- Are the study conclusions based on the data gathered?

Category IV: Theoretical Connectedness
- Are the theoretical concepts adequately defined and/or validated by data?
- Are the relationships among the concepts clearly expressed?
- Are the proposed relationships among the concepts validated by data?
- Does the theory developed during the study yield a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study?
- Is a conceptual framework or map derived from the data?
- Is there a clear connection made between the data and the (nursing) frameworks?

Category V: Heuristic Relevance

A. Intuitive recognition
- Is the phenomenon described well?
- Would other researchers recognize or be familiar with the phenomenon?
- Is the description of the phenomenon consistent with common meanings or experiences?

B. Relationship to existing body of knowledge
- Did the researcher examine the existing body of knowledge?
- Was the process studied related to nursing and health? (do we need this?)

C. Applicability
- Are the findings relevant to nursing practice?
- Are the findings important for the discipline of nursing?
- Can the findings contribute to theory development?

evaluate qualitative studies and has supported its utility through their experience. Further pilot testing is necessary to evaluate the reliability and validity of the tool for gen-

9.4 Detailed discussion of the application of Cesario et al.'s quality indicators

Descriptive Vividness

Descriptive vividness refers to the clarity and credibility of the study report. This rating links with Yardley's (2017) key dimensions of transparency and coherence. Dempsey's (2012) study received the maximum score of 3 within this category, indicating that the report demonstrated 'good' descriptive vividness. Within Dempsey's mixed-method study, using a non-matched wait-list control group, it was felt that the report provided a comprehensive and clear account of the research undertaken. A pragmatic approach was adopted by Dempsey, and throughout the report, justification is provided for all decisions made within the research.

Within Grahamslaw & Henson's (2015) paper, a score of 2 has been provided. Their exploratory, qualitative research used written questionnaires to gather information regarding the experiences of participants who had taken part in either a Circle of Adults or a Solution Circle (SC) intervention. The authors provide a clear rationale and description of the study, however details of their participants' roles in school are not provided. Such details would add important contextual information to better understand their individual perspectives as conveyed in the research.

Connor's (2018) thesis report received the lowest rating within this area. Connor undertook an exploratory study of group interaction processes within a Circle of Adults intervention itself, using sequence analysis. Connor's report may perhaps have benefitted from additional clarification as to the links between the research methodology applied and its theoretical and philosophical basis.

Methodological Congruence

Methodological congruence includes consideration of rigor. Rigor in documentation refers to a clear and accurate presentation of all the elements of the research study, including explicit reference to the phenomenon being investigated, the philosophical

basis of the research and the researchers' role within the study. Procedural rigor refers to the appropriateness of the methodology and sample, and efforts to reduce or acknowledge potential for bias, where appropriate, within the study process. Ethical rigor refers to the study making clear and explicit the steps taken to ensure the research process is ethical and that the participants and their rights are protected. Methodological congruence also takes account of confirmability, also referred to as auditability, and refers to a level of clarity and description within the report. This clarity would allow for decisions justified within the study to be scrutinised, or for a similar study to be undertaken. These considerations link with Yardley's (2017) key dimensions of commitment and rigor, as well as Garside's (2014) technical evaluation, including clarity and suitability.

Turner's (2014) study, later published by Turner and Gulliford (2020), involved a mixed methods, quasi-experimental design, using a wait-list control group. The quantitative data gathered was complimented by qualitative, focus group data gathering participants' experiences of the CoA intervention. Turner's study provides a high level of detail within each step of the research. Turner reports the data gathered and analysed consistently in line with the philosophical stance explicitly stated, first for the quantitative, post-positivist element of the research, and then for the qualitative, interpretivist element. Turner also addresses each potential source of bias throughout the research report, highlighting the steps taken to reduce the potential impact of bias, or acknowledge the possible impact upon the research results. One such area of difficulty, also discussed within Dempsey's (2012) research, is the reliability of statistical analysis used to analyse data regarding efficacy and causal attributions. Within these measures a Likert-scale is used to enable participants to provide their opinions on a 1 – 6 scale. The Likert-scale data is treated as interval data to enable the use of parametric statistical tests, despite the intervals between digits on an opinion scale being subjective and judged independently by each participant. In both reports, however, these issues of reliability, and justification for the decisions made with reference to existing literature, are made clear and explicit. Whilst Dempsey's study received the maximum ratings of 3 for all areas of methodological

congruence, Turner's study received a score of 2 within the area of confirmability, as additional details regarding the focus groups themselves from which qualitative data were gathered, would be been beneficial to better contextualise the data gathered.

Issues of methodological congruence within procedural rigor are highlighted in Dawson's (2013) study. Dawson undertook Interpretative Phenomenal Analysis (IPA) of key adults' and students' lived experiences of school and relationships before and after a CoA intervention. The data from key adults in this study was gathered retrospectively and therefore reflect a retrospective perspective following the participants' experience of the CoA intervention itself as well as experiences since the intervention. The heterogeneity of Dawson's participant group perhaps provides a broader reflection of the experiences of key adults. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) recommend the use of IPA with a minimum of 3 members of a homogenous group for a more in-depth perspective from within a specific group.

Connor's (2018) study offers useful insight into the sequence of interactions within a CoA intervention itself. However, no measures were taken of the CoA participant's perceptions of the usefulness of the intervention. Therefore, the interactions identified within the groups could potentially have been characteristic of successful, neutral or unsuccessful group problem-solving interactions. Additional clarification would also be welcomed within Connor's research as to the researchers' role within the CoA intervention meetings.

Syme's (2011) research thesis received a score of 1 for procedural rigor, within the area of methodological congruence. Syme's research takes a multiple case study approach as part of mixed methods research, using single-case experimental and quasi-experimental designs. A high level of clarity is usefully provided regarding the research methodology and justifications are provided for decisions made within the research design. The use of negative and positive behaviour points on the school system, recorded on a centralised system or a student's daily report card, demonstrated a measure which was difficult for the researcher to standardise. The

nature of behaviours which were or were not logged are likely to have differed between staff, and may have been influenced by knowledge of the CoA intervention being undertaken. Furthermore, pre- and post- measures were taken directly with the student, including a measure of school membership, self-concept as a learner and a measure of strengths and difficulties. Syme does not appears to account for the possibility of engagement with these measures themselves impacting on the student and their subsequent behavioural presentations, for example by providing an opportunity for supported self-reflection.

Analytical Preciseness

Analytical preciseness refers to the extent to which the researcher's findings, their interpretations of the data or results concluded, correspond with the data gathered within their research. This links with Yardley's (2017) key dimension of sensitivity to context and Garside's (2014) consideration of trustworthiness.

Within Syme's (2011) research thesis, a score of 2 has been provided for analytical preciseness, therefore rating it as 'fair' within this category. This reflects the potential difficulties with the reliability of repeated measures data as discussed above. Furthermore, it was noted particularly in case studies 1 and 5, with respect of causal attributions pre- and post-CoA, the opinions of one individual provides the basis of a reported average change in causal attributions amongst staff, despite the raw data demonstrating that the average change does not reflect the changes in perceptions of causal attributions of individual staff members.

Within the area of analytical preciseness, Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) report received a score of 1, therefore rating it as 'poor'. The researcher acknowledges that whilst five of the studies reviewed are doctoral theses, Grahamslaw and Henson's report was published in a journal and was therefore subject to a far shorter word limit, restricting the level of detail which can be provided when compared to the other research reports reviewed. Grahamslaw and Henson's report contains little detail regarding the analysis process. The research consisted solely of thematic

analysis of questionnaire data, however no details are provided as to influential aspects of data analysis such as the philosophical stance taken in the research, or the researcher's approach to analysis of the data.

Theoretical Connectedness

Theoretical connectedness refers to theoretical concepts within the report being clearly defined, and relationships between theoretical concepts clearly expressed and validated by data. This links with Garside's (2014) theoretical considerations. Given that five of the six studies within this critical literature review are doctoral these, this criterion was largely met to a high standard within the research reports. All of the theses discussed theoretical considerations within their research, reporting breadth and depth in the literature reviewed before focusing upon their specific research study. All of the theses reviewed then related their findings back to theory and literature in a way which is clear and explicit.

Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) report was given score of 2 within the area of theoretical connectedness. Within their report, theoretical key features of a 'circle' approach to intervention are highlighted and linked to their data. It is, however, unclear whether their data analysis took an inductive or deductive approach. An inductive approach may have led to identification of these features of a 'circle' approach from their data. On the other hand, a deductive approach, may have approached data analysis by applying these key features and seeking supporting evidence within their data set.

Heuristic Relevance

Within Cesario et al.'s guidance, heuristic relevance is broken down into three features; intuitive recognition, relationship to existing body of knowledge and applicability. Intuitive recognition refers to the study report demonstrating clear, explicit descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated, which are consistent with such descriptions of the same phenomenon in previous literature. Relationship to existing body of knowledge refers to the report making explicit where previous

literature has been examined ahead of the research being undertaken. Applicability refers to the relevance of the findings for practice and further development of theory. The area of heuristic relevance links with Yardley's (2017) key dimension of impact and importance, as well as Garside's (2014) practical considerations.

In all of the studies examined within this critical literature review, a score of 3, indicating 'good' has been provided within the area of heuristic relevance. Grahamslaw and Henson's (2015) study usefully draws conclusions which provide Educational Psychologists with a helpful guide, indicating which of the Circle of Adults or Solution Circle approaches are best suited for particular contexts. Connor's (2018) research helpfully provides insights into the interaction processes within the CoA itself, not previously studied in this way, and Syme's (2011) research provides useful insight into the possible immediate and medium-term impact of the CoA intervention.

9.5 Semi-structured interview schedules for Time-1 and Time-2

School of Psychology

Semi-structured interview schedule – Time Point 1

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Research into the nature of perceptions of teaching staff who have experienced the Circle of Adults intervention

Researcher: Jennifer Cosgrove Jennifer.cosgrove@nottingham.ac.uk

Introductory script:
Thank you for agreeing to come and talk to me today and for taking part in this research project. Can I just confirm I have your consent to be involved in this research and for this conversation to be audio recorded? Thank you. I'm recording our conversation today so that I can engage with you in discussion, rather than trying to write everything down. It also helps me not to forget or misrepresent your views. When I do write this research up, all identifying details will be changed or left out, so neither you, your school or the child will be identifiable. As it specifies in the information and consent forms, you are free to withdraw from the research at any point.
Please do help yourself to a drink, and if you'd like to take a break at any point, that is absolutely fine. I won't keep you for any more than 1 hour today.
Some of my questions might seem silly or obvious, but that's okay, please remember there is absolutely no judgement and there are no right or wrong answers.

We're here today to talk about a child in your class, ….

Q1:
How would you describe…? 20-25 minutes

- Open discussion (pull out key terms – check back)
- Identify contrast poles
- Pyramiding
- Laddering
- Scale 1 – 7 (+ where … is now, * where you would like … to be)

Q2:
How does … make you feel, as his/her class teacher? 20 – 25 minutes

- Open discussion (pull out key terms – check back)
- Identify contrast poles
- Pyramiding
- Laddering
- Scale 1 – 7 (+ how … makes you feel the majority of the time, * how you would like … to make you feel the majority of the time)

Prompts:
When you say…I'm wondering what that means to you?
How would you describe a student who is not…? How would you describe yourself when you're not …?
How would a passer-by spot that … is / you are …, what would a passer-by see?
What does … look like in your classroom?
What is that important? Why does it matter if a student is/if you are …?

Notes:
When scaling, 1 = contrast pole ----- 7 = emergent pole WRITE ON THE RIGHT!
Relate questions back to the specific child, 'your' experience, 'your' classroom
End on a positive!

School of Psychology

Semi-structured interview schedule – Time Point 2

Version 2

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

At risk of exclusion in Key Stage 1: An exploratory study of class teachers' perceptions of the school context and the impact of a Circle of Adults intervention

Researcher: Jennifer Cosgrove Jennifer.cosgrove@nottingham.ac.uk

Introductory script:
Thank you for agreeing to come and talk to me today and for taking part in this research project. Can I just confirm I have your consent to be involved in this research and for this conversation to be audio recorded? Thank you. I'm recording our conversation today so that I can engage with you in discussion, rather than trying to write everything down. It also helps me not to forget or misrepresent your views. When I do write this research up, all identifying details will be changed or left out, so neither you, your school or the child will be identifiable. As it specifies in the information and consent forms, you are free to withdraw from the research at any point.
Please do help yourself to a drink, and if you'd like to take a break at any point, that is absolutely fine. I won't keep you for any more than 1 hour today.
Again, everything discussed will be used purely for research purposes. All information will be completely confidential. Remember there is absolutely no judgement and no right or wrong answers so please try to be as honest as you can.
I appreciate it may feel like a long time ago and a lot has happened since, I'm going to ask you to think back to the Circle of Adults meeting we held in school and again, we will be focusing our discussion on ….

Q1: How did you find the experience of taking part in the Circle of Adults intervention?

Q2: Are there any changes you noticed following your involvement in the Circle of Adults intervention?

Q3: How did the Circle of Adults intervention impact on your thoughts and feelings about …'s behaviour?

Q4: How did the Circle of Adults intervention impact on your experiences of teaching …?

Prompts:
When you say…I'm wondering what that means to you?
How would you describe a student who is not…? How would you describe yourself when you're not …?
How would a passer-by spot that … is / you are …, what would a passer-by see?
What does … look like in your classroom?
What is that important? Why does it matter if a student is/if you are …?

Notes:
Relate questions back to the specific child, 'your' experience, 'your' classroom
End on a positive!

Thank you
FORWARD DEBRIEF INFORMATION

9.6 Ethical approval for interviews to be conducted virtually during Covid-19 pandemic

Ref: **s1200R chair approval**

Monday 30th March

Dear Nathan Lambert and Jennifer Cosgrove

Title of the new project:
Investigating the impact of a Circle of Adults intervention on Teachers' responses to Challenging Behaviour (A study employing a Thematic Analysis approach)
Applicants:
Jenny Cosgrove (lpxjeco@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk) / Nathan Lambert (Supervisor) (nathan.lambert@nottingham.ac.uk)

Details of the previous study:

Applicant: Jennifer Cosgrove
Title: Investigating the impact of a Circle of Adults intervention on Teachers' responses to Challenging Behaviour (A study employing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach)
Date of approval: 30th October 2019
Reference number (if known): s1200R

As Chair of the Ethics Committee I have considered your request and I am happy to grant approval for the following changes:

A number of minor changes have been made to the original design to take account of the challenges arising from the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
The original design involved face-to-face interviews with four class teachers who were taking part in a Circle of Adults group consultation about a specific child. The interviews were to take place prior to and following the group consultation.
All Time 1 data has now been collected. Two of the four interviews at Time 2 have been conducted.

Taking account of guidance provided by the University of Nottingham, School of Psychology as well as the Government guidance, no further face-to-face interviews are to be undertaken. The last face-to-face contact for research purposes was undertaken on 4th March 2020. The remaining interviews will be rearranged with the adults who had already consented to an interview. These will now be undertaken through phone call.

9.7 Information letters and consent forms (a sample)

Letter to teacher of student identified by schools' EP following headteacher consent

Dear Miss/Mr [name],

My name is Jennifer Cosgrove, I am currently a Trainee Educational Psychologist, based in the [LA] Educational Psychology Service and undertaking my doctoral studies at the University of Nottingham. I am contacting you to invite you to partake in research I am conducting as part of my final year research thesis.

Why am I being contacted?

[EP name], your school's link Educational Psychologist (EP) highlighted that you may have a student who meets the eligibility criteria for this research project and may benefit from a Circle of Adults intervention. [Student's name] was identified because he/she is currently in Key Stage 1 and perceived by yourself/your school to be at risk of exclusion.

What is the Circle of Adults intervention?

The Circle of Adults intervention (Wilson and Newton, 2006) is a group problem solving approach, facilitated by 2 Educational Psychologists. The intervention takes the form of a meeting, attended by key staff who work with the target student, ideally from different levels within school, and can also include relevant practitioners from outside agencies, such as the Behaviour Support Service. The meeting typically lasts 90 minutes and does not include the target student or their parents/carers but ensures feedback is provided to parents/carers following the meeting. The intervention offers an opportunity for structured discussion, facilitated by an EP, which provides group supervision and encourages problem-solving and the creation of an action plan. The discussion is supported and captured by a second EP who uses words and graphics to create an anonymised visual representation of the process and discussion. This visual is retained in school to support further review and planning around the target student.

What does the research involve?

My thesis research is focused upon the nature of Class Teachers' perceptions of the target student at risk of exclusion. I will therefore seek to capture your views in two interviews, one before and one several weeks after the Circle of Adults intervention.

The research will analyse data taken from the two interviews, both up to 1 hour long and ideally undertaken towards the end of a school day, on a 1:1 basis. The research will not include any data taken from the Circle of Adults meeting itself.

What will the interviews involve?

'Interviews' can be a misleading term and is being used as formally, they are known as semi-structured interviews. In practice, we will sit down with a cup of tea or coffee and talk about the target student. I will have a few questions prepared and we will aim to have a naturally flowing discussion about your experiences with the target student. Our discussion will be voice recorded. This ensures that I can engage fully in the discussion with you, rather than making lots of notes, it also ensures that your views are captured accurately. I will transcribe the discussions afterwards and remove any identifiable features. At this point you will be assigned a pseudonym (a fake name) and the data will be analysed as completely anonymous. From this point onwards there will be no way to link the data back to you as an individual, nor the target student or school, by anyone other than me, as the researcher. The audio recording will not be listened to in full by anyone other than me and will be destroyed permanently as soon as the research is complete (July 2020, following Viva Voce). At every point throughout this research project, all data will be stored safely and securely, in line with data protection laws.

Will my school's EP change?

[EP name], your school's link EP will remain responsible for the students' case and has highlighted this individual because he/she felt that involvement in a Circle of Adults intervention may benefit the students' ongoing engagement with school. Following the Circle of Adults, [EP name] will continue to monitor the student as usual and work with your school in the same way that he/she does currently.

Can I say no?

This is an invitation for you to be involved in research which you are under no obligation to agree to. This letter seeks to provide full information on which to base your decision about whether or not you would like to consent to your possible involvement in this research. Contact details are provided at the end of this letter should you have any questions you would like to ask. Providing consent does not guarantee that you will be involved in this research project as only a small number of schools will be able to take part. If you decide not to partake in this research, you will receive no further requests from myself. Your link EP [EP name] will continue to provide the same level of support as he/she does currently and in the case of the

child identified, this may or may not involve the suggestion that a Circle of Adults intervention is undertaken in the future.

What will happen if I do provide consent?

If you feel you have been provided with full information about the research and have no further questions, your consent for involvement in this research would be gratefully received. I would then write to the parents of the child identified. This letter will request consent from the child's parents/carers for their child's situation to be used as the focus of a Circle of Adults intervention. It will also request consent for discussions with yourself as Class Teacher, about their child's situation, to be used for research purposes. The letter will include information about how their child's data will be anonymised and stored safely. If parents/carers also provide consent, the Circle of Adults intervention will be arranged by liaison between a member of staff at school and myself. It is intended that the meeting and both interviews will take place before mid-December 2019. You will retain the right to withdraw your consent for involvement in the research at any point, and without needing to provide a reason. Following the withdrawal of consent, all data collected at your school will be permanently deleted. If consent is withdrawn ahead of the Circle of Adults intervention meeting, the meeting will not go ahead.

Who can I talk to if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself, my supervisor [TEP supervisor name] or your link EP [link EP name] on the details provided.

Who can I speak to regarding any concerns?

Should you have any concerns or complaints about this research project, please find details below for Professor Stephen Jackson, Chair of the Ethics Committee in the University of Nottingham School of Psychology.

Professor Stephen Jackson
School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham

Kind regards,
Jenny Cosgrove

CONTACT DETAILS

Consent form

School of Psychology
Consent Form – Class Teacher

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Research into the nature of perceptions of teaching staff who have experienced the Circle of Adults intervention

Ethics Approval Number or Taught Project Archive Number: S1200R

Researcher: Jennifer Cosgrove Jennifer.cosgrove@nottingham.ac.uk
Research Supervisor at the University of Nottingham: Dr Nathan Lambert Nathan.lambert@nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet? YES/NO
- Have you had an 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 research? YES/NO (at any time and without giving a reason)
- I give permission for my data to be shared with other researchers, provided that my anonymity and that of my school, colleagues and students is completely protected. YES/NO
- Do you agree to engage in a Circle of Adults intervention focused upon a target student, identified as being at risk of exclusion in KS1? YES/NO
- Do you agree to engage in voice-recorded individual interviews with the researcher to reflect upon your views of the target student? YES/NO
- Do you agree to take part in this research? YES/NO

"This research has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and as Class Teacher, I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time."

Signature of the participating Class Teacher: Date:

Name (in block capitals)

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

Signature of researcher: Date:

9.8 Ethics approval letter

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

SJ/tp

Ref: S1200R

Wednesday 30th October 2019

Dear Jenifer and Nathan,

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research **'An exploratory study of the nature of perceptions of teaching staff who have experienced the Circle of Adults.**

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.

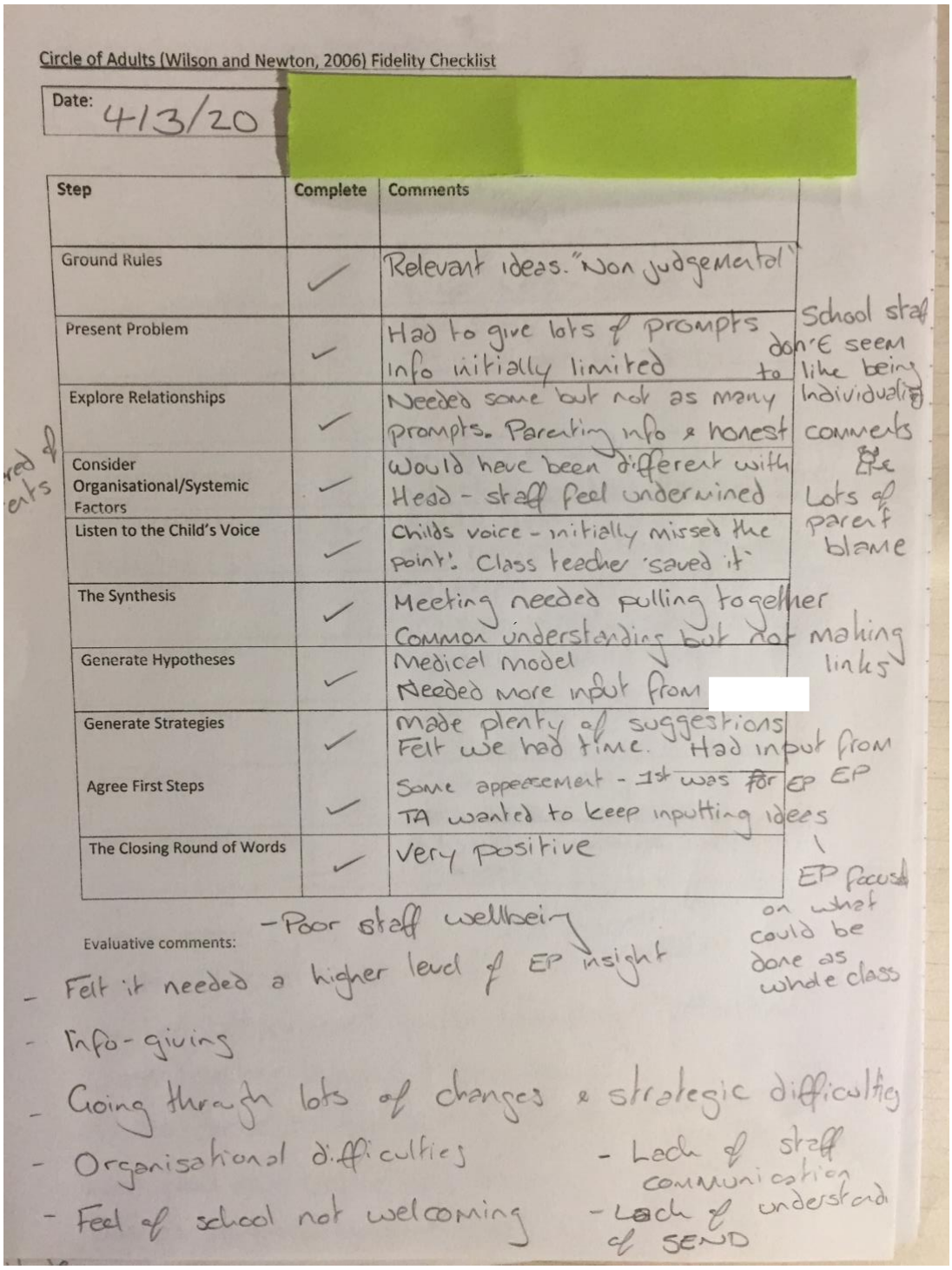
Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct 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

9.9 Fidelity checklist (sample)



Circle of Adults (Wilson and Newton, 2006) Fidelity Checklist

Date: 4/3/20 [redacted]

Step	Complete	Comments
Ground Rules	✓	Relevant ideas. "Non judgemental"
Present Problem	✓	Had to give lots of prompts Info initially limited
Explore Relationships	✓	Needed some but not as many prompts. Parenting info & honest
Consider Organisational/Systemic Factors	✓	Would have been different with Head - staff feel undermined
Listen to the Child's Voice	✓	Childs voice - initially missed the point. Class teacher 'saved it'
The Synthesis	✓	Meeting needed pulling together Common understanding but not making links
Generate Hypotheses	✓	Medical model Needed more input from [redacted]
Generate Strategies	✓	Made plenty of suggestions Felt we had time. Had input from EP
Agree First Steps	✓	Some appeasement - 1st was for EP TA wanted to keep inputting ideas
The Closing Round of Words	✓	Very positive

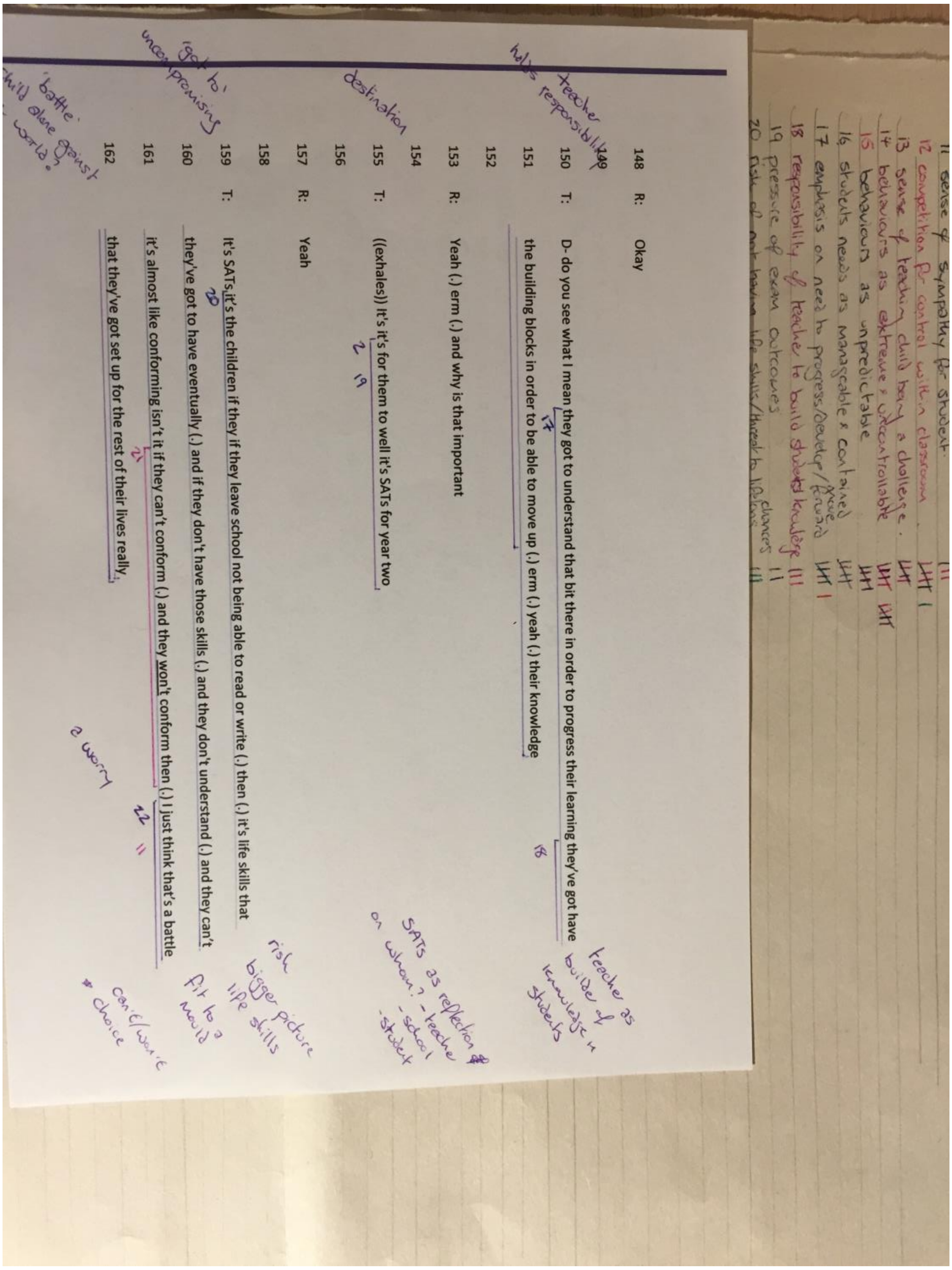
Evaluative comments:

- Felt it needed a higher level of EP insight
- Info-giving
- Going through lots of changes & strategic difficulties
- Organisational difficulties
- Feel of school not welcoming

- Poor staff wellbeing
- Lack of staff communication
- Lack of understanding of SEND

School staff don't seem to like being individualised comments
Lots of parent blame
EP focused on what could be done as whole class

9.10 Sample of coded data using hand coding (paper and pen)



R: Okay

T: D- do you see what I mean they got to understand that bit there in order to progress their learning they've got have the building blocks in order to be able to move up (.) erm (.) yeah (.) their knowledge

R: Yeah (.) erm (.) and why is that important

T: ((exhales)) it's it's for them to well it's SATs for year two

R: Yeah

T: It's SATs it's the children if they if they leave school not being able to read or write (.) then (.) it's life skills that they've got to have eventually (.) and if they don't have those skills (.) and they don't understand (.) and they can't it's almost like conforming isn't it if they can't conform (.) and they won't conform then (.) I just think that's a battle that they've got set up for the rest of their lives really

9.11 Full table of themes for Time-1 data

Theme	Sub-themes	Code clusters	Codes	Data extracts
Complex construing of the child	/	/	Child as having 2 sides	"when she isn't lashing out she is there wanting to (.) show you things wanting to please you (.) things like that" Mrs T
	Construing the child as a threat	Idealistic view of classroom	Adults collaborating and working co-operatively	"actually it it's everybody's problem and we should all be working together (.) to solve it" Mrs T
			Assumption / acceptance that every child is different	"thinking of ways that she can learn in her own way in her own right" Mrs T
			Class as collective, inclusive whole	"Yes and to share what they've learned with the others (.) then they learn from each other and then they see that as a model of 'oh I'd like to do that maybe I can go and do that' and then they start really that's that's the best (.) because it's not what I directed or I might just plant the seed and then some of them go off and make PowerPoints and send them to me and we show them as a class ((sniffs)) and that's brilliant" Mrs J

			Classroom as not restrictive / sense of freedom and independence	“Everybody's just engaged they’re all busy all the children are happy they’re all just doing their own little thing (.) I’m working with a little group they’re just doing their little thing it's all calm anybody can walk in and out (.) it's just a nice atmosphere” Mrs A
			Equal sharing of resources	“you want to feel that you’re doing the best that you can for all of the children (.) not just singling one child out and focusing on them or vice versa ignoring them” Mrs T
			Equality / respect / no judgement	“Just that team of people around [Rebecca] kind of all working together to make sure that you’re kind of on the same lines and working together” Mrs T
			Importance of boundaries	“they wouldn't call out they'd put their hand up they would (.) erm sit on their chair they would (.) do their work (.) they would discuss with other children when asked to (.) they would use please and thank you and have manners (.) they would listen to people and take it in turns to speak (.)

				erm how you would expect a child to behave" Mrs J
			Importance of consistency	"Yeah and it creates consistency doesn't it for [Rebecca] that if everybody's doing the same thing to work towards it (.) then she doesn't become confused (.) as to actually I'll get this response with this person but this person will give me this response (.) yeah" Mrs T
			School as safe sanctuary for all	"You know every child has the right to be safe (.) and secure (.) and happy in school (.) what- whatever the baseline is (.) an- and that's really important to me (.) that every child has got to feel (.) that they've got a voice and that they can say things" Mrs A
			Students' needs as manageable and contained	"greater need with a certain area needs more support (.) more structure (.) more guidance (.) they need (.) yeah (.) more structured learning" Mrs A
			Teaching and learning as an active 2-way partnership	"Because there has to be a point where a child has got to start to meet you (.) maybe not even halfway but at

				some point they've got to (.) give you something back again" Mrs A
		Student poses risk to idealistic view of classroom	Student poses a risk to idealistic view of classroom	"Then (.) it upsets the whole equilibrium of the whole classroom ethos it just it's just so hard (.) to create that atmosphere all the time" Mrs A
		Student opposes norms	Adhering to social learning principles	"Obviously he's got to follow the boundaries of every other children cause that's (.) obviously they're gonna think that they can do that" Mrs K
			Assumption that students should follow teacher's instructions	"That would look like if for example this afternoon (.) I've just said [Logan] will you come and do your writing with us erm because it's writing they've chose to do erm 'no' that's defiant 'no'" Mrs K
			Child's lack of peer relationships	"we found in reception would kind of go for one child and it would be that child that week but then the week after it would be focus on another child (.) and I don't know whether it was because she was trying to make friends an then actually those children were too mature for her that they

				then kind of moved on and pushed her on" Mrs T
			Child's social support	"that support is there from his friends as well (.) and they there's one girl in particular who really likes him" Mrs A
			Difficulty / resistance in speaking	"Hmmm ((pause)) ((sigh)) I don't know ((laughs)) hmmm (.) I wouldn't say frustrated" Mrs T
			Emotions generated by student as out of the ordinary	"That leaps out you to you because that's not something you normal you feel when you come to work is it really" Mrs K
			Expectation that all children can behave appropriately	"No he's he's being removed from (.) the children around him (.) and seeing that (.) they're actually able to get on with work and things like that (.) he needs the good role models around him he needs to see this is how you behave and (.) the consequences should be the same for him as they are for other children not that he's treated special" Mrs J
			Learning in school as a natural and	"Yeah the hidden curriculum they're all the other things that you learn (.) which are incidental to the main

			normal process	learning the academic stuff that goes on the hidden curriculum is actually all the things that children learn in school (.) which is they learn to erm copy behaviours from other children they learn you know they learn all these other things as well in school which is never set out explicitly to do (.) but they all do it" Mrs A
			Negative expectations of the child	"and she just kind of goes through school life with this not reputation but I don't want to turn it into a reputation of everybody knows her and knows why and knows what for" Mrs T
			Problem with child, not environment	"I moved the snooker cue to the top of the table (.) erm up there but then it will be something else that he will take and throw across and it's just dangerous" Mrs A
			Student as different to peers	"that doesn't seem to be his same baseline" Mrs A

			Teacher as responsible for drawing line at anti-social behaviour	“it comes down to what you’re prepared to expect from other people as well doesn't it” Mrs A
	Construing the child as a victim	Student having been failed by those who should look out for them	Adults have failed the child	“It’s disappointing really (.) because you know he's got the potential to be able to be (.) you know and to see that (.) it's a shame it's a shame when you know any child isn't able to have the opportunity to reach their potential it's it's it's really really sad” Mrs J
			Sense of sympathy for the student	“it’s a shame I do feel sorry for him” Mrs J
		Student not having accessed a safe environment in which to flourish	Assumption all children need a safe environment in order to flourish	“because I know [Rebecca]’s background and things I can appreciate she hasn’t had that normal upbringing and she hasn’t had that safe environment to flourish in (.) so actually I can understand why sometimes things might just kind of cause her to lash out or she might not be where the other children who have had different experiences can be so I can appreciate that” Mrs T

			Behaviour a reflection of not knowing any better	“and actually she then starts to learn kind of what’s right and wrong and her expectations what they should be” Mrs T
			Behaviour as learned	“I think she’s gotten away with it at her last school ((in overlap)) so she thinks […] Right I’m just going to do it here” Mrs T
			Child as alone	“he's now working on his own with a classroom assistant” Mrs A
			Child as having underlying, within-child needs	“even if it was a child that didn't have all these problems and issues” Mrs J
			Child as inherently ‘good’	“Well he's a lovely boy and he is really caring so if anybody hurts themself or in the classroom or anything like that he will always go and help them” Mrs K
			Child as not in control of own behaviours	“like a force that she had to do she had to (.) lash out” Mrs T
			Child’s needs not child’s fault	“I’d question why I’d want to know the background of the child erm what I could do (.) to help that” Mrs T

			High level of understanding / background knowledge impacts staff responses	“So an outsider might look and think ‘I don’t know how they deal with that’ but actually you can appreciate why when you know kind of backgrounds and things like that” Mrs T
			School’s response appropriate	“You recognise that there’s a problem then you need to kind of do something about it (.) and you want to make sure you’re doing the right thing” Mrs T
			Significance of home context	“I'd say it's very chaotic is his home life from what I know” Mrs A
			Student as overwhelmed	“Didn’t really want staff near her (.) didn’t want staff talking to her and she’d kept going to a little ball (.) at the back of my classroom and just refuse” Mrs T
			Student lacks knowledge and experience of wider world	“he's but he doesn't understand why he’s too young to understand why” Mrs J
		Student’s vulnerability and survival behaviours	Child in a battle against the world / school / self	“it's not (.) disengaging it is it's a fight in himself he's fighting himself he's not (.) ((exhales))” Mrs J

			Child is powerless	“I’m not disappointed in him (.) I'm disappointed (.) that we've not (.) I really am disappointed that we've not (.) actually (.) we’ve not made the situation better we’ve made it worse (.) but that’s a collective we” Mrs J
			Child’s behaviours being used to gain necessary school resources	“she also has that erm she has one-to-one TA now so I don’t know whether that has helped you know because she has that adult interaction all of the time” Mrs T
			Complex family dynamics	“they don’t really interact if she ever comes into my classroom I kind of have to say [Thomas] come on look [Rebecca] look at what [Rebecca]’s done and things (.) he’s never really of one to kind of interact and [Rebecca]’s never kind of one (.) you can see they’re proud of each other (.) and they will interact when you are there (.) but they wouldn’t kind of openly willingly go to each other” Mrs T
			Home context as at fault	“I know his home life is very very difficult” Mrs A

			Staffing and environment changes	“Yeah she was in my class when she first came” Mrs T
			Student as same as peers	“I mean ideally (.) relaxed all the time but even any you could pick any child and one day they could be hard work and another day they could make you feel relaxed so” Mrs T
Unrelenting challenge	/	Challenges which face the teacher	Behaviour as extreme and uncontrollable	“very aggressive (.) down at number one he has significant amounts of the time” Mrs A
			Behaviours as unpredictable	“because (.) the outbursts were unpredictable (.) I didn't know when they were coming I was fearful (.) of somebody (.) being hurt (.) I thought he was gonna hit me (.) I thought he was gonna hit another child” Mrs A
			Competition for control within classroom	“but you've got to make sure you're in control of the situation all the time” Mrs J
			Demanding of adult attention	“And if she’s not getting it then she’s just gonna not do anything” Mrs T
			Impact on peers / other students	“it would (.) may have an affect on kind of how you teach the other children ((pause)) and the impact it

				would have on those other children and also [Rebecca]" Mrs T
			Increased pressure (or workload) on class teacher	"every conversation (.) that was round school with other people (.) always seem to centre on him (.) and whilst he is in my class he's only one of twenty-eight (.) yes he's on the SEND register but so are other children in this class (.) and I got really cross and angry at the amount of time that was being taken up by [Marcus]" Mrs A
			Sense of teaching child being a challenge	"So like I said earlier she walks out the classroom at the moment (.) she isn't willing to learn follow the instructions follow what everybody else is doing erm when she was in reception like I said she didn't walk out (.) but it was still a lack of willingness she would refuse to do anything (.) she'd go into a little ball on the carpet refuse to look at you anything" Mrs T
			Speed of changes in behaviour as unmanageable	"it's when he's erm asked to do something that (.) for example work (.) or join in with the phonics session (.) that's when you can see his behaviour deteriorate and that's when he starts biting throwing things so it's only it's it's defiance it's only

				when you ask him to do something that you mainly see him change and he changes within a second and then he can calm down within a second" Mrs K
			Student poses a risk to safety	"Because it compromises the safety doesn't and it compromises not only their safety but his safety specially when he's throwing things erm around the classroom and e e he has cut another child's hand open (.) and he has er bruised (.) adults erm (.) so there's a limit isn't there of what you er what can happen in classroom there's boundaries and rules and and that's (.) crossing them" Mrs K
		Construing teacher as the victim	Cannot teacher effectively whilst worried / anxious	"Obviously because uh uh the mood you're in reflects it it goes throughout the classroom doesn't it so for you to do your best you can for those kids (.) you've got to feel (.) in a good place or not got to but got to leave your worries behind haven't you an and go in and feel alright" Mrs K
			Child having the control	"Because that that is (.) out of control (.) so when you're shouting at a child (.) they (.) that's knocked their self-esteem and that's that that is not how

				I operate I can get them to do what (.) usually to do what I want (.) by talking and you know different ways and I just think if I shouted at a child I've failed (.) and I did shout at him" Mrs A
			Physical / medical / health impact on teacher	"That is coming home from work with tense shoulders all the way back across here on your shoulders (.) and feeling really uptight and taking ages to go to sleep and waking up in the middle of the night (.) worrying about him and trying to find solutions" Mrs A
			Sense of student's needs as constant or unrelenting	"it's an accident waiting to happen really just like (.) can't can't afford for that to happen" Mrs A
			Sense of teacher feeling desperate for their experience to be heard / understood	"I was really really stressed (.) because (.) the outbursts were unpredictable (.) I didn't know when they were coming I was fearful (.) of somebody (.) being hurt (.) I thought he was gonna hit me (.) I thought he was gonna hit another child (.) every conversation (.) that was round school with other people (.) always seem to centre on him (.) and whilst he is in my class he's only one of twenty-eight

				(.) yes he's on the SEND register but so are other children in this class (.) and I got really cross and angry at the amount of time that was being taken up by [Marcus] […] In terms of the classroom time in terms of (.) my time in ti- in terms of meeting time (.) just in terms of everything" Mrs A
			Teacher as victim in situation	"but he's aiming things at you and you don't know if you're going to be hit (.) you are a little bit on edge" Mrs K
		Emotional impact on teacher	Emotional impact on the teacher	"((long pause)) when he's in my classroom (.) angry" Mrs A
			Teacher feeling let down/their hopes dashed	"thing is at the beginning of the year I thought he was going to succeed (.) erm and it was just but because he'd been missing all the lessons (.) I just feel really sad depressed and all" Mrs J
		Pressure and responsibility on the teacher	Emphasis on need to progress / develop / move forward	"it's that whole progression that they've got to get all the way through" Mrs A

			Pressure of exam outcomes	“however I’ve got to think of all the other kids I've got to get through this exam ((laughs))” Mrs J
			Problem as escalating	“Because (.) he thinks that's what (.) he deserves and that's what he's gonna get and he's only going to get older (.) and if it continues the way it is (.) he’s going to get worse (.) and the other children it shows that basically if you misbehave and you do what you want (.) you get all the attention you get to choose it’s it’s a really bad example for children” Mrs J
			Responsibility of teacher to build child’s knowledge	“they’ve got to have the building blocks in order to be able to move up” Mrs A
			Responsibility of teacher to ensure safety	“At the moment after this afternoon erm I was on I was scared for the other children so you know I wasn't up here then I was this afternoon I'd say I'm round I was round here because I was scared for the other kids” Mrs K
			Teacher as responsible for TAs	“And actually how can I support the other adults in the room who are having to deal with her (.) and the

				other children at the same time" Mrs T
			Teacher feeling pulled in 2 / competing pressures and demands	"if I'm honest (.) on edge for example he was throwing things today and and I moved the children to the other side but you still can't leave him on his own so one of us has got to stay there" Mrs K
			Teacher feeling solely responsible	"To what I could do in order to (.) manage (.) the class to manage him and his behaviours (.) it was stress in terms of ((pause)) just having to sit there the whole time with him to be next to him (.) to to (.) sort of do that but then the other side getting the results for the other children as well and helping and supporting them (.) erm yeah (.) so the stress was (.) quite acute" Mrs A
			Teacher having to 'step up'	"but (.) of course it's our job to put strategies in for these children" Mrs K
			Teacher's responsibility to find a solution	"A bit like what I said what can sometimes you've got to hold your hands up and say I honestly don't know what more I can do to support that child erm (.) and it can also be (.)

				kind of 'why why are you' I used to find something something that would affect her one day wouldn't affect her the next (.) and vice versa you could do something one day and she would love it the next day she wouldn't be interested and it was all about finding new ways to kind of control that behaviour and keep her kind of (.) on task as possible (.) erm (.) so yeah it's just what do you do ((laughs))" Mrs T
		Teacher feeling abandoned and unsupported	Risk or sense of judgement from other teachers	"Mrs J that you speak to next she just used to take [Marcus] for maths first thing in the morning and she won't do the same picture at all she she will say 'no problem' but as the day went on (.) his behaviour throughout the day got worse and worse as he got more tired" Mrs A
			Task as impossible (teaching / managing the child)	"Because I got to the point of saying (.) I'm not doing it (.) I'm gonna hand my notice in (.) because I can't work with that because I can't (.) I can't square this circle" Mrs A
			Teacher as not valued / appreciated	"Erm apart from saying that I think we dealt with it in the wrong way and I'm disappointed that (.) a couple of people ran off with (.) ways they

				thought were good to deal with things without (.) erm talking to the staff involved (.) is really I think that's quite disappointing erm because for something like this the strategy needs to be discussed in a staff meeting with the people involved or during some time erm to look at it with everyone who's with that child (.) and what everyone's experience is drawn on to see what would be the best strategy to use […] Not someone who had nothing to do with him as opposed to erm I think (.) yeah I just think it was taken out of the hands of the people who could actually (.) do something (.) to help him (.) as opposed to create (.) and fuel (.) some negative behaviour (.) which is a shame" Mrs J
			Teacher feeling they have to stand up for themselves	"Because I got to the point of saying (.) I'm not doing it (.) I'm gonna hand my notice in" Mrs A
			Teacher feeling unsupported	"no afternoons were worse because you have no support there as well (.) but my TA wouldn't engage with him because she just doesn't basically like him" Mrs A

		Teacher left feeling dejected and disempowered	Situation as overwhelming	"well after that you're a little bit in a heightened state aren't you so you just want to erm (.) you just want everybody to be calm whereas if you're if you're up there then you're gonna make the kids up there aren't you (.) so it's just about being calm yourself and actually asking yourself if you're alright and the adult who's just got hit (.) 'are you alright' and making sure [Logan]'s alright and everybody else so yeah you are a bit anxious aren't you" Mrs K
			Teacher as disempowered	"I don't know no-one tells me much" Mrs J
			Teacher as out of ideas	"A bit like what I said what can sometimes you've got to hold your hands up and say I honestly don't know what more I can do to support that child" Mrs T
			Teacher feeling dejected	"((sighs)) Deflated" Mrs T
			Teacher feeling disappointed	"Oh (.) I'm not disappointed in him (.) I'm disappointed (.) that we've not (.) I really am disappointed that we've not (.) actually (.) we've not made the

				situation better we've made it worse (.) but that's a collective we (.) and er (.) because this school's not used to children not being (.) well behaved (.) I mean there's a couple of teachers myself and Mrs A we've had (.) you know we've worked in schools where they've had children like that before (.) and I've never (.) they've always come round (.) and I've always felt that (.) I could do that with a child but he's not in my class he's only in for a bit which (.) no I didn't really have a problem with him in my class (.) but (.) yeah I yeah yeah (.) it's a shame" Mrs J
			Teacher in need of professional guidance	"Well yeah and having the tools to do that not just your mind isn't it it's knowing erm what you're gonna do step by step to stop to keep everybody safe (.) whereas at the moment we're a little bit like erm not really had a lot of advice so (.) we need a bit of step by step 'this is what you're going to do if that doesn't happen (.) then you're going to do this' (.) then we'll probably all feel a little bit better about the situation I mean he would as well [Logan] would as well" Mrs K

Disharmony in school	/	Lack of confidence in competence of colleagues	Adults as being in the wrong	“Which I don’t think are positive and I don't think people actually thought through the whole (.) cause and effect of their (.) actions and their (.) the implications of what would happen because of that so (.) it’s it’s (.) yeah” Mrs J
			Adults not seeing underlying needs	“I think he's been spoilt ((pause)) by everyone pandering to him (.) and I think he (.) I think he wants to be told no I think he craves being someone saying no to him but no one ever does so he just carries on pushing the boundaries until and that's what he does because he knows he can get away with it” Mrs J
			Loss of opportunities	“I'd like to feel that you know I mean thing is at the beginning of the year I thought he was going to succeed (.) erm and it was just but because he'd been missing all the lessons (.) I just feel really sad depressed and all […] Of that because there's no way even if he was put back in class that he'd be able to make up all that time (.) which (.) it would be too exhausting for him (.) it’s not possible (.) erm even if it was a child that didn't have all these

				problems and issues then to be able to make up all of that they've lost (.) in those weeks (.) so it's a shame it's really (.) disappointing" Mrs J
			Situation as out of hand / too late / damage done	"But no and he will then constantly from (.) this point onwards (.) as opposed to having all the other problems he will also have an academic problem because he will always be behind (.) so it'll get worse for him" Mrs J
			Teacher feeling frustrated	"I feel like we've not dealt with the situation as a school properly (.) I think too many people are being involved with lots of like I said before 'bright ideas' that they heard someone talk about that work for a child that" Mrs J
			Teacher vs. other adults	"Just kind of (.) not understanding [Rebecca]'s needs and background and also seeing [Rebecca] negatively not actually what she can do but really focusing on what she can't do and what she isn't doing (.) right (.) erm (.) ((exhales)) kind of getting that stress up with her (.) rather than having the patience to deal with it in a calm way (.) actually sometimes it can

				just build up and build up and build up (.) which is natural but not always the right way to deal with it" Mrs T
		Mismanagement	Adhering to behaviourist principles	"Because I'm not giving him more attention (.) than any other child if you treat him like any other child (.) and everyone has gets praised for being good (.) and erm put on cards and the system for when they're not then (.) they usually (.) conform" Mrs J
			Adults not providing appropriate environment / boundaries	"Well (.) he is able to be there he's choosing not to (.) and I don't think we're helping him (.) the way we should by giving him boundaries" Mrs J
			Lack of belief in strategies in place	"not try and go oh (.) 'talk about the Dolly' and all this other kind of stuff to y- you know that's not (.) I think you're able to talk to him like a human being and I think he'd actually appreciate being spoken to like a human being and actually been asked what's going on and why he's feeling these ways and to understand that feelings happen and (.) how to deal with those feelings that's what he needs not to just be taken out of the classroom an- and- and to go into a

				room where there's lots of sing song-y things and you know calming music I don't (.) know if that's (.) once a week for half an hour is going to help ((laughs)) I think he needs to have an understanding of what's going on and why he's feeling those things and what can be done to improve that situation" Mrs J
			Lack of organisation and consistency	"but you don't railroad lots of different initiatives 'oh we'll try this one today now this one tomorrow that one the next day' it's all just too much it changes too quickly (.) you do one thing (.) and see how that runs over a period of time and then you try another strategy (.) there's too many and too many upheavals (.) erm I think for him (.) but erm yeah that was (.) it's just one of those things isn't it (.) it's a shame I do feel sorry for him" Mrs J
		Sources of resentment towards the student	Behaviour as attention seeking	"he did sometimes want to try and gain attention from me but I just totally ignored it" Mrs J
			Child as rejected/not	"why should she (.) he doesn't listen he doesn't learn he doesn't do so (.) end of" Mrs A

			worthy of support	
			Child's behaviours excluding themselves	"Obviously for social aspects of it because when he erm when he displays the behaviour that's not wanted in class (.) it scares the other children so he's he's showing his other side (.) he's showing his side where children do want to go to him and that's what we want don't we we don't want them to be scared of him" Mrs K
			Child's behaviours self-directed	"things that she would be willing to do she'd do but it was on her terms and in her own time" Mrs T
			Differentiation of tasks or requests for student	"Yeah I'd quite (.) I am going to go into year one and take continuous provision from reception with me (.) as a way of seeing whether [Rebecca] will stay in the classroom and actually learn through continuous provision with an adult (.) rather than walking out of the lesson altogether can I then focus her on a small individual task with continuous provision rather than a sit down task like what the rest of the children will be doing" Mrs T

			Justifying factors for student's exclusion	"It's it's got to be it's got to be at number one there's no compromise there in my book (.) y- you know you're either in here and you're working like this because this is what we're doing (.) otherwise I'm out of here because I can't do it" Mrs A
			Risk of child being a role model	"Obviously he's got to follow the boundaries of every other children cause that's (.) obviously they're gonna think that they can do that" Mrs K
			Special attention is not earned	"I mean the reason he kicked off so much is because every time he kicked off he got to go sit in the head's office (.) so that's feeding (.) I think we're feeding the fire by that kind of thing no other child gets to sit in his office (.) and have one on one with the boss (.) you know (.) and everybody all the other children are not allowed in the room to show the teacher the head teacher what brilliant work they've done" Mrs J
			Student responsibility for own behaviour /	"that's what [Marcus] has got if you do give him that couple of minutes (.) and he can do it and that's what's

			behaviour is a choice	frustrating because he's 'I won't do it'" Mrs A
			Student responsibility for own learning	"Well no it's not to do with being bright it's whether you actually erm want to learn because all children can learn if they want to so it's actually a mindset (.) and his mindset isn't in the correct place therefore he's going to fail (.) whereas children even if they are not as gifted (.) or however you want to word it as [Marcus] erm will do better than him because they actually want to achieve" Mrs J
			Unequal distribution of school resources	"Because there isn't the finances to have one on one tuition with every single child in school" Mrs J
		Teacher feeling part of a team	Child is both home and school's responsibility	"It's it comes back down to what your needs are in life about (.) being you know fed watered valued and loved and those sorts of things and that exists in one (.) way in a family and exists in another way in the classroom" Mrs A
			Parents as valuable	"Maybe headteacher (.) or maybe our SENCo (.) maybe even parents if you thought maybe they've got

				suggestions (.) maybe having them in for a meeting and saying what do you suggest" Mrs T
			Support from colleagues	"erm the teacher from (.) that he had last year said that they think as he's moved older he's realised in himself that he can't do the work (.) his perception is (.) 'this is hard' because the year two ramps up a lot from year one (.) erm and so he backlashes against that in order to avoid doing the work in order to feel (.) failure" Mrs A
		Teacher's confidence in their competence	Teacher as autonomous	"Because I wouldn't go to them if I didn't have (.) not a problem but a concern or a question of 'how do I deal with this'" Mrs T
			Teacher as competent	"If I can great if I can't ((General laughter)) Then I'll think of something else" Mrs T
			Teacher being in control	"when he was in here he'd be okay (.) I didn't really have a problem with him (.) he did sometimes want to try and gain attention from me but I just totally ignored it" Mrs J

			Teacher feeling hopeful	"((pause)) I'm confident in the sense that I think the continuous provision will have an impact because in reception (.) that is how we kind of dealt with it she would go off to the areas erm (.) but I am confused whether or not that'll work" Mrs T
			Teacher having clear style / identity	"Very calm (.) very quiet (.) quiet teacher (.) quiet class (.) that's me" Mrs A
			Teacher having ideas and solutions	"you do one thing (.) and see how that runs over a period of time and then you try another strategy (.) there's too many and too many upheavals (.) erm I think for him" Mrs J
			Teacher holding realistic expectations and hopes	"Ideally I'd like her to follow expectations but you have to think of [Rebecca] as that's [Rebecca] (.) realistically (.) is she going to follow the expectations ((laughs)) and (.) I don't think you can get caught up on (.) making her follow the expectations when one that's not her (.) it's not going to help anybody is not going to help [Rebecca] by constantly being on at her to follow the expectations" Mrs T

			Teacher priority is managing the situation in the moment	“she’d go into a little ball on the carpet refuse to look at you anything the only way you could get her back is if you tickled her and turned it into a game but then actually she’s not really (.) learning that that’s wrong you’re only you’re just overcoming the situation and using it as a distraction” Mrs T
			Teacher’s measure of success and failure	“if we can get children to have the right (.) erm wanting to learn (.) and enjoying education then you know we've done a really good job (.) they have enough to deal with when they get to secondary school (.) you know if primary school can make it as good as it can be and they learn and they feel that they can achieve then they will (.) if we give them the wrong (.) we don't let them have the opportunity now and we fail them then (.) it's really sad ((Mrs J becomes upset))” Mrs J
Teacher’s responsibilities as the keeper of opportunities	/	Academic Challenges	Child facing academic difficulties	“but he's going to struggle (.) because that time period is a long time (.) might only seem a short time but it's a massive amount of time when basic skills are being taught (.) that are are

				built on (.) at this point in a kid's age I mean year two's massive" Mrs J
			Student not meeting academic potential	"well he could (.) he is capable of doing it absolutely capable of (.) doing (.) a lot more (.) than he is prepared to do" Mrs A
		Belief in students' capacity to succeed	Belief in student's capacity for change	"So having the time to allow the children to make their own decisions and choices ((pause)) kind of allowing the children to make those wrong choices and decisions and giving them the time to realise that and also change that and reflect upon that themselves erm (.) not kind of doing everything for them so giving [Rebecca] the choices (.) rather than saying you will be doing this you need to be here (.) giving her the choice and hoping that in time she would make that right choice erm (.) giving them the time to (.) kind of (.) come to me and kind of create that safety with me and that relationship" Mrs T
			No threat to peers' safety	"she started to kick (.) lash out (.) never with other children always with the staff" Mrs T

			Predictability feeds confidence	“Erm ((pause)) maybe confident to deal with the situations (.) if she acted the same way every time you’d be confident enough to use the strategy and confident enough to know it works” Mrs T
			Teacher’s use of amelioration	“she steals things so she likes to take things and she likes to have her treasures“ Mrs T
		Life skills	Students life skills and future successes	“Probably so they can kind of keep up with (.) well society (.) if they aren’t going to show that they’re loving are they just going to then get lost in systems and things like that” Mrs T
		Life skills: teacher being able to reflect and see the bigger picture	Children need to be protected	“I don’t think (.) the children should see that ever in here or kind of (.) while they’re in front of you I don’t think they need to see it” Mrs T
			Consideration of bigger picture/holistic factors	“And the expectation as to how to behave in school and how to treat each other (.) and how we value each other and respect each other and (.) you know all the ethos in the playground” Mrs A
			Negative framing	“Just kind of (.) not understanding [Rebecca]’s needs and background

			increases stress	and also seeing [Rebecca] negatively not actually what she can do but really focusing on what she can't do and what she isn't doing (.) right (.) erm (.) ((exhales)) kind of getting that stress up with her (.) rather than having the patience to deal with it in a calm way (.) actually sometimes it can just build up and build up and build up (.) which is natural but not always the right way to deal with it" Mrs T
			Patterns in behaviour	"Yeah I'd say so cause (.) when he's when he is erm choosing when he's making the choice (.) he's absolutely fine it's only when you ask him to do something that he displays the unwanted behaviour" Mrs K
			Teacher advocating for child	"I think like I said like I said earlier you don't kind of want her to go through school and kind of have that reputation of people dreading when she's in their class or in the classroom because that impacts the children and also then [Rebecca] herself you want to kind of show children and the staff that she can also make you feel this way (.) and why should she have that reputation" Mrs T

			Teacher as reflective	"Err (.) kind of put it to the back of my head while the children are there (.) and then at the end of the day kind of focus and kind of think right what can I do to help that kind of reflect on it" Mrs T
			Understanding or looking for reasons underpinning behaviour	"It's hard because although she is able (.) I don't think she's got the confidence to show that she's able" Mrs T
			Vicious vs virtuous cycles	"Because (.) she's a child ((laughs)) and we should be (.) we don't know what [Rebecca] sees at home we don't know what [Rebecca] has seen in the past actually that (.) it's not helping anybody (.) actually it's just making [Rebecca] more stressed the staff member more stressed it doesn't kind of bring anything back down and actually it's not going to achieve anything" Mrs T
			Window of opportunity before it's too late	"((pause)) Because it can have an impact on so many different things (.) and (.) if you're happy then everyone else around you is going to see that and kind of (.) not see [Rebecca] then in that negative way maybe they may see how you can see her and it shows

				kind of the children and the staff that actually (.) I don't want to say that she's kind of safe to be around but actually there is a positive aspect of it (.) yeah" Mrs T
		Sense of having failed	Situation feels hopeless/very little hope	"But no and he will then constantly from (.) this point onwards (.) as opposed to having all the other problems he will also have an academic problem because he will always be behind (.) so it'll get worse for him" Mrs J
			Teacher's sense of having failed	"Because I would shout (.) if he pushed me so far (.) I will shout and then that's when I feel real failure in me because (.) I don't shout (.) because to lose your own temper (.) is the worst thing to do" Mrs A
		Teacher's job to notice and nurture student's strengths	Child has underlying potential	"eah (.) I wouldn't say unable (.) because actually it might just be that they're able but in different subjects erm (.) I don't really know (.) erm maybe unconfident erm ((pause)) not resilient" Mrs T

			Identification of redeeming factors	“Caring like I’ve said erm he will help he will go in the line he will go and get somebody's hand you know if they were upset and stand with them erm if I say [Logan] will you come and help me pick these things up to keep his mind on task he'll do it to he’s helpful he’s helpful” Mrs K
			Teacher’s efforts validated and hard work paid off	“Um ((pause)) well ((pause)) when you feel really happy that you’ve helped them achieve (.) um (.) so when they’re when they’re happy and they’re (.) when the children are wanting to bring stuff that they've done at home and extra things you know that they've actually come out of their way and done it themselves then they’re becoming a (.) lifelong learner because it's not just what I give them to do it’s something that they found interesting and then they want to share their erm (.) share their (.) something they’re proud of with the class and that’s that’s lovely you know what I mean and then when they you know that that's magical that when they do that” Mrs J
			Teacher’s job to shape and	“It’s hard because you don’t want her to lose that loving side you just want

			mould children's individual attributes	her to be able to use that loving side at the right moment (.) and at the right times (.) and show it in the right way (.) so if you could foster that loving side and wanting to impress people (.) by (.) showing those good expectations (.) then it wouldn't have to change" Mrs T
		Teacher's job to support student to develop holistically and learn self-sufficiency	Children able to cope with their difficulties	"they don't share aggressive aggression if they're struggling or if they're stuck or if they're (.) upset they will come and say something (.) to me" Mrs A
			Children as independent / having independence	"so you would recognise it (.) by looking round at that child's ability to just (.) go and work on their (.) themselves to a greater degree" Mrs A
			Teacher responsible for academic, social, emotional, holistic development of child	"you feel (.) that you want to teach them to learn (.) and that's (.) to learn things and learn (.) about socially emotionally and everything (.) as you would expect all children" Mrs J

		Threat of falling short of espoused morals and values (internal conflict)	Exclusion as out of teacher's control	"most of the time he'd want to stay (.) but (.) you know (.) people made choices and (.) everyone wanted to try the latest initiative that someone had said 'ooh it worked for this child then it' everyone's just" Mrs J
			Exclusion of student	"he's had to be removed from the classroom situation and things" Mrs A
			Expression of morals and values	"it's just that (.) nurturing (.) environment (.) because that's what education is about it's not just the academic side it is the other social side of things which is so big especially down in the infants" Mrs A
			Highlighting awareness of child's emotional state	"It's (.) it's important for them to be able to achieve (.) it's about their feeling of self-worth" Mrs A
Insecure attachments in the classroom	/	Distance	Behaviour as expected / the norm (child's unwanted behaviour)	"of course then we got the brunt of it so (.) as usual lashing out things like that" Mrs T
			Distance between teacher and	"I don't even know if he's here for a full day any more or not I don't even know what he's doing" Mrs J

			child / relinquished responsibility	
			Matter of fact – no emotional investment	“So when she did want that adult there she was always kind of affectionate she’d always go for hugs she’d quite often say that she loved yeh things like that (.) erm it was always to an adult in the room” Mrs T
			Practicalities of meeting inconvenient	“That's good if it's Wednesday (.) cos that means I won’t have to come back to work” Mrs J
			Professional persona providing distance from personal emotions	“you’ve got to feel (.) in a good place or not got to but got to leave your worries behind haven’t you an and go in and feel alright” Mrs K
			TA as responsible for child	“When she’s lashing out again it’s just a confusion as to why and what can I do to help her erm (.) I can see why other people would get frustrated with it (.) it must be hard work” Mrs T
		Emotional states as contagious	Emotional states as contagious	“well after that you’re a little bit in a heightened state aren’t you so you just want to erm (.) you just want everybody to be calm whereas if

				you're if you're up there then you're gonna make the kids up there aren't you (.) so it's just about being calm yourself and actually asking yourself if you're alright and the adult who's just got hit (.) 'are you alright' and making sure [Logan]'s alright and everybody else so yeah you are a bit anxious aren't you" Mrs K
			Teacher mirroring child	"So she would (.) hit (.) kick (.) sometimes occasionally bite (.) grab on to people pull their hair we had incidents where staff had necklaces on and she'd pull the necklace (.) erm it was almost like a jolted movement that she couldn't control she had to do something to you at that point erm and it was always (.) it always followed almost like a temper tantrum (.) stomping feet (.) shouting (.) screaming erm there was never any tears it was almost (.) quite unemotional from that level so there wasn't any sadness or anything like that it was (.) almost I don't want to say an anger like a force that she had to do she had to (.) lash out ((laughs)) erm and it was (.) usually if she'd been asked to do something and she didn't want to do it" Mrs T

		/	Sense of connection / relationship	“giving them the time to (.) kind of (.) come to me and kind of create that safety with me and that relationship” Mrs T

9.12 Full table of themes for Time-2 data

Theme	Sub-theme	Code cluster	Code	Data Extract
"Light bulb moment" CoA provides a punctuation point in the school system	/	CoA facilitates collaborative team	CoA reinforces sense of team	"I think it's good it needs repeating (.) down the line as well erm with these children so that (.) we are all (.) you know (.) trying to do the same thing for the same child rather than everything else" Mrs A
			Lack of inter-agency communication before CoA	"I'd never met the people from the behaviour management support people before I know he toddles off there on a Monday […] But I've never spoken to them before maybe the Head's spoken to them […] And I get the Head's message but (.) but it- it's nice for it to come from the horses' mouth so to speak you know for everyone to be there (.) and to say what they're seeing" Mrs A
			Teacher feeling part of something bigger	"That everybody wants to do the best for this child and this family and to enable them to cope with society as it is" Mrs A
			Teacher's feelings validated	"but just to see so many people working (.) with him and the family

				was quite (.) was quite moving really" Mrs A
			Transition function	"actually it was a really really detailed transitional meeting for me" Mrs T
			Value of collaboration	"I think there were fifteen people in that room an an you just realised we don't always get the chance to sit down together and to talk (.) an s-everybody sees [Marcus] from from a different angle" Mrs A
		CoA promotes change	CoA as a means of becoming unstuck	"kind of breaking it open kind of what everyone's doing and what I could then take from that and what I thought kind of were next steps" Mrs T
			Empowered teacher to take on some responsibility	"I think it just made me understand kind of more (.) how I could support her not just the teaching assistant dealing with her (.) how I could take other people the way other people are dealing with her and kind of put that in my practice" Mrs T
			Intentions to bring student back into class	"One would assume that that would have continued and we try and build up his his time back in (.) you know

				with the class an and things like that" Mrs A
			Student's positive experiences of school	"she's going home and talking a lot about school now and a lot about me" Mrs T
		CoA promotes understanding and empathy for student	Attempt to address cause of challenging behaviour	"I kind of sat her down and said 'look everything in this classroom is still exactly the same I've just changed it a little bit' and kind of had to explain all of the things that she has in that classroom are still there (.) and after that she was absolutely fine I don't know whether she just kind of thought 'this teacher's come in and moved all my things and I don't know where everything is' and I think she thought I'd taken everything away (.) I haven't and it's still there for [Rebecca] to access she just doesn't actually access it as much as what I think she was previously" Mrs T
			CoA highlighting social difficulties- social impact on student	"I think (.) I didn't realise how much it was affecting kind of [Rebecca]'s social aspects and how she didn't really have friends and I think the other children were kind of a bit (.) taken aback when she was lashing out and things" Mrs T

			CoA promoting greater understanding of student's behaviours	"I can (.) in a way because of the Circle of Adults I can understand more why [Rebecca]'s doing it" Mrs T
			Empathy / sympathy for the student	"This poor little kid" Mrs A
			Focus on student's need to develop self-regulation skills	"I don't think that sort of behaviour should be ignored don't think it should necessarily be kind of sanctioned as such but actually [Rebecca] needs to be able to regulate those feelings and be able to talk about her feelings rather than just lashing out in frustration" Mrs T
			Impact of home context	"but some of that is the family setting (.) as well (.) that we heard about in the Circle of Adults you know there's lots of people there and lots of noise an (.) lots of aggression (.)" Mrs A
			Not blaming student	"you can't influence it and he can't change it" Mrs A
			Positive framing	"yeah I mean don't get me wrong she has kind of been violent towards me and the other members of staff (.) she's walked out about I think about

				twice but hasn't then been out for the entire day if she's been out for about ten minutes but then walked back in and been absolutely fine and I think erm (.) I think kind of just been a massive change in her" Mrs T
			Sense of connection / relationship	"I've been kind of taking her to one side and saying 'look (.) I can understand why you're doing this but actually (.) that's not how we do it' and talking about it more" Mrs T
		Giving voice / being heard / hearing others / sharing perspectives	CoA good structure	"Yeah (.) it it's a really good structure" Mrs A
			CoA highlighting emotional impact on staff	"I didn't realise how much of an impact it was having on (.) the staff an their wellbeing" Mrs T
			CoA highlighting practical impact on staff (time/resources)	"and kind of how much time was taken up dealing with [Rebecca] and making sure [Rebecca] was on task erm (.) what I can see now is actually a lot of their time was focused on [Rebecca]" Mrs T
			CoA provides opportunities to hear different perspectives	"I think there were fifteen people in that room an an you just realised we don't always get the chance to sit down together and to talk (.) an s-

				everybody sees [Marcus] from from a different angle" Mrs A
			CoA provides opportunity for staff to be heard	"I think it really really give her kind of a voice and a time to kind of say what she said don't know whether she would have necessarily had that time cause I think a lot of it is focused on kind of the class teacher whereas I think that really gave her the time to express how she was feeling about it" Mrs T
			CoA useful	"I found it really really useful to be honest" Mrs T
			Teacher responsible for TAs	"I think it affects me more when it's the teaching assistant who she's doing it to and I know that (.) one of the teaching assistants is kind of (.) not struggling but really takes it to heart when she's doing it and can get upset" Mrs T
			Teacher valuing TAs	"I think at the minute I'm kind of trying to bring my way into dealing with it but also having (.) to like (.) bearing in mind that they've been dealing with it a lot longer (.) and I don't kind of want to go in and say

				‘right this is what we're doing now’” Mrs T
		Opportunity for reflection	Idea that strategies can be put in place intuitively	“I found out a lot of things that kinda (.) [Mrs M] the other class teacher had been doing that I kinda hadn't realised and I don't know whether she kind of realised until she had been talking about the different things she had been doing” Mrs T
		Opportunity to upskill	Adapting strategies used by other adults	“I mean she did have er (.) routine where she lis- she did an activity for about five minutes but then she'd get a reward and then it'd be another five minutes then a reward I've been stretching that out a lot more than just kind of (.) not necessarily going off that (.) if there has been kind of days and moments where I thought she would need that (.) I've been kind of saying ‘yeah right five minutes’ and I've been setting the timer for five minutes […] But it's not I think [Mrs M] continuously followed that structure where as I kind of haven't felt the need to” Mrs T
			Opportunity to gain / accumulate	“I've been then kind of takin those erm it was just a nice kind of way of getting the information (.) if that

			ideas, resources and strategies	makes sense and kind of breaking it open kind of what everyone's doing and what I could then take from that and what I thought kind of were next steps" Mrs T
		Understanding provides punctuation point	CoA as enlightening	"I think the greatest one was erm when our deputy head erm took the voice of [Marcus] and (.) he kinda came back and said 'I'm confused' an- and that was a bit of a light bulb moment for me" Mrs A
			CoA enabling opportunity to reframe and consider student's perspective	"I'd never thought of it from [Marcus]' point of view (.) it- erm you know that (.) he could find all this completely overwhelming" Mrs A
			CoA experience moving / emotional	"but just to see so many people working (.) with him and the family was quite (.) was quite moving really" Mrs A
			CoA highlighting problems in the system	"you know who is in charge who is (.) his main (.) thing and all of a sudden he's taken out of the classroom and he's working now with a one to one with a TA who wasn't even our classroom TA and there was so much

				change going on in order to try and keep him in school basically" Mrs A
			CoA novel experience	"it was just a nice kind of way of getting the information" Mrs T
			CoA powerful tool	"circle of adults is very powerful tool I I think it's good" Mrs A
			CoA providing punctuation point	"and he's working now with a one to one with a TA who wasn't even our classroom TA and there was so much change going on" Mrs A
"Nothing's any different" CoA has insufficient impact	/	CoA having little impact	CoA made no difference	"But nothing happened (.) nothing's any different" Mrs A
			Continued exclusion	"He's not he's not been in my class now since before Christmas as well don't forget" Mrs A
			Feeling stuck	"and it gets you to the point where (.) it gets you angry because you can't (.) ((laughs)) you can't influence it and he can't change it" Mrs A
			No change in teacher behaviours	"No (.) the the work was the same" Mrs A
			Safety concerns	"there's all that an that's not ((pause)) you can't deal with that in a

				when there's so many other children around it's not safe (.) for the children it's not safe for the staff it it it's dangerous (.) you know someone's gonna get seriously hurt erm tha- that's the concern" Mrs A
			Student as different to peers	"some some children will go for you know stickers rewards erm and they're quite happy with that and they just (.) want to please you (.) the teacher (.) erm whereas [Marcus] doesn't have that ((cough)) excuse me (.) there's too many other issues going on I think (.) with him to ((sigh)) I don't know (.) I don't know to want to conform even I'm not sure ((laughs))" Mrs A
			Teacher feels her efforts are not acknowledged by student	"it's just that constant reaching out to this child (.) but there's nothing coming back again" Mrs A
			Teacher feels the same as before CoA	"No (.) it's the same" Mrs A
		CoA itself not efficient use of time	CoA is long – time requirements	"we'd kind of been going on about 2 hours by then I think" Mrs A

			Existing knowledge of student	“some of it I already knew (.) there was um I don't know more than fifty percent sixty percent that was irrelevant to me as in (.) I already knew it (.) and a lots of people statements (.) I already knew because I’d spoken to those people” Mrs A
			No value to airing problems	“but to just (.) air a load of problems for an hour and 45 minutes (.) and then not to act on the solutions and have (.) something in place that is going to make a difference (.) leaves you (.) feeling (.) a sense of erm inadequacy” Mrs A
		Continuing difficulties	Emotional impact of managing student, on teacher	“frustrated maybe cause (.) let's just say she picks her times” Mrs T
			No change in student’s behaviours	“but the behaviours that we’d seen in the whole class setting were still the same still really aggressive wanting to throw things kick things (.) kick the TA” Mrs A
			Problem continuing to escalate	“and then again because he's on a reduced timetable (.) erm for- going home at lunchtime (.) he was just

				getting further and further and further behind" Mrs A
			Student continuing to miss input	"And we go outside with (.) with (glass tumblers) an he's missing all that side the- I suppose the morning tends to be more (.) formal (.) and maybe the afternoon tends to be more (.) er fun maths but he never got to do PE he never got to (.) you know do music with the rest of them (.) and he miss- was missing out on the wider curriculum (.) of other things" Mrs A
			Student has the control	"but (.) even when I was giving him the work he was still calling the shots" Mrs A
		Inclusion inappropriate	Problem with society	"I still don't think a mainstream school setting is necessarily right for all children we're kind of steering them into this one (.) this one channel an an not all not all children can cope with that (.) and restriction on you know ((sigh)) it maybe it's a step too far for some children" Mrs A
			Specialist settings more able to adapt	"they could accommodate a lot more the needs of these children if it needs to be (.) more play focus if it needs to

			and be responsive to student needs	be (.) you know but they're still interacting where as now [Marcus] is on a one to one" Mrs A
			Sustained views on inclusion	"he is one of lots of children who need a lot of help and support (.) erm and there has to be solutions an an mainstream school (.) schooling (.) whatever isn't necessarily the solution for (.) for all children is it all of the time erm yeah (.) yeah but I I don't know you can only ever do your best" Mrs A
		Insufficient outcomes	Feeling frustrated / let down	"Which is (.) kind of not good enough ((laughs)) really" Mrs A
			Insufficient action following CoA	"So that's just one example there's things they have said that that haven't been actioned on (.) erm and we're four weeks down the line (.) an an that's (.) that makes it feel like a waste of time" Mrs A
			Insufficient focus on solutions	"but actually for me that was the most useful bit it's like yeah I knew all that (.) pretty much (.) yeah no real surprises coming out (.) erm but the last bit was the most useful as to where we go" Mrs A

			Outcomes from CoA inadequate	“No I don't- no I don't think th- there has been any change no (.) I think there should have been” Mrs A
		Resistance to take responsibility for effecting change	Behaviour problems as within-child	“And it was for not disabled children it was for children with behavioural problems” Mrs A
			curriculum pressures on teacher	“yeah this is the reality of (.) the (.) government putting the SATs in May” Mrs A
			Impact of pandemic	“But I I realise things have been hard with coronavirus and stuff going on as well and you don't know who's at work” Mrs A
			Need for responsibility to be shared	“and those children were in a small (.) group setting as in two teachers […] There were there were two teachers” Mrs A
			TAs responsible for student	“[Rebecca] has four teaching assistants who deal with her” Mrs T
			Teacher not taking responsibility for effecting change	“Then that will be a good step for him (.) that was that was a good positive solution that (.) was agreed as far as I know erm that would happen (.) and it hasn't happened” Mrs A

		Value of CoA undermined by lack of action	Action required to make investment of time worthwhile	“nothing the whole thing just puft it’s gone in a puff of air” Mrs A
			Insufficient as a one-off intervention	“I think it’s good it needs repeating (.) down the line as well erm with these children so that (.) we are all (.) you know (.) trying to do the same thing for the same child rather than everything else” Mrs A
			Teacher disempowered	“Erm another piece of the work he just flatly refused to do you cannot make someone do something (.) I er d- do you know what I mean […] You could of put all the stimulus there best teacher in the world there (.) erm (.) but if they won't do it and they flatly refuse (.) then you you’re pretty powerless to do anything about that really” Mrs A
			Teacher’s input to meeting not valued	“Then that will be a good step for him (.) that was that was a good positive solution that (.) was agreed as far as I know erm that would happen (.) and it hasn't happened” Mrs A
/	Change not	/	Change in school provision arrangements	“whereas now (.) it's not so much for example the teaching assistant who works with [Rebecca] also then has

	attributed to CoA			the group alongside her now so she works in a group with six other children whereas at the time it was only one to one support that [Rebecca] was really getting" Mrs T
			Change not attributed to CoA	"Um (.) well (.) it's a bit kind of hard to compare with itself because [Rebecca] is different now" Mrs T
			Positive change in the student	"[Rebecca] is different now in the sense that she's only kind of actually walked out the classroom once since I've been in there" Mrs T