Permanently excluded and perceived as challenging: a narrative inquiry into a parent's perception of their child

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Dedicated to my dearly loved late parents

Lavinia Rose and Francis Gregory Thomas Cox,

with grateful thanks for an idyllic childhood; the foundation of everything.

Also to my wonderful husband Michael James Walsh

for his truly outstanding support.

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CANDIDATE AND SUBMITTED WITH THE THESIS

Children and young people with challenging behaviour who are permanently excluded from school include a disproportionate percentage of children and young people from particular groups including boys and those with special educational needs (Atkinson, 2011). Using a single case study design, a narrative inquiry was conducted into how a parent perceives their child. During a voice recorded interview with the researcher the parent told the biographical story of their permanently excluded son who showed challenging behaviour but also had special educational needs. The parent's narrative was organised by the parent using a framework which facilitated a story of three hours in length. Following transcription, the Research Text was analysed using the poetic structural approach of Gee (1991), involving analysis at five levels. In some respects, the parent's narrative echoed the findings of some other research (Atkinson, 2011, 2012) as the parent made reference to her son being sent home from school, receiving fixed term exclusion, being placed on a part-time timetable, and eventually receiving a permanent exclusion from school and being sent to a Pupil Referral Unit to continue his education. In other respects the parent's narrative provided a unique understanding of her journey, experiences and emotions during the events that happened to her son. The emotional impact on the parent of her son's permanent exclusion from school and her use of the term 'we' to describe events that would usually be regarded as having happened to her son are new insights to the field offered by this research. There are implications for national policy in England regarding informal 'sending home', and implications for schools regarding earlier involvement of educational psychologists for children showing behaviour that schools find challenging. The extent to which the parent felt that her parenting was open to criticism due to her son displaying challenging behaviour, her need to defend her parenting, and the shift from collaborative work with school to being critical of school, are all aspects of the analysed narrative which have implications for educational psychologists. Finally, insight from Narrative Therapy is consistent with some currently implemented approaches and offers opportunities for early intervention with parents and teachers of children with challenging behaviour at school.

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Glossary

BESD	Behaviour Emotion Social Disorder
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Canonical Narratives	socially acceptable stories
Challenging Behaviour	behaviour which is perceived as challenging by others
Dominant story	a story which affects us presently and has implications for our future actions
EBD	Emotional Behaviour Disorder
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EFA	Education Funding Agency
False Start	a phrase started in speech but not completed
Glide	words not given emphasis in speech
Hesitation	pauses or sounds such as 'umm', 'err', 'mm' in speech
Idea Unit	a phrase including at least one pitch-glide
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local Authority
Life History Grid	an organising framework that enables researcher and participant narrator to agree the area to be covered in a narrated story - it is a blank grid of eight boxes
Line	a numbered line(s) of text which is about the spoken equivalent of a sentence
Macro-analysis	identification of stanza, strophe and parts in the transcript of the narrative
Mainline comments	the main point being made within a stanza
Managed Move	an agreement between schools, parents, (and sometimes the LA) that a child experiencing difficulties with behaviour at his school will attend instead a different school

Micro-analysis	identification of pitch-glide, idea units, and lines in the transcript of the narrative
Narrative Inquiry	a narrative research method which values stories and uses a case-based narrative methodology and narrative analysis
Narrative Practice	interventions based on narrative therapy
Narrative Therapy	a story-based therapeutic approach within family therapy, based on the work of White and Epston (1990)
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
OCC	Office of the Children's Commissioner
Off- mainline	information within a stanza, other than mainline comment
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
Outsider Witness Practice	a term from narrative therapy which refers to an approach where the narrative therapist involves parents and teachers to support a child in strengthening an alternative and positive story
Part	a group of Strophe on a given topic
Permanent Exclusion	a child is prevented from attending their school permanently and their name removed from the school role
Pitch	words given emphasis in speech
Pitch-Glide focus	a unit of speech including words of emphasis and words not emphasised
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
Repair	a self-correction in speech, often occurring following a false start
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
Speech Disruptions	hesitations, false starts and repairs during speech
Stanza	a group of related lines on a topic in the transcript of a narrative

Subject Positions	The subject positions adopted by the narrator (I and We) and other subject positions used within the narrative (he, she, you, they)
Strophe	a pair of stanza on related topics such that an appropriate overall name can be given to the Strophe
Thin description	simplified stories in which simple explanations are given and previous events selected to support this thin description, ignoring events which do not support the description

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

'Narrative inquiry characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle'
(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.41)

1.1. The researcher's personal historical narrative on the challenging behaviour of children and young people

In order for the reader to understand the perspective of the researcher at the outset of this study, the following personal narrative is included as an explanation of the researcher's interest in the research focus. For clarity, use of the first person is made in this introductory chapter (Hart, 1998, p.182; McAdoo, 2009).

1.1.1. Personal experiences with challenging behaviour

The researcher's experiences with challenging behaviour began, as for many other people, in childhood. My first encounter with behaviour that I found challenging was as an infant school pupil in the Primary One class at the local primary school in a Scottish village. Duncan (not his real name) was a young boy who wore callipers on his legs, though I never knew why. When he was called out of his desk to see the teacher I would hear him get out of his seat and move forwards as he travelled to the front of the room between the single rows of desks (arranged in neat rows with pupils arranged in order from front to back, according to their achievement on the previous week's class test, the highest scoring pupils seated at the front). Pupils were not allowed to look behind them, but I learned that if I listened carefully to him approaching I could tell which aisle he was in, and I could move across my seat as far away from him as possible, in case he would choose me this time. When he paused, it was to kick under the desk at the feet and legs of chosen pupils as he passed by. With the metal callipers on his legs, and with him kicking

hard, it hurt. I never knew why he did it, or who he would choose, and I was puzzled that the teacher seemed never to know what he was doing.

Many years later as a young parent, I realised that I had no training, no experience and little knowledge about behaviour management, yet the commonly held assumption in society was that controlling the behaviour of my children was my responsibility.   At this stage all behaviour seemed challenging, especially the 'terrible two's'. Presumably I was not alone in these concerns - one recent survey (Moody, 2014) suggested that more than one fifth of parents worry about one of their children throwing a tantrum in public, and for some parents this leads to changes in their plans.

These early encounters with challenging behaviour served as only an introduction to more significant experiences with challenging behaviour later on. Following my initial training as a primary school teacher, I encountered experiences with children's behaviour in the classroom that I found more personally challenging than anything I'd experienced before. As a newly qualified teacher it felt that a significant contributory factor to my judged effectiveness as a teacher (both by me and by others) was the level of compliance shown by the children in my class. As a result, any non-compliance or misbehaviour could feel personally threatening, especially at first. The challenge of finding ways of preventing, pre-empting and dealing with the behaviour of pupils became a priority for me. Sometime later while working as a supply teacher, I remember clearly the afternoon when a metal waste paper bin was spun dangerously at great speed by Daniel (not his real name), across the year four classroom floor towards me.   My judgement at the time was that Daniel certainly did show challenging behaviour.

As I became a more experienced teacher, the management of behaviour did become easier. In a sixth form setting it seemed that behaviour in the classroom was no longer something in need of much attention. I assumed that the more mature students in the sixth form always showed positive behaviour. However, when a student teacher took over my classes for a few weeks, I listened in amazement at the difficulties he encountered in managing the behaviour of psychology students who had previously been positive role models for behaviour. It seemed that these sixth formers showed challenging behaviour.

1.1.2. Professional experiences with challenging behaviour as an educational psychologist

In my later training and career as an educational psychologist, I began to grapple with the complexity of issues around behaviour. Remembering my early experiences as a teacher, I understood that school enthusiasm to deal quickly and decisively with any challenging behaviour was fuelled to some extent by a need to show that staff were in control. Also, I appreciated that sometimes there was fear by senior school managers, that challenging behaviour might 'spread', perhaps lead to a situation that no-one could deal with; perhaps a situation that could 'bring down' a school; make children feel unsafe and parents lack confidence; or lead to adverse judgements about the school from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

But quick and decisive action in schools did not always allow for consideration of the potential underlying causal factors of challenging behaviour. As a psychologist, the actions of some staff sometimes seemed vengeful, rather than actions to correct future behaviour. Sometimes, there seemed to be an assumption by staff that challenging behaviour always arose from anger, that Anger Management work

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was always the remedy, with no consideration if it might sometimes be more appropriate to attempt to remove the cause of the anger.

On some occasions, parents seemed disempowered in interactions with school staff once challenging behaviour occurred in school. Sometimes parents confided feeling pressured to attend courses for parents to strengthen their behaviour management of their child. Sometimes, more confident parents challenged such an assumption by school - and argued that further parental training on behaviour was unlikely to help teachers to manage their child at school.

Sometimes I wondered if joint work between school staff and the parents of pupils with challenging behaviour might focus prematurely or inappropriately on aiming to obtain various medical labels for a child, or to obtain a special school placement.

In other cases, I sometimes wondered why earlier positive intervention seemed not to have been considered for some children and young people with challenging behaviour. Some children and young people had made numerous 'managed moves' prior to any request for educational psychologist involvement. As a result educational psychologists became involved so late in the process that others already had very fixed ideas that statutory assessment and a place in special provision was necessary for the child. I wondered if, with earlier involvement regarding these children, a different outcome might have been possible. I was not alone in these thoughts, other educational psychologists working in different local authorities asked some very similar questions (Hobbs et al., 2012).

A phrase uttered by some parents was 'the school are doing all they can', (though others would sometimes also privately confide more negative feelings of

unfairness at the school that fixed-term excluded their son / daughter). However, even when they didn't agree with schools, parents often loyally acknowledged that they understood the actions of a school.

In contrast, in work with parents of permanently excluded pupils there was sometimes animosity by parents towards their child's previous school. This led me to consider if there was a shift in parental views at the time of permanent exclusion, or if there was some insincerity in the parent's previous support of school.

I felt that the whole issue of behaviour of children and young people was very complex, and although much researched, left many problems remaining for everyone; for the young people with challenging behaviour, their classmates, siblings, parents, teachers, and head teachers. In some cases, behaviour can also be a problem for local authorities, for politicians, and for government.

And then, I began to read about narrative therapy, an approach reportedly being applied with some success with some children with long standing challenging behaviour (Morgan, 2000). I wondered what stories parents told of their children and what stories children held about themselves, and if these stories were influenced by their parents' stories about them. I began to consider if there was case to utilise this narrative practice as a fresh approach to early intervention with parents of very young children, to pre-empt the development of unhelpful stories about their sons / daughters.

1.2. Amplification of the title

The title of this thesis is "Permanently excluded and perceived as challenging: a narrative inquiry into a parent's perception of their child". In this section the title of the thesis is amplified to provide the reader with a more detailed explanation of its meaning.

1.2.1. Definition of challenging behaviour

The research reviewed highlighted that the behaviour of some children and young people is of common interest to other children, parents, teachers, educational psychologists and governments. Yet there seems to be no consensus on a common term to describe such behaviour, or even a common definition.

A variety of categories or labels for behaviour have been used over time in government documents. For example, 'maladjusted' (Ministry of Education, 1945), 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'(EBD) (DfE, 1994), 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties' (BESD) (DES, 2001), and the more recent term 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs' (SEMH) (DfE, 2014c). Despite the variation in terms used to label difficult behaviour in these documents, the terms tend not to have been precisely defined. This could be due to a number of factors, for example; because it isn't possible to do so; because there are advantages to not doing so; or because there is a common belief that there is no need to do so.

Aside from official publications, other terms are in popular use to describe difficult behaviour. For example, a Google search for 'children behaviour' (25.05.15) elicited another set of popular terms from UK websites, including: 'difficult behaviour'(www.nhs.uk), 'challenging behaviour' (www.autism.org.uk, www.scie.org.uk) 'behaviour problems' and 'behavioural problems' (www.patient.co.uk), 'aggressive behaviour' (www.parents.co.uk), 'problem behaviour' (www.bbc.co.uk) and 'anti-social behaviour' (www.nice.org.uk). Again, these terms do not have precise definitions and it is plausible to suggest that perhaps all terms refer to the same types of behaviour.

Another set of medical /pseudo-medical terms imply behavioural deviation from the norm. These terms include named diagnosable conditions which affect observable behaviour and for which there are more precise definitions e.g. conduct disorder (CD),

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), as well as much less precisely defined terms such as mental health problems (www.mentalhealth.org.uk).

In order to be consistent, this study will use the term challenging behaviour as a means to indicate that behaviour perceived as challenging by others (including parents, teachers, and other professionals) is the focus of this study. In education, it is most likely that challenging behaviour will be perceived as challenging by teachers. Challenging behaviour as defined here includes behaviour along a continuum from low level disruptive behaviour which is trying for a teacher (for example continually tapping a pencil on a desk and continuing to do so when asked to stop), to much more serious behaviours where the physical well-being of others is threatened (for example during a threat of, or actual personal assault).

The term challenging behaviour is not intended to exclude any behaviour subsumed under any of the definitions above; the only requirement is that the behaviour is perceived as challenging by others.

The term challenging behaviour (as being used in the current study) is defined differently to the term '*challenging behaviour*' as used in the coded list of reasons for exclusion of children and young people from school (Cotzias, 2014). This is because the official document includes the term '*challenging behaviour*' as a subcategory of the '*persistent challenging behaviour*' category. Also, assault would be coded separately according to exclusion guidance (Cotzias, 2014) but in the current study is included within challenging behaviour. It is worth noting however, that one of the categories (illegal drug use) for which children and young people can receive exclusion from school, does not fall within the category challenging behaviour as defined in this study. While illegal drug use is undesirable it is not challenging behaviour as defined in the current study.

The definition of challenging behaviour as used in this study is all behaviour perceived as challenging by others.

1.2.2. Definition of permanent exclusion from school

When a child is permanently excluded from school, the child will no longer be eligible to attend the school from which they were permanently excluded, their name will be deleted from the school roll, and the child or young person will be provided with alternative arrangements for their schooling. The permanent exclusion is formally recorded by the school and the local authority and data reported to the Department for Education. The exclusion is recorded also on the electronic individual pupil record.

Following exclusion some children and young people are educated in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), or an alternative educational setting such as a mainstream or special school, or educated at home. For some excluded pupils initial temporary arrangements may be made in a PRU prior to later re-integration into another educational setting.

1.2.3. Why is this research based on permanently excluded pupils?

Most children and young people who receive exclusions from school do so because of something that they've done. As stated in the literature, '*exclusion usually happens because of a child's behaviour*' (Atkinson, 2012 p.8). At least one of the child or young person's behavioural actions has been cited as the reason for the exclusion. In some cases the exclusion has been given due to repeated actions, for example 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (Cotzias, 2014).

While not all children with challenging behaviour will be permanently excluded from school, almost all children permanently excluded from school will have challenging behaviour as defined in this study, as behaviour perceived as challenging to others. By focussing this study on children and young people who have been permanently excluded from school, but omitting from this study those who have been excluded from school for

drug related incidents, the assumption is that all of the children have some degree of challenging behaviour as perceived by staff at school. However, it is anticipated that this will not necessarily be a view shared by parents of the permanently excluded child or young person.

As the research design is to ask parents to tell the story of their child, it is anticipated that narratives might be more richly developed in cases of permanent exclusion, than in cases of fixed term exclusion which typically occurs earlier on. Many of these children and young people will have experienced fixed term exclusions and managed moves prior to the permanent exclusion, and so any influence of these events may be evident in the narratives of parents of children and young people permanently excluded from school.

1.2.4. What are parental narratives?

Parental narratives about their children and young people who have been excluded from school, are biographical accounts, stories of the child or young person from the parent's perspective. The parent chooses the content of the narrative and chooses which information to include or exclude from the narrative.

1.2.5. Why does this research seek parental narratives?

The reason for seeking parental narratives in this research is to discover the nature of the stories that a parent tells about their child with challenging behaviour. There are several reasons for doing this.

1.2.5.1. Parental narratives: the parental viewpoint

Firstly, parental narratives about their children are likely to indicate whether parents view the child as having challenging behaviour. As these are parents of children and young people who have been excluded from school, all of the children and young people are presumed to have challenging behaviour from the school perspective. The first point

of interest is whether parents also view the child or young person as having challenging behaviour.

1.2.5.2. Parental narratives: the history

Secondly, if parents do view the child or young person as having challenging behaviour, it is interesting to know what led to this view, when it first arose, whether it is the parent's view of the child from birth, or if certain events in childhood led to the development of the view of the child or young person as one with challenging behaviour.

1.2.5.3. Parental narratives: influence on the child's identity?

Thirdly, it is interesting to know what stories children and young people with challenging behaviour might have heard about themselves from their parents. This is important because it has been proposed (Harre, 1979), that identity is influenced by narratives about the self, conveyed back to the individual.

1.2.5.4. Parental narratives: a source of early intervention?

Finally, is the issue of whether analysis of parental narratives implies that there are opportunities for early intervention for challenging behaviour using practice informed by narrative therapy (narrative practice) with parents, in contrast to the more usual approach of working directly with the child or young person. Such an approach might facilitate earlier intervention or indirect intervention for children with challenging behaviour, at a time when they might not have the language skills or maturity necessary to engage with narrative practice.

There is evidence that narrative practice can be powerful when used with children and young people construed as having challenging behaviour (Walther & Fox, 2012). In narrative practice, a negative dominant story held by the child about themselves would be gradually replaced through thickening (elaborating and strengthening with further evidence) an alternative positive story that the child holds about themselves. The story

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would be made thicker by seeking evidence to support it, and perhaps through a technique known as 'outsider witness practice', an approach in which adults, perhaps parents, would be invited in to hear the child's alternative story about themselves and enrich it with further evidence (Walther & Fox, 2012).

If narrative therapy, including outsider witness practice, could be successful, I wondered about the role of parents in strengthening a negative account held by a child / young person in cases where narrative therapy does not take place.

While working as an educational psychologist, I have found that teachers sometimes describe parents as 'supportive of school' (that is, in agreement with the school view), or as 'unsupportive' (not in agreement with the school view). When children and young people show challenging behaviour there is often a culture of parents and school working together. In my work, I have sometimes been surprised at the extent to which parents are accepting of school accounts of their child. Sometimes I have felt surprised at the negative tone of descriptions of children and young people made by their parents to school, though this is perhaps more likely to occur in cases where parents are also experiencing difficulty in coping with the child / young person at home.

I wondered if it was possible to work with parents to thicken positive description of their young children, as potentially this might lead to change in the life path of children showing challenging behaviour.

1.2.6. What is narrative inquiry?

Narrative inquiry is a research method which values the stories of participants and seeks to understand the experience of participants. It is a post-modern approach to research, that shifts the emphasis away from the requirements of positivist and empiricist methodologies for control by the researcher, towards an acceptance of researcher

participation, even co-construction of story (through asking particular questions) in narrative interviews.

It is essential to be clear at the outset that narrative inquiry, involving narrative methodology and narrative analysis, as a research method within the narrative paradigm to research, is distinct from narrative practice, a therapeutic term used elsewhere in this report.

1.2.7. Definition of narrative practice

The term narrative practice is used within the literature review and elsewhere, when referring to interventions based on narrative therapy, an approach based on work within family therapy (White & Epston, 1990); a therapeutic (story based) approach.

Narrative therapy is a therapeutic person-centred approach in which problems are viewed as separate from people (White & Epston, 1990). The term narrative therapy can refer to '*ways of understanding people's identities*', '*ways of understanding problems*'; '*particular ways of speaking with people about their lives and problems they may be experiencing*'(Morgan, 2000, p.2). Case study literature includes examples of successful narrative therapy in long standing complex cases of challenging behaviour (Morgan, 2000).

The objective of an approach informed by narrative therapy (narrative practice) would be to thicken alternative stories which do not support or sustain the problem. So when applied to challenging behaviour, narrative practice provides a mechanism to discover an alternative story, to strengthen and develop a rich picture of a more positive account of a child or young person, who was previously deterministically described in terms of their most negative behaviours.

In narrative therapy, alternatives to the problematic and dominant story are sought. Then there are attempts to try to strengthen these preferred accounts, including using an approach such as outsider witness practice (Walther & Fox, 2012).

1.3. The relevance of this topic to educational psychology and education

It is suggested (Morgan, 2000) that we all hold many stories about ourselves and about our lives, and these occur simultaneously. The stories have arisen from our linking certain events together in a sequence and giving meaning to them.

Some stories can be described as stories with thin description (Morgan, 2000, p.12), these are simplified stories in which simple explanations are given and previous events selected to support this thin description, while ignoring other events which do not fit this simplified version of events. Although we may hold multiple stories, some stories may become dominant stories in our lives, affect us in the present and have implications for our future actions. This is because sometimes people come to understand their own lives through these thin descriptions provided by others, with significant consequences for their lives and identity formation. As a result, stories hold a central place in narrative ways of working.

Walther and Fox (2012) explain that when problem stories become dominant, they define and limit the self. They speculate that the mechanism for a problem story to become dominant includes written accounts by educational professionals (including educational psychologists), documentation of school events and teacher opinions and the circulation of these documents throughout an 'educational career'.

This implies that educational psychologists and other educational professionals, despite their attempts to be helpful, could inadvertently be part of the problem for children with challenging behaviour in education.

Whether educational psychologists could be more effective in reducing the incidence of challenging behaviour in schools through use of narrative practice as an early intervention, perhaps prior to school entry is worthy of consideration.

This would not be a conventional use of narrative therapy which currently takes place directly with the individual child or young person. Rather it would be an application of narrative therapy to work with parents. During outsider witness practice, narrative therapists already involve parents in supporting children and young people to strengthen alternative and positive accounts of the self. Perhaps intervention using narrative practice could take place as soon as challenging behaviour is perceived by a parent or school, to support development of a positive parental account of the child?

Seeking parent's narrative about their children with challenging behaviour who have been permanently excluded from school is the first step in investigating the feasibility of such a possibility. How parents describe their child with challenging behaviour in a biographical narrative is the focus of the study to follow.

1.4. Introduction to the remainder of this thesis including implications of a narrative inquiry approach for the structure and content of this research report

Narrative inquiry uses a case-based methodology. This is in common with the research of influential psychologists such as Freud (1909), Skinner (1953), and (Piaget, 1963). The research to follow is a case study within a narrative paradigm; a narrative inquiry. A narrative methodology has been used, including narrative analysis of results.

In contrast to some reports of narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) this report aims to utilise familiar and conventional report headings to support the reader in navigating the report, with the intention of the headings used having a familiarity to a reader familiar with the conventional format for reporting research. Taking such an

approach is to acknowledge the dominance and influence of formal research formats in the academic world.

However, as the research study reported here is a narrative inquiry, there are a number of divergences within this report, from the conventional presentation of a formalistic research report. This is entirely intentional and consistent with a narrative inquiry approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.41). Beyond the familiar report headings, including a review of literature with a focus on challenging behaviour (which provides a research context and background for this study), the reader will be aware of contrasts with formally anticipated styles of writing.

As stated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

> *'The contribution of a narrative inquiry is more often intended to be the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic than it is to yield a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field' (p.42)*

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

'We live our lives according to the stories we tell ourselves and the stories that others tell about us' (Winslade & Monk, 2007, p.2)

2.1. Introduction to the literature review

2.1.1. Conduct of the literature review

The literature review began with informal reading around the topic of behaviour, aided by identification of resources from literature searches as indicated below. This reading encompassed research from a wide range of approaches, from more conventional quasi-experimental designs to post-modern approaches to research including narrative inquiry. At the outset, the intention was to review literature about behaviour in the widest sense. However due to the very large field of research about behaviour, it was necessary to be selective. Inevitably, the pathway followed to some extent my interests in the field of behaviour, prior views based on professional experience as well as later insights gained from this wider reading of the research of others. In a sense, this literature review is my narrative of my selected pathway through the vast literature on behaviour; a pathway which led ultimately to the decision to conduct a narrative inquiry.

2.1.2. Content of the literature review

This literature review begins with a summary and justification for the literature search and this is followed by the literature review, presented in five further sections (2.3. to 2.7). The chapter concludes with the research aim.

The first section provides a summary of research into the origins of, and contributory factors, to challenging behaviour of children and young people, initially organised into within-child and without-child perspectives, a distinction proposed by Visser and Rayner (1999). This is followed by an examination of research into attributions for challenging

behaviour at school, and then an examination of the influences of teacher and school factors on children and young people with challenging behaviour.

The second section of the literature review initially focusses on the escalation of challenging behaviour in school, prior to a summary of data about exclusion from school, including rates of exclusion, and reasons for exclusion, with a particular focus on exclusion from schools in England. This section includes a summary of some of the research carried out by The Office of The Children's Commissioner for England during their focus on exclusion.

The third section of the literature review is focussed on challenging behaviour in the home setting and research into the role of parent's cognitions.

The fourth section begins with a discussion of discourse about behaviour, including dominant stories in society, followed by examination of the role of internalised social forces and the role of positioning. Then narrative practice is introduced and family interventions for challenging behaviour using narrative practice are discussed.

In the fifth section of the literature review, parental and family narratives about children with challenging behaviour are discussed and research into parent views summarised. Finally there is a summary of research using narrative inquiry interviews with parents of excluded children and young people. This is followed by a brief outline of the current research study, and the research aim.

2.1.3. Justification for the areas reviewed and not reviewed

The scale of available research literature about behaviour is immense. Despite a narrowing of search criteria (as explained in the next section), a wide range of theories and research relevant to the current study were identified. Some research is from a more positivist tradition, for example the quantitative statistical reports about exclusion

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rates. Other research is of a more qualitative nature, including interviews and questionnaires related to attributions about causes of challenging behaviour. Later research in this literature review is from a post- modern perspective, including evidence from narrative practice and examples of other research completed using narrative inquiry.

As the title indicates, both research into challenging behaviour at school and research into challenging behaviour at home are of interest to the researcher, as shown by the decision to interview parents about children and young people who have shown challenging behaviour in a school setting to the extent that they have received permanent exclusion from school. Examples of research are included from a within-child and a without-child perspective. Examples of attributions for challenging behaviour are included from the viewpoint of parent, teacher and child / young person.

As the current study is based around permanently excluded pupils, research into fixed term exclusion, managed moves and permanent exclusion is included, as pupils who are permanently excluded from school may have experienced fixed term exclusion or managed moves prior to the permanent exclusion. The detailed focus on exclusion data is confined to exclusion in England which is the context in which the current study has been carried out. However, for completeness the exclusion rates in England have been compared in some cases with exclusion rates elsewhere in the world. The limitations of exclusion data in England have also been discussed in the context of project work on exclusion by the Children's Commissioner for England.

The role of parental cognitions in responding to the behaviour of their children is included. Inclusion of research into the discourse about challenging behaviour and dominant stories about challenging behaviour are included as these may influence the

thoughts, feelings and responses of parents, and influence the biographical narratives

parents tell about their sons / daughters.

Theories and research about positioning, narrative therapy and narrative practice are

included as these arguments are likely to be pertinent to the biographical narratives that

parents tell about their sons / daughters. Family interventions for challenging behaviour

are also included as a context for the current research, which is in a loose sense, an

intervention within the family, as parents might not have had opportunity or cause, to

tell the entire life story of their child, if not invited to participate in the current study.

As this study is collecting parental narratives, inclusion of family and parental narratives

is particularly pertinent and so is included. Research not linked to the areas outlined

above was excluded from the review.

Finally, other examples of narrative inquiry interviews with parents are included,

followed by the research aim and questions. It could be argued the current study lies at

the edge of the formalistic boundary, a term proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

to describe the boundary between the formal inquiry that begins with theory and the

narrative inquiry that begins with story, as a description of life and experience.

2.2.   Literature search

An initial literature search was made using the Psych INFO database for combinations of

the following search terms; behaviour, children and young people, school, exclusion,

parents, views, beliefs, attributions, challenging behaviour, disruptive behaviour. Large

numbers of research articles in peer reviewed journals and academic books were

identified from these initial searches. For example, a search for the term 'behaviour'

identified 910,005 publications on 12.04.15. Similarly searches for other terms and

combinations of terms identified links to numerous articles and books, only some of

which were of interest. For instance, the number of links for each search is shown in brackets following the terms used for the initial search of the literature (numbers as at 12.04.15); 'children and young people' (5624); 'school' (325,547); 'exclusion' (12182); 'parents' (74440). Use of combinations of terms identified links as follows; 'behaviour' AND 'children and young people' (29); 'school' AND 'exclusion' (1267); 'behaviour' AND 'children and young people' AND 'school' AND 'exclusion' (0).

Later literature searches also with Psych INFO, additionally included combinations of the following search terms (number of publications in brackets, as of 12.04.15); 'suspension' (an alternative name for exclusion used outside the UK), with explosion to cover related terms (406), 'fixed term exclusion' (1) or with explosion to cover related terms (78795), permanent exclusion (17), managed move (2), stories and narrative (37257). Combinations of terms were used in searches including: parents, narratives, views, beliefs, attributions, challenging behaviour, disruptive behaviour, behaviour, stories, narrative, managed move, fixed term exclusion, permanent exclusion, suspension, children and young people. Some combinations of search terms led to numerous publications, for example, a search for 'behaviour' AND 'parents' AND 'views' yielded 343 links to publications.

Publications of narrative research were accessed via a different database, the Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts (LLBA). Additionally Google Scholar was used, searching with the same terms as used with Psych INFO. Access to government sites, for example to access exclusion rates, codes of practice for special educational needs and publications by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, was made via Google.

Further searches were made using the Voyager library catalogue at Cardiff University, the e-library, and On-line Research at Cardiff (ORCA).

The literature searches revealed a wealth of research into behaviour. This included many examples of adult views of the behaviour of children and young people (Croll & Moses, 1985; Miller, 1995; Miller, Ferguson, & Moore, 2002), including parent views of the causes of behaviour (Miller, 2003). Mostly this was qualitative research data collected by questionnaire and interview. The search was narrowed down to sources focussed more closely on parents' views, beliefs, narratives, stories, behaviour and exclusion from school. In the main, research tended not to be narrative inquiry studies, and tended not to include parents' views of the child, but to focus on for instance, the parent's view of exclusion (Allen-Glass, 2013).

No research was identified that elicited the story of the child over the life span in relation to behaviour, from the parents' perspective.

2.3. The origins of and contributory factors to challenging behaviour of children and young people

The contributory factors to challenging behaviour have been the focus of the research literature from a number of perspectives, including heredity and environmental factors as discussed by Travell (1999), teacher behaviour (Cowley, 2003), skill deficits (Greene, 2005), trauma (Bomber, 2007), unresolved problems (Greene, 2008) and relationships (Roffey, 2011). Some research has explored factors which may be correlated with the challenging behaviour of a child within the family, for example Herring et al. (2006). Other research has approached challenging behaviour from the school perspective, and sought interventions and strategies to improve the management of behaviour in school (Cowley, 2003; Roffey, 2011). This vast literature from a range of perspectives has provided useful insights into challenging behaviour.

A review of this research into challenging behaviour in home and school settings indicates two fundamental competing arguments underlying explanations for behaviour,

each aligned with one of the competing perspectives of the nature-nurture argument. These were referred to as the within-child perspective and the without-child perspective by Visser and Rayner (1999).

2.3.1. The within-child perspective

According to the within-child perspective (Visser & Rayner, 1999), challenging behaviour is viewed as emanating from the child. This perspective tends to lead to explanations about a child in terms of deficits, a need to change the child in some way, or an argument for an alternative educational pathway.

Travell (1999) argues that Emotional Behaviour Disorder (EBD), Behavioural Emotional Social Disorder (BESD), Social Emotion and Mental Health (SEMH) are constructions, constructed by "*adults working within the education system in an attempt to define and intervene with difficulties presented to the system by children who do not fit, or who challenge its rules*" (p. 14).

When behaviour is viewed as within-child, and the child labelled with EBD, it has been argued by Travell (1999) that this influences many other factors, including: how the child is treated by others from then on; the beliefs that others will have about the child; how the child will view him/herself; and Travell (1999) suggested that this may as a result, impact on the child's future behaviour. A strength of the work of Travell (1999) is that it recognises that the causes of behaviour may be both complex and subtle.

Since publication of the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 2014c) which is specific to England only, behaviour is no longer listed as a category of need. There is the potential for this to influence labels applied to children and young people in future, and a label of 'mental health needs' or 'SEMH' are both possibilities.

There is a lack of reliable data about the incidence rate of mental disorders in children and young people (NHSEngland, 2014). However, some local authorities, for example Leicester City Council have re-launched the previous local authority 'Behaviour Support Team' as a 'Primary School Social, Emotional & Mental Health Team' (Leicester City Council: Education and Learning, 2014). Arguably this is to venture closer to a within-child perspective in classifying the behaviour of children and young people in schools, and perhaps towards a further alignment of constructions about behaviour with constructions about diagnosable conditions. The potential difficulties of such an approach was expressed eloquently by Miller (2003) when he stated that: "*the problem is not that these perspectives are 'wrong', but that they give an unequivocal message, not necessarily intentionally, that the difficulties are lodged deeply and totally with the pupil*" (p. 16).

2.3.2. The without-child perspective

According to the without-child perspective (Visser & Rayner, 1999), environmental factors are viewed as the source of challenging behaviour. Research falls into two camps - that which attributes the cause of challenging behaviour to parents and the home setting (Miller, 1995, 1999, 2003), and that which attributes the cause of challenging behaviour to schools (Miller, 1999).

In a summary of a set of studies into the concordance of views on the presence of behaviour problems (Miller, 1999), it was concluded that "*only a minority of children seen by one party in their particular setting (for example by parents in the home setting) are seen by the other party as having difficulties in the other setting*" (p. 76). This would seem to imply that behaviour has, at its origin, without-child factors, with behaviour varying according to setting and influences at the time. However it is also possible that there are

distinct differences in the behavioural expectations of parents at home and teachers at school.

2.3.3. Attributions for the cause of challenging behaviour in schools

Analysis of the attributions of parents, attributions of teachers and attributions of children and young people about the causes of challenging behaviour, has taken place in research over time by a number of researchers (Allen, 1999; Gribble, 1999; Miller, 1995, 1999, 2003; Miller, Ferguson, & Byrne, 2000; Miller, Ferguson, & Moore, 2002). Such evidence suggests that there are differences between the attributions of teachers, parents and children and young people about the causes of challenging behaviour (Miller, 2003). There is evidence that each party sometimes holds blaming attributions about the other, with teachers attributing behaviour to "home factors", and parents attributing behaviour to "teacher fairness" (Miller, 2003).

However, other views are shared. For example, in research reported by Miller (2003), both teachers and pupils attribute behaviour to "*family circumstances*" and both parents and pupil's attribute behaviour to "*teacher fairness*" (p.153). This particular finding implies that pupils may have some insight into the complexity of the origins of their behaviour that is not shared by teachers and parents. This provides evidence in support of drives to include the voice of the pupil, for example in Education Health and Care assessments. A distinct difference in culture between home and school settings might be an example of a situation that could lead to such a finding.

As pointed out by Miller (1999), it would be regarded as "*inappropriate*" (p.76) for parents of children with literacy difficulties to be blamed for their child's difficulties, and "*unthinkable*" (p.76) for parents to be blamed for their child's severe or profound difficulties, yet the Elton Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989) stated that when it comes to behaviour, "*many teachers feel that parents are to blame for much*

misbehaviour in school" (Department of Education and Science, 1989, p.193) and added "*we consider that, while this picture contains an element of truth, it is distorted"* (p. 193). However, one can perhaps imagine the sense of stigma that a parent of a child who shows challenging behaviour might experience, on reading such a phrase in a government document. It is possible that in turn, any such feeling of stigma may influence the future thoughts, beliefs, feelings, constructions and actions of the parent.

Miller (2003) argued that on empirical and anecdotal grounds, "*schools and teachers can, with or without the support of others, move pupils some distance along the DfE's spectrum – in either direction*" (p. 14). The spectrum of behaviour to which Miller (2003) refers, is one which at one end has disruptive and naughty behaviour, then progressing to EBD, then severe mental illness at the other. The impact of the changed categories of need within the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfE, 2014c) may already be having some influence on how behaviour is viewed. This change in categorisation may lead to behaviour being viewed more often than previously, as at the end of the spectrum, as a mental illness. There is also the potential for the label SEMH to become a synonym for mental health needs or mental illness.

2.3.4. An eco-systemic approach to behaviour

An eco-systemic approach in which behaviour is viewed as the product of negative social and environmental influences was proposed by Cooper and Upton (1991), who argued that the approach had implications for pastoral work in schools. According to the eco-systemic approach, schools, families and other organisations can become self-regulating systems and function in ways corresponding to natural ecosystems. Individuals can become trapped in repetitive interactional patterns which act to preserve the ecosystem. However, changes in one part of the ecosystem result in change in the whole ecosystem. As a result, Cooper and Upton (1991) argued that eco-systemic approaches, were worthy

of further investigation. According to an eco-systemic approach the origin of challenging behaviour would be seen to be the interaction between the individual and others, for example interaction between the child showing challenging behaviour and his/her parents and teachers. They proposed that a family therapist would be a suitable professional to organise a family-school interview at which an intervention strategy would be developed. While this approach has much to offer schools, and there are successful records of the use of this approach (Power & Bartholomew, 1985), there is limited availability of family therapists in England and these skills do not form part of the basic training for educational psychologists. Use of this kind of approach is in some ways in direct opposition to the "punitive impulse" in government documents such as The Elton Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989) and more recent government publications (DfE, 2014a).

An ecosystemic intervention described by Power and Bartholomew (1985) was a complex, time-consuming and multi-professional successful intervention by a multi-professional Child Study Team. Although the intervention was successful, the paper indicates in its conclusion that the team were not given credit for the success of their intervention, rather this was taken by the principal and teacher. While this shows the success of the approach in reaching a conclusion that all were happy with, it poses a problem for generalising such an approach, if other professionals involved do not recognise the role played by professionals in the intervention. As a result, resources become less likely to be invested in multi-agency teams of this kind. Indeed, such multi-professional teams of psychologist, social worker and learning consultant is not an established way of working in all local authorities in England in the current day.

2.3.5. Teacher and school factors

Multiple interventions are sometimes sought by school and parents during a period in which challenging behaviour becomes more problematic in the school setting. These may include interventions focussed on changing the behaviour of the child directly (such as anger management training), on increasing parental behavioural strategies (such as parent behaviour training), or on changing teacher strategies (such as in-service behaviour training). Sometimes one or more of these approaches is at least partially successful, but it could be argued that there remain a group of young people for whom the escalation in challenging behaviour seems to be of sufficient pace that there is no deceleration in the escalation of problems.

For children and young people there is the potential for interaction of a number of within-child, parental and school factors to occur (Howell, 1998). This interaction could potentially increase the likelihood of the occurrence of challenging behaviour and affect the response made to the challenging behaviour by parents and teachers (Cooper & Upton, 1991). Furthermore, the actions taken to address the behaviour are likely to depend on the constructions of those taking the action, and whether they see the behaviour as arising from within-child or without-child factors. Factors as diverse as the whole school behaviour policy and the level of personal stress of the teacher (Gribble, 1999) , the mental health of parents (White & Barrowclough, 1998) and the unresolved problems of children (Greene, 2005) can directly and indirectly impact on the behaviour of a child. It could be argued that there results a complex interaction of discrete and related factors which seem difficult to separate out to facilitate intervention.

2.4. Escalation in behaviour and exclusion from school

As steps are taken in school to meet the needs of children and young people with challenging behaviour, through interventions such as Individual Behaviour Plans and

report targets, it is likely that the children and young people with challenging behaviour will be expected to make significant progress in the areas in which they experience most difficulty (Howard, 1999). But for some children, the difficulty of arresting the effect of the interacting range of factors which contribute to challenging behaviour, contributes to a negative conclusion (Gribble, 1999; Miller, 1995, 2003).

Teachers may be adversely affected by dealing with a child or young person with challenging behaviour. Miller (2003) argued that the adverse effects on a teacher of a child or young person with challenging behaviour "*should not be underestimated*" (p.17) as teachers may feel "*defeated, less competent than colleagues, or exhausted*" (p.17), and as result, "*have little or no sympathy for a pupil who has made their life a misery*" (p.17). This may lead to rapid progression through the stages of the Code of Practice, generating much evidence of failed interventions building and reinforcing a negative picture of the pupil (Miller, 2003). It has also been noted, rather pessimistically, that in some instances when successful strategies are identified by individual teachers, they don't pass on this information to other teachers experiencing similar difficulties (Miller, 2003).

There are pressures on schools to be successful as measured against a range of performance criteria, for example as defined by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). With threatened penalties for failure, there is a tendency for the removal of children and young people who display challenging behaviour, to be viewed as more beneficial to the school, than are efforts to meet their needs (Howard, 1999). Sometimes there is a spiralling effect, a worsening of the challenging behaviour, (or a decrease in adults capacity for coping with the challenging behaviour), and repeated fixed term exclusion (suspension) from school can occur, sometimes followed by permanent exclusion from school (Cotzias, 2014).

From the perspective of the school staff, it can be argued that exclusion of the young person displaying challenging behaviour; may serve as a warning that behaviour was inappropriate and will not be tolerated in future; is a punishment to reduce the likelihood of the behaviour occurring again; is a sign to other pupils and their parents that the school is in control and conveying its disapproval of the behaviour. It can be argued that from the perspective of the pupil, exclusion can be perceived as unfairness, victimisation, and injustice.

In view of the disproportionate number of pupils with special educational needs who are excluded (Cotzias, 2014) it is possible that this group in particular, have difficulties in understanding the reasons for exclusion. If they do understand, there is the potential for them to develop more negative views of the self, and if they don't, to hold more negative views of school, and teachers. It can be argued that neither would seem to be desirable. However, for parents, a range of emotions may arise from exclusion of their child from school. Additionally, on a practical level, parents may be inconvenienced by the exclusion and it may interrupt work patterns and perhaps lead to financial disadvantage for the excluded pupil and the rest of the family.

2.4.1. Managed moves

In some cases, managed moves which provide a form of 'fresh start' at a neighbouring school, are attempted in order to avoid excluding a child. Managed moves (Vincent, Harris, Thomsdon, & Toalster, 2007) are a collaborative process between a group of schools, to cater for children and young people at risk of exclusion from one of the schools. Interview data from pupils, parents and staff from seven secondary schools (each school collaborating in a scheme to take collective responsibility for the support of, and provision for excluded pupils in a geographical area through managed moves) suggests that it is possible to re-engage 'at risk' pupils through "*tailored support, care and*

commitment" (p. 283). However, researchers emphasised that of prime importance was the process of managed moves, rather than the move itself (Vincent et al., 2007).

Varied practice in managed moves between different parts of England was commented on in the School Exclusions Inquiry (Atkinson, 2012 para. 9). The inquiry found that a "*more formal and closely monitored process*" (para. 10) is preferable for a child (as compared to an informally negotiated move agreed between head teachers).

Although in some cases, for some pupils, a managed move seemed to be cause of success in reintegrating a pupil, it was found by Vincent et al. (2007), that in other cases it seemed that an inclusive ethos in a school was also a very important factor, with disaffection being more likely to occur in situations where children and young people are experiencing difficulties in accessing the curriculum.

2.4.2. Exclusion facts and figures

Nationally, statistical data for England indicated that exclusion rates were in decline until 2012-13 but more recent data for 2014-15 has shown an increase in rate of exclusions. Changes to ways of reporting exclusion data limits the extent to which absolute comparisons between years before and after 2012-2013 can be made. For the academic year 2014-2015, variations in rates of exclusions by local authority were also published.

Statistical data published by the Department of Education (Clarke, 2012; Cotzias, 2014; DfE, 2012, 2014b) indicates that the rate of permanent exclusions declined year on year, from 9 per 10,000 students to 6 per 10,000 students between 2008-9 and 2013-4. By 2014-15 this had increased to 7 pupils per 10,000 (DfE, 2016a).

Over the same period the number of fixed term exclusions declined year on year until 2011-12 then increased again in 2012-13, ranging between 304370 (in 2011-12) and 363280 (in 2008-9). As measured by the number of pupils who have been excluded,

there was a year on year decrease between 2008-9 and 2012-13. Over this period the rate of fixed term exclusion dropped from 262 pupils per 10,000 pupils to 192 pupils per 10,000 pupils. In 2013-14 3.5% of pupils received fixed term exclusions and this increased to 3.88% in 2014-15.

2.4.3.   Reasons for exclusion

Statistical data stated that there were 12 reasons for excluding children from school in England in 2012-2013 (Cotzias, 2014). These reasons included a number of behaviours which would fall into the definition of challenging behaviour as defined in the current study. For instance all of the following reasons for exclusion are consistent with challenging behaviour as defined in the current study as behaviour perceived as challenging by others: "bullying", "damage", "persistent disruptive behaviour", "physical assault against adult", "physical assault against pupil", "racist abuse", "sexual misconduct"; "theft", "verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against adult", "verbal abuse / threatening behaviour against pupil" (Cotzias, 2014, p.8). Additionally pupils may be excluded for "drug and alcohol related behaviour" including "drug dealing" and for "other" (a category which guidance suggests should be used sparingly) although these drug-related reasons for exclusion from school are excluded from the current study. Each category is broken down into the main reasons for including an exclusion within the given category. One subgroup of "persistent disruptive behaviour" is "challenging behaviour". However, the term challenging behaviour as used in the current study is behaviour perceived as challenging by others.

While all of the reasons for exclusion are examples of undesirable behaviour by a young person, the main reasons for using a category seem to vary quite significantly in severity. For example, an exclusion given for "damage" could arise from "graffiti" or "arson", one given for "drug and alcohol related" could be due to "smoking", or to "drug dealing". So

knowing the category under which a child or young person has received exclusion, may tell us little about the severity of the behaviour, a situation which could be unfair to the individual. It could be argued for instance, that there is reason to be more concerned about exclusion for "arson", than for "graffiti", undesirable though both actions are. Similarly, behaviour which included "carrying an offensive weapon", or "threatened violence", is surely more serious in most cases than would be "swearing", unpleasant though the latter might be.

2.4.4. Exclusion from schools in England

Discrepancies in exclusion rates around the world are evidence of local and national decisions which set the context for exclusion. In fact England has the highest rate of exclusion in the UK, and neighbouring Scotland has significantly lower rates of exclusion from school than occur in England, as do Northern Ireland and most other countries in the world, with the exception of USA and Australia (Parsons, 2005). Exclusion data for 2014-2015 indicates that there are also significant variations in rates of exclusion by Local Authorities in England with percentage permanent exclusion rates between 0 to 0.03 and 0.11 to 0.27 and percentage fixed term exclusion rates between 0 to 2.84 and 4.80 to 15.82. The highest rates of permanent exclusion were recorded in the West Midlands region (0.11%) and the North West region (0.09%) in 2014-15.

We might expect that in more recent years, the data might be favourably affected by the Equality Act (2010), which introduced for the first time a Public Sector Equality Duty (Government Equalities Office, 2011) which was in force from 5 April 2011 . Whereby, for the first time, public sector organisations (including schools and local authorities) were required to ensure that their policies, procedures and the ways they deliver services did not discriminate and played their part in "*making society fairer*" (p.2).

However, Department for Education statistical data (Cotzias, 2014) indicates that in 2012 to 2013, children from some groups remain more likely to be excluded: boys (3 times more likely than girls); pupils with SEN (between 6 and 10 times more likely than pupils without SEN); pupils eligible for free school meals (up to 4 times more likely); and pupils from some ethnic groups are also more likely to be excluded. Similar patterns of data were reported for 2013-14 and 2014-15 which is a little surprising as the number of pupils with special educational needs declined over this period from over 1,500,000 to 1,228,785 by 2016, though the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plan remained static at 2.8%.

So during years in which there was an overall reduction in the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions, and implementation of the Equality Act (2010) including the Public Sector Equality Duty, by 2012 to 2013, there was little change in inequality-related risk of exclusion from schools in England. Similarly, despite a reduction in the number of pupils with special educational needs during years of increasing rates of exclusion (DfE, 2016b), those with special educational needs remain similarly disproportionately affected by exclusion.

Exclusion of pupils from schools in England was the topic of the first formal inquiry by the Children's Commissioner for England, a post created by the Children's Act 2004. The foreword to the subsequent report (Atkinson, 2012) outlined the reasons for the choice of topic: firstly that nine out of ten children and young people surveyed "*insisted that schools should never exclude a child*" (Atkinson, 2012, p.8); secondly, that while exclusion is a sanction used in England, it is not used to the same extent in other European countries; and thirdly, that "*some groups of children are far more likely to be excluded from school than others*", a fact that ill fits with "*claims of being an equal society that treats children on their merits*" (p.8).

Official government statistics show that; boys, children with some types of special educational needs, children from some specific ethnic backgrounds and children of poor parents, are excluded in far greater numbers; a situation described (Atkinson, 2012) as a "*scandal*". Based on the data,

> "*In 2009-10 if you were a Black African-Caribbean boy with special needs and eligible for free school meals you were 168 times more likely to be permanently excluded from a state-funded school than a White girl without special needs from a middle class family*" (p.9)

One argument is, that in the USA and Australia, exclusion is used as "*part of the weaponry necessary to keep order*" (Parsons, 2005, p.188) and aligned with this, exclusion is regarded as "*normal*" in the UK (p. 188). However in other countries, exclusion would be regarded as "*abnormal*" and "*unacceptably punitive to the young and dependent*"(Parsons, 2005, p.188).

2.4.5. Further complexity in exclusion data

Interesting though exclusion data is, the situation may be more complex than it at first seems, as official data on exclusions may have significant limitations. This was alluded to in the foreword of "They never give up on you" (Atkinson, 2012), as evidence emerged for the first time that "*a minority of schools exclude informally and therefore illegally*" (p. 9).

The topic of illegal exclusion was explored further in a subsequent report by the Children's Commissioner " Always Someone Else's Problem"(Atkinson, 2013) . This report quoted extensively the views of children and young people, teachers and other professionals, and parents from five diverse boroughs of England. Their comments were elicited using a range of methods, including: single institution visits, meetings with stakeholders including children and young people attending provision; a reference group

of young people who had been excluded or were at risk of exclusion; a primary research project by a team from the University of Sussex focussed on best practice in inclusion in schools; and National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) group interviews, focus groups and questions asked through a teacher survey.

Three types of exclusion which could be classified as illegal were identified and discussed, including: schools not following proper procedures; schools not fulfilling their legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010); and schools and local authorities failing to provide alternative education during a period of exclusion.

At the time of the publication of "Always Someone Else's Problem" in 2013, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) had a statutory duty to promote the views and interests of all children in England, and highlight where it believed vulnerable children were not being treated properly, to national policy makers and agencies that make decisions about children's lives. The Children's Commissioner also had the legal right to require a written reply within a reasonable period, in response to the recommendations.

The Children's Commissioner report 'Always Someone Else's Problem' (Atkinson, 2013) made ten recommendations. Of these, four recommendations were to the Department for Education, one to schools, two to Ofsted, and three to local authorities (LA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA), as follows:

Recommendations of OCC to the Department for Education:

1. statutory guidance to be developed with the involvement of the Human Rights Commission on interpretation of the Public Sector Equality Duties with regard to exclusions;

2. 'governors be empowered to provide a more robust challenge to schools which exclude illegally' (p.10);

3. governing bodies to nominate a Member to have overall responsibility for behaviour and exclusions, and ensure that it complies with the law;

4. a clear route of accountability for all school-based professionals which allows them to raise concerns with relevant bodies, safely without fear of reprisal.

Recommendations of OCC to schools:

5. Schools should publish their behaviour policies prominently on their website and include information on the rights of children and their parents.

Recommendations of OCC to Ofsted:

6. Ofsted should revise its methodology for identifying illegal exclusions.

7. Ofsted should develop a method for ensuring that inspectors become aware of parental views.

Recommendations of OCC to LA and EFA:

8. Closure of the accountability gap.

9. Local authorities for maintained schools and EFA for academies and free schools, to have responsibility for identifying illegal exclusions, investigating complaints, and imposing sanctions.

10. Remove the potential incentive on schools to exclude illegally by:

- Immediately reporting any illegal exclusions to Ofsted and recorded as monitoring data;

- Illegal exclusion identified by the Education Funding Agency / or Local Authority should be reported to the governing body, used as evidence in the head teacher's annual performance review and dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

- If registers are found to have been falsified to hide illegal exclusion, this should be dealt with as a criminal offence and the head teacher referred for professional misconduct.

- The school should incur a financial penalty equal to the amount it receives for a child annually, if a child is illegally excluded for a total of one month.

As required to, the government made a detailed response to the recommendations made by the OCC in 'Always Someone Else's Problem'. The government's responses suggested that: any illegal exclusions found to have taken place should be reported; to Ofsted which should record this information; to the school's governing body who should deal with this as a disciplinary matter for the head teacher; and financial penalties should be applied to the school (DfE, 2013). The mechanism for how the latter could be achieved was not made clear in the report, however there was greater clarity in revised guidance on exclusion issued to schools which was published later (DfE, 2014b). In making this response, the government seems to be taking a punitive stance towards the perpetrators of illegal exclusion, rather than an enquiring stance as to the multifactorial issues that might be leading to the occurrence of illegal exclusion. Just as a punitive approach is taken to pupils (via exclusion) so the government is proposing a punitive stance towards schools and head teachers (as perpetrators of illegal exclusion).

The government concluded (DfE, 2013) that "*the revised school inspection system and individuals' accountability to their employer provide a robust mechanism of accountability*" (p. 15). On the website of The Children's Commissioner (Atkinson, 2011) it is concluded that "*all exclusions must comply with the law*" (p.1).

Of course, law is nationally defined and locally interpreted, which may be factors in the variation in rates of exclusion between schools in different countries and between different local authorities within England. As argued from the stance of culture and

policy regarding student disaffection, it is national and local government that sets the scene for exclusion, through decisions about how to allocate resources in providing for children and young people with challenging behaviour (Parsons, 2005); that is, through punitive exclusion or through restorative and therapeutic intervention (Parsons, 2005).

The website of the OCC indicates that there were plans to publish a 'One Year On' update in May 2013, but this does not seem to be available on the website or via email request. However, revised guidance was issued to schools on behaviour and discipline in schools in July 2013, updated in February 2014 (DfE, 2014a) to include updated advice on sanctions, and updated again in September 2014, the reason for this update is described on the website as to '*remove references to running as a sanction*' (DfE, 2015). Ofsted revised guidance to schools on the use of exclusion in November 2014 (Ofsted, 2014), and issued guidance on unannounced behaviour inspections in January 2015 (Ofsted, 2015). Although some of the recommendations made by the OCC seem to have influenced the content of some of these documents, they fall short of the recommendations of the OCC in that they are only guidance to schools, not requirements by law. However, Ofsted inspectors are to consider '*any evidence of the use of 'unofficial exclusion' or any evidence that a pupil has been removed from a school unlawfully*' (Ofsted, 2014).

It can be argued that increased Ofsted focus on illegal exclusion may have unintended consequences. There are anecdotal verbal reports of an increase in rates of Elective Home Education (EHE) amongst children and young people who have shown challenging behaviour in schools. This is a possible unintended and undetected consequence of Ofsted scrutiny of school's use of exclusion as a consequence for challenging behaviour.

The responsibilities of the Children's Commissioner for England changed in 2014 as a result of the Children and Families Act (2014). From 2014 the role of the Children's

Commissioner is to promote and protect children's rights. The role has a focus on children and young people in care, leaving care, receiving social care services, and on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives. The post holder changed on 1 March 2015 when the post passed from Dr. Maggie Atkinson to Anne Longfield.

There is therefore, an evolving national and local context, in which officially recorded permanent exclusion occurs and as argued above, at different times, official exclusion data may have significant limitations as a measure of the degree of exclusion experienced by some children and young people.

2.5.   Challenging behaviour in the home setting

Many parents experience difficulties in raising young children, and survey results suggest that this is mostly with difficulties related to irritating developmentally-typical behaviour such as whining, interrupting adults and non-compliance (O'Brian, 1996). This research was on a nonclinical sample of parents with a high educational and income level, and raising children was reported to be '*a difficult task*' (p. 433). There may be bias in this research and limits to how much it can be generalised as parents were all of similar educational and income background.

Some research has focussed on family interactions and levels of maternal stress. For instance, analysis of research data from a questionnaire design with mothers, combined with observation of mother-child pairs in a laboratory setting (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990), suggested that life stress such as daily hassles were significant predictors of maternal behaviour. The authors argued that there was the potential for such hassles to influence parent-child relationships and contribute to family and child dysfunction. This research may be limited due to observation of mother-child pairs in a laboratory setting where the

behaviour of the pairs may lack ecological validity, so limiting the generalisability of the findings.

Other research into behaviour has focussed on parental groups of children involved with services related to difficulties other than behaviour, such as learning difficulties. For instance, in research interviews with parents of children with learning disabilities (Saxby & Morgan, 1993) to assess the number and type of behaviour problems amongst their children, scores of parents' perceived coping skills and malaise was associated with the number of behaviour problems shown by their child, with the highest scores amongst parents whose child had a sleep problem, or hurt themselves or others. As the data in this study relied on the self-report of parents, the data is vulnerable to a social desirability bias.

Similarly, in research in which children were classified according to the extent of their developmental delay (Baker, Blacher, & Olsson, 2005), and measures of child behaviour problems and parental well-being made when children were aged 3 and 4 years, it was found that child behaviour problems were strongly related to parental scores during assessment of their levels of depression and marital adjustment. However the level of parental optimism was also found to be related to parental measures of well-being, and researchers concluded that interventions aiming to both enhance parenting skills and psychological well-being should be available for parents of pre-school children. As the research focussed only on families with children with developmental delay, this research may be limited in the extent to which its findings can be generalised to other children and families.

Further evidence of a correlation between child behaviour and parental stress, as well as mental health problems and family functioning was provided from research (Herring et al., 2006) with children with pervasive developmental disorders and their families,

referred to a developmental assessment clinic. Although fathers reported less stress than mothers, maternal stress was significantly related to child emotional and behavioural problems. Researchers concluded that early support and intervention is important for parents and families of children with autism and / or developmental delay. As this research focussed only on families of children with pervasive developmental disorder it may not be appropriate to generalise findings of this study to wider cohorts.

In further research with parents of children with disabilities enrolled on intervention programmes in Melbourne, Australia, parental perceptions of the intensity of child behaviour problems accounted for a significant proportion of the predicted quality of home life (Davis & Gavidia-Payne, 2009). Higher rates of maladaptive behaviour problems were reported by caregivers of young adults with autism than in other diagnostic groups (Blacher & McIntyre, 2006). However some cultural differences in caregiver reports in levels of well-being were also identified. This research may not be applicable in other parts of the world such as England, where the current study has been carried out.

Other research has focussed on parental interactions with their children (White & Barrowclough, 1998) and the social skills of their children. Significant association between parenting style and child behaviours likely to be associated with negative peer relationships in school have been reported (Rubin & Mills, 1992). For instance (Stevenson-HInde, Hinde, & Simpson, 1986), the frequency of positive maternal interactions with their children is inversely related to the child's negative behaviour towards peers at pre-school.

Despite the limitations of these examples of research into challenging behaviour in the home setting, they provide us with some insight into the breadth of research, albeit often

with discrete groups of families such as those with a child with a pervasive developmental disorder, learning difficulty or developmental delay.

2.5.1. The role of parent cognitions

The consequences for children of parental cognitions has been previously studied in some detail (Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992) and parental cognitions , including "*thoughts, constructs, theories, ideas, and attributions*" (p. xiii) have been linked to child outcomes and parent behaviours. There is an argument in the literature that parental beliefs affect their behaviour towards their children, and the ways in which they respond to their children's behaviour. According to this argument the outcomes for children are indirectly affected by parental beliefs (Rubin & Mills, 1992). This is a powerful argument which recognises the complexity of the contributory factors to a child's behaviour and so implies that within-child explanation and simplistic intervention is likely to be insufficient on its own in resolving a child's challenging behaviour.

For instance, in research into the role of depression in mothers and its effect on their attributional biases (White & Barrowclough, 1998), the authors argued that "*negative parental behaviour is the major contributory factor in the development and maintenance of behaviour problems*" (p. 395) and concluded that the depressed mother's attributional biases may have mediated their coping responses and parenting behaviour. However, this research used a naturalistic experimental design in which mothers who already had depression formed the experimental group. There are some weaknesses in this design as the mothers may also have varied in other key characteristics, so the researchers have not really established cause and effect between depression, parental attributional bias, negative parental behaviour and maintenance of problem behaviours in the child.

It is argued by Rubin and Mills (1992), that parental beliefs which underlie parental behaviour towards their children, is indirectly correlated with the child's behaviour. For

example, if a parent believes that biological factors underlie behaviour, or has unrealistic

age expectations of their child's behaviour, or believes folklore including "*spare the rod,*

spoil the child" (p. 46), then parental behaviour towards the child will reflect these views.

However, the researchers acknowledged that they had neglected the role of fathers in

their research while focussing their study solely on mothers. They also acknowledged the

limitations of research based only in Western cultures.

2.6.   Discourse about behaviour

Challenging behaviour amongst the young, and more specifically, challenging behaviour

of pupils in schools are emotive issues. From time to time there occurs heightened

interest in the issue, perhaps related to particular cases or incidents, which attract press

interest (Kendrick, 2014). The behaviour of young people in schools is also intermittently

a focus of television documentaries and dramas, for example the BBC 3 drama "Kicked

Out of School" (Episode 1 transmitted on 27.01.15). As a consequence, society exposes

us all to various arguments and discourse about behaviour, sometimes popularly

presented as 'common sense'.   There are arguments that some of this discourse may

have the effect of exacerbating difficulties (Watson, 2005) by locating the problem firmly

on the children and young people, and neglecting other potential contributory factors,

such as teachers, curriculum or schools.

2.6.1.   Dominant stories in society

> "*We are born into a storied world, and we live our lives through the creation
> and exchange of narratives*" (Smith, 2008, Chapter 6, Section 3, Paragraph
> 1).

There are some dominant stories that pervade culture about the behaviour of children

and young people, and the role of their parents in the development of challenging

behaviour. Two examples are included below to illustrate subtle assumptions about the

parents of children with challenging behaviour that are stated without any research

evidence cited.

The first example is a quote from a publication by The Children's Commissioner for

England, (Atkinson, 2012)

> "*Exclusion usually happens because of a child's behaviour. Schools, academics*
> *and ministers have recognised such behaviour often originates in troubled home*
> *lives which spill over into school*". (Foreword Para. 5)

No data is offered in support of this assertion and it raises many questions, such as how

do parents of children and young people who show challenging behaviour feel about

judgements like this, or how are relationships across contexts affected as a result? The

dominance of the view that the causes of problem behaviour are outside school

influences are "*views prevalent both in official disclosure and within the teaching*

profession" (Araujo, 2005, p.295; Watson, 2005).

However, there is contrasting evidence (Vincent et al., 2007) that difficulties in the school

setting can contribute to difficulties in the home setting, as well as the often assumed

situation whereby difficulties in the home setting contribute to difficulties in the school

setting. From an extensive review of the literature, there is seemingly much less

awareness of the former scenario in society, a situation which may feel discriminatory to

parents of children and young people with challenging behaviour.

An assumption by school staff that all challenging behaviour in school has as its origin,

issues in the home environment is sometimes evident in interactions between teachers

and parents. Some parents are puzzled that they are asked to attend a course to

improve their behaviour management of their child even though the child's behaviour is

only regarded as challenging in the school setting.

The second example of subtle assumptions about parents of children with challenging behaviour, is a poem by the psychiatrist R D Laing, who was associated with the anti-psychiatry movement. Arguably this poem represents a rationale that parents of a child with challenging behaviour may feel an affinity with, and could underlie a drive for medical diagnosis of the child with challenging behaviour by parents (and teachers):

> *It is our duty to bring up our children to love, honour and obey us.*
> *If they don't, they must be punished,*
> *otherwise we would not be doing our duty.*
>
> *If they grow up to love, honour and obey us*
> *we have been blessed for bringing them up properly.*
>
> *If they grow up not to love, honour and obey us*
> *we have been blessed for bringing them up properly*
> *or we have not:*
> *if we have*
> *there must be something the matter with them;*
> *if we have not*
> *there is something the matter with us.* (Laing, 1970, p.3)

Unfortunately the poem also alludes to a simplistic model of challenging behaviour arising from a single cause, rather than a complex multifaceted cause.

2.6.2. Internalised social forces

The reflection of dominant stories in society, in culture, as discussed in the previous section, are not the only pressures on parents and children and young people.

Arguing from the stance of positioning theory, Winslade (2012) asserts that there may be a tendency for psychological workers (such as educational psychologists and school counsellors) to pay too little attention to the internalised social forces within a student. As a result it is argued that educational psychologists can too easily adopt roles that are undemocratic and unjust towards students, by being "beholden" to discourses that can be prevalent in education for other reasons such as "*social sorting*" (being involved in the sorting of children with differing needs into different types of school). Whilst this

argument has been made from the perspective of educational psychologists working within educational systems in New Zealand and USA, where the role is different from that of educational psychologists in the UK, it remains possible that UK educational psychologists may be subject to similar pressures, albeit from different educational systems.

2.6.3. Positioning theory

Positioning can occur through very subtle speech communication. According to positioning theory, an utterance can establish even if only for an instance in time, our position to others, and theirs to us. Winslade (2012) argued that such utterances are powerful influencers within school, and agents of social constraint.

Winslade (2012) explained that children and young people can be positioned during schooling. Using a term proposed by Davies (2006) he suggested that a process of "*subjectification*" occurs through "*positioning people as good or successful students*" (Winslade, 2012, p.26). As a result, mastery in learning is not "*available to everyone*" (Winslade, 2012, p.26) and so, "*students risk being produced as educational failures*", perhaps as "*naughty boys*" (Davies, 2006, p.428).   The behaviour of boys is more often subject to labelling of this kind, by a ratio of four to one (Atkinson, 2012). Labels provide further tools for positioning these individual students for example 'at risk', 'behaviour problems', and 'sensory processing difficulties'.

Winslade (2012) urges educational psychologists to "*consider reflexively how we are being positioned and how we might position ourselves in relation to the lines of force and expressions of resistance in schooling*" (p.27). In the opinion of Winslade (2012), narrative practice "*appears to offer the most potent leverage in the process of subjectification through schooling*"(p.27). Stories hold a central place in narrative practice. The importance of stories is discussed in the next section.

2.6.4. The importance of stories in our lives and in society

Stories hold a central place in narrative practice. It is suggested (Morgan, 2000) that we all hold many stories about ourselves and about our lives, and these occur simultaneously. These stories have arisen from linking certain events together in a sequence and giving meaning to them. Although we may hold multiple stories about ourselves, according to narrative practice, some stories may become dominant stories in our lives, affect us in the present and have implications for our future actions.

2.6.5. Narrative practice

Narrative practice is based on the work of White and Epston (1990), originally developed in the context of family therapy. Narrative practice argues that life is multi-storied (Walther & Fox, 2012) and although there may be one dominant story (which may be negative and problematic), there will be alternative (more positive) stories which can be discovered, developed and strengthened.

Narrative practice was proposed (Winslade, 2012) as a practical approach to empower an individual to develop a sense of identity freed from prevalent dominant forces (that is dominant stories) that might otherwise negatively determine their future. This approach is known as narrative therapy.

A key tenet of narrative practice (White & Epston, 1990) is known as "*externalising the problem*", whereby problems are conceptualised as outside the person. So, even within-child diagnoses are externalised in talk. For example a young person diagnosed with autism might be asked "*How does autism work its mischief on you*?"

Such practice might include use of techniques such as double listening (hearing both the problem as well as the resources the individual is using to cope), and "deconstructive questioning" (achieved largely through a process of externalising the problem).

2.6.6. Family interventions for challenging behaviour using narrative practice

Evidence that work within a family can be preventative with young people with conduct disorder (Asen, 2002; Cottrell & Boston, 2002), including oppositional behaviour (Carr, 2000) is cited by Statton (2005). The use of narrative practice, an approach informed by narrative therapy, provides a method of revising a parent's relationship with the problem (White & Epston, 1990).

As emphasised in this literature review, much of the research into challenging behaviour over time has had a problem focus; the contributory causes of the problem for example low socioeconomic status and maternal stress (Rubin & Mills, 1992); the consequences of the problem, for example the effects on teachers (Miller, 2003); and explanations of the problem, for example lagging skills (Greene, 2008).

In contrast to these problem-based approaches to research, narrative practice provides a therapeutic person-centred approach in which problems are viewed as separate from people. The term can refer to "*ways of understanding people's identities*", "*ways of understanding problems*"; "*particular ways of speaking with people about their lives and problems they may be experiencing*" (Morgan, 2000, p.2).

According to the post-structuralist understanding on which narrative practice is based, identity is seen as being shaped by social forces and by relationships within communities (Walther & Fox, 2012). This is in contrast to alternative views that identity is an integral part of the self, "*determined by the internal structure of the individual*" (Walther & Fox, 2012, p.10).

Case study literature includes examples of successful narrative practice with children and young people in long standing complex cases of challenging behaviour, for example the case of nine year old Bryony with whom a narrative therapy approach was used with the support of her mother over several months (Fox, 2006). Bryony was referred to a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) as she experienced difficulties with anger and temper. During the first few sessions the therapist gradually developed a working relationship with Bryony until eventually she explained her current strategies for "*stopping anger taking control*" (Fox, 2006, p.4). In the next session a list of tempers were elicited from Bryony. Fox (2006) described working with Bryony and her mother for seven months and making progress in "*fits and starts*" (p.5). Externalisation was used throughout the work with Bryony, and new language was developed for problems and solutions. By eight months there was noticeable progress and sessions continued for a further three sessions over five months. Finally, a party was held to which Bryony's teacher was invited, and at which Bryony was presented with a certificate to celebrate her "*skills in blocking out temper, making and keeping friends, and getting happiness going*" (p.7).

Using a narrative practice approach (Walther & Fox, 2012), first the child or young person engages with counselling in which the techniques of narrative practice are applied to develop an alternative positive story from the child / young person's perspective, and then adults who might be sympathetic to this alternative account are chosen to participate in a collaborative meeting with the child / young person with a view to making this story "reality". Using an approach known as Outsider Witness Practice (Walther & Fox, 2012), alternative accounts of children and young people have been strengthened and young people have been given support from parents and teachers, so enabling the child / young person to follow a more positive route than previously when defined in terms of a dominant negative account.

While the limited narrative therapy case study evidence suggests that this can be a helpful approach for young people with challenging behaviour, in some cases there can be some obstacles to applying this in practice. For instance, initial research findings (Excluded Students' Narratives Project, 2014), suggest that young people are resistant to looking back on difficult times, and in some cases find it difficult to construct a positive narrative about themselves. This is consistent with evidence (McLean & Mansfield, 2010) that reasoning about the past may not be "*possible or beneficial*" (p.89) for young children (e.g. aged 9-13). Applying the approach to some children with special educational needs could also be problematic, if children and young people do not have the language skills or understanding to participate at sufficient depth. Also, as in the case of Bryony (Fox, 2006) narrative therapy is lengthy and time consuming for all involved (therapist, parent and child).

2.7.   Parental and family narratives

Parental narratives or stories about their children with challenging behaviour are thought to be important because there is the potential for these stories to be often repeated, absorbed by the children and young people, and incorporated into their identities over time.

Erikson (1963) argued that stable identity is established in adolescence, but also argued that for some a negative identity is formed due to difficulties in establishing a stable identity. However, Erikson (1963) was a Western psychologist and there may be cultural differences in identity formation.

From the perspective of narrative therapy, it was argued by Denborough (2014) that "*our lives*" … "*are shaped by story*" (p.vii). Perhaps stories about a child or young person, told by the parent and listened to by the child or another person have the potential to

affect how the child feels and behaves, and how the other person views and perhaps treats the child.

Whilst parents may never intend to adversely influence their children with their views, the ease with which this can occur is illustrated by the following example. During narrative therapy with the nine year old boy Matthew (White & Morgan, 2006) his mother Janet, answered questions on his behalf during narrative therapy as follows:

> *"Well, Matthew used to be such a friendly kid, he always was, since he was really little … but not now, since the accident … have you Matthew? Tell Alice how you cry all the time now and how you've told me you hate yourself" (p. 78).*

Janet had much opportunity to put forward her views prior to Alice's meeting with Matthew, and both Alice and Janet had met separately prior to the meeting involving Matthew. Yet still the parent's view was presented in answer to questions to the child, and this was to present a dominant and negative story about Matthew. These often repeated stories have the potential to influence how the child is viewed and treated by others in future and how the child views himself. They are stories that have the potential to become assimilated into the child's self-concept over time.

Some stories can be described as stories with "thin description" (Morgan, 2000, p.12), these are simplified stories in which simple explanations are given and previous events selected to support this thin description, while ignoring other events which do not fit this simplified version of events. For example, the Craxton family (Morgan, 2000) had a narrative about the young boy Sean, that he was "*attention seeking*" and was "*stealing to get people to notice him*" (p.11). Sometimes people come to understand their own lives through these thin descriptions provided by others, with significant consequences for their lives and identity formation. It is possible that for some children, the term challenging behaviour serves as thin description.

The longer term effects of parental stories was expressed by Spector-Mersel (2010) as follows:

> *"Families live according to stories passed on from generation to generation"* (p. 211)

Furthermore, it is argued (Bruner, 1987; Emerson & Frosh, 2009) that the personal meaning-making of individuals in life, often results in narrative around breaches between the ideal and real self and social context / society.

2.7.1. Research into parents views

Permanent exclusion was the focus of a number of pieces of research by trainee educational psychologists in 2009. For example, in a small-scale qualitative study by King (2009), in addition to semi-structured interviews with five pupils permanently excluded from mainstream secondary schools, semi-structured interviews also took place with parents of the five pupils. There were several areas of enquiry: a history and narrative of the child's schooling deficits; aspects of school and schooling associated with the child's difficulties; the exclusion; the support received; and the future. Verbal probes were used to explore some areas in more detail during the interviews. Three research questions were investigated, all of which focussed on exclusion. The following two research questions were relevant to parent interviews; 'What are the parent (s) views of the exclusions?'; and 'What are pupils and parents perceptions about what needs to be done differently to prevent young people being permanently excluded from mainstream school?' Parent interview data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify things that need to be done differently to prevent permanent exclusion. Themes relating to peers, school, family, parent attitudes and perceptions, as well as individual pupil factors were identified. As permanent exclusion was the focus of this study, research questions were tightly linked to permanent exclusion. An assumption that permanent exclusion is undesirable underlies the second of the research questions quoted above. A strength of this study is that it provided rich data, but in some cases parents and children were

interviewed together. As the research was conducted on a small sample of volunteers from a discrete geographical area, the researcher acknowledged that as a result findings could not be generalised.

Similarly, while there is research into the views of parents of excluded pupils, this has also focussed on the experience of exclusion. For instance, in a study involving semi-structured interviews with parents (Wood, 2011), into the experiences of parents' and pupils' views of permanent exclusion, analysis using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) identified that the role of parents in the exclusion process was a central theme. Use of IPA in this study allowed access to parents' and pupils' feelings and experiences, and so facilitated access to a deeper understanding of pupil and parent experiences of permanent exclusion. However in critical comment about IPA, Willig (2008) argues that participants may experience difficulty in conveying the 'rich texture of their experience' (Willig, 2008, p.67) to a researcher, due to difficulties in properly expressing their feelings and experiences in words. Also their experiences may be limited by their language as there are arguments discussed by Willig (2008) that language constructs rather than describes experience.

2.7.2.   Narrative inquiry interviews with parents of excluded children and young people

Research using a narrative inquiry interviewing approach has begun to focus on the perceptions of parents about the effects of fixed term suspension (exclusion) from school on the behaviour, attitude and relationships of the child or young person.

For example, research in South-eastern Pennsylvania using a qualitative case study approach (Allen-Glass, 2013), in which five parents who were living with students at the time of their suspension (fixed term exclusion) from school were interviewed for 30 minutes each, using a 19 question structured interview. Research questions included 'Does suspension change student behaviours?'; Do suspensions change student attitudes

towards school?'; 'How does the student social interaction with others change after undergoing suspensions?' Audio recordings were made of the interviews and these were transcribed and agreed between researcher, research assistant and parent participants. Interpretative analysis was used in which codes were applied using both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. Additionally, analysis of teacher incident reports and principal suspension records was made. Results suggested that teacher, school and parental involvements were commonly associated with improvements in behaviour, attitude and acquaintances following fixed term suspension from school, although improvements following fixed term suspension were evident in some cases but not others. The researcher suggested that the limitations of the study included its qualitative design, use of only five participants, and that all cases were drawn from the same school in one district at one point in time, so limiting generalisability. Power relationships may also be significant given that the researcher had a role in school as an administrator with responsibility for determining the seriousness of behavioural offences in school.

Furthermore, research using in-depth individual interviews with caregivers, has focussed on the caregivers' experiences of their African American child's suspension from school (Gibson, 2013) as accessed through the oral narratives of caregivers. Interviews started with the question '*How did you react when you first learned your child had been suspended*?' (Gibson, 2013). Further questions explored the '*reasons for the child's suspensions, the child's reactions, and the caregivers' interactions with school officials*' (Gibson, 2013). The transcribed interviews were read repeatedly and codes focussed on meaning ascribed to the transcripts. This research concluded that out-of-school suspensions were rarely viewed as appropriate, sometimes viewed as unjust, harmful to children, negligent in helping children with underlying problems such as bullying, as well as racially problematic. There is a planned cultural bias within this study, as it set out to explore the experiences only of caregivers of African American or black children (these

terms are used interchangeably by the researchers) due to the known increased

likelihood of suspension of black children in the United States (Losen, 2011 as cited by

Gibson, 2013 (p.2)). Limitations of this study included use only of volunteer participants

who may not be representative of those caregivers who did not volunteer (volunteers

were recruited through flyers at school, social service agencies and churches). Also, the

research was limited in focussing only on caregivers, and did not seek views of children or

educators.

Narrative inquiry research has also focussed on the experiences of mothers of "*behaviour*

disordered" sons   (Mickelson, 1995). This narrative inquiry within a social

constructionist paradigm told the story of the lives of four mothers of sons labelled as

behaviour disordered in Alberta, Canada, over a twelve month period. Data was

presented in the form of letters to and from the researcher and participants, although all

letters were written by the researcher using a fusion of her thoughts and experiences of

her conversations with participants, together with quotations from their comments.

Themes and patterns identified included early influences in the mother's lives, the unique

qualities of their sons, relationships with professionals, and mother's practical

knowledge. A focus was the stress experienced by the mothers and the ambiguities

associated with labelling. This study focussed on the stories of the mother, and on the

mother's experiences as mothers of behaviour disordered sons. One limitation of this

study is that as at the outset, the researcher used 'behaviour disordered' as a diagnostic

category, this pre-empts any alternative explanation of behaviour than within-child

descriptions in the report to follow. The data as presented in this study were overtly co-

constructed. However, there is the potential in this study for the researcher's views to

dominate. Although letters were shared with participants, and they had opportunity to

comment and amend for accuracy, the power imbalance that exists between a

participant and a researcher may have led to a bias towards the researcher's viewpoint

and perspective in the letters. The research report, presented as it is in the form of letters, while a fine example of a report of narrative research unfettered by the conventions of positivist science, may be perceived as difficult to navigate by academic readers more accustomed to conventional report formats.

Although schools are attributed as the shaper of identities through the development of negative dominant stories (Walther & Fox, 2012) little seemed to be known about the stories of parents about their children with challenging behaviour.

However, it can be argued that the relevance of the research of Allen-Glass (2013) in South East Pennsylvania, the research of Gibson (2013) in the United States and the research of Mickelson (1995) in Alberta, Canada, has limited application to the English educational system in 2016, given the diversity of educational systems across settings and over time.

An extensive search of the literature has shown that little research has been carried out using a narrative inquiry approach to explore parental biographical narratives about their children with challenging behaviour who have received permanent exclusion from school. This is a gap in the research literature that this current study aims to fill.

The aim of the current study is to fill this gap by working with parents of children with challenging behaviour who have been permanently excluded from school.   The current study will focus on hearing the narratives of parents of permanently excluded children and young people.

However, in contrast to previous research which has focussed on the exclusion of the child, the process of exclusion, and parent's views as to how things could be improved, or exclusion avoided, the current study will focus on hearing the parents' stories about their sons / daughters as they tell their son's or daughter's life story so far. The research

interest is on the developmental story of the child with challenging behaviour over time; the focus on parents only of excluded children is merely the chosen method of identifying parents of children with challenging behaviour; this is how challenging behaviour has been operationalised in the current study.

2.8. Research aim

The overall research aim of the current study can therefore be summarised as follows:

To hear the story of a parent of a child with challenging behaviour who has received permanent exclusion from school and consider implications for educational and educational psychology practice.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter starts with a discussion of the theoretical background underpinning the

methodological approach used in this study. This is followed by further detail of the

research design of the current study including a discussion of the epistemological

position taken. Next, ethical considerations are discussed, including those arising at the

design, sampling and data collection stages. Further ethical considerations are

considered, including those relating to the issue of consent, also confidentiality and

debriefing. The structure of the interview is described and the use of verbal questions

and prompts within the interview considered. The degree of co-construction at the data

collection stage is discussed. Finally, transcription processes are described and details

given of methods of narrative analysis employed.

3.2. Theoretical background

Epistemology is the philosophical study of theories of knowledge (Smith, 1998). The

epistemological position adopted in research determines the objectives and potential of

the research. This has been variously expressed as '*the questions we ask about how we*

know' (Smith, 1998, p.279)*,* and the answers to the question, '*How, and what, can we*

know' (Willig, 2008, p.2).

One well established epistemological position is positivism, according to which, research

aims to produce objective knowledge untainted by bias or the views of the researcher

(Willig, 2008). The positivist approach has been widely and successfully used in the

natural sciences, for example physics. However when such an approach is used in the

social sciences including psychology, it is more difficult to claim that the approach lacks

bias or influence of the researcher. This is because social scientists study humans, and

human cognitions and behaviours may be influenced by the experience of taking part in research, and by the cognitions and experiences of the participant and researcher.

Although attempts have been made to apply positivist scientific approaches to the social sciences including psychology, in psychological research it is sometimes more difficult and less appropriate to adopt a positivist approach as used in the natural sciences, which assumes (Robson, 2002) that there is a truth to discover, facts to find out which can support the development of universal causal laws to explain human behaviour. One reason for this is, that in research focussed on people it is necessary to take into account that people have feelings, thoughts, perceptions, aspirations, wishes, and beliefs which may have implications for the questions asked, the methods adopted and may also influence research findings.

In contrast (to positivist approaches), approaches to research based on relativist epistemology, in the pure form at least, assume that the only reality there is in the world is related to human consciousness (Robson, 2002, p.22). According to this world view, the focus of our research endeavours should be towards the minds of people, to people's interpretations of events and experiences, to capture the meanings that people have found in life. Relativist approaches accept qualitative methodologies as of equal status to more traditional (positivist) scientific methods (Robson, 2002, p.25) and emphasise the role of language as an object of study (Robson, 2002, p.25).

Similarly, according to post-modern ideas it was argued that early approaches to knowledge were biased rather than scientific, as feminist thinkers pointed out that women were largely absent as researchers and participants in early research, and where they were, women were judged against male norms (Willig, 2008). Also, claims of objectivity were challenged on the grounds that a researcher always has a relationship, a

standpoint, or a view towards research which potentially can influence a research process and its findings (Willig, 2008).

In contrast to both positivism and relativism, realist epistemology provides an acknowledgement of values, and views knowledge as a "social and historical product" (Robson, 2002, p.34). It accepts differences between the study of natural phenomena and social phenomena and accepts use of different research methods according to the subject matter under study.

Constructivism assumes that reality is socially constructed. It is aligned to the relativist tradition (Robson, 2002, p.27). Social constructionism is an approach in which it is acknowledged that human experience is culturally mediated (Berger & Luckman, 1966). This implies that our understanding of the world around us consists of an interpretation of our experiences, based on our historical, cultural and linguistic background. According to this approach there will be different ways of socially constructing reality.

In describing a "*gradual shift away from realism*" (Reissman, 2008 p.14) in the 1960s, Reissman (2008) referred to a "*Narrative Turn*" (p.14), attributing the undated term to Kristin Langellier.

It is argued that this narrative turn is part of the move from "*investigator-controlled practices*" (Reissman, 2008, p.15) as used in positivist and empiricist methodologies. Narrative inquiry is an approach in which the researcher participates in the creation of a narrative with participants (Reissman, 2008) in complex ways, perhaps through asking particular questions, by the ways that information is recorded, or written. It is a case-based methodology, which (Reissman, 2008, p.12) was noted by Mishler (undated) to have previously led to "*theories of great significance*" within psychology, as many

influential psychologists (including "Freud, Piaget, Lewin, Erikson, and Skinner" (p. 12))
developed their theories based on individual cases.

The term case study requires some definition. It has been described as "*a strategy*" … "*a
stance or approach, rather than a method*" (Robson, 2002, p.179). The "*central defining
characteristic is concentration on a particular case*" (Robson, 2002, p.179). The case
study approach is described by Yin (2014) as a "*rigorous methodological path*" (p.3)
which "*arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena*" (p.4).
Furthermore Yin (2014) argues that the case study method is appropriate when research
questions "*require an extensive and 'in-depth' description of some social phenomenon*"
(p.4). However Yin (2014) argues that the case study deals with a "*full variety*" (p.12) of
evidence from different sources such as interview, observation and documents and in
this way distinguishes case study from a history when only documents are available. A
case study approach is appropriate when the research aim is to "*understand a real-world
case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual
conditions pertinent to your case*" Yin (2014, p.16).

3.3.   Research design

This is a small scale qualitative piece of research; originally designed as a collective case
study, informed by a narrative approach. This approach was chosen as an approach
which facilitates detailed analysis of parental views of their children, a qualitative
approach in which the individual parent's thoughts feelings and views of their children
can be accessed. In a collective case study informed by a narrative approach, each
narrative is a case study in its own right and overall the study is a collective case study as
the parents all have in common that they are parents of children with challenging
behaviour who have experienced permanent exclusion from school.

However, following collection of data from the first participant, the design was amended to a single case study. This was possible because the first interview produced abundant and rich data which allowed for detailed analysis. Collection of further data from other participants was thought likely to lead to an imbalance between case studies, as it seemed unlikely that further participants would engage in the task to a similar extent as the first participant. Also, analysis of data from further participants would detract from the time available for analysis of data from the first participant.

Comparison of different narratives was not part of the design, as each parent has a unique situation, a unique child that they describe. There may have been elements to the narrative analysis of multiple cases that are common between the different narratives, but this is not possible with a single case study.

It is not possible to generalise from the findings of this study to general laws, as this is a small scale qualitative piece of research. However case studies can sometimes provide novel perspectives on situations and so there is the potential for findings to have wider implications which could be explored in future research or used to develop or refine theory (Willig, 2008, p.86).

3.3.1. Epistemological and ontological position

Taking a relativist epistemology, this research from a narrative paradigm adopts a constructivist ontology, assuming that reality is socially constructed, and that stories are one of the methods by which the social construction takes place.

It is argued by Spector-Mersel (2010) that through stories (narratives) human beings gain their sense of continuity and identity (Alasuutari, 1997; McAdams, 1993), adjust behaviours, connect with others, and learn culture (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Kenyon & Randall, 1997). This was summarised by Smith and Sparkes (2009) in the following quote

'*we live in, through, and out of narratives*' (p.3) and Smith and Sparkes (2009) further

argued that narratives '*shape who we are and might become*' (p.3).

According to narrative epistemology, stories are co-authored, as there are a range of

influences; current situation; selection; and the social situations in which they evolve and

are produced (Spector-Mersel, 2010). According to the narrative paradigm, we

understand our world through subjective and culturally rooted interpretative processes

(Spector-Mersel, 2010). We interpret the world through stories. These will always be

selective, some events being selected for inclusion, and others selected for omission.

What is selected for inclusion will be influenced by context, by the questions asked and

who asks them, and for what purpose. Stories may also be influenced by dominant

stories prevailing at the time.

This research is based on inductive reasoning. Use of inductive reasoning allows for the

possibility of a broad range of outcomes, about which there could be broader

generalisation and theory, in the context of other research.

3.4. Method

As this is a small scale qualitative piece of research, a single-case study design using a

narrative inquiry approach, this has influenced the methodological decisions about

research design with regard to sample, data collection, analysis etc. This is clarified

below.

3.4.1. Ethical considerations at the planning stage

An initial gatekeeper letter (please see Appendix A) was sent to the Principal Educational

Psychologist in the Local Authority in which it was proposed to conduct the research,

seeking consent of the Local Authority for the research to take place within the Local

Authority. No further steps were taken until it was confirmed that the Local Authority

had provided consent for the research to take place.

3.4.2. Sample

Three different ways were devised to contact parents of excluded children with challenging behaviour.

3.4.2.1. Sample selection - Stage 1

A Local Authority list of permanently excluded pupils for the academic years 2013-14 and 2014-15 was used to identify pupils from National Curriculum years 3 to 7 who had received permanent exclusions from school and were recorded as having shown behaviour which would be likely to be perceived as challenging by others. It was assumed that children excluded from school would have challenging behaviour, (though it is possible that parents may not view their children in this way).

Invitation letters (see Appendix B) were sent to parents of these pupils inviting them to participate in the study. Copies of the Information and Consent Sheet (Appendix C) were sent with the letters. The objective was to identify 4-6 parents to participate. This is a small sample, which is consistent with the narrative design of this study. No participants were selected using this approach.

3.4.2.2. Sample selection - Stage 2

Due to difficulties in recruiting participants in Stage 1, the method of sampling was refined. With the renewed consent of the Local Authority, the researcher was introduced to parents of recently excluded pupils by a member of Pupil Referral Unit staff. The nature of the study was explained, copies of the Invitation Letter (Appendix B) and Information and Consent Sheet (Appendix C) given, and parents were provided with information about how to contact the researcher with a view to finding out more about taking part in the study. A message was recorded on the voicemail message service of the researcher. The script for this message is indicated in Appendix D. No participants were selected using this approach.

3.4.2.3. Sample selection – Stage 3

As Stage 2 sample selection became time consuming and there were still difficulties in recruiting participants, Flyers advertising the research (Appendix E) were prepared to advertise the study to parents of children who were attending Pupil Referral Units. The Flyers (Appendix E) were handed out to parents as they waited for their children at the end of the PRU session. The Flyers included the contact details of the Researcher, for interested parents to telephone to seek further information about taking part. One participant volunteered to participate.

3.4.2.4. Inclusion criteria

Parents of children with challenging behaviour who had been permanently excluded from school during National Curriculum years 3 to 7 during the academic years 2013-14 and 2014-15 were the intended focus of the study. These dates were chosen as the most recent full academic years prior to completion of data collection. The school years were chosen based on prior knowledge of patterns of exclusion and parental involvement within the local authority. Fewer pupils are permanently excluded prior to Year 3, and there is a tendency towards lower rates of parental involvement beyond Year 7 which could make involvement of these parents in research more difficult.

3.4.2.5. Exclusion criteria

In order to ensure that the researcher could approach parents purely as a researcher, any parents of permanently excluded pupils with whom the researcher had involvement (with pupil or parents) were excluded from the research. This was to avoid as far as possible any positioning (Winslade, 2012) of the parent which might have led to a degree of influence on the narrative.

A decision was made at the design stage that should there be any indication that parents were limited in the extent to which they were able to give informed consent due to

learning difficulties (e.g. they had a Statement of Special Educational Needs for learning

difficulties when a child), or had unresolved serious and current mental health problems

(e.g. involvement of the Community Mental Health Team), or if they appeared to

experience difficulties in understanding the idea of informed consent, they were not to

be included in the study.

3.4.3. Data collection

Data was collected from a structured narrative interview as described below. Prior to

any data collection, potential ethical issues were considered and plans made to ensure

ethical practice.

3.4.3.1. Ethical considerations at the data collection stage

The interview took place at a setting and at a time of the parent's choice. The location

could be at home, at the Education Development Centre, or at another public setting

close to or distant from the home setting.

As it was anticipated that parents of excluded children and young people might have a

tendency to take a negative stance in relaying the story of their child with challenging

behaviour who had been excluded from school (as they could be telling a dominant story

about their child or the child's experiences), several ways of returning parents to a more

positive way of thinking were built in to the data collection design. Firstly, headings likely

to encourage positive aspects of story-telling were given as examples within the sample

life history grids (examples included in Appendix I and explained more fully in section

3.4.3.6).

Secondly, solution focussed / positively focussed questions such as "Of all the events

you've told me about, what did you find most helpful?", "What has gone well?", "In the

story of [name of child], what are you most pleased about?", were asked following

parents' completion of their stories about their child, although these were also available

for earlier use if necessary, to positively refocus parents should they seem to get trapped in relaying distressing and negative events in their child's life story and experience difficulties in moving on.

In accordance with ethical requirements, care was taken to both manage any negative feelings arising during the interviews and return parents to their original state as prior to their involvement in the research.

Additionally, the researcher had available, contact details for free local counselling services for adults.

3.4.3.2. Consent

A description of the nature of the research was provided to parents in advance of the researcher meeting with them. Consent letters were provided in advance of the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting with the parent, the Information and Consent Sheets (Appendix C) were signed and the parent provided with a copy to retain.

3.4.3.3. Confidentiality

The names of all people and places mentioned by the parent during their interview were changed to preserve confidentiality. The audio recording was retained under secure conditions by the researcher and no record made of the parent's or pupil's details kept with audio recordings. Although PRU staff handed out flyers to parents, they were provided with no feedback on the responses of parents to invitations to attend interviews.

When interviews were transcribed all names of people and places were changed to pseudonyms to preserve anonymity of participants.

3.4.3.4. Debriefing and Right to withdraw

After participating in the research, the participant was provided with a Debrief summary to take away with them (please see Appendix F). The participant had the right to withdraw their information until 1 September 2015. After this date all information was transcribed, anonymised and participant real name and contact details destroyed.

3.4.3.5. Narrative interview

It was planned that one narrative interview would take place for each child, and if both parents had wished to take part then they were to be interviewed together. If the narrative of any parent was too long to complete in one session, then further opportunities were to be offered for them to tell the remaining part of their narrative at another session.

A semi structured interview consisting of several open ended questions supported by use of prompts was used to elicit the parent's stories about their child. This enabled the parent to speak freely to answer the main question, which was

> "Please tell me [name of child]'s story from the very beginning".

A list of questions asked during interviews is provided at Appendix G.

3.4.3.6. Use of the life history grid

A life history grid (see Appendices H and I) was used to structure parental responses to the main question "Please tell me [name of child]'s story from the very beginning". The use of a "life history grid" is discussed by Reissman (2008, p.25) as a means of assisting participants in responding to a main question. The purpose of the life history grid was to: support parents in answering the main question; to structure their response; to assist those parents who experienced difficulty in responding to such a broad question; and to contain the responses of parents who would otherwise speak in very great detail for a very extended period of time.

The grid was devised at the beginning of the structured interview. The parent was first told the main question they were being asked, and was then invited to construct a grid to structure the story. A blank grid (Appendix H) was shown to the parent and they were free to design a structure entirely of their own choice. However example grids (Appendix I) with sample structures were available as prompts to assist them in doing so. They could adopt one of the sample structures in its entirety, mix and match between different grids, or choose one or more headings from a sample structure to combine with headings of their own on their personally designed structure. The eight box grid devised at the beginning of the session was used as a prompt to aid the parent in moving through their story during the interview. It was planned that if parents were unable to identify eight topics for the life history grid they could proceed to tell their story with a fewer number of headings within the story structure. Parents were to be discouraged from going beyond eight boxes on their grid, due to concerns about length of interview, and the possibility of combining headings into one box was to be discussed.

During the interview the life history grid was referred to at relevant points. For example, at the outset the parent was asked "To help you in telling me [name of child]'s story, lets construct a grid to structure the story. Imagine that the beginning of the story goes into the first box of the grid and the most recent part of the story goes in the last grid. Can you suggest titles / phases for the other boxes on the grid – to help you to tell me all aspects of [name of child]'s story. Then the life history grid was referred to at points in the story when it seemed that a change of focus was imminent. For example, "Tell me about the next box on the grid, which you called '…..'".

3.4.3.7. The use of questions and verbal prompts within the interview

Of the questions to be used in the semi-structured interview (listed in Appendix G), questions 1, 2 and 3 are the main prompts to elicit the narrative, and questions 4 to 7 are

positively framed / solution focussed questions for use towards the end of the interview. The objective of these questions was to move parents to a positive frame of thinking prior to the end of the interview, as it was possible that they may have spent a proportion of the interview relaying negative stories and events about their child.

As it was anticipated that some parents might be less vocal and require encouragement to provide a comprehensive narrative, encouragement was communicated through nodding and prompts such as 'please tell me more about that', and 'please explain in a little more detail', 'is there anything else?', 'what else?', 'can you tell me some more about that?'. At times it might be necessary to seek further clarification of their stories to check that they are being understood and interpreted correctly, so might be necessary to ask questions of the type 'do you mean…', 'are you saying…' etc.

The additional prompts were available for use as necessary; to prioritise building a rapport with the the parent, following their lead as to what is important, and helping them to tell the complete story as they see it.

3.4.3.8. The degree of co-construction at the data collection stage

Although the parent's story about their child would be to some extent co-constructed with the researcher within the interview, the intention was to be as clear as possible about the contribution of the researcher in the co-construction. If the parent adopted in its entirety one of the pre-prepared life history grids in the interview, the degree of co-construction in story structure would be greater. At the other extreme, if the parent devised a life history grid entirely independently, the degree of co-construction would be less.

However this is not to suggest that the parent story was not co-constructed with the researcher. The story may not ever have been told in its entirety had the parent not been invited to participate in this research. Also, the role of the researcher in prompting

a parent to expand on some points and in not prompting a parent to expand on other points, means that all stories are to some extent a co-construction with the researcher. The researcher's non-verbal behaviour (both positive and negative, and expressive and passive) also provided a method of influencing a participant's responses. The presence of the researcher in the interview room will to some extent influence the participant's stories. So that the researcher's non-verbal communications and encouragement to the participant was as explicit as possible, the researcher simultaneously used vocalisation ('mm') when making non-verbal nods to the participant during the interviews; as a result, researcher contributions were audible on the audio recordings.

3.4.3.9. Practical arrangements for the interview

The interview with the parent was voice recorded using a Phillips digital recorder, with a back-up recording made by IPhone 6 using the 'Clear Record Lite' Application.   The microphones were placed near to the parent to ensure that voices were heard most clearly on the recording. The interview and recording took place at a table.

The child at the centre of the story was not present during the interview.

Additionally the researcher had available a notebook in which to make handwritten notes of any non-verbal signs or communications that seemed important to record. However, no notes were made.

Raw data was retained indefinitely and kept securely.

3.4.3.10.   Evaluation of interview

Parental feedback on the experience of the structured interview was elicited by three further questions, questions 7, 8 and 9 which were, "Looking back over our conversation as you have shared your story of [name of child], how do you feel about the experience of telling your story?", "Which aspects of telling your story of [name of child] has been

most worthwhile for you?" and, "Do you wish to add any further comments about your experience of telling your story of [name of child]?".

The intention was to collate responses to these questions to form a summary of all parental feedback when the study was intended to be a collective case study. However when the design was amended to a case study, the answers were specific to the individual narrative story about the child.

3.4.4. Transcription

3.4.4.1. Ethical issues at the transcription stage

Participant names and the names of their children were not included in the Primary Transcription Text or in the Research Text, rather pseudonyms were used. Pseudonyms were also used for all other people and places mentioned in the interview. Pseudonyms were allocated to people and places in the order in which they occurred in the transcript, pseudonyms being chosen according to Appendix J for names of people, and Appendix K for name of places. Pseudonyms are listed in the appendices according to the order they appeared in the relevant publication.

3.4.4.2. Process of transcription to produce a primary transcription text

The audio recording was transcribed in its entirety by the researcher. This was achieved through repeated playing of the recording as the researcher typed. A Primary Transcription Text was produced by the researcher for the interview, as far as possible this was a verbatim written record of the interview. The transcription was checked for accuracy twice by the researcher by replaying the audio recording while simultaneously reading the research text. Any discrepancies between the audio recording and the research text were corrected.

At any time within the audio recording in which it was difficult to hear what the participant had said, and it was not possible to address this with use of the back-up recording, there was a plan to indicate this in the research text by use of italics.

The research text produced, includes interviewer questions and comments, so that the audio context for all interviewee comments is clear, and the researcher's verbal contributions to the narrative is evident. This provides some explicit evidence of the degree of verbal co-construction, the extent to which the researcher overtly contributed to the narrative during the production stage. The transcription included notes of pauses and hesitations made by the interviewee.

3.4.4.3. Secondary transcription to produce a research text

The intention was to derive a chronological account, a Research Text from the Primary Transcription Text. However, no changes were necessary as the participant mainly delivered the story in chronological order and clearly indicated any divergences from chronological order.

3.4.5. Data analysis

3.4.5.1. Analysis of research text

With reference to the research literature on narrative inquiries (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Emerson & Frosh, 2009; Gee, 1991; Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Patterson, 2013; Reissman, 2008; Sermijn, Devlieger, & Loots, 2008; Willig, 2008), samples of the research text were analysed in depth using a range of techniques found in narrative inquiry approaches to research data.

3.4.5.2. Pilot analysis

Narrative inquiry is a developing field in which methods of analysis show some variation. The researcher retains flexibility on the method of data analysis chosen, though each approach has its merits and shortcomings.

During analysis of the research text, consideration was given to a range of approaches to narrative analysis as documented during previous studies (Andrews et al., 2013) and referred to in the literature. The most appropriate method was chosen.

In a pilot analysis of sections of the transcript, a range of methods of narrative analysis were considered. Initially a Labovian approach (Labov, 2013) was adopted. This involved identification of five aspects of narrative clauses: an abstract, or summary of the story to come; the orientation or setting for story i.e. when, where, who?; the complicating action or the plot of the narrative; the result or how the story ends; the evaluation or crucial point of the story, without which the story would not be told; and the coda or end of the narrative when the narrator indicates that the story is over, probably by indicating a return to the present. Three types of evaluation were identified by Labov (2013) including external (overt evaluation where the narrator emphasises a point to the listener), embedded (which communicates how the narrator felt to maintain the 'dramatic continuity' (Patterson, 2013)) and evaluative (revealing emotions through actions without using speech).

There are some known limitations to Labovian analysis. Firstly, the text is regarded as a selected repetition of events, a story-telling of past events. This is distinct from story-telling as defined as a telling of past experience. Secondly, the approach is based on identification of narrative clauses, that is, clauses which report a sequence of events rather than convey feelings about events (evaluative clauses), though difficulties in distinguishing between the two have been reported (Patterson, 2013). Although

Labovian analysis is useful for analysis of chronologically ordered discrete events analysed out of the original context, the approach is limited when applied to personal experience, and when used in isolation is likely to lead to a degree of reductionism as only portions of the research text which conform to Labovian structure are analysed by this method. Therefore, while use of the Labovian method is useful, it is insufficient on its own. Modifications to Labovian analysis, when used in tandem with Labovian analysis can provide a more comprehensive method for analysis of narrative.

Patterson (2013) provided discussion of the methodological problems with the Labovian approach and summarised some alternative approaches and developments. She explained that Polanyi (1985) used a Labovian approach but extended the definition of narrative clause to include 'state clauses' (Patterson, 2013) (section 6, paragraph 4) which persist over time.

Also, Patterson (2013) suggested that Reissman (1993) reconceptualised narrative to include two different types of narrative. Firstly, to include 'ongoing and enduring states of being' (Patterson, 2013, section 6 Paragraph 9). According to this approach, the entire research text is a narrative if it conformed to the 'sequential, thematic and structural coherence', according to the 'poetic structural approach' (Section 6, Paragraph 8) used to analyse text using stanzas and themes (Gee, 1991). Secondly, Reissman (1993) used narrative to include segments which conform to Labov's criteria (as explained above). This reconceptualization by Reissman (1993) can result in analysis of the whole text using Labovian analysis. However, while Labovian-type analysis is detailed and rigorous (Andrews et al., 2013) and can be very illuminating, there are other shortcomings to the Labovian approach. This approach assumes that the oral narrative is a factual account of real events and makes no allowance for the narrative being a construction (or co-construction) of events.

As a result of the partial pilot analysis, the outcome of which is described in Chapter 4, a decision was reached to utilise the poetic structural approach by Gee (1991) which is explained in the next section. The step by step process used is detailed in Appendix L.

3.4.5.3. Gee's (1991) approach to narrative analysis

Gee's approach is also known as the poetic structural approach (Gee, 1991). It includes analysis at both micro and macro levels. Analysis of micro-components includes identification of pitch-glide, idea units and lines. Analysis of macro-components includes identification of stanzas, strophes and parts. Analysis using Gee's (1991) approach always involves separate analysis of each transcript. The step by step process used is summarised in Appendix L.

Consistent with a thematic narrative approach to research, sequences were preserved, so the coded sections are relatively large sections (as compared to short segments coded in other methodological approaches), this is so that the story / sequence is retained. The underlying assumptions in the account were identified and named / coded, using both prior theory and novel theoretical insights from the data to inform the coding.

Ultimately, sections of narrative were included in the report (and Appendices), together with the researcher's interpretation, theoretical formulation and references to prior theory. As thematic narrative analysis is case centred, any theorizing was from the individual case and no attempt would be made to theorize across cases.

Analysis at the latent level enabled examination of the underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies behind the narrative.

Gee's approach allows for five levels of analysis (which are described in more detail below together with the meaning of terms used). These range from re-transcription (level 1), the level of cohesion (level 2), mainline and off-mainline distinction (level 3), the

subject positions from which stanza are viewed (level 4), to '*hierarchically the most*

inclusive, interpretative level' (Emerson & Frosh, 2009) (page 84) (level 5). The

description of the process of analysis according to Gee's approach as given by Emerson

and Frosh (2009) was used as a guide to the process of narrative analysis during analysis

of the data for this study. Table 1 is a summary of analysis at levels 1-5 and provides a

reference point for terms used in levels of analysis according to the Poetic Structural

Approach of Gee (1991).

Table 1	Summary of the process of narrative analysis according to Gee (1991)			
	Name	**Meaning**	**How represented in transcript**	**Underlying significance**
Level 1 – micro and macro analysis to achieve re-transcription [*"How has this text been organised or structured to show its meaning?" (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.73)*]				
Micro-analysis (identification of the smaller elements of speech)	Pitch	Words given emphasis during speech	CAPITAL LETTERS OR UNDERLINED ACRONYMS	Preserves in the transcription of speech the manner in which the words were originally spoken
	Glide	Words NOT given emphasis during speech	Lower case	
	Idea Units	Phrase including at least one pitch- glide	/ at each end of the idea unit /	Initial level of analysis, the first stage of attending more closely to the narrative
	Lines	Like a sentence in writing	Numerical number in sequence in left hand margin	Aids navigation and reference to the transcript
Macro-analysis (identification of the larger structures within speech)	Stanza	Title given to a group of lines on one topic	A numbered heading at the beginning of a section of text	Developed through co-construction Helps to structure the story. Initial identification of topics within the narrative.
	Strophe	Title given to a related pair of stanza	A numbered and underlined heading at the beginning of a section of text	Developed through co-construction. Strophe provide further structure for the story. Strophe help to identify the links between stanza. Through construction, a view develops of why the narrative is presented in the order that it is.
	Parts	Thematically related strophe	**NUMBERED BOLD CAPITAL LETTER HEADINGS WITHIN THE TEXT**	In this research, parts correspond to headings in the planning framework developed with the participant at the outset.

Table 1 continued					
Level 2 – speech disruptions [*"Why has the speaker made this particular kind of connection at this point?"* (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.75)]					
	Name	**Meaning**	**How represented in transcript**	**Significance / Underlying meaning**	
The level of cohesion within the narrative	Hesitations	For example 'err', '……' 'mmm'	Blue highlight	A sign that the participant is planning the story to come	These occur when participants are planning a new or maybe major diversion in the story (Gee, 1992)
	False starts	And I….	Pink highlight	Participant starts but doesn't complete a phrase	
	Repairs	… he	Green highlight	Participant self-corrects, this often occurs following a false start	
Level 3 – mainline or not [*"What is the main point or significance of this plot? So what?"* (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.77)]					
	Mainline	mainline	Double underlined	The main point being made	
	Off mainline	not mainline	Not underlined	This information is potentially still important (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.78)	
Level 4 – subject positions [*"Who or what is the subject of a given stanza?"* (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.78)]					
The subject positions from which the stanza are viewed	I	The participant / narrator	Red font	*"Why does a narrator change psychological subjects or shift points of view and are there patterns in these changes?"(Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.79)*	In this research, it might be anticipated that 'he' might be the dominant subject position in most stanza, as Mrs Dent is telling the story of her son.
	We	The participant / narrator and at least one other person	Blue font		
	He	A male person	Brown font		
	She	A female person	Dark Green font		
	They	More than one person	Bright green font		
	You	The researcher or a generalisation	Pink		
Level 5 – pitch-glide focus [*"Hierarchically the most inclusive interpretative level"* (Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.82)]					
A reading of the focussed material to build an interpretation of the narrative.	Pitch - Glide *"Why is this so important?"(Emerson & Frosh, 2009 p.82)*	*"Sense making must be seen to emerge from focussed material across the levels of textual interpretation"* (Emerson &	Material identified at levels 1 to 4 is reconsidered	In this research a tabular summary of levels 1 to 4 was used to identify Key Stanza as identified in levels 1 to 4. *"Themes emerging from the emphasised material at one level need to be taken into account at more inclusive levels of interpretation"* (Emerson & Frosh,	

		Frosh, 2009 p.85)		2009 p.82)

3.4.5.3.1.   Level 1 analysis

Level 1 analysis involves identification of the micro-components of pitch-glide, idea units

and lines, and identification of the macro-components of stanzas, strophes and parts.

These are all described in more detail below.

Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.73) suggest that level 1 analysis includes the question "How

has this text been organised or structured in order to convey its meaning?"

3.4.5.3.1.1.   *Identification of Pitch and Glide*

Consistent with level 1 analysis according to Gee (1991), pitch and glide were identified

within the transcript. This involved a replaying of the recording and initially highlighting

on a paper copy of the transcript all words to which the participant gave emphasis (pitch)

when speaking. These words were subsequently placed in capitals and are so identifiable

on the written version of the transcript (Appendix P). Where acronyms such as EHCP,

CAMHS, and SEN were given emphasis in the interview, these were underlined in the

transcript in order to indicate that they had been given emphasis by the participant.

Words which are not in capitals or acronyms which are not underlined in the transcript

are example of glide.

3.4.5.3.1.2.   Identification of Idea Units

Idea units were identified within lines of transcript. As a minimum each idea unit

contains one pitch-glide (Gee, 1991). Idea units were identified from the transcript once

pitch-glide was recorded in the transcript. Idea units were indicated in the transcript

using a slash (/) sign at each end.

3.4.5.3.1.3.   Identification of lines of transcript

Lines of transcript were identified at the time of the original transcription of the interview. The definition of a line was taken as '*something like what would show up as a sentence in writing*' (Gee, 1991) as quoted by Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.65). Following initial identification of lines within the transcript, the transcript was re-read, and re-read again at the same time as replaying the transcript. Amendments were made until it was felt that lines were appropriately identified in the transcript.

3.4.5.3.1.4.   Identification of Stanza

A stanza portrays a '*particular point of view*' (Gee, 1992), as cited by Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.66). It is also a '*group of lines with a common theme*' (Mischler, 1996), as cited by Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.66). For a large part of the transcript, stanza were readily identifiable, as if the participant had spoken in pre-prepared stanza and the stanza were there waiting to be discovered. However in other parts of the transcript it was more difficult to make decisions about where stanza started and ended, and how they might most appropriately be labelled.

Stanza '*tend to come in related pairs*' (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.66).

3.4.5.3.1.5.   Identification of Strophe

The term strophe refers to related pairs of stanza as defined by (Gee, 1991) and referred to by Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.66). It was in the identification of strophe (and stanza) that the active co-production role of the researcher in analysing the Research Text was most evident. In places in the transcript, there were choices to be made about whether to label a section in one way and group it with an associated section to make a strophe, or whether to label it differently, and alternatively group the stanza differently with a different section to make a different strophe. These are decisions made throughout the

text, but the researcher became more aware of this at points in the transcript at which the process became more difficult.

3.4.5.3.1.6.   Identification of Parts

When identifying Parts within the transcript it was realised that these corresponded to the parts of the framework agreed with the participant at the beginning of the interview. A part is defined a '*thematically related strophes*' (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.70) forming episodes or sections of the story as told.

3.4.5.3.2.   Level 2 analysis

Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.75) suggest that level 2 analysis raises questions about "*Why has the speaker made this particular kind of connection at this point?*" and "*How does this connection make sense within the logic of particular narrative parts and of the overall jointly produced interview?*". During this level 2 analysis the false starts made by the participant and the repairs made were identified with a view to identifying the underlying planning for the story by the participant. Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.75) argued that these speech disruptions are displayed when participants are planning a new or major diversion within the story (Gee, 1991).

3.4.5.3.3.   Level 3 analysis

Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.77) cite Gee (1991) to define the objective of level 3 analysis as "*What's the main point or significance of this plot*". They suggest that level 3 analysis includes "*distinguishing the main line of the plot from material off the main line*" (Gee, 1991), or in more simple terms "*So what?*" (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.77).

3.4.5.3.4. Level 4 analysis

Citing Gee (1991), Level 4 analysis is defined by Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.78) as the "*subject positions or points of view from which the material in a stanza is viewed*". In this stage of analysis attention is paid to the psychological subjects of stanza, for instance if a narrator is using the term 'I', or 'we', or 'women', or alternatives.

At this level of analysis the objective is "*Who or what is the subject of a given stanza?*" (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.78 and 79), and "*Why does a narrator change psychological subjects or shift points of view and are there patterns in these changes?*" (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.79).

3.4.5.3.5. Level 5 analysis

Level 5 analysis is based on the pitch-glide focus of idea units. The pitch focus has been placed in capitals in the Research Text (or underlined in the case of acronyms). Emerson and Frosh (2009, p.82) describe level 5 analysis as "*hierarchically the most inclusive interpretive level*" and they cite Gee (1991, p.33) as arguing that across the text as a whole, level 5 analysis involves identifying "*images or themes out of which we are invited to build an overall interpretation of the narrative*". Further, (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p.82) suggest that the question "*Why is this so important?*" is repeatedly asked. The focussed material (that is, that in capital letters, or underlined in the research text) is re-read at this level in a form of "*thematic interpretation*" (Gee, 1991).

Key stanza were identified for more detailed analysis. In order to draw on analysis at all levels, stanza of particular interest were identified at each level in turn. The stanza found to be of most interest were selected for closer analysis. However, through analysis of the transcript using the approach of Gee (1991), some parts of the transcript seemed to include points of interest not particularly highlighted by the narrative analysis according

to Gee (1991), and these were also considered for inclusion in the six stanza analysed in more detail.

Chapter 4 - Analysis of Results

The first part of this chapter begins with a discussion of the outcome of three different sampling methods used to attempt to gain participants to take part in the research. This is included in this section: as it could not be foreseen in advance that three different approaches would be necessary prior to carrying out the research; and also because difficulties in gaining participants was unforeseen, based on previous research (Mickelson, 1995). Then qualitative details of the interview are described, including a synopsis of the story of the boy at the centre of this research. This is followed by a discussion of the production of the Research Text. The results of analysis using the five levels of analysis as proposed by Gee (1991) are then described.

In the second part of the chapter the focus is on the more detailed discussion of the six stanza identified as key stanza. This is followed by identification of canonical narratives identified by the analysis.

4.1. Outcome of different sampling approaches

In the original research proposal, only one method of selecting participants to take part was included. However no participants were recruited using this Stage 1 approach and so following approval, a Stage 2 sample selection procedure was used, but again no participants were recruited. One participant volunteered to take part when approval was gained and the sample selection method was changed to Stage 3 procedure.

Difficulties in recruiting participants to take part in this research was unexpected, as previous research in this area reports no difficulties in gaining parental participation (Mickelson, 1995). It appeared that the parents could be described as belonging to a 'hard to reach' cohort (Bonevski et al., 2014).

4.1.1. Stage 1 sampling

During the Stage 1 approach, in which parents were initially contacted by telephone if a telephone number was known, some parents did not answer the telephone. In other cases telephone numbers had been disconnected, or telephones switched off at the time of the call. Of those parents who were successfully contacted by telephone, several parents expressed an unwillingness to take part during initial telephone conversations. For example, one parent declined to take part on the grounds that '*I'm not concerned at the moment*'. Another declined on the grounds that she was '*taking action against the local authority as her child was being neglected by the system'.*   Some ended the telephone call as soon as the researcher had explained who she was. Possibly some were rejecting any intrusion into their lives, or wished to protect their child from any intrusion. Perhaps the parents contacted were unfamiliar with, suspicious of, or untrusting of, or perhaps did not value research. Perhaps some found the language used in the initial telephone call (which followed a script) difficult to understand. However if so, given the ethical decision to exclude from the research any parents with learning difficulties, then these parents might not have been suitable for inclusion as participants in the study. If difficulty in recruiting using this telephone contact method failed due to a high percentage of parents with learning difficulties within the cohort of parents of excluded children, this would have implications for a child's risk of exclusion from school.

For parents contacted successfully by telephone, letter follow up was sent and sometimes parents chose not to participate further and communicated this to the researcher. It is possible that the literacy level of some parents did not enable them to access the invitation letter, or that with further written information and time to consider, they no longer wanted to take part.

For parents for whom no initial telephone contact details were available, the initial contact made was by letter. Most did not respond to letters. It is possible that the literacy level of some parents did not enable them to access the invitation letter, or that they found the letter unfamiliar or threatening.

A few parents arranged to meet with the researcher in their home setting but were not at home when the researcher arrived at the agreed time. It was assumed that parents would feel less threatened in their home environment, but it is possible that they felt that a visit by the researcher might be intrusive; there may have been a lack of trust. Also in some cases parents seemed to have forgotten about a planned meeting. This is consistent with explanations given by Bonevski et al. (2014) about the effects of the pressures of everyday life on disadvantaged groups.

As a result of the difficulties in recruiting participants using Stage 1 sampling procedures, an alternative approach was taken.

4.1.2. Stage 2 sampling

During the Stage 2 approach, the researcher was introduced to parents (of permanently excluded pupils) face to face by staff at the PRU, prior to the researcher explaining about the research. Some parents expressed an interest in participating but then later became unavailable to participate. One parent was willing to participate by writing out her child's story, but this offer was declined as this option had not been included in the ethical proposal.

As a result of the failure to recruit any participants to take part in the study using Stage 2 sampling procedures, a third approach to gaining participants was adopted.

4.1.3. Stage 3 sampling

During the Stage 3 approach, in which parents were given a simplified flyer with very basic information about the research, by hand, by someone they knew, parents seemed more willing to volunteer to participate. The Flyer appealed for their help, a characteristic of successful attempts to gain participation according to previous research (Bonevski et al., 2014).

The participant who took part in an interview was a volunteer. As with all volunteers for research it is likely that they are distinctive from the group from which they belong and that the uniqueness of the situation or disposition or experience of the volunteer makes them more likely to volunteer to take part in research. As a result, in positivistic research, use of volunteers as participants is regarded as a weakness. However as the current study is a narrative inquiry, outside positivist constraints, it is expected that each participant has a unique story to tell, so the participant being a volunteer is not regarded as a limitation. It is the uniqueness of the story told, that makes the story worth listening to.

It is possible that the characteristics necessary of a participant in order to successfully take part in telling the story of their child are more likely to occur in participants who volunteer to take part. These include characteristics such as: a good memory and level of cognitive skill to tell a chronological story about their child; sufficient grasp of language skills to adequately and meaningfully express the story; and a degree of self-awareness and emotional literacy to be able to articulate feelings and experiences.

4.2. The interview

The participant was aware of the requirements of the interview prior to the day of recording. She was aware that a framework (Appendices H and I) would be derived and that she was to be asked to tell the story of her son's life from the beginning to the

present day. A transcription of the recording of plans to tell the story is shown at

Appendix M. Just prior to the interview Mrs Dent [pseudonym] referred to having

prepared to tell the story, though she used no notes when doing so. Maybe this

preparation supported her in telling the story of her son at length and in detail. The story

was told at quite a fast pace, as if the parent was unburdening herself in some respects.

As a listener to the story it seemed that she gained some satisfaction from being allowed

to tell the whole story as she judged it to be, and as she wished to tell it. It seemed that

this opportunity had never occurred for her before. The participant showed an unusual

degree of ability to express herself, including the confidence to tell the story from her

perspective, share her emotions, and in some cases share events where she felt that she

personally had made mistakes.

The story told by the participant was given a title by the researcher, based on comments

made by the participant during the interview and answers to questions.

4.3. Steps towards a research text

4.3.1. Transcription of the interview recording

As indicated in Chapter 3, the interview with the participant was dual recorded using

both a Philips Digital Recorder and an IPhone 6. The former proved to be an inferior

quality recording due to an incorrect sound level setting having been pre-programmed

into the device, and the researcher being unaware of this. As a result of this error, the

IPhone 6 back-up recording made using the 'Clear Record Lite' application was used to

generate the transcript. The recording was played and word processed, and replayed

and corrected as many times as necessary to produce an accurate transcription of the

interview.

Sometimes corrections were made by hand on a paper printout and then this amended

paper copy used to inform corrections to the word processed version. At other times

corrections were made directly onto the electronic word processed document. Different methods were used at different places in the transcript because the recording was easier to transcribe in some places than in others. This was because of hesitations or corrections by the participant, and in places due to the speed of the participant's speaking, which in places was very fast.

Although the Philips Digital Recorder allowed for a slowing down of the interview so that a word processed version could be generated at any speed of typing, because this recording was of inferior quality, repeated playing of the IPhone 6 recording in real time proved the most effective way of generating an accurate transcription of the interview. This was very time consuming as the interview was almost three hours in length. However, as a result, the researcher became very familiar with the interview by the end of the transcription process and this was helpful during the later analysis of the transcript.

The Primary Transcription Text was also used as the Research Text, as the participant told the story in a close chronological order and there were concerns that meaning might be lost from the transcript if it was re-arranged to be in perfect chronological order. In fact, the participant adhered very closely to the framework agreed at the beginning of the interview, and helpfully gave signposts including use of the phrase "going back" (for example in line 126) indicating when she was going out of chronological order in the interview, and again when she was returning to the main story.

Initially the story was organised in numbered lines intuitively by the researcher. The lines were subsequently reviewed to ensure that Gee's (1991) definition of lines was utilised throughout. Gee (1991) defined lines as being about a central argument and having correspondence with a written sentence.

In all, 867 lines of text were recorded related to the story of 'John Dent' (a fictitious name, a pseudonym). (A key for all pseudonyms used in the transcript is shown at Appendix N.) Additional lines of text cover the derivation of the framework and the participant's answers to questions at the end.

The verbal contributions of the researcher, limited though they were, were recorded and retained in the Research Text so as to preserve the continuity of the original interview as closely as possible. Also, the hesitations, repeats, corrections and occasional errors by the participant were retained in the Research Text. This is in contrast to some other approaches within narrative analysis work, but was decided upon in order to retain as much information as possible about the parent's view of the child's story and to facilitate full analysis according the approach suggested by Gee (1991). In places, the participant began a sentence that was never completed (for example 'I'd' in line 46) as an utterance that could be cleaned from the Research Text. However, by retaining this comment in the Research Text, this allows us to reflect on what she might have been about to say, allows us to check if soon after she returned to voice the comment, or if it faded away, never to be included in the story of her child either through choice or by inadvertent omission. This was useful during level 2 analysis according to Gee (1991) when false starts and hesitations were analysed.

4.3.2. A synopsis of the story of John Dent

A synopsis of the story is included below. John Dent is a completely fictitious name,

given by the researcher, to the boy at the centre of this research.

"A Good Thing Came Out of a Bad Situation"

John was an eleven year old boy at the time his story was told by his mother

during one session of about three hours. John had been diagnosed with

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder at the

age of nine years. John lives at home with his parents, the fourth child in the

family and the only boy. John attended the same school from Nursery to Year 6

and was permanently excluded from school during the Summer Term of Year 6.

At the time his story was told, he was attending a primary-age pupil referral unit

(PRU) for four hours per day. This is a secure setting run by the local authority

to provide educational provision for primary aged children who have received

permanent exclusion from school.

4.3.3. Participant's evaluation about taking part

Appendix O is a transcript showing the participant's answers to the questions asked at

the end of the interview.

4.3.4. Pilot analysis

The beginning section of the transcript was used for a pilot analysis using different

approaches to narrative analysis. An initial attempt to use Labov's approach (Labov,

2013) proved difficult to implement with this transcript as did an attempt to use an

approach proposed by Polanyi (1985) which also includes state clauses for analysis, in

addition to event clauses as analysed by Labov (2013).

A narrative includes six elements according to Labov (2013) though not all stories contain

all elements. Coda were often identifiable, but it was frequently difficult to determine

other aspects of Labov's structure within the transcript, or at times, even to decide which structural elements were present.   However, Reissman (2008) indicated that not all texts conform to the structure proposed by Labov (2013) and also Patterson (2013) reported difficulties in using the approach as data did not seem to conform to the expected structure assumed by the Labovian approach.

Perhaps also, the difficulties in applying the Labovian (Labov, 2013) approach and the Labovian approach as extended by Polanyi (1985) in this current research, arose from the design of this current study, in that it is the story of the excluded child, but told by the parent? In Labovian analysis it is assumed that the narrative is of events that actually happened, but in many cases parents are unsure what actually happened to their child at school when the parent was not present.

In contrast, during pilot analysis using Gee's (1991) poetic structural approach, both strophe and stanza were readily identifiable within the transcript and it seemed possible to analyse all parts of the transcript using this approach. This is consistent with the findings of Reissman (1993) as quoted in Patterson (2013, p.39).

4.4. Analysis using the poetic structural approach of Gee (1991)

The approach to analysis proposed by Gee (1991) was only applied to the part of the transcript that related to the story of John Dent. The approach was not applied to the initial discussion to derive the life history grid, or to the section of the interview at the end where the parent was answering other questions from the researcher. The outcome of each of the levels of analysis proposed by Gee (1991) is detailed below.   Table 1 in the Methodology Chapter may be helpful to the reader to refer to, for meaning of terms used during the narrative analysis according to Gee (1991).

4.4.1 Level 1 analysis

4.4.1.1. Microanalysis of pitch-glide

The pitch-glide identified in the transcript is shown in Appendix P. Pitch refers to the

words given emphasis in speech and glide refers to those not given emphasis. Pitch is

shown by words in CAPITAL LETTERS, and for acronyms which are always written in

capital letters are shown underlined to represent pitch, for example EHCP.

4.4.1.2. Microanalysis of idea units, and lines

Idea units are shown in the transcript in Appendix P. Each idea unit includes at least one
pitch-glide.

Each idea unit is separated from the next by a forward slash (/).

The lines of the transcript are numbered on the left hand side as shown in Appendix P.

4.4.1.3. Macroanalysis of parts, stanza, and strophe

4.4.1.3.1. Parts

When planning to tell the story of John Dent, his mother built the following life history
grid to structure her story. She started in the top left hand corner, worked left to right
along the top row then left to right along the bottom row.

Birth	Family	Two years old (because that was significant - he achieved quite a lot at aged 2)	Pre-school
Early Years	Years 4, 5 and 6	Friends	Strengths and Achievements

The sections of the life history grid became the parts of the story. Additionally she spoke

in the final strophe about 'The Future', forming a ninth part of the story.

Most lines within the story were used for the fifth part, "Years 4, 5,and 6". The number

of lines within each part of the story are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 The parts of the story of John Dent			
PART 1 **Birth**	**PART 2** **Family**	**PART 3** **Two years old** **(because that was** **significant - he** **achieved quite a lot** **at aged 2)**	**PART 4** **Pre-school**
Lines 1-34	Lines 36-65	Lines 66-88 and 104-124	Lines 89-103 and 125-135
PART 5 **Early Years**	**PART 6** **Years 4, 5 and 6**	**PART 7** **Friends**	**PART 8** **Strengths and** **achievements**
Lines 136-202	Lines 208-771	Lines 772-847	Lines 821-867
PART 9 **The Future**			
Lines 851- 869			

4.4.1.3.2. Stanza

A stanza is a named group of lines on one topic. In all 108 Stanza were identified within the transcript. Stanza are numbered from the beginning of the transcript as shown in Appendices P and Q.

Although the length of stanza is not necessarily important, length was noted in case it may be indicative. The longest stanza as measured by number of lines were Stanza 62 'School and parent have different views and John is excluded from school' (22), Stanza 68 'Parent's view of events' (22), Stanza 105 'John's Green Card Challenge at PRU' (22), Stanza 97 'John perceives unfairness' (20).

The shortest stanza were Stanza 14 'John is just like other children', Stanza 59 'A good spell in Year 6', Stanza 83 'School permanently exclude John', and Stanza 84 'Parents' reaction to the permanent exclusion', which were all of one line in length.

Despite the readiness with which pairs of stanza could be identified within the transcript, there are alternative ways in which the transcript could be divided into stanza. During much of the analysis, stanza were so readily identified that there could be a tendency to assume that stanza are there waiting to be discovered, but rather during the process of analysis stanza are applied to the transcript, and this could be done in more than one arrangement. It is at the discretion of the researcher which arrangement of stanza is chosen.

It is not a requirement of the use of Gee's (1991) approach that all stanza occur in pairs, although they usually do. Throughout most of this narrative it was possible to identify stanza in pairs but in some places this was more difficult. This was overcome by giving a priority to stanza being paired though not necessarily occurring consecutively within the narrative. These were the split strophe. The one line stanza are probably a consequence of this decision. Alternative arrangements might be chosen by other researchers.

A list of all stanza in the chronological order that they appear in the transcript is included at Appendix R. These provide a summary of the entire narrative.

4.4.1.3.3. Strophe

A strophe is a pair of related stanza. In all 54 strophe were identified within the transcript. It was possible to organise all stanza into pairs to form strophe. When stanza were organised into strophe, stanza were not always used in number order as they appeared in the transcript. This was because it seemed that the participant sometimes broke off in the middle of a strophe to provide some further information about something else, in order to facilitate the listener's understanding of the next stanza. For example, during Strophe 12 (Football and Playing for the Team), following Stanza 23 (John joins the football club), there is Stanza 25 (John shows no fear) which has been coded as part of Strophe 13 (Fear). Stanza 26 (John feels fear on the inside) follows

Stanza 25 so completing Strophe 13. This is followed by Stanza 24 (John plays for the

Football Team), to complete Strophe 12 (Football and Playing for the Team). Therefore

although the number allocated to strophe indicates the order in which they start in the

transcript, they are not necessarily completed in this order. In this example of Strophe

12 and 13 there are no comments by the participant to indicate that she might be

breaking off in the middle of a strophe. However there is a comment at the beginning of

Stanza 24 in line 173 (shown below) which suggests that she is returning to a section of

the story left partially told, earlier on.

> 173   *so …. but anyway … GOING BACK, umm … in case I'm going off the lines*
> *again, going back, he joined GARDEN WARRIORS FOOTBALL CLUB when he*
> *was SIX … umm*

There are two false starts at the beginning of this line followed by an emphasis on the

phrase GOING BACK. This indicates that the participant has a feeling of returning to

something mentioned earlier in the story. By coding Stanza 24 in a strophe with Stanza

23, this utilises the information provided by the participant in line 173 that she was

"GOING BACK".

Also in line 173 is the phrase "in case I'm going off the lines again". As the framework

agreed at the beginning of the interview was recorded in a series of line edged boxes, it is

thought that this phrase was a reference to the framework. The digression (Strophe 13,

Fear) from the main story (Strophe 12, Football and Playing for the Team) was not

interpreted by the researcher as part of a different PART of the story, although it would

be possible to do so. This is because Stanza 25 begins in line 161, with the phrase "and

again by the age of TWO". This is information which would technically belong to the

"TWO YEARS OLD" box of the framework. Line 161, as part of Stanza 25 (John shows no

fear) has been interpreted by the researcher as off the main line – the main line being

about John's perception of fear. However, this interpretation of this stanza in terms of

fear is partly arising from the contribution of the researcher during the interview in

asking the participant to "tell me a bit more about that" (following line 162) and directing

the participant further with the words "when you say there's something a bit different

deep inside" (following line 163). This further direction was only given to the participant

when she seemed unable to "tell me a bit more about that". So it is possible that the

researcher's constructions and understanding of the story at this point, guided comments

to the participant, their responses, and the subsequent coding of the stanza as part of

Strophe 13.

Strophe 13 (Fear) [INSERTED STROPHE]
Stanza 25 (John shows no fear)

161	And again by the age of TWO John was… we'd take him out on to the FIELD , or Nigel used to go to RACE MEETINGS with his FRIENDS, so he was allowed to take the bike and John would get on the bike and ride a motorbike by the age of 2 which again, there's not many 2 year olds that can ride a motorbike, so … /
162	but then again, THE FEAR, there was just no fear, just no fear and there still isn't in John / but I think there is, but DEEP INSIDE to be honest with you, but that's getting onto a little bit further /
R:	*Ok, can you tell me a bit more about that?*
163	*What about …. ?*
R:	*When you say there's something a bit different deep inside?*
164	Like I say, JOHN hasn't got NO FEAR, em… he's got in a swimming pool and just SWAM, he's got on a motor bike and just gone on his BIKE and onto a push bike and just rode on a PUSH BIKE /

In line 164, the participant seems to summarise Stanza 25 and clarify that the information

from when he was younger (line 161) was used just to illustrate her argument that he has

no fear, therefore this is justification for the stanza title used, as "John shows no fear"

rather than about John aged two years.

The researcher made few comments during the interview as a whole, but felt that

intervention was needed following line 162, because it seemed that the participant was

holding back information as shown by the phrase "but that's getting onto a little bit

further /" (line 162). It is interesting that the participant seemed not to know what the researcher was asking for in the comment following line 162. However, the participant's clarification at line 164 sets the scene for Stanza 26 (John feels fear on the inside) where she explains John's fear further.

Further on in the interview there is another example of a split strophe. Strophe 17 (Consequences) is split following Stanza 33 (Parent's use of consequences when John was young). Strophe 18 (Deputy Head's view of John) is inserted following the first stanza of Strophe 17. First there is Stanza 35 (Deputy Head has no concerns), then Stanza 36 (Deputy Head is concerned about John's behaviour). Following completion of Strophe 18, comes a further split strophe. Strophe 19 (CAMHS involvement) starts immediately following completion of Strophe 18. However the first stanza in this strophe, Stanza 37 (CAMHS outcome; there's nothing wrong with John) is followed by Stanza 34 (Parental use of consequences as John grew older), which then completes Strophe 17 (Consequences).

Immediately following completion of Strophe 17, Strophe 19 is also completed with Stanza 38 (CAMHS suggest parenting programme). There are no verbal comments made by the researcher during Strophe 17,18 and 19, so it seems that this is how the participant decided to tell the story with no interruptions by the researcher to influence the direction taken or information included.

Strophe 19 is a digression as shown by the participant's comments at line 242 "whether it was the year before whether he was SEVEN or EIGHT" and line 245 "going back". Strophe 17,18 and 19 represent a complex section of the story as coded by the researcher. By coding in this way, all stanza are grouped in pairs within strophe, although in order to do so, strophe are split and sometimes there is a double split as occurred across Strophe 17, 18 and 19. This is shown by the following list of stanza order.

Stanza 33 (Strophe 17, part 1)
Stanza 35 (Strophe 18, part 1)
Stanza 36 (Strophe 18, part 2)
Stanza 37 (Strophe 19, part 1)
Stanza 34 (Strophe 17, part 2)
Stanza 38 (Strophe 19, part 2)

4.4.2. Level 2 analysis

The focus during level 2 analysis was speech disruptions including the false starts and

repairs made by the participant as she told the story of her son. These are interesting

because Gee (1991) asserted that these disruptions during speech imply underlying

planning, and occur when participants are planning a major diversion in the story. A table

showing the number of hesitations, false starts and repairs in each stanza is shown in

Appendix S.

4.4.2.1. Hesitations

During the story of John Dent, analysis showed that many hesitations occurred at the

beginning part of the story during the first seven stanza in particular. At the time of the

interview, it was assumed that the participant was settling in to the task of telling the

story, and perhaps becoming more comfortable with the telling of the story being voice

recorded. However, as argued by Gee (1991), at the beginning of the story the parent

was also engaged in planning the story to come.

The participant made 226 hesitations (such as 'umm' and 'err') during the hours spent

telling the story of her son. On average this would be equivalent to about one per

minute, but in fact the hesitations were not evenly spread throughout the story.

The number of hesitations made by the participant were counted within each stanza.

There were 33 stanza in which the participant made no hesitations of the err / umm type,

18 stanza in which one hesitation was identified, and 16 stanza in which two hesitations

were identified. This was a means of adopting a form of measurement of hesitation during the level 1 analysis.

There were no stanza with zero hesitations early on in the transcript; Stanza 33 was the first stanza in which the participant made no hesitations.   This stanza, 'Parent's use of consequences when John was young' was four lines in length. There were eight consecutive stanza in which the participant made zero hesitations. These were (with stanza titles):

Stanza 88 Mum's initial feelings about PRU
Stanza 89 John's PRU classmates
Stanza 90 Mum's feelings of breakdown
Stanza 91 Mum comes to terms with what has happened
Stanza 92 John starts PRU
Stanza 93 Standards at home
Stanza 94 Standards of other PRU parents
Stanza 95 Parental uncertainty

Most hesitations were found in Stanza 1 'Background to Pregnancy' (8) which was 6 lines long, Stanza 2 'A Boy Pregnancy'(10) which was 13 lines long, and Stanza 22 'Behaviour Escalation' (11) which was 9 lines long. During the first two stanza it might be expected that the participant was settling into telling the story, getting used to her words being voice recorded, and planning the story still to be told. In Stanza 22 a cluster of hesitations occurred (mainly 'umm') as she described parental management of John's behaviour and his responses to these strategies.

In Stanza 21 just preceding Stanza 22, the participant had described the circumstances under which her son might show his temper.

Stanza 21 (Temper)

165 Behaviour-wise umm BEHAVIOUR-WISE he just didn't seem to have NO FEAR umm
166 Even from an EARLY AGE, if … he THOUGHT SOMETHING

167 If at home, he'd LOSE HIS TEMPER because umm
168 his sister had got ONE SPOONFUL OF BEANS more than what he had, he
   would absolutely just LOSE HIS TEMPER …umm … /

Then in Stanza 22 parental responses to John's temper are described.

Strophe 11 (Temper and behaviour escalation)

Stanza 22 (Parent responses to John's temper)

144   Which obviously by this time, by the age he was 5, we'd got our own
      strategies that we would SEND HIM UP TO HIS ROOM, and he'd GO in his
      room for like 10 MINUTES because /
145   Obviously we'd brought up 3 girls and we considered our parenting as
      GOOD, do you know what I MEAN? /
146   And obviously we'd had JOHN and we was dealing with a COMPLETELY
      DIFFERENT person, we was dealing with a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
      SITUATION to what we'd dealt with, with the THREE GIRLS umm umm /
147   At, well like I say, when he was NAUGHTY umm, he'd go up to his
      BEDROOM, and he'd stay in his bedroom … umm … after 10 minutes he'd
      come down …umm… sometimes he was SENT UP TO HIS BEDROOM, and
      he'd behave, his behaviour got worse in the bedroom and we'd ADD
      another 5 MINUTES ON, another 10 MINUTES ON umm /
148   And even NOW, EVEN AT 11, we are still doing this kind of thing, so… umm /
149   as John's got older obviously HIS BEHAVIOUR umm HAS GOT WORSE and
      umm you know he has to spend quite a lot of time in his bedroom
      unfortunately /
150   Umm.. right … umm going on to … umm
151   Is there anything else you want to ask me? At the moment
R: *No you're fine*
152   Am I ok?
R: *No you're fine, unless you want me to … you've got the plan, if you're thinking
        where should I go next?*

Stanza 22 is a key stanza in many respects. This is where parental behaviour

management strategies are explained in a little detail. Mrs Dent reveals some of the

challenge to her personal sense of self, and to her and her husband as a couple, posed by

John's challenging behaviour. Her comment 'we considered our parenting as GOOD' (line

145) followed by 'do you know what I MEAN?' reveals the disempowerment the couple

encountered as they found their son's behaviour difficult to manage. The focus given to

the words 'COMPLETELY DIFFERENT', uttered twice in line 146 emphasises the need to

express the entirely different challenge posed by John as compared to his siblings.

Having raised three girls, as a couple, they felt that they knew how to manage children,

only to find that a different approach was needed with their son.

4.4.2.1.1. Requests for reassurance and researcher responses

Although not hesitations as such, at times the participant made direct requests for

reassurance from the researcher about the story told. At the end of Stanza 22 (Parental

responses to John's temper), in line 151 the participant sought guidance from the

researcher as to what to include in the story by asking, 'Is there anything else you want to

ask me?'. However the researcher encouraged the participant to continue, uttering the

words 'No, you're fine', a phrase uttered again after the participant asks 'Am I ok?'. It

isn't clear in what respect the participant is asking 'Am I ok?' Is this a request for

comment on the behaviour management strategies adopted, or a request for

reinforcement about the telling of the story? The researcher's repeated response 'No,

you're fine' is curious. While it seems appropriate to respond 'no' when asked 'Is there

anything else you want to ask me' (line 151), it seems the wrong response to 'Am I ok?'

(line 152). Surely a more valid response would be 'Yes, you're fine'. Perhaps this

suggests that at the time of the interview, the researcher interpreted the question 'Am I

ok?' (line 152) as a request for comment on the suitability of the management approach

parents were taking with their son.

The (psychologist) researcher's contribution in Stanza 31 seems maybe a little

inappropriate. However, it is likely that the 'ok' is in response to the parent's concern at

line 212 'I hope I don't get told off for this', rather than tacit approval for smacking

children as a consequence for undesirable behaviour. It also reveals that the researcher

was in the role of researcher and acting to encourage continuation of the story telling.

4.4.2.2. False starts

The stanza with most false starts is Stanza 20 (Progress with language) which has 6 false starts and also 6 repairs.

Stanza 9 (John is different to other children –strong physical skills) and Stanza 80 (John plays up in class) each have 5 false starts and 3 repairs.

Three stanza have 4 false starts, these are Stanza 18 (Swimming without armbands), Stanza 45 (Mum thinks a statement of SEN is going through), Stanza 50 (John takes on other people's problems), and Stanza 66 (Multiagency support for John's educational needs).

False starts tend to be short and sometimes appear grouped within a stanza. As if, once there is one false start within a line or stanza, there is an increased likelihood of the occurrence of another.

4.4.2.3. Repairs

In many instances there are the same number of false starts and repairs in each stanza, though there are some exceptions. In some cases a false start occurs at the end of a stanza and the repair occurs at the beginning of the next line and stanza. This leads to some differences in equality within stanza. In most cases repairs are longer than the false start that precedes them, and they are more detailed.

4.4.3. Level 3 analysis

During the level 3 analysis in which the main line (main point) of the story is identified, some mainline material was identified in most stanza. However in some stanza significant amounts of mainline material was identified. In an attempt to quantify the degree of mainline material in each stanza the number of phrases was counted. This is shown in Appendix S. This does not result in precise measurement of the amount of

mainline material present in each stanza due to difficulties in consistently applying the phrase count to each stanza; however it provides a method of identifying stanza containing the most mainline material.

The following stanza contained the most mainline comments

Stanza 29 (Home and school reaction to John)   18

Stanza 98 (John experiences positive relationships at PRU)   13

Stanza 22 (Parent responses to John's temper)   10

Stanza 35 (Deputy Head has no concerns)   10

Stanza 36 Deputy Head is concerned about John's behaviour)   10

Stanza 38 (CAMHS suggest parenting programme)   10

Stanza 37 (CAMHS outcome; there's nothing wrong with John)   9

Stanza 58 (School get tired of dealing with John's behaviour)   9

Stanza 62 (school and parent have different views and John is excluded from school)   9

Stanza 43 (Parents decide to medicate)   8

Stanza 72 (Mum is hopeful)   8

Stanza 97 (John perceives unfairness)   8

Stanza 41 (Parental response to diagnosis)   7

Stanza 51 (John gets hurt at residential)   7

Stanza 64 (Parental support for school wanes)   7

Stanza 80 (John plays up in class)   7

Stanza 85 (Effect of mix up on John)   7

Stanza 107 (The challenge of secondary school)   7

Stanza 40 (Third referral to CAMHS and diagnosis)   6

Stanza 53 (John uses bad language and reacts angrily at home   6

Stanza 96 (John is successful at PRU)   6

Less than five items of mainline material was identified in all other stanza. There were 14 stanza in which no mainline material was identified. These were:

Stanza 8 (John is different)

Stanza 14 (John is just like other children)

Stanza 15 (Aggression)

Stanza 23 (John joins the Football Club)

Stanza 25 (John shows no fear)

Stanza 59 (A good spell in Year 6)

Stanza 61 (Parents and school work together towards an EHCP)

Stanza 65 (CAMHS support for John)

Stanza 70 (Mum feels hopeful)

Stanza 71 (Mum blames some teachers)

Stanza 74 (School suggest a part time timetable)

Stanza 81 (John feels frustrated and needs space)

Stanza 89 (John's PRU classmates)

Stanza 104 (John's friends cope with his temper)

4.4.4. Level 4 analysis

A summary of the subject positions / points of view from which the material in each stanza is viewed is shown in a summary in Appendix S. The numbers quoted during this level 4 analysis reflect the number of times each word appears in the stanza. The numbers do not however reflect absolute values for the subject positions within each stanza. For example, the number of times the parent utters the word 'he' within a stanza is not a reliable guide to the number of times she refers to her son, as sometimes 'he' is used to refer to her husband, or to a teacher. On other occasions, 'he' is a word uttered by someone else and quoted by the parent. So the numerical values present in Appendix S are only starting points in the bottom-up analysis of the transcript during the level 4 analysis.

From this summary, some Stanza were identified as of particular interest for closer analysis. These were as follows;

Stanza 55 (Parents way of handling John)

Stanza 59 (A good spell in Year 6)

Stanza 60 (John is under threat of exclusion from school)

Stanza 61 (Parents and school work together towards an EHCP)

Stanza 69 (Mum feels confused)

Stanza 93 (Standards at home)

Stanza 95 (Parental uncertainty)

Stanza 100 (John withdraws socially)

4.4.5. Level 5 analysis

A summary of the pitch glide focus identified in the transcript during Stage 5 analysis is shown in Appendix S. Following identification of these pitch glide foci, summary of the key points was made. This is shown in Appendix T.

Stanza 62 (School and parent have different views and John is excluded from school) is of particular note during Level 5 analysis as there is a large amount of pitch glide focussed material in this stanza. The stanza describes the build up to John's first exclusion from school, a one day fixed term exclusion.

4.5. Findings from analysis of key stanza identified using the approach of Gee (1991)

Following each level of analysis according to Gee (1991) key stanza were identified which appeared for some reason to be of particular interest. For instance stanza in which there was a high level of hesitation at level 2, or mainline comments at level 3 which seemed particularly important: stanza in which the subject positions adopted at level 4 raised particular interest; and pitch glide focus at level 5 showed patterns which seemed

interesting. Using this approach, six stanza were identified for more detailed analysis and discussion. These were:

Stanza 22	interesting at 4 levels
Stanza 62	interesting at 3 levels
Stanza 75	Identified as of particular interest at level 2
Stanza 88	Identified as of particular interest at level 2 and 3
Stanza 92	Identified as of particular interest at level 2 and at level 3 for the number of 'I' statements
Stanza 97	Identified as of particular interest at level 2 and at level 3 for the number of 'he' statements

The level 4 analysis showed that there were 41 Stanza in which the tally of use of 'I' exceeded that of 'he'; these parts of the story were about the mother of John Dent. There were 47 stanza told primarily from the 'he' position. This suggests that the parental narrative was both the story of her son, and a report of her own experiences, feelings, hopes and opinions.

4.5.1. Stanza 22 (Parent responses to John's temper)

Stanza 22 was the only stanza identified as of interest from analysis at all of levels 2,3,4 and 5. The stanza is 9 lines in length and is focussed on parental responses to John's temper.

During level 2 analysis the stanza was identified as one with a high rate of hesitation, 12 in total, the highest rate of hesitation within a stanza within the entire transcript. There were 10 hesitations in Stanza 2 (A Boy Pregnancy) and 8 in Stanza 1 (Background to Pregnancy), so hesitations tended to concentrate early in the story when the parent was perhaps apprehensive or nervous about telling the story, though Gee (1991) argued that hesitations are a sign that the participant is planning the story to be told and it is plausible that a lot of planning takes place early on in the story telling. It is

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possible that the parent is engaged in extensive planning during Stanza 22, as the Stanza

precedes a detailed description of John's experiences at the football club. Closer

examination of the hesitations however show that they occur as the parent is describing

parents' responses to John's problem behaviour. The hesitations are clustered in lines

146, 147,148 149 and 150, four occurred as she seemed to be planning where to go next.

The others seemed to indicate hesitation about sharing information about parental

responses to John's behaviour. There was one false start at the end of the stanza when

the parent seemed unsure where to go next with the story, and sought direction,

feedback and reassurance from the researcher. This hesitation was repaired by asking in

line 151 'Is there anything else you want to ask me? Analysis at level 3 showed that there

were a relatively large number (10) of mainline comments in stanza 22 which also

suggests that this is an important stanza. The mainline comments focus on parental

strategies used in response to John's challenging behaviours. These were:

*'we'd got our own strategies that we would SEND HIM UP TO HIS ROOM, and he'd GO in
his room for like 10 MINUTES'*

'we considered our parenting as GOOD'

*'we was dealing with a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT person, we was dealing with a
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SITUATION'*

'sometimes ... his behaviour got worse'

'we'd ADD another 5 MINUTES ON, another 10 MINUTES ON'

*'as John's got older obviously HIS BEHAVIOUR umm HAS GOT WORSE and umm you know
he has to spend quite a lot of time in his bedroom unfortunately'*

From Level 4 analysis it was identified that only two subject positions were identified 'he',

which in this stanza always referred to John, and 'we' which in this stanza always referred to Mr and Mrs Dent, John's parents.

The pitch glide focus of the stanza includes 'John is different', a view also occurring in Stanza 16,18. So by Stanza 22, 'John is different' is an echo of previous comments, reinforcing the message and argument being made by Mrs Dent. Stanza 22 shows that parents have responded to his behaviour, but found that his behaviour has deteriorated. The stanza suggests that they are 'good parents' but that 'John is different'. Stanza 22 is shown in Appendix T.   For this key stanza, hesitations are highlighted in blue, false starts are highlighted in pink, repairs in green, mainline comments are double underlined. In Stanza 22, the word 'obviously' is used four times. The first time the word obviously was used to indicate that Mr and Mrs Dent are experienced parents who have successfully raised three girls and had learned strategies to manage the behaviour of their children. ('obviously ... by the age he was 5, WE'D GOT OUR OWN STRATEGIES', 'Obviously we'd brought up 3 girls'. Then it is used again to emphasise the difference parents had noted in dealing with John, as compared to dealing with their elder daughters ('Obviously we'd had John and we was dealing with a COMPLETELY DIFFERENT person'). The next use of obviously ('As John's got older obviously HIS BEHAVIOUR umm HAS GOT WORSE') has at least two interpretations. Perhaps the word obviously reflects an assumption that challenging behaviour always deteriorates over time - if so, such an assumption might have contributed to the development of John's behaviour through influence of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948). However there is also the possibility that 'obviously' in this context refers to knowledge that John has been excluded from school (so his behaviour must have deteriorated). Line 147 shows how the use of punishment has escalated over time in parents' responses to John's behaviour, and as a result, the time he spends in his bedroom as a punishment has increased over time until 'he has to spend quite a lot of time in his bedroom

unfortunately' (line 149). It is not evident from the transcript if use of this strategy has been reinforced by professionals, or if alternative approaches to managing John have been suggested or tried.

Stanza 22 provides a clear insight into the dilemma faced by John's parents about dealing with his behaviour at home. Mrs Dent offered the researcher opportunity to ask for further information at the end of this stanza (line 151), the only stanza for which such an opportunity was given. The researcher declined to seek further information, so an opportunity to elicit more information about the origins of the parental strategy was lost.

4.5.2. Stanza 62 (School and parent have different views and John is excluded from school)

Stanza 62 is the longest stanza within the transcript and has 22 lines. From level 2 analysis no hesitations were identified within Stanza 62. There is one false start in line 441 as Mrs Dent explained an incident at school, of which she had no first hand knowledge, perhaps the information came from John, or from school staff, or from other children in the class, or their parents.

Initially Mrs Dent states that John 'put his hand up, and he said to the teacher 'can I have the whiteboard - and the teacher said, 'OH'. There is then a repair as Mrs Dent corrects herself to give an alternative version of the story 'John GOT UP just to get a WHITEBOARD, I don't think he asked the teacher, and the teacher asked him what he was DOING and he said he was going to get a WHITEBOARD because his friends was sitting there and he was on his WHITEBOARD'. The report of this incident shows how easily John is able to find himself in a position in which he is isolated from peers and feeling 'that wasn't fair'. By this time John had a diagnosis of autism, a condition with marked impairment of social interaction. There is no evidence from the way this story is told, of any reasonable adjustment for John's difficulties with social interaction. As he has a

diagnosed condition (autism) which causes difficulties with social interaction, it is reasonable to assume that he had difficulties in this area.

From level 3 analysis, the mainline plot of Stanza 62 is identified as 'John's belief in fairness'. It is explained in line 439 that if John 'doesn't think THINGS ARE FAIR, he'll just kick off'. then it is explained that during the incident with the whiteboard, that 'he thought THAT WASN'T FAIR'. An additional piece of mainline plot occurs towards the end of Stanza 62 as Mrs Dent explains that she had argued with the Head Teacher and refused to collect John from school. She understood from the local authority officer that as a result of her refusal to collect John when asked, due to her lack of co-operation, that John was given a fixed term exclusion from school. Arguably, this latter mainline plot within Stanza 62 could be a separate stanza, perhaps with the title 'John is excluded from school'.

During level 4 analysis the subject positions used in Stanza 62 also showed a split in position towards the end of the stanza. During lines 438 to 446 the main subject position used was 'he' but there was a shift at line 447 and from then onwards the main subject position was 'I'; sometimes this was used by Mrs Dent to mean herself and on other occasions it was used as John's voice as she explained how he might be reasoning about being sent home from school. For example in line 454 Mrs Dent explains that John would think 'You know WHAT, 'if I can kick off, if I'll comeback, and I can do it again, and I'll be able to go HOME'. A large amount of material in Stanza 62 was identified for pitch glide focus during analysis at level 5. The focus was initially on the school position that John was 'completely out of control' (line 438), then on Mrs Dent's belief that there's 'always a reason' (for John being out of control). Much of the explanation for the event which John perceived as unfair was focussed material; focus was also given to Mrs Dent's beliefs that school were acting ill-advisedly in sending John home from school; and additional focus

was given to parent's refusal to collect John from school and his subsequent exclusion, which Mrs Dent construed as arising from her refusal to co-operate with school and collect John.

Stanza 62 concludes with a description of an argument between Mrs Dent and the Head Teacher and Mrs Dent refusing to collect her son from school on principle, as she reports feeling afraid that this might teach her son that it's ok to kick off at school. This is closely followed by John's fixed term exclusion and deterioration in the relationship between home and school. Stanza 62 marks a shift in the relationship between parents and school; the point at which the parental - school staff relationship began to 'GO DOWN' (line 459).

4.5.3. Stanza 75 (Mum feels upset)

This stanza was identified as being of particular interest at two levels of analysis: at level 3 the mainline plot was about the feelings of Mrs Dent and also the dominant use of 'I' as a subject position at level 4. As the story being told was about John, not his mother it is interesting that this stanza is predominantly about his mother.

At level 2 analysis there were two hesitations (both 'umm') and on both occasions this was to slow down the story - as if to give her time to think how or what to say next, so consistent with the suggestion of Gee (1991) that hesitations reflect planning by the narrator. There was one false start and one correction within Stanza 75, relating to difficulty in recalling the exact week that an event occurred.

The mainline plot identified at level 3 was about parental shock, difficulty understanding, and anger at her son being placed on a reduced timetable.

Level 4 analysis of the subject positions adopted in Stanza 75 show use of 'I' (8), 'he' (7), 'she' (4), 'we' (5). The parts of the stanza in which the 'I' position is adopted refer to

parental shock, upset, confusion and action. 'We' is used to refer to both parents, 'she' to the head teacher and 'they' to school staff.

The pitch glide focus at level 5 was on the feelings of Mrs Dent. Stanza 75 shows that it is difficult for a parent to tell the story of their child per se. The story is effectively her story about her experiences with her child as well as the story of her child. It could be argued that the whole of Stanza 75 is off the mainline in that it about parental feelings about their child being placed on a part time timetable. However Stanza 75 shows the parental context in which the child lives; parental shock at a part time timetable; parental anger and confusion at a seemingly unfair decision by a head teacher, followed by parental argument with the headteacher. We cannot be certain that John was aware of these events but it seems unlikely that the atmosphere and relationships at home would continue unscathed by these events and a child be entirely oblivious to such strong feelings of a parent.

4.5.4. Stanza 88 (Mum's initial feelings about PRU)

Stanza 88 was identified as of interest from analysis at levels 2 and 3. Stanza 88 includes no hesitations, false starts or repairs. The mainline comments in this stanza show the parent's distress at the situation arising from her son's permanent exclusion from school and education at the PRU. In line 663 she states 'I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL to be honest with you' with pitch emphasis on 'SENT TO HELL'. At first, Mrs Dent struggled to describe the PRU, saying in line 664, 'I just can't even describe ...', then in line 665 achieves a description of the PRU through use of analogy, 'It was like sending a young boy TO PRISON'. Then, of John's behaviour, she asks the question 'is this (the PRU) GOING TO MAKE IT WORSE?

A description of a first visit to the PRU is made in the previous stanza (Stanza 87), but Stanza 88 is about the feelings of Mrs Dent about the PRU. It is interesting that she uses

the word 'we'd' in the phrase *'I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL'*. She was on a visit to

the PRU with her son, but use of '*he'd*' rather than '*we'd*' would still have been

appropriate here as it was her son that had been sent to PRU. The question is whether

the use of '*we'd*' in this phrase reflects a feeling that she too has been punished by her

son being permanently excluded from school and sent to the PRU. Such a perspective is

supported by a comment much later in the transcript in Stanza 108, line 859 *'So PRU is*

not NICE, but it's taught us all a LESSON, and it's taught John a lesson as well'. The second

part of this sentence places John outside the definition of *'us all'* in the first part of the

sentence. The question is, when she said *'it's taught us all a LESSON'*, who was she

referring to? *'Us all'* certainly includes Mrs Dent, perhaps it also includes Mr Dent?

Certainly, these comments imply that she feels that the permanent exclusion of John

served as a punishment not only to him, but also to others including his parents. The

perspective of school staff on this remains unknown, but feasibly they might claim that

the permanent exclusion was given to protect staff and other pupils at the school, if they

were feeling that they could not control John's behaviour.

4.5.5. Stanza 92 (John starts PRU)

Stanza 92 was identified as of interest from analysis at levels 2 and 3. There were no

hesitations, false starts or repairs identified from level 2 analysis. During level 3 analysis

interest was focussed on a mainline comment in line 689 'I WAS DEVASTATED, and he

said 'does he want to start next week as he's so upset'. The story told by Mrs Dent refers

to her feelings as a parent - 'I was DEVASTATED', yet the question asked by the Head

Teacher at the PRU refers to John being upset in line 689 'Does he want to start next

week as he's so upset?'

This is a parent overwhelmed by feelings as described earlier in the transcript at Stanza

90 (Mum's feelings of breakdown). Presumably John was also upset, as this is what the

Head Teacher is recalled as saying, but was Mrs Dent aware of John's feelings, was John

upset about his mother's upset, and was Mrs Dent experiencing a joint upset with her

son?

The other mainline comment in this stanza at line 692 shows that Mrs Dent feels that the

parenting provided to other children attending the PRU was different in kind to the style

of parenting Mr and Mrs Dent had provided to John. In line 692 she states

'I walked in, and I am absolutely NO SNOB but we have always tried to bring our children up in DECENT WAY in a DECENT AREA where we live.'

Pitch is used to emphasise the word 'DECENT', this word being emphasised twice. Mrs

Dent elaborates this comment further in the following stanza at line 693

'We've got RULES, in the house FOR SWEARING, WE DON'T SWEAR'.

Overall the pitch glide focus within the stanza seems to be claiming that the Dent's are a

'normal family' in contrast to the families of other children attending the PRU. Perhaps

this is because Mrs Dent felt that she had little in common with other parents of

excluded children, or because she felt that John had been treated unfairly in how he was

excluded (this view is more clearly argued in response to questions in line 910 'I feel like

his junior school have let him down').

4.5.6. Stanza 97 (John perceives unfairness)

No hesitations, false starts or repairs were identified in Stanza 97. The stanza is very

much about John, and the dominant subject position used within the stanza is 'he' which

is used 27 times. It is quite a long stanza of 20 lines and other subject positions are also

used 'we' (parents), 'I' (Mother), 'they' (John's friends).

The mainline plot of Stanza 97 is about the unfairness that John perceives. In line 723 'he

STILL FEELS that his exclusion was UNFAIR', then in line 726 'his friends from Glasgow

Towers Primary School were SITTING HERE and he had to go and SIT HERE'. John 'did not

understand why he hadn't been TREATED FAIRLY' (line 727). This is emphasised in line 736 'in his head, he feels like he's a FAILURE, that he hasn't been treated FAIR, he's been PUNISHED and put in GROUP 3'.

The pitch glide focus also, is on unfairness.

4.6. Canonical narratives referred to in the transcript

Reference to a number of canonical narratives (socially acceptable stories, as defined by Bochner et al (1997)) are evident in the story. These are evidence of social construction within the narrative. A list of identified canonical narratives is included below;

All babies are born in hospital (line 17)

Siblings love each other (lines 36 and 403)

I'm a good parent (lines 72, 115, 144, 145,215, Stanza 92 and 93)

Good parents smack their children (Stanza 38)

Popular girls like naughty boys (Stanza 48)

Children's behaviour is poor when they are 2 (the terrible two's) (line 72)

Bad parents swear (Stanza 94)

Professionals are right (Stanza 36 and 37)

Monster narrative of 'Jekyll and Hyde' (Stanza 55 and line 405)

School should be able to cope (Stanza 58, line 412)

Conflict is inevitable in secondary school (Stanza 107)

Behaviour doesn't change quickly (Stanza 36)

When there are problems for a child at school, there's something not right (Stanza 40)

It's normal to feel fear (Stanza 8,9,12,17,18,25,26,42)

Unfairness leads to feelings of anger and to playing up in class, autism also leads to playing up in class (Stanza 79/80 and line 613)

Chapter 5 – Discussion

"Personal identity as the accumulation of stories we tell about ourselves" (Andrews et al., 2013, p.959)

There are several elements to this chapter. Initially, there is a discussion of the findings arising from analysis of the narrative. This is followed by an evaluation of the use of the method of analysis based on Gee (1991) in this research, and then by a consideration of the usefulness of terms from narrative practice in understanding this narrative. Finally, the implications for educational policy and school practice and implications for educational psychologists are considered.

5.1. Interpretation of Findings

In the subsections below the findings emerging from analysis of the parental interview are discussed.

5.1.1. The story told by Mrs Dent about her son John Dent

Mrs Dent provided a biographical narrative of her son's life from pregnancy to the age of eleven.   At the time John's story was told he was attending a PRU, having been permanently excluded from his primary school a few weeks before.

A summary of the entire story is shown by the strophe and stanza titles at Appendix Q. Her story was a story of her son John, but as shown by the summary of subject positions adopted in the story-telling in Appendix S, it was also the story of Mrs Dent, in particular her feelings, emotions and experiences related to her son and his attendance at school. In Stanza 75, 86, and 90 the feelings of Mrs Dent are described in some depth. These stanza provide a very strong message about the emotional impact of the experiences of the child (fixed term exclusion, part time timetable and permanent exclusion) on the emotional well-being of the parent.

The story of John is one of a boy with two developmental disorders diagnosed relatively late despite three referrals to CAMHS. He is described as a boy whose birth was to some extent traumatic (for his mother at least) but who was regarded as a 'good baby' (Stanza 6) and who was in many respects 'perfect' (Stanza 7).

Mrs Dent told the story of a boy who was different to the other children in the family in several respects (birth, delivery, behaviour, exclusion, diagnoses, difficulties with change and difficulties coping with perceived unfairness).

More positive aspects of John are also described: his physical strength (Stanza 29); his talent at football (Stanza 28); his love of winning (Stanza 30); his good year (Stanza 46); his success at PRU (Stanza 96 and 106); positive relationships at PRU (Stanza 98); and his popularity (Stanza 103).

The narrative about John Dent by his mother Mrs Dent included a number of threads or themes of information: initial background information about John and his birth; his family; the differences between John and other children; information about John's temper and the situations in which it arose (perceived unfairness and fear); John's difficulties in coping with change; the perceived relationship problems between John and the Deputy Head Teacher; his difficulties with social skills; his referrals to CAMHS and eventual diagnoses; parents' views of diagnosis and treatment; the challenges for parents in managing John; and parents' views of the strategies used to support John in school. These information threads are spread throughout the narrative both in an ordered and in an intermittent pattern with some threads occurring at more than one part of the narrative. As a result, some threads are supported by examples from different points in time as Mrs Dent reflects on the story of her son. There are signs of authenticity (Harre, 1979) in that there is a coherent order for the themes within the narrative. One example is John's heightened sensitivity to unfairness and his hostile reaction to this. At several

points in the narrative Mrs Dent referred to a degree of unfairness that she perceived that John encountered in his life, in particular in his school life.

The longest section of the narrative was that covering Years 4, 5 and 6 and this focussed mainly on difficulties experienced at school with John's behaviour and the lead up and consequences of his permanent exclusion from school.   There are a number of possible explanations to consider about why much of the narrative was based on the lead up to and the exclusion itself and aftermath.

Firstly, it is possible that so much focus was given to the lead up to the exclusion, the exclusion itself and the aftermath because it is this part of John's story where there is a perceived breach between ideal and real self (Rogers, 1951, p.136-137) and / or social context and society as suggested by Bruner (1987) and Emerson and Frosh (2009) as the cause of narrative. Such a breach is evident in the narrative as Mrs Dent described the perceived difference between the life of the family and the world of the primary PRU. Having felt that she had been a good parent, now as a parent of an excluded pupil attending a PRU, maybe Mrs Dent felt that this challenged her sense of self.

Her reported feelings at the time hint at this and at other times are more explicit at the impact on herself as John's mother. The strength of her feelings is re-enforced by the use of pitch on key words in the following phrases.

' I was ABSOLUTELY DEVASTATED' (line 641)

' I just can't even DESCRIBE' (line 664),

'I was at my LOWEST POINT' (line 675),

'I couldn't STOP CRYING' (line 674),

'My family thought that I was going to have a BIT OF A BREAKDOWN' (line 680)

According to this explanation, the narrative arises as a result of the narrator's awareness of a gulf between their sense of ideal self and sense of self as they currently experience it (Rogers, 1951). The narrative may be arising as a result of an awareness of a gulf between the narrator's current social context (her child having been permanently excluded and attending a PRU) and society (in which the norm is for a child to attend a mainstream school). Therefore, the narrative focuses disproportionately on these areas and years of John's life and his mother's experiences at these times.

Secondly, it is possible that the focus on the lead up to exclusion, the exclusion and its aftermath, was the result of a deliberate decision by Mrs Dent, perhaps as a result of her awareness that only parents of excluded pupils were invited to take part in the study. Perhaps she thought that this was what was expected of her, an unspoken requirement of taking part? The tendency for a participant to try to be a good participant in research was identified by Weber and Cook (1972) as an example of a demand characteristic in psychological experimental research, but this could also take place in a narrative interview.

Thirdly, perhaps Mrs Dent chose to focus most of her time in telling the story of John on the lead up to exclusion, the exclusion and its aftermath, because these were the parts of his story that she feels most strongly about and wanted to share or offload. In the context of working with people who have experienced trauma, it is argued by Denborough (2014, p.28) that "*it's very important that therapists hear whatever it is that people want to share with them*". Mrs Dent had been provided with opportunity to speak at length (and mainly uninterrupted) about her son's story, it is possible that she was experiencing this opportunity as an opportunity to "*speak about what may not have been previously spoken of*" (Denborough, 2014, p.28). This was not the intention of the research interview and it was not expected that Mrs Dent might have experienced the

exclusion of her son as a trauma or would seek to use the interview as a therapeutic situation, though it had been anticipated as a precautionary measure that there might be a need to provide participants with contact details for a counsellor. In narrative work with those who have experienced trauma, Denborough (2014) argues that it is necessary to not only hear the story told, but to also give the trauma a name (so externalizing the problem) and "*listen for signs of what the person has continued to give value to in life despite all that they have been through, and for any expressions that might provide some hint of the person's response to trauma*" (Denborough, 2014, p.28), a process which is called "double listening" (Denborough, 2014, p.28). Though it was not appropriate to do so during the narrative interview within a research situation, it is possible to retrospectively identify some of Mrs Dent's values, these include: her desire for her son's needs to be met (lines 680, 681); and her appreciation of support from her friends (lines 776, 781, 787, 804/805).

5.1.2. Changes in Mrs Dent's parental story over time

There is a noticeable shift in the views of Mrs Dent towards John.   In an early part of the narrative, Mrs Dent described John as a 'good baby' (Stanza 6) 'perfect really' (Stanza 7). An alternative view of John unfolded during the narrative as she began to describe him as a boy who was 'different', who had problems, in particular behaviour problems; a boy who could be a 'monster' at home (Stanza 57).

During the first part of the story, Mrs Dent refers to John as being 'different' (Stanza 8, 13, 14). A few stanza considered the nature of John's difference: 'doesn't seem to feel pain' (Stanza 9); 'doesn't show fear' (Stanza 10 and 25); 'is naughty' (Stanza 11); his aggression (Stanza 15); behaviour (Stanza 16 and 20); anger (Stanza 78); 'temper' (Stanza 21); his difficulties in coping with change (Stanza 47); and his acute awareness of 'fairness' is referred to in a number of stanza throughout the story (21, 26, 34, 62, 67, 79,

97). A number of stanza refer to the behaviour management of John (Stanza 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 42, 53, 55).

Towards the end of the story there is a shift back to more positive views of John as a boy who is popular (Stanza 103) and remains strong and resists retaliation at PRU (Stanza 106).

Therefore, the narrative does indicate some shifts in parental description of John over time. However the narrative is an integrated whole and mostly these apparent shifts are more like nuances of description rather than massive changes in view.

The biggest shift is from the description of John in Stanza 7 as a '*really, really easy baby*' '*who slept a lot*', '*had his bottles*', and '*was perfect, kind of thing*' to the description in Stanza 55 as a '*Jeckyll and Hyde*' character (Stevenson, 1886) who can be '*abusive*'. However, even then Mrs Dent referred to a positive loving side of John as someone who 'can come and love you and kiss you' and in Stanza 57 she re-iterates '*as a parent, obviously I love John*'.

John is described in both positive and negative terms from the perspective of his mother, though it could be argued that the dominant story (Denborough, 2014) of John is a negative one about his behavior at home and at school.

 John's future chances of success might be enhanced through use of narrative practice (White & Epston, 1990): to thicken a positive alternative story about John (Morgan, 2000); through use of externalizing conversations (Morgan, 2000); and through outsider witness practice (Walther & Fox, 2012).

5.1.3. Key events and experiences within the parental narrative

Two key shifts in John's behaviour are recorded in the narrative, each associated with key events within the narrative and with times at which there is a change in the home-school relationship.

The first key shift in John's behavior was the deterioration in John's behaviour described by Mrs Dent, following comments by Mrs Clooney (his English Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher) during John's presence at parent's evening.

John witnessed the reported comments made by Mrs Clooney including, 'we *can't cope with John, he'll be lucky if he gets through primary school because we can't cope with his behaviour*' (Stanza 60, line 414).

In Stanza 59 Mrs Dent used the phrase '*And she was sitting there, with myself, Nigel, and John, there was LOTS OF NEGATIVITY, so from then / things obviously just started GOING DOWN*' (lines 419 and 420). Such a deterioration is consistent with a negative account of John becoming the dominant story of John (Denborough, 2014).

According to the story told about John, he was at parents evening and witnessed these comments by Mrs Clooney. He may also have heard her comments repeated by his parents as they discussed the conversation later, or relayed the tale to friends. If so, this would provide a mechanism for this expectation of John to become the dominant story (Denborough, 2014) of John, held by John himself, Mrs Clooney, his parents and anyone else who heard a retelling of events at parents evening.

There are several aspects of the story of John Dent that seem to have been shared by his mother with others.   There are indications that John may have witnessed his mother telling other stories about him, in addition to his experiences at parents evening when he

heard the views of Mrs Clooney. Not all stories were accurate, for instance the story told about him having upset the member of staff proved to be inaccurate (Stanza 77 and 85).

There are many other examples in which it is not clear whether or not John has heard a story about himself (lines 91, 123, 124, 128, 232, 242, 253, 268, 275, 277, 279, 383, 414, 474, 483, 501, 514, 516, 528 – 530, 541, 586, and 598-600 are all possible examples).   It is quite likely that he witnessed at least some of these stories.

The admission that '*that's how we've always described him as JECKYLL AND HYDE*' (line 393) indicates a story about himself that John has very likely heard at least once. As a dominant story of John by his parents, this would probably be quite unhelpful to John. The description may be related to a description of John later in the transcript in which he is described as '*LIKE A MONSTER, he changes, he completely changes'* (line 405).

The stories of John as a Jeckyll and Hyde character (Stevenson, 1886), a monster, had the potential to become the dominant story of John (Denborough, 2014). As Mrs Dent said '*that's how we've always described him*' (Stanza 55, line 393), it is very likely that John was aware of this description, and as a boy with social communication difficulties, he may have thought these were the expectations of him. If shared with school staff, this would most likely have been an unhelpful description of John. For instance if this view was shared by Mrs Dent with Mrs Clooney at the football match in which John was first discussed, this could have initiated a negative story of John which developed to become the dominant story of John, held by Mrs Clooney. Such a development could explain the rather sudden deterioration in Mrs Clooney's perceptions of John's behaviour at school in the following weeks.

The second key shift in John's behavior was the improvement in his behaviour following his transfer to PRU. In contrast to the actions of Mrs Clooney, staff at the PRU took a

much more positive approach with John '*saying he's had a FANTASTIC DAY*' (Stanza 98, line 750) when his mother went to collect him.

Mrs Dent is clear about the positive effect this had on her feelings '*you FEEL so much BETTER that someone's saying something nice POSITIVE THINGS about your SON*' (Stanza 98, line 754). Looking at this from the perspective of narrative practice (White & Epston, 1990), this is consistent with the development and strengthening of an alternative story of John. Saying positive things about John strengthened the positive story of John and saying these things about John made Mrs Dent feel more positive, more able to cope with her son, a more successful parent. The PRU staff are providing the parent with an alternative positive story to tell of her son. Perhaps this also had the effect of providing Mrs Dent with a positive story about herself, as a successful parent with a successful son.

Mrs Dent may well have felt in serious need of this support from PRU staff. The exclusion of her son was a severe emotional blow to her personally, not just as a punishment of her son, as shown by the two comments below.

> '*I felt that John had been SENT TO HELL*' (line 659)
>
> '*I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL*' (line 663)

These two statements are interesting in that the first refers to the exclusion of John and his referral to the PRU, but the second refers to the consequences for parents (or parent and John). It seems that the exclusion of John is possibly being interpreted as a punishment of parents (for not doing as school wished / for not agreeing to take John home / for not agreeing with part time timetable / for the breakdown in relationship with school?)

The latter part of the narrative identified John's strengths in having coped with challenging peers at the PRU and his success in achieving the green cards. So a more positive account of John is evident arising from his attendance at PRU, than was evident from his lengthy attendance at a mainstream primary school.

The actions of the PRU in giving positive feedback to John and his mother at the end of the PRU session are a first step in strengthening a positive alternative story of John. PRU staff were perhaps not consciously adopting a narrative approach in their dealings with John and his mother. For instance, PRU staff may have regarded John's attendance at PRU as a fresh start, or as an opportunity to teach him positive behaviours in a higher ratio environment, and provided positive feedback in the context of these alternative ideas. This is not an approach that could only be applied in the PRU environment but such an approach might not be continued in John's next school and the possible effects on John's identity are uncertain. In consideration of the suggestions by Erikson (1963) that difficulties in establishing a stable identity in adolescence leads to the formation of a negative identity, there could be increased risks of John developing a negative identity in future if the stability of John's identity is adversely affected by differing approaches adopted in PRU and in schools.

However there is a distinction between a positive alternative story as initiated by PRU staff for John, and the type of positive alternative story which would result from use of narrative practice (White & Epston, 1990). A narrative practitioner would seek an alternative and preferred identity for John, from John (White & Morgan, 2006 p.109). Even though we know from the narrative of Mrs Dent that she prefers the positive PRU story about John, we do not know for certain that John prefers it. A narrative practitioner would seek to engage audiences (for instance through outsider-witness practices as discussed by Walther and Fox (2012) to thicken John's preferred story of

himself. The starting point is John's identity, which would be discovered during double-storied / re-authoring conversations (Denborough, 2014, p.58). Provision of narrative practitioners to work with children at their request might be one way in which preferred alternative stories could be achieved for excluded pupils.

5.1.4. Examples of social construction emerging from the parental narrative

The canonical narratives identified within the narrative are all examples of social construction. However there are other examples of social construction within the narrative. These include that of John being '*different*', John having '*behaviour problems'*, and John's parents being '*good parents*'.

There is some evidence of parental blame of individual teachers and the response of the school as a whole to John Dent's SEN, within the narrative. This is quite persuasive, repeated as it is throughout the narrative. John's mother's narrative makes clear the division between 'normal life' (another canonical narrative perhaps?) in Stanza 93 and 'life after the permanent exclusion' in Stanza 94.

'I walked in, and I am NO SNOB but we have always tried to bring our children up in a DECENT WAY in a DECENT area where we live' (line 692)

'We've got RULES in the house FOR SWEARING, WE DON'T SWEAR' (line 693)

'And I like to think we've brought the children up in a NICE, NORMAL ATMOSPHERE' (line 694)

'We've had a NICE LIFE' (line 695)

She described ways in which some previous friends turned away from John and from his family following the exclusion. This aspect and consequence of the exclusion was revealed in more detail by the parent to the researcher, following termination of the audio recording. Perhaps these details felt too sensitive and personal to reveal during the recorded session? Therefore, for ethical reasons, they will not be discussed any further here, but future research could focus on this area.

5.1.5. Parental feelings about taking part in the research

As this research is a case study there are only the feelings of Mrs Dent to consider. She described her experience of telling her story and taking part in the research as "*good*".

She spent almost 3 hours of her time during an evening following a day at work to tell the story. At the time it appeared that this was a story that she felt the need to tell and she apologetically made reference on several occasions about the length of time it was taking for her to tell the story. It seemed likely that the story had never been told in its entirety before – it's length alone, makes this unlikely.

In Chapter 2 (Literature Review), the question was posed about how parents feel about an assumption in society that parents are to blame when their child shows challenging behaviour at school. Mrs Dent's sensitivity to this assumption underlies her narrative in that she carefully justifies their position as good parents and explains John's behaviour in terms of 'difference'. The poem by R D Laing (1970) expresses this bind within which parents including Mrs Dent find themselves. Essentially, Mrs Dent defends herself as a parent through John's difference to other children (his diagnoses), and his difference to his siblings.

A negative story about John and his behaviour became the dominant story while he was at primary school. It was his success at PRU that led to the beginning of an alternative positive story about John as a boy who could resist provocation, and remain well-behaved despite challenge.

Analysis of Stanza 22 revealed the extent to which Mrs Dent felt that her parenting was under scrutiny as a result of having a son with behaviour difficulties who had been permanently excluded from school. As Mrs Dent was a volunteer to participate in this research, it is likely that she was more confident about telling her son's story, than were

other parents who did not volunteer to take part and felt too vulnerable to participate. This is consistent with the difficulties experienced in recruiting participants to participate in this research.

Some factors which may have boosted the confidence of Mrs Dent and so made her more likely to volunteer to participate include: she was an experienced parent who felt that she had been successful as a parent previously; her son had identified and diagnosed conditions and had been acknowledged as a young person with special educational needs; and she had found the experience of her son attending PRU a positive one. In contrast, parents who were reluctant to participate perhaps felt that their child's difficulties were their fault. As discussed by Bonevski et al. (2014) parents classified as 'hard to reach' may be so for valid reasons. For instance it could be a way for the parent to protect their own self-esteem, and sense of self-worth.

5.16. Parental opinions expressed in the narrative

The aspect of the story that Mrs Dent found most worthwhile was 'obviously, the green cards' (Appendix O, line 42). She explained that the green cards, as a measure of her son's success at PRU, enable her to feel that 'we've proved Glasgow Towers wrong' (Appendix O, line 56). This seems to be through showing that her son could be successful at school when a positive approach is taken by staff, in smaller classes with more individual support, despite his behaviour and difficulties arising from ADHD and autism and being on medication. An element of blame towards his previous primary school crept into the final part of the answer to this question in that John's mother seemed to argue that provision for her son must have been inadequate in primary school, given that he was subsequently so successful in PRU (Appendix O, lines 64-69).

Mrs Dent also raised for the first time a suggestion that John may have been excluded on spurious grounds. The narrative suggests that there is a sharp difference in approach

between the mother and school on the incident in which John was reported to have called a girl at the school 'spotty'. Mrs Dent argued that she should have been informed about the incident when it happened so she could use it as a teaching point to develop her son's social skills with peers and make amends to the girl, rather than the incident reportedly being used as a reason for exclusion. In doing so, she is arguing for an instructional role for the school regarding John's social behaviour. This does not seem unreasonable given that he has a diagnosis of autism with the associated difficulties in social communication skills which usually accompanies such a diagnosis.

From the parental narrative it appears that in contrast, the school viewed such conduct as a reason to punish and to exclude, rather than a reason to intervene and develop his social skills. This difference in opinion goes to the heart of the debate about the role of schools – solely to develop academic skills, or an equally important responsibility to also develop a wider range of social behaviour in the pupils? It seems that there is a fundamental difference of opinion between Mrs Dent and senior staff at Glasgow Towers Primary School on this issue. The Code of Practice for SEN (2015) does indicate a role for schools in supporting the development of social communication skills of pupils, so this raises a question about the quality of SEN provision for John at the school.

5.17. Parental perceptions of pressure

Daily hassles as predictors of maternal behaviour as evidenced by Crick and Greenberg (1990) has some relevance to the behaviour of Mrs Dent. The narrative suggests that there were a number of daily hassles: dealing with John's behaviour at home; taking numerous calls from school relating to his behaviour there; six weekly meetings at school with professionals; repeated assessments by CAMHS; and some friction within the family about ways of managing John. It is possible that these hassles resulted in or contributed

to the type of relationship that existed between John and his parents and may have resulted in family relationships moving in the direction of dysfunction.

Mrs Dent provided some insight into the tensions in her personal life arising from John's behaviour towards other members of the family. Difficulties for Mrs Dent as a mother of John and as mother of her other children and as a grandmother are shown in Stanza 53, 55 and 57.

'My youngest daughter, she's quite a big girl, he'd be really ABUSIVE TO HER, call her FATTY, and generally REALLY NASTY' (line 389)

'I feel he can be ABUSIVE to the rest of the family' (line 393)

'John is nasty to THE GIRLS' (line 398)

'we have a little granddaughter who's Julie, she's SIX YEARS OLD and he can be nasty to Julie' (line 399)

'We have a pet dog and he can be nasty to the PET DOG' (line 400)

'and it is REALLY HARD sometimes you do find it REALLY HARD TO LOVE A PERSON, when someone's being SO NASTY TO SOMEONE ELSE, and can be difficult to love someone, but YOU DO LOVE HIM, but sometimes it's REALLY HARD' (line 400)

'Obviously you LOVE HIM, but it's very hard, a bit like anyone else, if someone is NASTY to someone else, you DISLIKE that person (line 401)

'it's like he's TWO DIFFERENT CHILDREN like JECKYLL AND HYDE, and that's how we've always described him, and that's how we've always described him as JECKYLL AND HYDE' (line 393)

The impact of difficulties at school contributing to difficulties at home as reported by Vincent et al. (2007) are also identifiable within the narrative by Mrs Dent. For instance she described on more than one occasion, John climbing out of his bedroom window and sitting on the porch roof following upsets at school.

5.1.8. Parent- school relationship

Examination of the narrative suggests that collaborative work between parents and school did have a protective effect regarding John's risk of exclusion. It was when

parents resisted school demands that the relationship between them broke down and John's exclusions occurred, first a fixed-term exclusion and then a permanent exclusion from school. It seems that the home school relationship was not an equal relationship in any respect; the relationship was held together by parental compliance with school demands. Eco-systemic factors as identified by Cooper and Upton (1991) provide possible explanation of this home-school relationship.

Applying the model of Cooper and Upton (1991) to the case of John Dent, it is possible that a home-school ecosystem existed around John. The ecosystem maintained John's status as a child showing challenging behaviour. The responses of staff to his behaviour (to ring parent and send him home) were balanced by the responses of parents (to comply with the school request and collect John from school). Possibly this was a repetitive interaction between school staff and parents that served to maintain the ecosystem. It served advantages for all concerned: school staff could send John home when his behaviour became challenging; parents could co-operate with school and so maintain a close relationship with school staff and feel that they were being good parents and working to improve John's behaviour. As a result John may have enjoyed extra time at home with his parent, and felt that he had status amongst peers in school as a boy 'sent home'. However, it seems that this ecosystem did not result in solution focussed thinking around John's behaviour to identify contributing factors to his behaviour, or use of effective interventions to improve his behaviour over time. That John's behaviour improved once he attended the PRU might suggest that his behaviour was to some extent a product of the ecosystem around him while he was at Glasgow Towers Primary School.

5.1.9 Discussion of the parent's perspective

Having felt that she had been a good parent for her three daughters, now as a parent of her excluded son, maybe Mrs Dent felt that this challenged her sense of self (Rogers, 1951). This would be consistent with the degree of upset, the personal distress she experienced at her son's permanent exclusion ('*I was ABSOLUTELY DEVASTATED*', line 641) and her feelings about her son being sent to the PRU ('*I felt that John had been SENT TO HELL*', line 659). The intensity of upset by Mrs Dent is undesirable given that Sigel et al. (1992) identified that parental cognitions are linked to child outcomes and parent behaviours.

But Mrs Dent did not just feel upset about her son being sent to the PRU, she felt that the punishment applied to her and her husband (and perhaps the whole family) too. Her statement '*I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL*', in line 663, echoing her previous statement about John having been sent to hell, could indicate that she regarded this also as a punishment of herself. In conversation (which was not recorded) after the end of the interview, Mrs Dent explained in more detail, ways in which she was treated differently by others following the permanent exclusion of her son. She appeared to feel very deeply about these events and had tears in her eyes as she described events. It was probably not accidental that these comments were made after termination of the audio recording. This finding of parental distress associated with exclusion of their child, is consistent with the findings of Mickelson (1995) in narrative research with mothers of 'behaviour disordered' sons in Alberta, Canada. However, although reference is made to "*the stress they have felt*" and "*the courage with which they have faced their lives*" (Mickelson, 1995 Abstract), no link with the permanent exclusion was made, but rather to the uniqueness of the mothers and to the labeling of their sons. Further research to explore whether high levels of stress associated with the exclusion of a child is an experience shared by other parents of children excluded from English schools could

provide useful information about whether this is a common perspective of parents of excluded children.

There is also an alternative interpretation of Mrs Dent's statement *'I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL'* in line 663. The question is whether she feels that she and her son are one entity; mother and child, mother and son, a unit. This is not the only place in the narrative where Mrs Dent uses the term '*we*' when speaking of events which might primarily be regarded as events which happened to her son. For example,

"*We went into Venice Play Centre*" (line 82)

"*We used to go ONCE A WEEK*" (line 96)

"*We went to St. Portugal Language Group*" (line 126)

"*We went onto a course*" (line 138)

These are all examples of the use of '*we*' when referring to John that relate to instances when he was very young / at pre-school. Other examples of the same use of '*we*' occur later in the narrative when John is much older.

"*We got to the AGE of EIGHT*" (line 224)

'*We'd had a BAD YEAR in YEAR FOUR*" (line 261)

"*We'd been REFERRED TO CAMHS FOR THE THIRD TIME*" (line 268)

Mrs Dent continues to use the phrase '*we*' when referring to her son as the situation at school deteriorated.

"*She was putting us on a HALF a DAY TIMETABLE*" (line 576)

"*We'd been thrown to the LION'S DEN*" (line 652)

"*We were actually going somewhere we'd seen a boy HIT A BOY IN THE CLASS*" (line 662)

"*I felt like we'd been SENT TO HELL*" (line 663)

"*We started coming TO PRU*" (line 689)

"*We've gone 50 days with 50 green cards*" (line 848)

Further examples of the use of '*we*' which seem to indicate that the experience is happening to Mrs Dent as well as to John occurred during Mrs Dent's answers to questions at the end of the interview.

'*PRU doesn't frighten me now as much*' (line 861)

'*I think it's taught us all a lesson*' (line 880)

'*And when you've had negativity for such a long time and suddenly everyday you've got positivity every day, every day, every day*' (line 876)

'*I feel that we've proved Glasgow Towers wrong*' (line 926)

This use of '*we*', of including herself in the description of events that happen to her son is a significant finding in this research. In this way analysis of the narrative of Mrs Dent has provided a new sense of meaning and significance to the research topic, in that the extent to which Mrs Dent regarded John's experiences as part of her own experiences was not previously present in the literature. Whether this reflects a common use of language for all mothers or for other mothers of excluded children could be examined in further research.

That Mrs Dent seemed to feel that these events were happening to her as well as to her son, may be a contributory factor to the extremes of emotion she experienced at the time of his exclusion. There is also the possibility that it is through taking part in this research, and telling the story of John, that Mrs Dent has come to identify herself with him. This would be an unanticipated outcome but would be consistent with the

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suggestions of Harre (1979) that the identity of a participant can change through the course of telling a biography.

> *'Though it was P1, who entered the experience at the beginning, and who lived the history el ... en it is P2 who has come into being in the course of constructing the (auto) biography. Only P knows that he lived it'* (Harre, 1979, page 327 and 328).

The depths to which Mrs Dent fell emotionally following her son's exclusion, implies that for this family at least, exclusion of children from school is a very serious event indeed for parents, and consequently, very serious for the whole family including the excluded child. Herring et al. (2006) suggested that early support and intervention is important for parents and families of children with autism, but this was not possible for the family of John Dent due to his late diagnosis. The high levels of maternal stress among parents of children with autism investigated by Herring et al. (2006) is evident from the narrative of Mrs Dent.

Although there are support services which aim to reduce the rates of exclusion from school, and although both fixed term and permanent exclusion is officially recorded and forms one of the data sets on which schools are measured, these seem mainly to be operating in the interests of a means of measuring the quality of a school, as well as in the interests of the education of the child. This narrative suggests that there may be a host of other consequences of exclusion which operate more indirectly on the child, via their impact on the parent. This is worthy of further research.

5.2. Discussion of the use of the approach of Gee (1991) in this research

Application of the approach informed by Gee (1991) led to a detailed analysis of the transcript of the narrative. It yielded a large amount of data, of which only some is discussed here.

Analysis according to the five levels of analysis (Gee, 1991), resulted in a structure being applied to the narrative / research text which made navigation through the transcript much easier. This in itself facilitated the development of an understanding of the narrative. This was primarily achieved through application of parts, strophe and stanza. Identification of pitch-glide was helpful in understanding where the participant placed emphasis within each phase and what was important to her. Focus on the dominant psychological subjects referred to in each stanza provided further insight into the nature of the story of John as told by his mother.

Use of the five levels of analysis (Gee, 1991) provided a deeper understanding of the narrative than would have been gained otherwise, including awareness of the different threads throughout the narrative. However, the threads were not identified by use of the five levels of analysis (Gee, 1991) as such, although some stanza were given titles related to some of these threads in places in the narrative when these threads were the focus of a stanza. This is consistent with the findings of Reissman (2008, p.95) during her analysis of the narrative of Sunita.

Use of the Gee (1991) approach led to the researcher gaining quite a thorough knowledge of the transcript and noticing aspects of the parental narrative that had not been identified at the time of the interview or of the initial transcription.

The large amount of data arising from application of the approach informed by Gee (1991), could be examined and additionally discussed in further research. For instance,

as John Dent had diagnoses of autism and attention deficit disorder, the data could be examined in research into the experiences of parents at the time of diagnosis of their son / daughter.

Also, the transcript could be subjected to further analysis using alternative methods of analysis, such as grounded theory or interpretative phenomenological analysis, approaches which might identify themes within this transcript and make comparisons with similar analysis of transcripts of other interviews with other parents.

5.3. Discussion of the usefulness of narrative practice as applied to this narrative

Parts of the narrative (as discussed in 5.1.3 above) imply that use of an approach informed by narrative practice has potential for use with parents of children with challenging behaviour. From this case study of John it seems that as an early intervention approach it would be necessary to use an approach based on narrative practice with key school staff; in the case of John the participation of Mrs Clooney would have been essential to success.

In the case of John, it seems that a crucial role was taken by school staff in developing the dominant (and negative story) of John, and by PRU staff in developing the alternative story of John.

The role of the PRU in helping Mrs Dent to feel more positive about the whole situation was crucial. It is quite likely that their positive approach is used with all children they work with, but in the case of John Dent the positivity served the dual purpose of reinforcing the positive behaviour of John and helping him to feel that he could be behaviourally successful in an educational environment, while also helping Mrs Dent to feel positive about John's PRU attendance and reinstating her hopes for the future education of her son. Perhaps the positivity of PRU staff also helped Mrs Dent to feel

more successful as a parent again too. These improved feelings by Mrs Dent would be anticipated to lead to further positive gains for her son, perhaps more positivity by Mrs Dent towards her son, perhaps leading to him hearing her tell others about his success, so strengthening the alternative (positive) account of John.

In a sense, the PRU staff were acting to strengthen an alternative positive story (White & Morgan, 2006) about John as a boy who behaved well and was successful in an educational setting. This is consistent with narrative practice, in particular outsider witness practice (Walther & Fox, 2012) and re-authoring conversations (White & Morgan, 2006). By strengthening an alternative story of John as someone who was being successful, PRU staff were also providing Mrs Dent with an alternative story about herself, as the mother of a boy who was behaving well at school and being successful; a successful parent. This is a further example of the link between John's experiences and the experiences of his mother. Both John and his mother benefitted from the interventions by PRU staff.

It seems that the principles of narrative practice could provide a useful approach in working with children and their parents in PRU settings. It seems likely therefore that they could be useful earlier than this as an early intervention for challenging behaviour.

5.4. Implications for educational practice and educational policy in England

5.4.1. Sending home from school
There are a number of references within the story, to parents being asked to collect John from school which seem not to have been occasions on which he was excluded from school (lines 246, 266, 451). One of these occasions (line 266) shows the dilemma for the parent at being asked to collect her child from school at a time when she felt that she

couldn't, due to being in sole charge of the office at work while her boss attended a funeral.

Sometimes it is not clear from the story as told whether requests for the parent to collect the child from school are requests to collect John at his usual home time or if it is a request to collect him before this, but the example in Stanza 62 indicates clearly that this was a request to collect John before his usual leaving time. Seemingly drawing on ideas from behaviourism (Watson, 1924), Mrs Dent expressed disagreement with this action, fearing that this would effectively reward John for bad behaviour and so increase the likelihood of him behaving in the same way at school in future. However she did not just express disagreement - "*I did end up having an argument with the head teacher and I did refuse to get John out of school*" (line 459). Soon afterwards, Mrs Dent received a phone call from a local authority officer, in which she was informed that John would be excluded from school for a day. She understood that was due to her lack of co-operation with the head teacher over collecting John from school.

Analysis of Stanza 62 raises the issue of illegal exclusion from school as it appears that the request by school for Mrs Dent to agree to collect her son (presumably early) from school is an attempt by school to send him home without officially excluding him from school. The occurrence of unofficial exclusion from school was identified as an undesirable feature of the approach to challenging behaviour in some schools by Atkinson (2011).

Parental refusal to collect John from school early, co-occurred with the start of a deterioration in the home school relationship, according to Mrs Dent. It is arguable whether the deterioration was caused by her actually refusing to collect him, or because she disagreed with school on this point, or because she had an argument with the Head Teacher, or indeed whether, as Mrs Dent anticipated, the event triggered a reasoning in

her son that it was worthwhile to misbehave at school because then he would be sent home (as a faux punishment).

This was the point however at which Mrs Dent's faith in decision-making at the school declined. Her statement in line 458 '*I refused to get John out of school so they EXCLUDED JOHN*' echoes the statement in line 439 '*JOHN BELIEVES IN FAIRNESS*'. In this way Mrs Dent alludes to unfairness by school but avoids saying so directly.

The narrative does imply that there may have been opportunities for earlier intervention by educational psychologists. In particular it may have been helpful if support had been sought to identify pre-emptive alternatives to the 'sending home' from school which seems to have happened in this case. Some school staff seem not to have considered that John's difficulties at school might be due to his special educational needs; that alternative strategies to punishment for challenging behaviour may have been necessary; that reasonable adjustments for his needs may have pre-empted some of the difficulties that arose.

Analysis of the narrative raises the question whether national policies around exclusion might be improved further. At present in England, there is fixed term and permanent exclusion and all other 'sending home' is unofficial (and illegal) exclusion. Perhaps there is the potential to improve outcomes for children and young people with challenging behaviour by introducing a lesser category (of 'sending home') which enables schools to avoid exclusion by legally sending children home from school over a short period of time as long as they simultaneously seek external agency advice including educational psychologist involvement; to improve in-house strategies; consider eco-systemic issues; use narrative practice; or alternative interventions. The 'sending home' would be a trigger for a shift in the strategies employed by schools. If applied to the case of John,

this might have resulted in greater recognition of his special educational needs and additional provision and reasonable adjustment to enable him to be successful.

5.4.2. Parental-school relationship

Mrs Dent described the worsening in parental – school relationship that occurred following the initial fixed term exclusion. The consequent damage to the parental - school relationship appears to be immense ('*Then when John became excluded, there came a MASSIVE MASSIVE BARRIER become with us with GLASGOW TOWERS*' , line 463).

So, although school may have been acting improperly by asking Mrs Dent to collect John from school without issuing a formal exclusion, it seems that having done so, helped to preserve the parental-school relationship over time. However this temporary preservation of the parental-school relationship may have been at the cost of delaying involvement of external agencies that may have been able to help school to meet John's special educational needs.

The Head Teacher's decision to place John on a part-time timetable was a surprise to Mr and Mrs Dent and to John. From reading the transcript it appears that this is the point at which school and parents began to have very different views of events. Mrs Dent argues that John's sense of injustice at being placed on the part time timetable is a contributory factor towards the behaviour which ultimately resulted in his permanent exclusion.

This pattern of sending home, fixed term exclusion, part-time timetable, permanent exclusion is one not unfamiliar to those dealing with excluded pupils. These events were studied and discussed at length in the work of The Children's Commissioner (Atkinson, 2011).

From the story of John Dent it appears that very low level behaviour led to telephone calls to parents. For instance, Mrs Dent described calls from school to say '*he's been*

naughty', 'we can't cope', 'there's been an incident' (line 755) and 'he's not been sitting still in assembly, and he won't put his hands together and close his eyes' (line 752). These imply that skill levels in school may have been in need of development as difficulties in managing children can be due either to the behaviour of the child being very challenging or to the skill levels of teachers being inadequate.

These are a curious set of events about which, with the information only from the perspective of Mrs Dent, it is difficult to understand what exactly was going on. Was the school effectively attempting to unofficially exclude John by requesting that his mother collect him early from school? Was the official exclusion really given as a consequence of the actions of John's mother? Could the local authority be conspiring with the school over exclusion? Alternatively, perhaps these explanations as given by Mrs Dent do not imply wrong-doing by others and rather reflect her lack of familiarity with regulations and lack of understanding of the actions of others, given her lack of prior experience regarding exclusion of children from school. However, whatever occurred, it does seem that the official exclusion caused damage to the relationship between parents and school in a way that the more casual requests to collect John from school had not. As Mrs Dent explained - "*when John became excluded, there came a MASSIVE MASSIVE BARRIER become with us with GLASGOW TOWERS*" (line 465),"*I felt that we were OPENING FLOOD GATES*" (line 467) and "*things just STARTED GOING DOWN*" (line 468).

A review of English national policy on exclusion could be helpful to identify alternatives to official exclusion which deliver effective positive intervention without damage to parental-school relationships.

5.5. Implications for educational psychologists

There is no direct mention in the story of John Dent of the Educational Psychology Service or of Educational Psychologists. Perhaps this is surprising given the complexity of

needs of John Dent, his special educational needs and subsequent diagnoses, challenging behaviour, difficulties in understanding social situations and his exclusion. Mrs Dent states that the request for John's EHCP was rejected (line 469) but there is no mention of educational psychology services. Despite repeated mentioning of meetings at school (lines 239, 319, 324, 328) and Mrs Dent stating that "*we had a lot of services involved"* (line 385), at no time is it indicated that an educational psychologist took part in these meetings. Mrs Dent indicated that in Year 6 these meetings were held every 6 weeks (line 384) and it is possible that these meetings resulted in a strengthening of a dominant and negative story of John. Might a greater degree of involvement of the local Educational Psychology Service have pre-empted the situation which ultimately led to John Dent's permanent exclusion from school? If educational psychologists were involved at a much earlier stage, this would facilitate use of narrative practice as an early intervention strategy to develop early on an alternative and positive account of the child / young person.

Retrospectively it could be argued that educational psychologist involvement to work with school during the time that they were sending John home from school may have been the most helpful intervention. However, as unofficial exclusion is illegal, this may have inhibited the likelihood of the school seeking help at this stage. Instead the situation developed further and deteriorated until John was permanently excluded from school.

While the requirement for all sending home /exclusions from school to be officially recorded is sound and protects the child's physical safety, inclusion and educational rights, perhaps there is a need for official recognition of a pre-exclusions stage allowing involvement of external agencies including educational psychologists to improve within-

school management of individual children and consideration of any necessary interventions to meet the child's special educational needs.

John received late diagnoses for his conditions but this should not have prevented school in making provision for his needs, as diagnosis is not necessary for a graduated approach to need as required by the Code of Practice (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015).

The narrative does imply that there were opportunities for earlier and successful intervention by educational psychologists in this case. John's special educational needs seem to have received little attention with attention instead being focused on his behaviour. It may have been helpful if support had been sought to identify alternatives to the 'sending home' from school which seems to have happened in this case. Further identification of interventions to support John's special educational needs would also have been helpful. Also, earlier involvement of an educational psychologist might have facilitated use of principles from narrative practice such as outsider witness practice (Walther & Fox, 2012).

5.6. Limitations of this research

This research considered the story of John only from the perspective of his mother. The only source of data was his mother's narrative. While the narrative was a rich source of information about her perspective about events over many years of John's life, the research is limited in having taken information from only one source. Consideration was given at the design stage to seeking narratives of more than one person, for example including John's narrative and the narrative of school staff in the study. However it was not possible to take narratives from more than one person while offering confidentiality

and anonymity to participants, so for ethical reasons, only the narrative of Mrs Dent was sought.

One feature of a case study as defined by Yin (2014) is a study which "*relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion*" (p.17). While this study is consistent with other definitions of case study according to Yin (2014), the only respect in which it could be regarded as a triangulation of data is that Mrs Dent recalled in her narrative memories of events over many years, at multiple data points. There is evidence of triangulation in her narrative through the threads of information which occur at multiple points within the narrative, such as John's acute sense of fairness.

5.7. Summary

From the detailed narrative analysis of the story of one mother about her son, questions are raised about whether national policies in England around challenging behaviour and exclusion can be improved. Secondly, whether systems within schools in England currently deliver the best possible outcomes for children with challenging behaviour; that is whether teachers with responsibility for challenging behaviour in schools identify the potential advantages of early educational psychologist involvement and have opportunity to initiate this involvement; and whether they work closely enough with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to ensure that educational needs are met. Thirdly, whether sufficient educational psychologist involvement takes place at the early intervention stage for children with challenging behaviour. Although this research has taken place in a single local authority context, it is anticipated that the findings potentially have wider implications which could be the focus of further research.

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