

Raising pupils' educational and occupational aspirations

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the aspirations of a group of pupils in a post-industrial community in the South Wales Valleys. Using a mixed methods approach, I explore and consider a range of social, economic and cultural issues to understand how educational and occupational aspirations are influenced and shaped. The recommendations made will hopefully help develop the role of personal tutor, as set out in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and help others within the education sector understand the complex, multifaceted nature of pupils' hopes and dreams for the future.

The ideas on the formation of aspirations which are developed by the economist Ray (2002, 2006) and the anthropologist Appadurai (2004) act as a strong reference point in this thesis. These works, coupled with the theory of *circumscription and compromise* which has been developed by Gottfredson (1981) provide a conceptual framework with which to facilitate a better understanding of the ways in which the educational and occupational aspirations of young people could be affected.

I suggest that aspirations should be considered from a socio-cultural perspective. Such is the dynamic nature of aspirations that pupils' dreams about the future begin to grow and be affected from a young age. For this reason, schools should consider a range of interventions to challenge gender stereotypes and ensure that sufficient guidance is provided from a young age about the many different academic and occupational pathways that pupils can choose in life. Throughout the thesis, I argue that for a group of young men and women in a community of social and economic deprivation, aspirations and transitions to adulthood are framed through geographically, familial and historically shaped class and gender codes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AEN	Additional Educational Needs
AVID	Achievement via Individual Determination
CWoW	Careers and the World of Work Framework
DfES	Department of Education and Skills
Edd	Doctorate in Education
EiC	Excellent in Cities
FSM	Free School Meals
ESW	Essential Skills Wales/Key Skills Qualification
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GIST	Girls into Science and Technology
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
IB	International Baccalaureate
INSET	In-Service training
KS4	Key Stage Four (Years 10 and 11 in secondary school)
LEA	Local Education Authority
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
Ofsted	Office of Standards in Education
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSE	Personal and Social Education
RAISE Programme	Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education
SES	Socioeconomic status
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government, now Welsh Government
WBQ	Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple deprivation
WISE	Women into Science and Engineering

Reflexive Preface

I would like to provide the reader with a brief biography and some background behind the motivations of this thesis. I will describe how this area of study became of interest to me and lead eventually to this particular doctoral research.

My interest in peoples' aspirations and life chances emanates from my interest in the different educational and occupational pathways that my own school friends have chosen. However, as a teacher, I have always been interested in the decisions the pupils I teach at Green Valley School make about their futures.

Trials and Tribulations

I recall my first day at secondary school clearly. I remember being told by my form tutor which teaching group pupils were to be placed in. Teaching classes were labelled according to the first five letters of the alphabet, with the most able pupils being placed in 'A'. I listened intensely, as my form tutor read out our names, whilst fidgeting with my new pens and pencils, only to hear that I was in 'B' class. I can still feel the sense of disappointment now, but at the same time, I remember thinking to myself then, I need to show everybody I should be in set 'A'. I must confess the determination and grit with which I still face life must have been in abundant supplies from a young age, because I set about my school work with fierce and relentless determination. Four months into the first year everybody sat exams in every subject in the 'big hall' before the Christmas holidays. During the first week back in January, I was called out from morning registration to speak with the head of year outside the classroom. She said that my average exam score across every subject was the highest in 'B' class and she wanted me to move up to 'A' class. I was delighted!

I can only now really remember my friends in my new class and how their aspirational educational and occupational goals continued to challenge the work of our classes. Three of my friends, all from ethnic backgrounds became doctors, just like their fathers. I recently spoke with one of my good friends, Abha on Facebook. She moved to London to study Medicine after leaving school; there she met her husband, who is also a doctor and they have recently moved to Canada. Most of the pupils in the class came from working class backgrounds, but what I remember about each other's home lives, is that everybody in my new class had parents that seemed to support their school work, were willing to pay the phone bills when we spent hours discussing maths homework (!) and encouraged their children to further their studies in university. Cerys and Catherine's parents were both

teachers and both girls followed in their footsteps. Claire's parents were accountants and she became a Maths teacher. My mum was a tax collector and my dad was a postman, my passion for Music started at a young age and I was always able and encouraged to pursue my interests.

Teaching seemed a natural step for me as a career choice. I trained on a P.G.C.E. programme qualifying in 1998 and took up a post in a secondary school in Llandudno for 5 years. During this time, I completed a part-time M.Ed at Bangor University where I completed modules such as 'Behaviour Management', 'Mentoring' and 'ICT in the classroom'; my dissertation considered the benefits of establishing an online curriculum on pedagogical skills. In 2002, I moved to Green Valley School in South Wales. I was initially employed as Head of Music but then took up the role of progress manager. This was my first pastoral role.

As time went on, I became increasingly interested as to why pupils chose the educational and occupational paths they did. I wanted to be able to understand why some pupils disengaged from the education system and why, despite continuing to try to 'move heaven and earth', some pupils would just not engage with school life. I wanted to better understand why some pupils approached their studies with so much enthusiasm that they would not give up until they had achieved the highest grade possible and why - in contrast - others just wanted to do the bare minimum and were happy 'cruising along'. Was this lack of motivation and apparent apathy, as I viewed it, because I am somebody who faces up to a challenge with boundless enthusiasm and commitment? Or was it the outcome or stance, resulting from low aspirations, a lack of self esteem and belief, or a lack of ability? Or did this phenomenon relate to the long standing debate on nature versus nurture? My initial thesis title when I applied to study for a professional doctorate - the EdD at Cardiff University asked the question as to why pupils in Key Stage Three and Four became disaffected from the education system. I am a positive person and as my module EdD studies progressed I adapted the title and set out to focus on the more positive inquiry rather than depicting the negatives, thus my revised research focus moved onto raising aspirations.

Sharing my initial research findings

After analysis the two questionnaire surveys which were distributed in October 2010 and July 2011, I asked to meet with the headteacher to share initial findings. We had an in-depth conversation about the effects on pupils' aspirations, with regards the fact that we are an 11-16 school and all our pupils have to 'find' post 16 options. The headteacher clearly felt that the lack of a sixth form disadvantaged

pupils and it would always be a vision for the school to reinstate a sixth form. On scrutinising the data we were both very surprised to see that only six boys in the whole year group wanted to continue their studies in a sixth form and we wondered if this notion of masculinity and boys wanting greater freedom within the learning process made the further education college a more appealing choice. We acknowledged that the breadth of vocational courses and the focus on learning skills for careers in the 'trade' by the FE College also appealed to the longer life plans of the boys. I can still remember this meeting really vividly and can see how our discussions helped me/us realise how it is so important not only to look at and develop teaching within the classroom, but there also needs to be an equal consideration of the influencing factors within a school catchment, particularly in areas of high deprivation. After teaching for fifteen years, I still think that the quality of pedagogical skills is essential, but I also think that resources need to be targeted to support the holistic development of a child, especially in deprived areas.

Following this conversation, clearly a critical moment, we agreed that the themes identified following my doctoral data gathering and study of the literature would need to be explored further. It was felt that the creation of a professional learning community (PLC) would be a positive way forward. This PLC could consider how gender impacts on achievement, and work collaboratively with a view to identify ways which might reduce the gender gap that exists in attainment (and aspiration) at Green Valley School.

Gender PLC

I established a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in September 2011 and recruited twelve volunteers from the teaching staff. We met once every half term after school during the academic year 2011/2012.

Staff member	Role
Emma	Inclusion Assistant
Eleri	Progress Manager and Welsh teacher
Richard	Inclusion Manager
Gareth	Deputy Headteacher
Rebekah	KS4 to KS5 Transition Manager. Organiser of work experience and Careers provision.
Owain	Head of PE
Lana	PE Teacher
Lisa	Progress Manager and PE teacher
Nerys	Head of English

Jane	Head of Art
Amy	Art Teacher
Rhianne	Science Teacher

The deep and meaningful discussions that we had in these meetings were based on rich and extensive experience within the classroom and it really reminded me of the importance to be reflexive about our daily work and of the need to scaffold such opportunities for teachers to consider a range of issues that may affect the teaching and learning process. For example, in preparation for our first meeting, I went through the aims and objectives of the group as suggested by the headteacher and then I asked the group to break up into smaller sub groups. We identified and noted down what we wanted to explore and aimed to achieve by the end of the academic year (July 2012). When the sub groups came back together we discussed many common themes and how they impacted on pupils' aspirations and achievements and how as a group we could tackle these issues. Everybody spoke so passionately about their work as a teacher and it was easily apparent in this meeting how the historical and social context within which a person had grown up influenced their outlook on life. After the initial meeting, I summarised the key themes under three headings: curriculum, assessment and pastoral. This document formed the basis of our work for the remainder of the year and we focused on those issues we felt could achieve within the time allocated to the group. The group met seven times in total and the decision was made that we were going to:

- Design a set of generic inclusive posters for each Departmental area to highlight possible career pathways for men and women within that subject;
- Plan a two-day whole school event which encouraged pupils to think about future career pathways and set short and long term action plan. (It was hoped that this would become an annual event and targets would be kept with form tutors and revisited regularly);
- Organise an INSET for all teaching and LSA staff to share/disseminate our findings.

The work on designing the posters was fairly straightforward. All subject leaders were asked to supply a list of 6 to 8 possible career pathways within their subject area. Two of the teachers in the PLC were art teachers and they worked together to create several different layouts for the posters. The group discussed the merits of each design and the best points were compiled into one design. Jane and Amy

kindly made the posters together. These were then explained to all staff during an INSET day in September 2012 and subject leaders were asked to consider the career advice they offered pupils in their Departments and update a display area that was dedicated to raising pupils' aspirations and breaking down any gender stereotypes.

I feel that all of this work with the PLC made me constantly reflect on the findings of my doctoral research. For example, the pupils in both focus groups said that they wished they had received more careers advice when choosing options and wanted the school to provide more information about the work that was undertaken in different careers. When we first thought about the two day event, we wanted to invite a range of companies in to school and hold a career fair and allow pupils to circulate around the main hall and speak with people from different careers. However, it soon became apparent that a fair of this scale was going to be very difficult to organise on top of a full teaching workload. We met with Careers Wales several times throughout the year and although they were happy to support our work, they could not offer firm commitment because they were unsure what funding they were going to receive and therefore did not know what resources (personnel and financial) they could provide. During one of our meetings with Careers Wales however, we were taken through the online platform '*Kudos*'. This package allows pupils to explore over 1800 different jobs, learn about the everyday duties involved, the required entry qualifications, and the average salary range and watch a video of somebody already employed within that field. On entering the site, pupils have to complete a series of questions about their likes and dislikes and *Kudos* then presents a list of possible careers pathways. Pupils then have to eliminate careers further and decide upon one career and create an action plan to achieve this job. We really liked the look of this package and felt that it could easily be differentiated; also the range of information would prove appealing to all pupils. We felt that within the two days we were organising, all pupils would be given two hours to work through various tasks on *Kudos*.

In order to launch the two days, we decided that we wanted to organise a whole school assembly so that the aims and objectives could be clearly explained. In this assembly I spoke with the school population about aspirations and explained how our gender, families, friends and the community we live in influence our outlook on life. I gave various examples to further this point and then said that a number of teachers in school had been working together for a year to design a range of workshops to challenge any gender stereotypical images they may have and help them to think about their futures. I did not want to speak with the pupils on my own and wanted to try and find a past pupil who had made significant progress

within their academic and professional career after leaving Green Valley School. In order to do this, I spent a considerable amount of time searching online for somebody. Eventually, I found a woman who now works as a professor in a local university. When I contacted her, she was absolutely delighted that somebody from the school was undertaking such work and she immediately agreed to work with the PLC on this project and speak with the pupils during the whole school assembly. She had found some school photos and showed these to the pupils and spoke about her time in school and what she did when she left school in order to help her achieve her current position. The pupils and staff were fascinated with her story, especially when she revealed that she was the first female from Green Valley School to have gone to university!

Both careers days went really well and all staff and pupils who completed review sheets said that the experience was '*well organised*', '*sought to challenge stereotypes*' and '*provided an excellent action plan resource for pupils to consider their educational and occupational aspirations*'. In fact, some teachers even answered all the questions on Kudos themselves to see which career the programme recommended they follow! One teacher said that he was flattered to read that he could have been a wedding organiser! I also enjoyed the conversation that two boys in Year 9 were having whilst moving between classrooms during the KUDOS workshops. Jordan was delighted that KUDOS suggested he could be a 'bomb disposal expert', this was certainly a career he was now very interested in considering and he was going to talk with his Science teacher for further advice, he even said to his friend that he may begin to concentrate more in Science lessons as he would have to achieve good grades in this area.

Literature Review

My literature search journey for this study began with the work of Louis Weis for a number of reasons. Firstly, I felt that the longitudinal nature of this ethnographic study allowed for a greater understanding of race, class, and gender and how these influence pupils' aspirations. The author explores issues among white working class youths, and she considers the roles of school and family in the production of the self. The book also examines the working class teens' attitudes toward and readiness for 'post-feminist' thinking and the emerging American New Right. Weis looked beyond policies and practice and focused on the voice of the young men and women and sought to amplify the identities of these individuals as they struggled to adapt to the complex society within which they live and the increasing dominance of capitalism and de-industrialization. When I read a number of the excerpts from interview transcripts of pupils from Freeway I felt that there were strong similarities

with Green Valley School. The pupils at Green Valley School live in an area that is still feeling the effects of de-industrialization and the male pupils at the school are still learning how to adapt to changes to male working class identity in order to secure employment.

I think that it was after reading this work that I began to question the impact one person, i.e. the personal tutor could actually have on raising aspirations. I am not as naive as to think that one person could have changed the way that every single person thought about their futures, but I was not as aware as to the full impact of influences such as family, gender and intergenerational transmission, amongst many other influences could have on individual aspirations.

After Weis, I then read the work of Gottfredson and I began to learn about Developmental Psychology and how social, emotional and cognitive skills develop throughout a person's life. Gottfredson's work draws heavily on the developmental theories of Holland and Super: she develops their theories by trying to adapt and apply them to demonstrate the process involved in deciding on occupational pathways. What I found interesting about this work was the way that developmental stages were explored in an attempt to theorise and divide concepts of child development into distinct stages. I have always felt that some interventions for disaffected pupils have been offered too late, i.e. I feel that a young person has formulated a clear and strong opinion about their future and the decisions that they have reached are going to be 'protected' by years of formulation. One particular example I can give with regards current practice is the 14-19 Learning Pathways. When this was launched, the hope was that pupils would have a wider choice of learning options and would be offered independent pastoral, academic and careers support. Within this 14-19 agenda, pupils who are disaffected can access so many opportunities and support networks, such as NEET teams, PreVent, Families First. These opportunities need however to be offered to younger pupils. The Welsh Government have tried to revolutionise the education of younger children with the foundation phase, older children follow the learning pathways between the age of 14-19 but there is nothing in the middle. Something needs to exist within this void. Gottfredson's work, along with others are showing that pupils are making choices about their future from a very young age and support needs to be provided to break down stereotypes before they are formed.

Current Academic Year

Last April, I made a successful application to be seconded to the senior leadership team (SLT) in school. With this secondment came the responsibility of developing parental engagement with the school. Since last April (2012), I have tried to use the

knowledge and skills I have gained from my study to help further the school's work in this area.

One of the initiatives I wanted to pursue was the promotion of a reading log. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 go to the school library every fortnight during an English lesson to get a reading book and then they need to read this in their free time, as well as at the beginning of an English lesson. I wanted to try and develop the use of this log and draw on support from the pupils' families. In order to do this, I worked with the English Department and we updated the overall design of the log. We also decided to run a competition with our new Year 7 pupils; when the pupils visited us during the summer term for a transition day, we asked the form tutors to explain the reading log and we wanted pupils to design a new front cover. Pupils were given an hour with their form tutor to finalise their designs. At the end of the day, the English Department and I sat down and selected a winner and three runners up. All the pupils were set to return to school that evening with their parents to meet with the headteacher, progress manager and go through final information with form tutors. We announced the winners at this evening and handed out book tokens. We hoped that by organising this competition and announcing winners during a public event, we would highlight the good work of the reading log, whilst emphasising the importance of the family role within the reading process. This thinking links very closely with my findings in my research, that the role of the family within the learning process is crucial and is a resource which every school must exploit to its fullest.

Recently, (27th February 2013) I arranged a review meeting with the English Department to discuss the work that had been undertaken in the reading log. Some pupils and families had completed the log together on a weekly basis and it was easy to see the collaboration at home. Some pupils and families were struggling with this work and in order to help these, we wanted to copy good exemplars and share these. One parent had refused to sign the log and this is something I said needed to be explored further; over the next few weeks I would like to work with the SLT to look at the home/school agreement which parents have to sign if they want their children to attend the school to see if we can promote the need for greater collaboration with the learning process by all families.

I feel my research has given me the confidence to lead whole school projects and analyse the success and weaknesses within the work through the employment of critical skills. I also feel that having access to so many online journals means that I am able to research any given subject and begin to build up a good understanding of current research and findings and advise my headteacher on ideas deriving from concrete evidence based practice.

Reflexive Practice

I wrote at quite some length in my thesis about the need for reflexive practice, not just as a researcher but as a teacher. I learnt so much through my empirical research about the pupils I work with every day and made several conclusions about strategies that could be employed to ensure that the aspirations of these young people continued to be stretched and scaffolded as they got older. I spoke at some length in Chapter Five and Chapter Six about Ollie, who was keen at every point in the male focus group to show his masculinity. He was and had been for some time intent on working with his uncle when he left school to become an electrician. Ollie's attitude towards the education system was very stereotypical as a young teenager from a white working class background; he often did the bare minimum of work required from him in lessons in order to achieve satisfactory grades and was keen to leave school as soon as possible. I remember one occasion in fact where the school were trying to encourage him to stay behind for extra Maths lessons on a Monday in the hope that he might improve on the 'D' grade he received in his first set of examinations; his response was very dismissive and he did not want to attend these classes because he was happy with the 'D' and couldn't think of any reason why he would need to strive to get a higher grade. I spoke with Ollie's brother last week (seven months after he had left Green Valley School) only to find that Ollie did start working with his uncle after leaving school but was asked to do general labouring work, Ollie didn't like working in the cold and decided after several months to quit. He has now found a temporary job in a local primary school as a learning support assistant, apparently he is really enjoying this work. Of course, I am really pleased that Ollie has found a job and he is enjoying this work, however, I am still intrigued as to how somebody's outlook about the future can change so radically in such a short space of time. This is what I find fascinating about research and teaching, the book can never be closed, the ink can never dry as things are constantly change. I do feel that Ollie's story illuminates the complexities of aspirations around gender, class and age.

Another brief story to tell is that of Megan. Megan was involved in this research and is now studying in a local college. She returned to school for several months this year as part of her 'work experience' which contributes to her studies. On her last day she called in to see me and we began speaking about her travel to the college. She said that she spent £4.25 every day to travel back and forth to college and had to leave the house at 7:30am; she admitted she was struggling with the travel costs. When I asked her if she had applied for the travel grants I explained in Chapter Six, she knew nothing about these grants. To think that somebody who is so keen to stay in education, in a county where NEET figures are continuing to rise, I am really frustrated to know that this young and motivated woman is not

receiving the information and support she deserves. Who is at fault here, the school, the college, the county? Whoever it is, something must change.

Looking Forward

I feel that my doctoral research journey has taught me a great deal. In particular, I have learnt about the challenge of raising aspirations but also about the importance of considering the wider socio-cultural context within which a young person grows up. When planning future whole school interventions I will now be more mindful of the need to embrace factors beyond the school gates in order to shape interventions within them. Finally an appropriate statement from Willig (2001) is fitting to close this personal preface.

'Personal reflexivity' involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research. It also involves thinking about how the research may have affected and possibly changed us, as people and as researchers. (Willig, 2001: 10)

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This is my truth; now tell me yours.
(Bevan, 1978: 12)

Aneurin Bevan was the son of a coal miner from Tredegar, South Wales. He became a lifelong champion of social justice and the rights of working people. Like Bevan, I too am from a working class family and have grown up in the Valleys of South Wales. I worked hard in school to get good qualifications, go to university and become a teacher. I achieved that dream. I now work in a school in a South Wales Valley which serves an area that is suffering huge socioeconomic disadvantage; I support families who are struggling financially and I support pupils who are struggling educationally and are becoming increasingly disengaged with the education system. As a progress manager I am responsible for the pastoral and academic care of a year group of approximately 190 pupils as they move through secondary school (Year 7 to Year 11, age 11 to 16 years). I have now supported two groups of pupils through their secondary education and began working with a third group of pupils in September 2012. Bevan posed an interesting question in his book *In Place of Fear*:

A young miner in a South Wales colliery, my concern was with the one practical question: Where does power lie in this particular state of Great Britain, and how can it be attained by the workers?

(Bevan, 1978: 21)

This is my truth therefore, as somebody who has herself, grown up in an area of huge poverty and aspired to achieve and attain, how can I transfer that 'power' to the pupils I work with? How can I empower these young people as they grow and

begin to decide how they want to contribute to the society they live in so that they will aspire to be the best they possibly can?

I hoped, at the very outset of this study that my work as a professional doctoral student would take me on a journey of personal and professional discovery. I hope also that the reader will draw inspiration from the pupils, their locality and the data that are discussed and also reflect on their own past, present and future influences.

2. Research Aims

Improving the life chances of children and young people in Wales is a key priority for the Welsh Assembly Government. In fact, since the devolution settlement and the establishment of the National Assembly in Wales in 1999, there has been a plethora of policy and strategy documents relating to children and young people to achieve this aim. As the then Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson, explained in her Foreword to *The Learning Country* (2001):

We share strategic goals with our colleagues in England – but we often need to take a different route to achieve them. We shall take our own policy direction where necessary, to get the best for Wales.

(WAG, 2001: 2)

Policies such as *Extending Entitlement* (WAG 2002b), *Reaching Higher* (WAG 2002c) and *Rights to Action* (WAG 2004a) have all sought to increase pupil choice through greater collaboration, provide an inclusive and aspirational learning experience that breaks down barriers to learning for all to experience the joys and rewards of lifelong learning.

The Learning Country (2001), began a process of radical change in Welsh education, with the aim of ensuring the best possible environment to encourage learning at all stages in peoples' lives, from strong foundations in the Early Years through to individual 14-19 Learning Pathways and finally on to adult life.

(WAG, 2007: ii)

The *Learning Country* heralded the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate as an overarching qualification for pupils aged 14-19, for them to follow and develop wider skills and experiences alongside academic studies (WAG 2004b). A detailed description of the Welsh Baccalaureate and the central role of the personal tutor are offered in chapter two.

The main aim of this study is to contribute knowledge about the way pupils' aspirations are formed and to understand how these influence and affect a young person's outlook on life. I hope that the research findings will help enrich my day to day work as a progress manager and also support Green Valley School to develop new policies and actions to raise pupils' aspirations. The four preliminary research questions which were identified for the pursuing literature and policy reviews at the outset of the study were as follows:

- How are aspirations formed?
- To what extent does gender contribute to pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?
- How do individual pupils' educational and occupational aspirations change and evolve over time?
- What are the main roles and responsibilities involved with the post of personal tutor? How could this role be developed to raise pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?

3. Raising Aspirations

The power of aspirations to mitigate socio-economic disadvantage was first explored extensively in the longitudinal National Child Development Study (Morrow and Elliott 2007). This longitudinal study of children dates back to 1958 and it collected over 13,000 essays written by children when they were aged 11 in 1969 asking them to imagine their life at 25, their interests, home life, as well as asking them to complete a survey on their current expectation on leaving school. The essays were later compared with the actual lives of the 42 year old 'former children'. This large scale study was able to identify clear links between the aspirations of children when aged eleven and their educational trajectories in early adult life.

It is well documented by academics and researchers that social class and family background have a crucial effect on the educational and occupational aspirations of a child, (Halsey, Heath and Ridge 1980; Douglas, 1964). This concern is also raised in the more recent Leitch Review (2006) which considered the link between parental aspirations for their children and attainment:

The Review has found that inequalities in aspiration by adults drive inequalities in attainment for their children at school. This creates a cycle of disadvantage that locks generations of the same family into persistent poverty. It perpetuates the number of young people unable to read, write and add up and who drop out of school at 16, spending teenage years not in education, employment or training (NEET). This cycle needs to be broken by raising the aspirations of parents and children and standards in all schools.

(Leitch, 2006: 22)

The intergenerational relationship between gender and class was explored over thirty years ago by Willis in *Learning to Labour* (1977). In his study, the working class boys formed a distinctive counter-school sub-cultural grouping characterised by opposition to the values and norms perpetuated throughout the school. They chose openly to work in industry to assert their masculinity by following in the steps of their fathers and older brothers. However, the world economy has changed considerably since this time and we have seen factories and mines close and we have entered a time of post industrialisation. This decline in job availability has continually challenged the identity of working class white men (Fine, et al., 1997) and coupled with a time when women began to assert their rights and since have demanded equal rights and challenged vehemently the limiting effects of patriarchy (Weis, 1990, 2004), we must embark on serious social change to ensure that narrow or conservative gender identities do not affect or limit aspirations.

The need to 'challenge' and support pupils' aspirations must start at a young age as a number of studies have confirmed that young people, even before reaching secondary school, have a detailed knowledge about different careers and the social context in which they are embedded (Schoon and Parsons 2002; Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg, 1986). Gottfredson (1981) has argued that most children between the ages of nine and thirteen have established a set or range of occupations that they consider as suitable based on social class and ability level. The county in which the research school is situated, Berllan, has a high proportion of people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (see Table 1.1) and I was particularly

interested in discovering if the pupils involved in this study had preconceived ideas about their futures, as theorised by Gottfredson (1981).

Table 1.1 Year 11 Leavers for Schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) (2004 to 2010)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Wales	7.0	6.8	6.4	6.9	7.1	5.7	5.4
Isle of Anglesey	4.5	5.8	7.0	6.7	8.2	5.2	5.3
Gwynedd	6.2	4.6	5.4	4.4	5.7	4.2	3.6
Conwy	5.6	5.7	7.9	5.5	5.7	4.8	3.7
Denbighshire	6.3	6.3	6.0	4.9	6.2	4.4	4.4
Flintshire	5.4	4.9	3.9	4.6	7.2	3.7	2.8
Wrexham	8.5	7.2	8.1	8.9	9.6	5.0	4.2
Powys	4.4	4.8	3.0	5.3	3.0	2.1	2.9
Ceredigion	3.4	3.6	2.2	2.6	3.8	2.3	2.3
Pembrokeshire	5.2	6.6	3.6	4.7	6.4	4.8	4.8
Carmarthenshire	5.0	5.7	5.4	5.5	4.4	4.0	2.9
Swansea	12.2	8.5	8.0	5.8	5.8	6.4	4.2
Neath Port Talbot	10.6	8.1	7.0	9.0	7.7	7.1	6.6
Bridgend	6.7	8.2	6.8	7.3	8	7.6	7.1
The Vale of Glamorgan	4.1	6.4	5.2	6.8	6.2	5.6	4.6
Cardiff	7.4	8.4	8.8	8.5	10.6	8.9	8.8
Rhondda, Cynon Taff	6.0	5.0	5.1	7.5	6.1	4.9	5.7
Merthyr Tydfil	6.4	11.4	7.3	7.9	7.8	4.6	7.6
Caerphilly	8.1	7.8	6.8	7.1	7.1	5.0	6.0
Blaenau Gwent	10.3	8.8	8.1	10.4	9.7	6.6	8.7
Berllan	6.7	6.9	7.9	10.5	10.1	8.2	7.0
Monmouthshire	4.0	4.6	4.8	5.6	5.3	5.0	3.9
Newport	9.2	9.2	9.0	9.3	10.4	9.1	7.5

Source: Careers Wales Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales, as referenced in Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin, Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Accessed: 27 July 2011.

I was interested to find out if pupils held low occupational aspirations in this particular area of Wales, and if so, why. I also wanted to gauge if such low aspirations stopped pupils wanting to find employment or stay in education beyond the post compulsory age. The findings from this research I felt could help the Education Department in the county reshape part of their vision, provision and

policy and this might be considered advantageous given that this study was conducted and being written up at a difficult time. Estyn, the Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, reported on the standard of the Local Authority's Education Services for Children and Young People in 2011 in the locality where this research was undertaken and deemed it unsatisfactory. A number of concerns were raised, but pertinent to this study was the percentage of 16-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the fact that it remained too high.

The key questions posed and addressed here then are, why are so many young people not choosing to 'stay on' in post-16 education or training? Vignettes of the local demographic where this research was undertaken are provided in chapter two (section 2.5); they each highlight the challenging economic situation faced by the families living in the school's catchment area, with some of the children living in Communities First¹ areas. The employment rate in the county is 64.8 per cent, compared to the Wales average of 66.7 per cent. There are 25.4 per cent of children living in workless households. Of the working population, 16 per cent have no qualifications, which is higher than the Wales average of 13.7 per cent.

¹ Communities First was established by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002 because the Welsh Assembly grew concerned that many of Wales' communities were suffering from lack of investment, stagnation, and apathy. Following the release of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) in 2000, which measured six ways in which County Council wards compared: Income, Employment, Health, Education, Housing, Access to Services, the 100 most deprived wards were recognised as Communities First areas.

4. Pupil Voice

Research initiatives and shifts in Welsh educational policy have sought to promote 'pupil voice' in recent years (Younger and Warrington 2009; MacBeath, et al., 2003; WAG 2002b). Rudduck and Flutter (2004) highlighted the successes of discussing issues with pupils in their research:

Evidence from various projects we have worked on suggests that hearing what pupils have to say about teaching, learning and schooling enables teachers to look at things from the pupil perspective—and the world of school can look very different from this angle. Being prepared—and being able to see the familiar differently and to contemplate alternative approaches, role and practices—is the first step towards fundamental change in classrooms and schools.

(Rudduck and Flutter, 2004: 141)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and The Children Act (1989) are two of the more prominent moves which have endorsed giving the greater credence to the voice of the child. The Education Act (2002) made specific reference to the need to '*consult with pupils in connection with the taking of decisions affecting them*' (Part 2, Section 176), and Section 53 of the Children's Act 2004 contains an important clause on ascertaining the wishes and feelings of children regarding local authority services. Statutory guidance on pupil participation is also provided in the Welsh Assembly document *Rights to Action* (WAG 2004a). In Wales, since 2005, it has also been a statutory requirement for all state schools to have school councils with elected members; the opportunities provided by schools to allow pupils to comment on school practice are regularly commented upon during Estyn inspections.

5. Overview of the Doctoral Study

The educational and occupational aspirations of pupils in one year group were sought and considered at four points during a period of four years. In July 2007, 52 pupils outlined their occupational aspirations on a simple printed questionnaire as they joined Green Valley School. Then in October 2010, 152 pupils completed an electronic questionnaire which encouraged them to consider their educational and occupational aspirations and in July 2011, 137 pupils completed a final questionnaire. The analysis of these survey instruments helped identify common and recurring themes; these themes were then explored further with a smaller group of pupils during two separate single sex pupil focus groups in September 2011, when the pupils were in Year 11.

The results of the three questionnaires and two focus groups inform the main key findings in this thesis and are discussed with a view to developing a deeper understanding as to how a pupil's educational and occupational aspirations are formed.

The role of the personal tutor, which was introduced in the Case Study school – Green Valley School - as it launched the WBQ is also explored. In particular, the possible effects or perceived impacts that the person in this role (in this instance, Mrs Kay James) may have had upon pupils' aspirations and choices are considered.

6. Vignettes

Personal Background of Researcher

In the fifteen years I have been a secondary school teacher; I have worked as a head of department in two different schools and held a significant pastoral role as progress manager since 2002. As a progress manager my main responsibilities include supporting a group of pupils as they move through secondary school from Year 7 to Year 11 (aged 11 to aged 16) and ensuring their pastoral support and academic development. This work has meant that I am able to form close relationships with the pupils in my year group and I have come to understand the holistic development of a young person. Furthermore, how their educational experience can be shaped so as to optimise the best learning and teaching experience possible so that pupils can achieve their full potential in life has been my mission. It was this interest and desire to begin to understand further the range of causal effects and influences that affect pupils' aspirations in life that encouraged me to embark on a Professional Doctorate at Cardiff University after completing a MEd successfully at Bangor University (Lewis, 2002).

Brief reference should be made here towards the term 'fighting familiarity' (Delamont and Atkinson, 1995). I have come to learn during the course of my studies that overfamiliarity with a research topic can cause bias and I am very conscious of this. Familiarity with a research setting can inhibit a researcher and make it very difficult to form an unbiased opinion or actually gain some analytical distance. I remember fondly, my teacher training year when I was introduced to the

work of Schon (1990) and the ability to become a *reflective practitioner*. My emic insider perspective coupled with the role of researcher and the relationship between teacher and pupil within empirical research projects is explored further in chapter four.

History of Green Valley School and its surrounding area

Green Valley School is nestled deep within the South Wales Valleys and is steeped in social history. Green Valley grew quickly in size from the end of the 18th century, when men arrived from all over Europe eager to secure employment in the ironworks and coal pits. Houses, chapels, pubs and shops soon extended uphill towards the neighbouring villages of Carnau and Pentre Uchaf to create densely populated communities. The traditional white farmhouses were soon surrounded by rows of grey stone cottages and red brick houses. Meanwhile, the mountains became hives of activity honeycombed with coal levels and furnaces; the tramroads, inclines and railway lines took the riches down to the valley floor and onwards. Unfortunately, the riches of the valley were limited and the closure of local industry led to depopulation and to the demise of many thriving organisations.

The School where this research was undertaken - Green Valley School - was originally opened in 1914 as a higher elementary school and pupil teachers' centre because of the growing population in the area. The imposing red brick buildings still stand as a historical reminder of times gone by. The move to become a grammar

and technical school saw the development of two teaching blocks in the 1950s. A further brand new block which was opened in 2008 now stands at the new entrance for the school and seems to herald another chapter in the school's history; a time of transformation and technology.

There are 935 pupils on role and the school's intake covers the whole ability range although a high proportion of pupils are of lower ability. Sixty pupils (6.4%) have statements of Special Educational Needs and a further 189 have been identified as needing some support. 215 pupils (22.9%) are entitled to free school meals (FSM). The school's motto is '*Learning to Live*' and its vision statement highlights three key areas of work; the school will:

- *provide an innovative and dynamic approach to learning, enabling all pupils with the skills to thrive in a continually changing world.*
- *promote an ethos of high expectations, academic achievement, positive values and continuous improvement within a caring, orderly, supportive and fully inclusive community.*
- *Commit to the pursuit of individual excellence, achievement and success for everyone.*

(School website: accessed 6th June 2012)

A further detailed and broader account of the social context and settings of this doctoral research is provided in chapter two.

Mrs Kim James, personal tutor at Green Valley School

Kim was born in the area and attended the school where this research is undertaken. Kim said she always enjoyed school life and achieved 'O' Levels in

English, Maths, Latin, RE. French, History, Science. After leaving school aged 16 she went to the local college and enrolled for Business Studies. However, after three months she dropped out of the course because she did not like it and began working full-time. Kim knew that she enjoyed administrative work so found a job in the office of a local building company. From there, Kim moved between jobs but still focused on providing administrative support. In 1982, Kim began working in a local college, her main role involved arranging work placements for pupils as part of their work experience. Although she really enjoyed this role, she soon relinquished this post to start a family and moved to Saudi Arabia with her son and husband who had secured promotion with British Aerospace. When in Saudi Arabia, Kim readily admits that she did not have to work but has always been somebody who is keen to 'keep busy'; she therefore worked in library and then set up a coffee shop with a close friend. After leaving Saudi Arabia in 1988, Kim went to work part-time in a family planning clinic until 2007 when she joined the staff at Green Valley School as a reprographics technician. In June 2010, the position of personal tutor was advertised and Kim was successful at interview, thus securing the position, she took up post in September 2010.

Kim was nervous at first about taking on the role as she had received no formal training to prepare for this role and had little knowledge of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and how it should be operationalised. However, she felt that her experience of working in a local college organising work placements for college students and her life experience as a mum raising two teenage boys was

invaluable. She has undertaken the role of personal tutor for three years and has often undertaken work beyond her job description and developed the role within the school's needs and resources.

Having introduced the contexts and key personnel of the study, albeit briefly, the final sections map out the shape of the thesis.

7. Structure of the Study

The thesis has six chapters. Chapter Two examines the policy context in Wales following devolution in 1999 which led to increased focus on providing individual learning pathways for pupils aged 14-19 in order to raise aspirations and promote lifelong learning. Chapter Three reviews key literature thematically which has focused on aspirations, mentoring and tutoring with a view to identifying key factors which could affect educational and occupational aspirations. The works of Appadurai (2004), Ray (2002, 2006) and Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) are considered and then a range of mentoring and tutoring programmes across the world are discussed.

Chapter Four explains why a mixed-methods approach was adopted in this study in order to address the research questions. This introductory section then leads into a contextual description and overview as to the many processes, decisions and ethical and logistical issues that needed to be considered whilst collecting the data.

Reference is made at the same time to researcher reflexivity, the limitations of the study and how the various data were prepared for analysis.

Chapter Five describes the main findings. The results of three separate survey questionnaires that were administered to the same group of pupils over a period of five years are considered. Key themes that were identified in two focus groups are also considered in order to triangulate findings. Chapter Six presents and summarises the main findings of the empirical study and suggests ways in which these findings could be utilised to improve and develop current practice.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a detailed background of the school and people involved in this research project. The need to exploit the pupil voice has also been considered as this is considered to offer an unbiased perspective on educational initiatives.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCING THE EDUCATIONAL, POLICY AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF THE STUDY

There is no single explanation for why learners from disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well than their peers and there is no single easy solution. Schools that tackle the impact of disadvantage use a range of approaches and interventions to address a complex set of problems.

(Estyn, 2012: i)

1. Introduction

This first section of this chapter traces and reviews the development and changes in educational policies in Wales following devolution in 1999. It is not intended as a comprehensive review, rather, it focuses on *The Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14-19* (WAG 2001, 2002a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c) and the introduction and development of the Welsh Baccalaureate.

The next chapter section then considers the roles of mentor, tutor and coach and the array of international and national initiatives that have been introduced whereby adults have been identified, some working in a salaried position and others volunteering to help and support pupils. This will show how the role of mentor, tutor and coach have all been used to raise achievement, attainment and aspirations whilst improving pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence.

The final part of this chapter provides a geographical and sociological analysis of the surrounding areas and school where the empirical part of this research was undertaken. It is important to emphasise that the sociographic accounts of the catchment areas for Green Valley School form an integral part of the policy and context chapter. My research since embarking on the Professional Doctorate has shown me how the decisions that people make are shaped by the opportunities that are available to them, the ways in which they understand those opportunities and their relationships to them. Therefore, I believe that a clear analysis of how the social and economic relations characteristic of localities have changed over time is essential to a proper understanding of the learning trajectories that individuals follow and how their patterns have shifted over the decades (Gorard and Rees, 2002: 31). Rees, Williamson and Istance (1996) highlighted the importance of considering the wider community where research is undertaken and wrote that different patterns would have been uncovered in their research if it had been carried out in a different area:

[...] the specificities of the local labour market and wider social structure have an influence on post-16 careers of young people.

(Rees et al., 1996: 222)

2. Devolution and Entitlement

The Welsh Government is the executive arm of the devolved government in Wales. It was initially set up as an executive body of the National Assembly for Wales, created by the Government of Wales Act 1998, following a referendum in 1997. It consisted of the First Minister and his Cabinet from 1999 to 2007. During this time,

the Assembly had no powers to initiate primary legislation, however, limited law-making powers were gained following the Government of Wales Act 2006. In May 2007, separation between the legislature (National Assembly for Wales) and the executive (Welsh Assembly Government) took effect under the Government of Wales Act 2006. Further primary law-making powers were granted following a referendum on 3 March 2011, making it possible to legislate without having to consult the UK parliament, or the Secretary of State for Wales in the 20 areas that are devolved.

Policies such as *Reaching Higher* (2002c), *Extending Entitlement* (2000b), and *Rights to Action* (2004a) are guided by the principles of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Welsh Assembly Government's seven core aims for children and young people - one of which is to ensure that children and young people are not disadvantaged by poverty. Policies in Wales are influenced by a geographically dispersed population (Gallacher and Raffe, 2012) and a strong commitment to social inclusion (Rees, 2005).

The RAISE Programme (Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education). Was targeted at improving the levels of attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Wales. Using additional funding from the 2006 budget, it provided £32 million over the two years up to 2008 for schools in Wales where the free school meal uptake was 20 per cent or higher, to help them develop customised strategies such as literacy support, out-of-hours activities and extended curriculum opportunities. This

initiative was developed as a specific response to the growing awareness that the links between disadvantage and low attainment were particularly strong in Wales (Davidson, 2006). Most schools used the funding to increase staff numbers and positive gains were noted in younger pupils, with regards to literacy skills and self-esteem (Estyn, 2009). Unfortunately, the final report issued by Estyn which considered the impact of the funding on achievement reported that:

After two years of the RAISE initiative, there have been no major changes in the performance of free-school-meal pupils against the main performance measures. There are slight indications of a positive effect on the measures in primary schools, but the performance of free-school-meal pupils in secondary schools has deteriorated a little.

(Estyn, 2009: 3)

First Campus is a partnership between higher education institutions, further education colleges and schools in South East Wales. Projects focus on Communities First schools and try to raise pupils' awareness of the progression routes into higher education for pupils. The hope is that by making university facilities available to young people this raises their educational aspirations and achievements, and encourages them to progress to higher levels of learning. Each project tries to raise awareness of progression routes to university and potential career opportunities. Part of the First Campus work involves arranging for undergraduate students in university to mentor pupils in Communities First schools when they are in Year 11 (this mentoring scheme is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

Communities First was a Welsh Government flagship programme set up throughout Wales in 2001 to be active in areas which were in the top 10 per cent of social

deprivation; according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). Following consultation in April 2012, it was decided to realign Communities First as a Community-Focused Tackling Poverty Programme, continuing to build on the achievements since its launch. In future there will be fewer, larger Communities First areas to be known as Clusters.

Reaching Higher (WAG, 2002c) which was superseded by *For Our Future* (WAG, 2009) places emphasis on widening access to and increasing participation in Higher Education (HE). The Welsh Government made targeted funds available through the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to HE institutions. This work has been focused around the Communities First initiative, (Gallacher and Raffe, 2012); in 2010–2011 this funding stood at £5.6m (WAG, 2009). One of the objectives was to improve educational opportunity for the least advantaged socio-economic groups in Wales with a quantitative target of increasing the proportion of young people accessing HE from low participation neighbourhoods from around 25–30% to 40-50% by 2010 (WAG, 2002c: 21).

3. The Curriculum Context

Learning Pathways 14-19

One of the main foci in Wales was to tackle the high number of young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) (WAG, 2006a). In order to do this, and to improve the experience of schooling for pupils at risk of becoming ‘NEETs’, it was decided that the compulsory school curriculum should be adapted to

increase the range of vocational (work based learning) and academic qualifications, support the development of more transferable skills and promote lifelong learning. The results of these recommendations were encapsulated in the *Learning Pathways 14-19* (WAG, 2002a, 2006b) and *The Learning Country*; (WAG, 2001, 2002a, 2006a, 2006b) with the goal to ensure that:

95 per cent of young people by the age of 25 will be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015.

(WAG, 2004a: iii)

Interestingly, raising pupils' aspirations is not mentioned as a strategic aim in any of the *Learning Pathways* or *Learning Country* documentation. The use of the word 'aspiration' is minimal across all of these documents and when used it refers to the aspirations of national policies and what they may achieve. On the few occasions that pupils' aspirations are mentioned, the reference is towards writing policies to help pupils *meet* their aspirations.

By 2010, at the latest, a learning framework will be in place providing opportunities for young people to progress their 14-19 education and training through high quality individual learning pathways.... as well as wider experiences through the Learning Core, to meet individual needs and aspirations.

(WAG, 2006b: 91)

This contrast in use of the word 'aspiration' is noticeable when reading documentation that outlines new initiatives in England. For example, the White Paper *Higher standards, better schools for all* (Department of Education and Skills (DfES), 2005) described several times the need to *stretch* pupils' aspirations.

Although the physical notion of stretching and raising aspirations is absent in the vast majority of educational literature stemming from Wales, it is clear that initiatives in England and Wales have both argued fervently about the necessity to provide extra funding and encourage collaborative working among a wide range of agencies in order to improve lifelong learning.

The Assembly's educational aims also concentrate on the need to handle transitions between the stages of learning more seamlessly and fruitfully; and to provide for 14-19 year olds in new and more imaginative ways to help them to achieve their full potential (WAG, 2001: 2). The different schooling stages in maintained schools in England and Wales normally are categorised as 'Years' and 'Key Stages'. A child's age on the 1st September determines the point of entry into the relevant stage of education. Since 2005, early years education in Wales is provided part-time for children aged 3-4 (nursery) and full-time for those between the ages of 4 and 5 (reception). Education is compulsory beginning with the term following the child's fifth birthday until the end of the academic year when they turn sixteen. Table 2.1 explains the different terminology further:

Table 2.1: An explanation of the terminology used to describe different schooling stages in maintained schools in England and Wales

Key Stage	School Year	Pupil Age Range
Key Stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2	Between 5 and 7
Key Stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6	Between 7 and 11
Key Stage 3 (Secondary School)	Year 7 to Year 9	Between 11 and 14
Key Stage 4 (Secondary School)	Year 10 and Year 11	Between 14 and 16
Key Stage 5 (Secondary School/College)	Year 12 and 13 (Sixth Form)	Between 16 and 18

The *Learning Pathways* focus on providing learning resources and support for pupils in Key Stage Four and Key Stage Five. The Pathways consist of a set of entitlements which identify six key elements, all of which seek to develop a learner's potential in both formal and non-formal settings:

Table 2.2: Six key elements of the Learning Pathways 14-19

Learning Pathways
1 Individual Learning Pathway
2 Wider Choice and Flexibility
3 The Learning Core
Support for Learners
4 Learning Coach
5 Access to Personal Support
6 Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

(WAG, 2004b: i)

All six elements were intended to be available in a school's typical 'option menu' from September 2004, supported by a WAG grant of £50,000 to each of the then twenty-two unitary authorities in Wales. It was hoped that the *Learning Pathways* would contribute to an improvement in qualifications, support an improvement in the proportion of 16 year olds progressing to further learning in education and training by widening choice, promoting equality of opportunity and supporting the achievement of *Extending Entitlement* (WAG 2002b). As well as providing this range of opportunities and support for pupils, a new qualification, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) was to be launched at the same time.

International Baccalaureate

The word 'baccalaureate' has its roots in the Latin word *baccalaureus*, meaning an advanced student. Nowadays, the word is most familiar to educators in the 'International Baccalaureate' (IB) concept. The IB was founded in Geneva,

Switzerland in 1968 as a non-profit educational foundation. Initially, pupils followed a single programme which prepared them for university; however, pupils now follow three programmes:

- The Primary Years Programme for pupils aged 3 to 12 focuses on the development of the whole child in the classroom and in the world outside;
- The Middle Years Programme for students aged 11 to 16 provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills;
- The Diploma for students aged 16 to 19 leads to a qualification that is recognized by leading universities around the world.

(IBO, 2010)

One of the main strengths of the IB is considered to be the focus on the learner, the consideration of their holistic development as they grow and the importance of them being educated to become responsible and responsive citizens, internationally minded. This focus on the pupil as an active lifelong learner is continually reiterated to all involved in the IB, pupil, teacher and parent, through the Learner Profile. This Profile is translated into the IB mission statement that underpins all three Programmes; it consists of a set of ten learning outcomes and aspirational qualities for the 21st Century: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk takers, balanced, reflective (IBO, 2006: 5).

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) was designed by teaching professionals and educationalists serving the Welsh Joint Education Committee

(WJEC)² in parallel with the Welsh Government policy on *Learning Pathways 14-19*.

An initial pilot of the post-16 qualification was launched in 2003 and a pilot of the KS4 qualification was launched in 2006 (Greatbatch, Wilmut and Bellin, 2006). In a press statement, the previous Education Minister, Leighton Andrews, announced that the number of centres offering the WBQ was set to rise from 167 to 217 in September 2010 (WAG, 2010).

The Welsh Baccalaureate is a wide ranging qualification that seeks to add an additional dimension to the subjects and courses currently available to 14 – 19 year old students. It coalesces personal development skills with existing qualifications like A Levels, NVQs and GCSEs to create a broader award that is acknowledged by employers and universities. It creates a wider and more diverse learning experience than traditional learning programmes, so as to cater for the diverse needs of young people today.

This policy addresses the need for a more flexible and balanced approach to the education of 14 to 19 year olds, developing a range of relevant skills, and providing a wider range of experiences which will suit the diverse needs of young people in Wales.

(Estyn, 2008: 1)

²The Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) is an examination board, based in Cardiff, that provides examinations, assessment, professional development, educational resources, support for adults who wish to learn Welsh and access to youth arts activities. It also provides examinations throughout England as well as Wales. It was established in 1948 as a consortium of Welsh Local Education Authorities, replacing the Central Welsh Board. It is now a registered charity, owned by the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Similar to the Learning Pathways key elements, the WBQ provides a wide spectrum of learning opportunities, whilst acting as a key structure through which individualised pathways can be delivered effectively by a range of learning providers.

The WBQ is approved nationally and learners can undertake it at three levels; at Key Stage Four, pupils can achieve the foundation (level 1), intermediate (level 2) qualifications and then progress to the advanced (level 3) qualification in post-16 education. The qualification consists of two parts; 'Options' and a 'Core Programme'. To achieve the full WBQ, students must achieve the full requirements of the Core Programme together with the necessary options. The 'options' part of the WBQ must be completed by students studying for all levels of the Welsh Baccalaureate Diploma, and is comprised of subjects selected from established, approved courses/programmes (for example GCSEs, Vocational GCSEs, AS/A Levels, Vocational A Levels). The 'Core Programme' part of the Baccalaureate consists of a programme of personal development studies, which students must complete along with their options. The core programme has five key areas:

- Essential Skills (communication, application of number, ICT, working with others, problem solving, improving own learning and performance);
- Work Related Experience;
- Individual Investigation;
- Wales Europe and the World;
- Personal and Social Education including Community Participation.

The table overleaf sets out the requirements pupils need to complete in order to achieve one of the three Levels of award:

Table 2.3: Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifications

	Foundation	Intermediate	Advanced
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four ESW/key skills at level 1. • Completion of compulsory Candidate Diary. • Individual Investigation at level 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four ESW/key skills, two at level 2 and two at level 1. • Completion of compulsory Candidate Diary. • Individual Investigation at level 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three ESW/key skills at level 3, together with the other three ESW/key skills at level 2. • Completion of compulsory Candidate Diary. • Individual Investigation at level 3.
Option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four grades D-G at GCSE, NVQ level 1, BTEC Introductory Diploma, or equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four grades A*-C at GCSE, NVQ level 2, BTEC First at pass level (6 units), or equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two GCE Advanced Levels, BTEC Level 3 Diploma, or equivalent.

Source: <http://www.wbq.org.uk>. Accessed online: 8th March 2013.

In Wales the uptake of the WBQ at KS4 has continued to increase steadily since it was first piloted in 2006. Figure 2.1 below shows the considerable increase in the number of pupils entered at Intermediate and Advanced Level since its introduction:

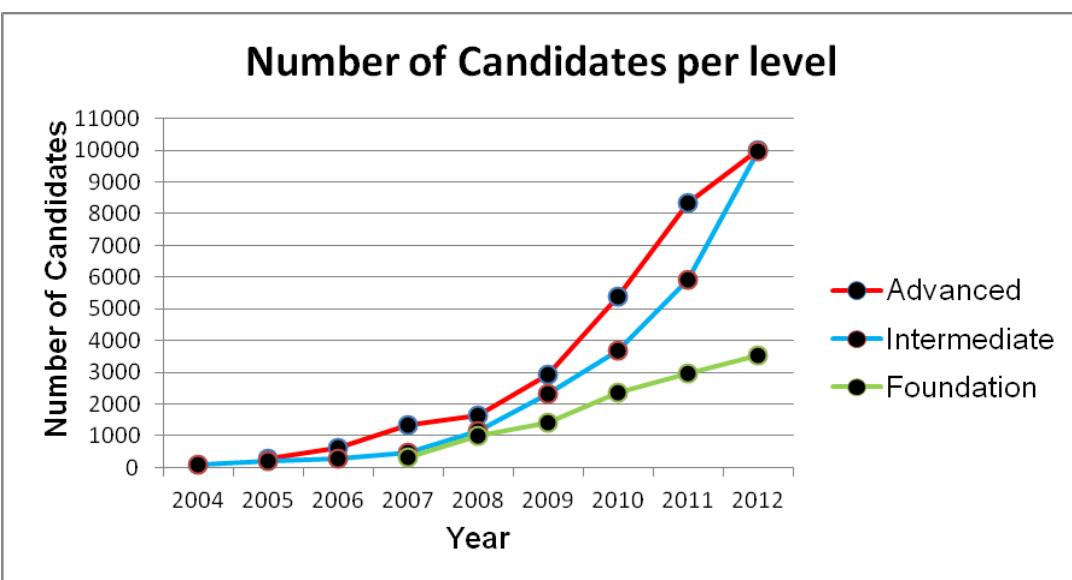


Figure 2.1: Number of candidates entered for Welsh Baccalaureate at Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Level (2004 – 2012)
(SOURCE: WJEC, 2012: 6)

The proportion of females in the total entry has fluctuated over the past four years, but has always been higher than the proportion of male pupils. Whereas the gap has decreased since 2009, this pattern was not seen in 2012.

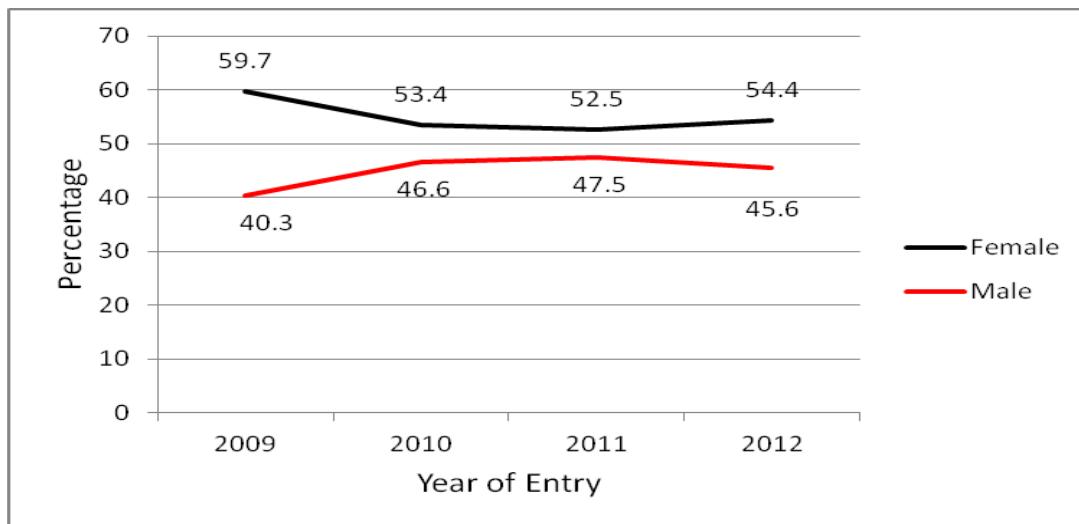


Figure 2.2: Percentage of female and male pupils entered for the Welsh Baccalaureate at all Levels. (2009-2012)
 (SOURCE: WJEC, 2012: 7)

Tables 2.4 to 2.6 below show the number of pupils who were entered for the Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Levels and the results achieved:

Table 2.4: Welsh Baccalaureate Foundation Diploma Awards, 2008 to 2012

Foundation Level	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Candidates completing	1013	1414	2373	2970	3521
Candidates awarded Foundation Diploma	450	910	1623	1873	2236
% awarded Foundation Diploma	44.4	64.4	69.1	65.5	63.5
Candidates awarded Core Certificate	626	1,085	1,941	2136	2515
% awarded Core Certificate	61.7	76.7	82.6	74.7	71.4

(Source: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=25>. Accessed online 2nd February 2013)

Table 2.5: Welsh Baccalaureate Intermediate Diploma Awards 2008 to 2012

Intermediate Level	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Candidates completing	1173	2310	3677	5911	9938
Candidates awarded Intermediate Diploma	603	1346	2345	4021	7210
% awarded Intermediate Diploma	51.4	58.0	63.4	67.0	72.5
Candidates awarded Core Certificate	735	1640	2757	4652	8119
% awarded Core Certificate	62.6	70.7	74.5	77.5	81.6

(Source: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=25>. Accessed online 2nd February 2013)

Table 2.6: Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma Awards 2008 to 2012

Advanced Level	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Candidates completing	1654	2936	5380	8318	9978
Candidates awarded Advanced Diploma	1186	2341	4360	6948	8259
% awarded Advanced Diploma	71.7	79.7	81.0	83.5	82.7
Candidates awarded the Core Certificate	1306	2505	4679	7464	8747
% achieving Core Certificate	79.0	85.3	87.0	89.7	87.6

Source: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=25>. Accessed online 2nd February 2013]

An external review of the WBQ by the Centre for Developing and Evaluating Lifelong Learning (CDELL) in the School of Education at Nottingham University, found that the introduction of the WBQ had begun to broaden and add value to students' learning experiences (Greatbatch et al., 2006: 41). Such experiences were said to improve the students' self-confidence and make them better learners, and more literate. The WBQ also improved students' social skills and their ability to work both independently and with others. It was also said to be good for developing the students' research skills and for empowering the students. (Greatbatch et al., 2006: 162/63). The Nuffield Review (2009) recommended that '*England should learn from the Welsh attempts to incorporate in its 'Learning Pathways' a broader and more flexible vision of progression.*' (2009: 11). The Review supported the continued development of the Welsh Baccalaureate so that it became the organising framework for all 14 - 19 learners in Wales.

Greatbatch, et al. (2006) found that the structure of the personal tutoring support offered to all pupils who study the WBQ varied considerably between schools.

Tutorial support is seen as essential in the schools to make sure the students are doing the work. Most staff seemed to see this a part and parcel of what they would regards as routine good practice at this level, regardless of whether they were involved in the WBQ. However, there are a variety of models and not all are wholly consistent with the WBQ

requirements, these range from one-to-one support in regular slots on the timetable, through the provision of tutorial help on a one-to-one informal basis if requested by students, to regular group tutorials.

(Greatbatch et al., 2006: 125/126)

The authors continued by raising concern about the workloads of personal tutors. They found that the proportion of personal tutors employed by institutions in comparison with the number of pupils they needed to support and work with was insufficient and the sheer volume of paperwork that could be created for persons occupying this role could become overwhelming.

The 1:1 review sessions with students work well when students are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and respond to questions and challenges from form tutors. But these sessions can create a large amount of clerical work and there is a danger that they can become more impersonal and more concerned with form filling than individual review and reflection.

(Greatbatch et al., 2006: 127)

Greatbatch, et al. (2006) also raised concern about the recognition of the qualification by universities and employers outside Wales:

There has been a very mixed reaction from universities. Staff stress that it is important to make people aware of the WBQ and until it is recognised in that way, it will not have the desired impact. Whilst some Welsh universities have responded positively to the WBQ, there are concerns about universities in England accepting the WBQ as a valid qualification not just being aware of it. Although there are signs that the WBQ is being recognised by some employers, especially inside Wales, many do not appear to be aware of it at all...most employers have little, or no, awareness or understanding of the WBQ.

(Greatbatch et al., 2006: 129)

Whilst an increasing number of higher education institutions are beginning to recognise the qualification, those students who had been looking around

universities, reported that there was a mixed reaction in some universities; in fact some of their peers had decided to drop the WBQ in order to concentrate on getting the AS/A2 grades they needed to get into university. However, more recent research (Taylor, Rees and Davies, 2013) found that:

there is strong evidence to suggest that the WBQ is enormously valuable in helping students to enter higher education. This benefit would appear to be largely due to the weighting given to the Core component of the WBQ as the equivalent of an additional A-level qualification (at grade A) for (some) university admissions.

(Taylor et al., 2013: iii)

Thus, the possibility to gain extra UCAS points by completing a range of vocational and academic work associated with the Baccalaureate could provide more access routes from which to enter university. However, this advantage may be limited as Taylor et al. (2013) also found that:

students with the WBQ Core find they are less likely to achieve a 'good' degree result than equivalent students without the WBQ Core, once they are at university.

(Taylor et al., 2013: iii)

Disappointingly, and this is acknowledged in the Taylor, et al. research (2013: 10), the study focused on gathering views from 25 pupils in sixth forms, due to time constraints. This is a key limitation of this work since a large proportion of young people who go to universities attend FE colleges and a large proportion of students taking the WBQ attend FE colleges (Taylor et al., 2013: 10). Also, this research found 77 per cent of girls who hoped to study in sixth form wanted to continue into higher education, whereas only 40 per cent of girls who hoped to study in a further education college wanted to continue to higher education. Similarly, 60 per cent of

boys who hoped to study in sixth form wanted to continue to higher education and only 33 per cent of boys who hoped to study in a further education college wanted to study in higher education.

A recent review of qualifications (DfES Wales, 2012) for 14-19 year olds in Wales found strong support for the Welsh Baccalaureate. It was thought that the broad range of skills and experience that employers, universities and others seek were covered in the Baccalaureate. Also, the combination of vocational and academic qualifications in the programme made the curriculum more appealing and accessible to pupils. Various recommendations were made in the review to the Welsh Government, the following recommendations are pertinent to the discussions and findings in this study:

- *Introduce grading of the Welsh Baccalaureate at Advanced level for teaching from September 2013 and consider grading at other levels;*
- *At 14 to 16, all learners should follow the same Welsh Baccalaureate programme of learning, but attainment may be at Level 1 (National Foundation) or Level 2 (National);*
- *Essential Skills should not feature in the 14-16 curriculum, but be replaced with a new English Language and Numeracy GCSE;*
- *A longer 'project' should replace the individual investigation.*

(DfES WALES, 2012: 9, 13)

Also in the review, a new structure for the Foundation Baccalaureate was proposed and table 2.7 overleaf summarises the main recommendations:

Table 2.7: Revised Welsh Baccalaureate: Indicative Outline of Attainment Outcomes
(SOURCE: DFES WALES 2012, p.34)

	National Foundation	National
Essential external qualifications	GCSE English Language or Welsh First Language grade A*–G GCSE Numeracy grade A*–G	GCSE English Language or Welsh First Language grade A*–C GCSE Numeracy grade A*–C
Supporting external qualifications	Three further GCSEs grade A*–G or Two further GCSEs grade A*–G plus Levels 1 or 2 IVET or One further GCSE grade A*–G plus Levels 1 or 2 IVET ³ s equivalent to two GCSEs	Three further GCSEs grade A*–C or Two further GCSEs grade A*–C plus Level 2 IVET or One further GCSE grade A*–C plus Level 2 IVETs equivalent to two GCSEs
Welsh Baccalaureate Core	Project Digital literacy Wales, Europe and the World any two elements from: Community participation Work-related learning Team enterprise Foreign language	Project Digital literacy Wales, Europe and the World any three elements from: Community participation Work-related learning Team enterprise Foreign language

I do think that the core programme of the current WBQ considers the holistic development of a pupil. It seeks to develop pupils' key skills (essential skills), increase awareness of the local community (community participation) and encourage pupils to consider thinking about future occupational choices (work related education). The suggestion to replace the 'essential skills' element with a new English and Numeracy GCSE will allow pupils more time to focus on the latterly mentioned units. Pupils will have the opportunity to 'work' with a range of professionals in their local community, thus widening the aspiration window whilst building and strengthening cultural capital, something which is vital in areas of deprivation. Also, such an approach which emphasises the importance of recognising the child in varied contexts and collaborating with the child, family and community demonstrates a deepened understanding of socio-cultural theory.

(Extract from research diary)

³ Guidance from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training defines two categories of vocational qualifications:

- Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) is general or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life.
- Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) is education and training after initial education and training, or after entry into working life.

Careers and the World of Work Framework (CWoW).

In 2008, a Welsh national non-statutory framework for careers and the world of work was published for 11-19 pupils with the hope that:

Well delivered, CWoW will offer young people the kind of insights that generate both realism and aspiration in terms of their future life....and ensure that young people were ready to take their place in a rapidly changing world of work within the global economy.

(WAG, 2008b: 2)

The framework for CWoW (WAG, 2008b) provides schools with clear learning outcomes that should be achieved by the end of each Key Stage. The framework encourages schools to explore a range of issues associated with the world of work such as gender stereotyping, entrepreneurship, aspirations, employees' rights and employers' responsibilities. The framework also allows for the development of pupils' skills such as communication, time management and setting personal targets. Reference is also made to the PSE Framework and the fact that 'mixing and matching' learning outcomes from both Frameworks is possible and recommended. For example, the Key Stage 2 learning outcomes for personal and social education (PSE) include a requirement for students to consider the range of jobs carried out by people in their community.

A recent report published by Estyn (2012) which evaluated the extent and effectiveness of secondary schools' delivery of the statutory framework for CWoW offered scathing reviews of current practice in schools.

Nearly all schools fail to gather useful achievement data against the overall CWoW framework of learning objectives. They do not assess

pupils' skills or knowledge consistently or systematically in this respect. The amount of lesson time that schools allocate to CWow varies too much.

(Estyn, 2012: 3)

Such comments highlight the range of quality and quantity of careers support offered to pupils in secondary schools and Estyn make several recommendations to the Welsh Government, schools and Learning Networks about key areas that need to be addressed. Even before the CWow was published, Fitz, Taylor and Pugsley (2005) warned that:

career and higher education guidance and advice was differentially provided in schools and called for a more equitable and judicious use of career teaching to facilitate decisions about higher education participation. (Fitz et al., 2005: 15)

If pupils are to achieve the learning outcomes listed for each Key Stage, schools will need to plan specific activities and lessons which are delivered by specialist staff and pupils' progress will need to be effectively monitored and evaluated (Estyn, 2012). In order to allow for such rigour, adequate timetabled activities which are delivered by specialist staff are a necessity and the practice of delivering the majority of careers support through PSHE and Welsh Baccalaureate lessons (Estyn, 2012) should be reviewed.

The dominant model for the organisation and delivery of careers curriculum in schools through PSHE will no longer be viable. In the view of pupils, PSHE is seen as providing little value due to poor resources, poor teaching, and its use as the 'ultimate curriculum gap filler'. Staff who teach it and thus who also teach on the careers programme are often seen as non specialists with little or no interest in the subject. Its role is often associated with 'endless form filling and target setting' which many pupils appear to consider as their most significant experience of the careers curriculum.

(Foskett, Pyke and Maringe, 2004: 75)

Career programmes need to be delivered to pupils from a young age by specialist staff and specific units of work / set lessons on a school timetable should be allocated. Schools should complement this curriculum by organising and maintaining an up-to-date careers library, publicising progression routes to further and higher education and exploring different ways of promoting education post-16 destinations on a regular basis; Donnelly (2012: 250) suggested including such information in pupils' homework diaries. Such an approach of establishing 'careers' as a subject which is taught by a specialist and promoted throughout the school would make the learning process more meaningful for pupils and would ensure the learning objectives laid out in the CWoW framework were fully addressed. Part of this framework, outlines the work experience opportunities that should be offered to pupils.

Work Experience

Learning through work-focused activities is an essential part of CWoW framework. Work-focused experience includes all activities that directly equip learners in their understanding of and competence in the world of work. This includes work experience placements. The first purpose of work-focused experience is to enhance an individual learner's future employability and competence in the world of work. In simple terms, employability is what young people will need in order to thrive in their future working lives - a mixture of skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding that will need to be maintained and refreshed throughout life.

Work-focused experiences benefit young people by helping them to:

- understand the world of work and the changing demands of working life;
- clarify their personal goals, raise their aspirations and set ambitious targets for themselves;
- think through their learning options and career choices; and
- develop the employability skills that employers require.

There is no statutory requirement to provide work experience placements for every learner. Work experience is, however, a specific mandatory requirement of the WBQ core studies. All learners are required to work with an employer, typically on a work experience placement. The core of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification requires all learners at foundation, intermediate and advanced level to undertake 30 hours of community participation. Adams, et al. (2008) provided a comprehensive review of work experience opportunities offered to pupils in schools across Britain and the world. They outlined advantages for pupils, schools and employers, which included the promotion of personal responsibility, catalyst for school-employer partnerships and the acknowledgement that pupils are moving to another point in their lives. One of the weaknesses in the organisation of work experience was related to the generic introduction it offered to pupils in the workplace and it was felt that the placements should be more ambitious, and more closely aligned to pupils' study areas and career goals (Adams et al., 2008: 61). Other research studies have highlighted other concerns about the structure and

organisation of work experience; for example, Francis, et al. (2005) demonstrated that, in spite of the guidelines, the distribution of work experience placements among the student population exhibited patterns of gender inequality. Hatcher and Gallais (2008) also found this inequality, especially in schools with low SES composition, they also found that work experience choices were limited in some fields because of health and safety reasons.

Careers Wales Mark

The Careers Wales Mark was developed following the introduction of a CWoW framework as part of the Revised Curriculum (WAG, 2008b). The award is reviewed every three years and at present 86 secondary schools/colleges have been awarded the Mark (in 2009, there were 223 secondary schools in Wales). The Careers Wales Mark accredits learning settings that have demonstrated they have active procedures in place to ensure a continuous improvement in outcomes for learners. Working towards the Mark will require schools to continually audit and self-evaluate their CWoW work at Key Stages Three and Four to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for further developments. Developed to align with the CWW framework, the Careers Wales Mark, has been designed to meet the Welsh Government's statutory entitlement for careers and the world of work for 11 to 19-year-olds in Wales and to contribute to the Learning Core of 14-19 Learning Pathways.

Having provided a brief overview of policy thrusts and development for 14-19 Pathways in Wales to set the scene and backdrop to the study, the following sections will consider the ideas about pupil 'support' and its modes.

4. The Support Context

A huge number of initiatives have been set up all over the world to provide support for children and young people whilst studying in school. A variety of terms and vocabularies have been deployed to describe this support, the main 'job' roles being described as mentors, tutors or coaches. These terms are often prefixed with an adjective or noun, for example: pastoral, peer, academic, emotional, social, physical and learning. A working definition of each of the three main roles, mentoring, tutoring and coaching, are offered in Chapter Three. The following section describes a number of initiatives that have been set up around the world, and then considers the development of the learning Coach role in Wales and the development of the personal tutor as part of the WBQ.

The International Context

The first recognised mentoring programme that can be traced back in modern history is the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization which dates back to 1904. A young New York City court clerk named Ernest Coulter saw an increasing number of boys coming through his courtroom. He recognized that caring adults could help many of these boys stay out of trouble, and he set out to find volunteers. The organisation now works across America and in 12 other countries across the world. It matches adult volunteers who will work on a one-to-one basis with children aged

6 to 18. It seeks to support children who are facing particular difficulties in their lives, such as those living in single parent homes, growing up in poverty or living without a parent as they have been imprisoned. This notion of mentoring through encouraging support and guidance from adults is a critical part of the process that allows youths to grow into responsible adults (Tierney and Grossman, 2000: 2). Although this mentoring programme does not aim to raise educational attainment, it does seek to promote educational success and high aspirations through providing children with role models that will support them as they grow.

An upsurge of interest in mentoring in Canada also occurred during the 1990s, according to the Peer Resources Network (Carr, 2001). The Peer Resources Network is a Web-based organization that provides information on mentoring and tutoring and has the most extensive mentoring database in North America. The database lists 7,500 peer and mentor programmes around the world, with around 5,200 programmes and individuals in Canada, most of them managed by educational or non-profit organisations. One scheme which has had particular successes over the past decade is *Pathways to Education*.

The *Pathways to Education Program* was created by Toronto's Regent Park community in 2001 to support young people from low income backgrounds. Such is the success of the scheme that it is now being delivered in 10 other Canadian communities. A recent external study highlighted some of the schemes success stories:

- High school graduation rates among participants in the program have more than doubled;
- High school dropout rates have declined by over 70%;
- The rate of students going on to college or university has increased by 300%.

Pathways to Education complements the school system by offering after-school tutoring, social skill groups, a school staff advocate and financial assistance to address the barriers that can stand in the way of education. Each student benefits from a personal relationship with their student parent support worker – part counsellor, advocate, confidante, social worker, and mediator – who motivates, monitors academic progress, guides students and their families, and holds students accountable to the contract they signed in order to participate in the programme.

Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a longitudinal programme designed to motivate and prepare underachieving students from linguistic and ethnic minority groups to perform well in high school and seek a college education. It began in San Diego in 1980 and is now followed in over 300 schools across California. Low achieving students are placed in college preparatory classes with high achieving students and participate daily in an AVID elective class that emphasizes writing, inquiry, and collaboration. Local college students act as tutors and AVID students collaborate in study teams. Case studies of 248 AVID students (Mehan et al., 1996) found that 48 per cent of the AVID students who remained in the programme for at least three years enrolled in four-year colleges, 40 per cent

enrolled in two-year or junior colleges. The AVID four-year college enrolment rate was higher than the local and national rates.

Chiapa, Garrido and Prina (2010) focused on the key concepts introduced by Ray (2006) and the notion of extending the '*aspiration window*' when they analysed the successes of a social programme in Mexico. They demonstrated how *PROGRESO*, a project in Mexico, encouraged parents of families living in socially deprived areas to meet educated medical professionals over a period of time with a view to increasing the educational aspirations they set for their children. The project was able to report a '15% increase in the proportion of parents who aspire for their children to finish college' (Chiapa, Garrido and Prina, 2010: 1).

The National UK Context

In Britain, the origins of mentoring can be traced back to teacher training courses whereby students training to become teachers are 'mentored' by staff in associate schools (Wilkin, 1992; Furlong and Maynard, 1995; Fletcher, 2000; Miller, 2002). This type of mentoring falls outside the scope of this literature review, but the author acknowledges the importance of this professional to professional support as it allows recognition of a point in time when mentoring first became established as a recognised practice in schools in the UK.

Learning mentors first appeared in schools in England in 1999 as a part of a new government initiative called *Excellence in Cities* (EiC), aimed to raise standards and improve inclusion in inner city schools. The role of the learning mentor varied

between schools. However, the government set out four objectives for the learning mentor programme as a whole. These were to:

- *ensure, through the recruitment of a network of professionally trained learning mentors, that every pupil of secondary school age in eligible schools in the EiC areas will have access to a new resource focused on removing barriers to the pupil's individual learning both in school and outside;*
- *target help on those who need it most in deprived areas, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantage;*
- *raise standards and reduce truancy and exclusion in the target areas, and to help local education authorities and schools make accelerated progress in achieving their attainment, truancy, exclusions and other relevant targets; and*
- *provide a complementary service to existing teachers and pastoral staff in school, and others providing services to such children and their families outside school, such as social and youth services, the Education Welfare Service, the Probation and Careers Services, and business, community and voluntary workers.*

(DFEE, 1999: para. a1)

This was an early example of mentoring on a wider, national scale, and by 2001 there were approximately 2400 Learning Mentors within England. Since this time, there have been a number of mass mentoring projects that have sought to support a huge number of pupils:

The National Mentoring Pilot Project (NMPP), was funded by the DfES and ran between 1999 and 2004. It was established to utilise the experiences of undergraduates in providing practical help and support to pupils aged 13–19 from socially deprived areas in England. These pupils had the potential to be effective learners but for a variety of reasons were not realising their potential. The mentors, who were trained and remunerated, met with pupils on a one-to-one basis to offer academic support and promote the university-school link. An evaluation found that

pupils who had been mentored for one year achieved higher GCSE grades in English, Mathematics and Science than broadly comparable pupils who had not been mentored (Huddleston et al., 2005)

AimHigher in England (2003-2011) was a national scheme designed to improve pupils' attainment and awareness of the possibilities of, and opportunities offered by progression to higher education. A key component of the initiative involved one-to-one mentoring by university students for pupils aged 13–19. Other opportunities included visits to university campuses, residential summer schools, master-classes and open days. The scheme was formally closed in July 2011, although this scheme adopted a 'deficit model' and aimed to change the students to make them fit into the existing provision (Gorard et al., 2006), Baxter, Hatt and Tate (2007) found that pupils positively regarded participation in *AimHigher* as it offered them a means of becoming better informed about HE and of exploring the extent to which this option can further their own career plans (Baxter et al., 2007: 267). Moore and Dunworth (2011) also reviewed the impact of the activities on:

- progression in education and, in particular, into higher education;
- attainment, particularly in terms of GCSE results;
- aspirations for higher education

and found that there was an improvement in GCSE achievement, retention and progression beyond the age of 16 amongst students from disadvantaged areas; the *AimHigher* programme seemed to play a key role in bringing this about.

The *First Campus* Mentoring Project in Wales is a HEFCW-funded project promoting a partnership between universities, further education colleges and schools in south-east Wales. During its early stages of development a mentoring project was established within the Learning and Development Unit (LDU). The LDU team trained undergraduates from UWIC⁴, Newport University, Glamorgan University and Cardiff University to work with learners in a large number of secondary schools across the First Campus area to raise their aspirations and improve their educational performance. At present, mentoring initiatives are offered in Cardiff, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil, localities and schools characterized by indicators of deprivation.

Learning Coach

The role of learning coach, as described in *The Learning Pathways* guidelines (WAG 2002a, 2004b, 2006b), became necessary because the 14-19 agenda required that pupils could and should be offered a number of option choices in their studies. In order to help pupils understand all the choices available to them and make the right decisions, they need to be guided through the option process to ensure that they achieve their short and long term goals as they progress through the pathway. Thus a coach should help them navigate potential routes:

*The learning coach should provide **impartial and practical advice and guidance** on pathways which best meet both the individual learner's needs and reflect the learning styles which suit them best.*
(WAG, 2004b: 19)

⁴ University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, (UWIC) is a university situated in Cardiff. In 2011 it changed its name to Cardiff Metropolitan University.

It is the role of the learning coach, in collaboration with others involved in the young person's learning, to support the individual learner as they make their decisions and help them review their progress on a regular basis, to ensure they maximize their learning potential.

*The Learning Coach should work with individual learners on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, to **establish goals** and to **develop a Learning Pathway** for each learner that will include formal, non-formal and informal opportunities phased over time. It will take into account experiences outside the learning setting, and which help in realising individual ambitions.*

(WAG, 2004b: 19)

The timescale that was set out for developing the role of learning coach was very specific. The role was initially introduced in specific areas in Wales from September 2004 as part of a pilot programme; good practice was then considered and gathered and additional guidance was offered to educational establishments in the summer 2005 so that the role could be expanded across Wales. Formal training was then offered to those professionals who wanted to work as learning coaches to help them become more effective when supporting pupils.

*Learning coaches will need a wide range of skills and knowledge and will put the individual's learning needs at the heart of all their work. The effectiveness of learning coach support relies on the integrity of prospective learning coaches from all professional backgrounds to act **impartially** in the interests of the learner, including providing full access to information and guidance about the options menu across all settings.*

(WAG 2006b p.40)

In 2006, an all-Wales national training programme for learning coaches was launched. The Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh European Funding Office allocated funding to the training programme and awarded the training

contract to the *First Campus* partnership of higher education institutions. The accredited programme covered five core 10 credit modules set at level 4 within the CQFW. Fifteen tutors led 140 training workshops involving a total of 299 coaches over a 19 month period. By the end of the first year a total of 210 coaches completed all of the core training, with 89 gaining accredited status. Saunders' (WAG, 2008a) study of the first cohort of learning coaches introduced into Wales revealed their diverse backgrounds which ranged from teaching, youth-work, careers guidance, classroom support to company training. Of this cohort:

- 70% were female;
- the majority were qualified to level 4⁵ and above (with less than five per cent qualified at level two or below);
- 26% were from teaching professions (i.e. teacher, lecturer);
- 26% were linked with teaching support (i.e. learning support assistant, special needs assistant, behaviour support assistant, cover supervisor, pupil support worker);
- the age range was varied:

Table 2.8: Age profile of Learning Coaches across Wales

Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
%	10.3	24.2	29.0	18.4	0.6

(SOURCE:WAG 2008a: 110-112)

According to Saunders (WAG 2008a), the professional development of learning coaches is key to the effectiveness of their role. They need to be people with significant knowledge of young people and their learning; they must be aware of all the learning opportunities available within their local area, not just in the learning

⁵ Level 4/5: First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HNC, HND, Qualified Teacher status, Qualified Medical Doctor, Qualified Dentist, Qualified Nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor.

setting in which they are employed. They will also be required to monitor, record and manage the information resulting from work with individual learners.

Personal tutor

Whilst following the WBQ, students are supported and guided by a personal tutor. This is at both individual and group level – appropriate to their needs. This individual personal support for learners on a one-to-one basis is a key element of the WBQ.

In order to become successful learners, all candidates need to be supported throughout their courses of study. Tutoring and mentoring support and guidance is seen as a key element in the success of candidates following the Foundation Diploma.

*Every candidate following the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification must be allocated a **personal tutor**. How this is organised within a centre depends on internal arrangements and requirements. However, the quality of the advice and guidance given to candidates will be the key to the success of each candidate's individual programme and the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification as a whole.*

(WJEC, 2010: 35)

A recent review of the personal tutoring system by Estyn (2008) concluded that:

there is considerable variation in the way schools organise the personal tutorial system at key stage 4. For example, in one school, learners are divided into manageable groups of between 12 and 16 and their tutor sees them every day. This is an effective arrangement and ensures that learners get very good support for their work. By contrast, another school has one tutor for a group of 30 learners and this arrangement does not allow the tutor to provide the support that is needed.

(Estyn, 2008: 16)

Both the work of the learning coach and personal tutor focus on the process of empowering the pupil through helping them learn how to develop problem-solving

skills and set targets for themselves. These support processes are evident in Egan's person-centred theory where guidance is based upon mutual respect:

Helpers are effective to the degree that their clients, through client-helper interactions, are in a better position to manage their problem situations and/or develop the unused resources and opportunities of their lives more effectively.

(Egan, 1990: 5)

5. Institutional and Geographical Context

School Setting

The empirical research for this study was undertaken in one secondary school.

Green Valley School is a mixed 11-16 school maintained by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and situated in the South Wales Valleys, in the Berllan county. The county has a population of around 91,000. Much of the southern part of the county borough is now fairly urbanised. However, the north of the county borough, where Green Valley School is situated is greener and retains extensive areas of countryside. The school sits at one of the lowest points of the valley and is surrounded by woodlands, the journey north following the river will take you to much higher ground, ground that is often covered in snow during the winter months, thus transforming the area into a Welsh Narnia.

Pupils in the school come from the full range of economic and social backgrounds, but as it is in an area of high social deprivation a significant number of pupils are living in Communities First areas and are experiencing social and financial disadvantage. The school did have a sixth form until 1982, but when it became a

comprehensive school, post-16 education was transferred to the local further education college, some four miles away. At present, if pupils want to continue their education, there are five 11-18 schools (one Welsh medium) in the county and further education provision is also provided across two college campuses. These schools and colleges range between 6 and 15 miles away from Mynydd Mawr (the biggest catchment area for Green Valley School), a 15 minute commute by car or a 90 minute commute on two buses. Table 2.9 below depicts at a glance the commute time and distances involved:

Table 2.9: Distance travelled and commute time from Mynydd Mawr to local sixth forms and further education colleges

School	Commute Time	Distance travelled
School 1	35 mins	6 miles
School 2	1hr	10.3 miles
School 3	1 hr 20 mins	11.6 miles
School 4	1 hr 10 mins (infrequent times)	11.9 miles
College 1	35 mins	7.2 miles
College 2	1 hr 30 mins	15 miles

This exercise, of using a local bus timetable to calculate the bus times, journey durations and route distances between Green Valley School and the local sixth forms and further education colleges, reminded me about the constraints of living in more rural areas: It would probably take somebody much less time to travel a similar distance across a bus network that operates in a city, but the reality of living in rural areas where the terrain fluctuates so greatly means there is an over-reliance on personal or/and public transport and the dichotomy is created when one realises that public transport may not be so convenient. The statement on the county website about travel subsidies for post-16 education reads:

Free transport will also be provided for post-16 pupils / students if they live more than 2 miles from their college campus or catchment school. Provision will either be in the form of a Travel Grant (currently £48.00 per term) or a season ticket.

(no source data is provided to protect school and county anonymity)

A quick calculation with the bus company who operate the main line in this area revealed that a multiple use ticket which lasts four weeks will cost £58.90; the cost for travel expenses every term actually totals £184.50. The use of the word 'free' at the beginning of the above statement is therefore very misleading. The only pupils who will get all their travel expenses covered are those pupils who are in receipt of free school meals. The denominational school within the county and the colleges have however, begun to ease transport arrangements for their pupils: the school provides a private bus in the morning and afternoon for all sixth form students and this is financed through the travel grant scheme outlined above. The college offers a discounted bus ticket for all its students, pupils can purchase a £2 ticket for a return trip to their college from anywhere within the county. However, recent conversations with pupils about this service revealed that the one bus that runs up and down the Berllan Valley is often overcrowded. Research has shown (Spielhofer, Golden and Evans, 2011) that transport and distances between providers can impact on a young person's post-16 study choice.

There are 935 pupils on roll at Green Valley and the school's intake covers the whole ability range although a high proportion of pupils are of lower ability. Sixty pupils (6.4%) have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 189 have been identified as needing some support. 215 pupils (22.9%) are entitled to

free school meals (FSM), which is above the Welsh national average of 17.4 per cent. Whilst the FSM measurement is by no means a perfect one, it is the most reliable indicator we have of socio-economic disadvantage in the school population. These data are now an established proxy for low socio economic status (Gorard 2000; Estyn 2009; Estyn 2011; Egan 2010) and a growing body of research is beginning to address and identify the link between socio-economic background and academic achievement (Egan 2010; Hansen and Vignoles 2005; Cassen and Kingdon 2007; Estyn 2009; Estyn 2011). For example, Egan reported that FSM pupils typically share the following characteristics:

- *Their absence and exclusion rates are much higher;*
- *They are less inclined to 'like school a lot';*
- *They are less likely to participate in post-16 and post-19 education and training and particularly to proceed into higher education;*
- *They are more likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training);*
- *They are much more likely to suffer long-term negative effects from having low educational qualifications and skills and, therefore, to become disadvantaged adults who will repeat this cycle of deprivation for their children.*

(Egan, 2010: 73)

Cassen and Kingdon (2007) found evidence in their research that disadvantage – as measured by free school meal eligibility – was an important risk factor for persistence in low achievement and for sliding into low achievement over time (2007: 14).

Examination results at Green Valley School are continuing to improve steadily year on year. At Key Stage Three (KS3), 50 per cent of pupils reached Level five in all three core subjects combined in 2010. At Key Stage Four, the percentage of pupils who gained five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) A-C

grades (Level 2 threshold) was 53 per cent in 2010. Figures 2.3 to 2.5 summarise key examination results at Key Stage Four for the past four years and compare results with local and Welsh averages.

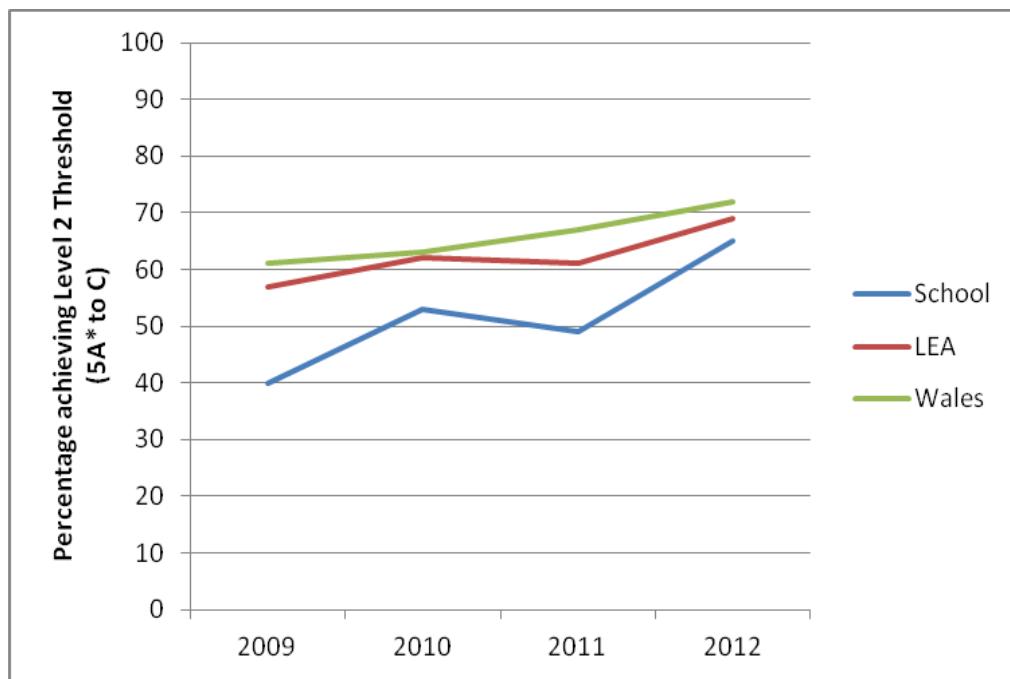


Figure 2.3: Key Stage Four Results at Green Valley School 2009-2011 (%).
Source for LEA and Wales data: STATSWales.

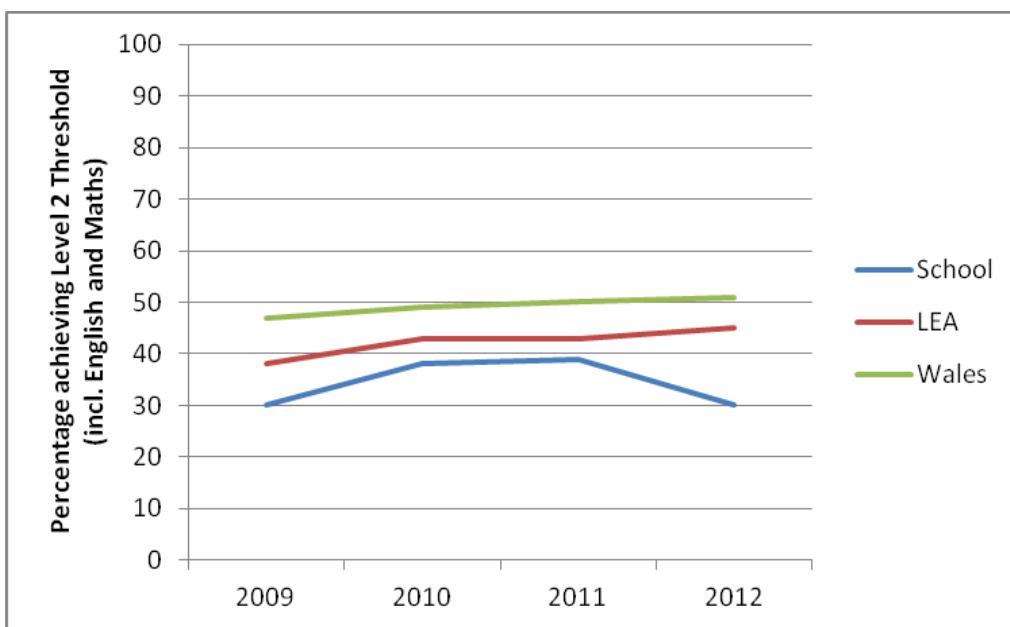


Figure 2.4: Level 2 Threshold (incl. English and Maths) at Green Valley School 2009-2011 (%)
Source for LEA and Wales data: STATSWales.

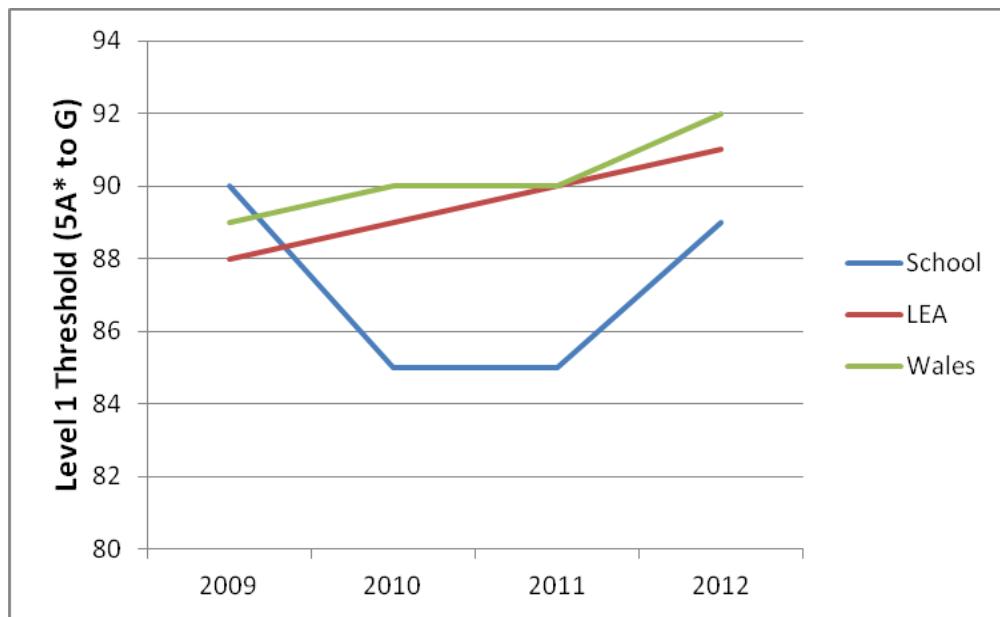


Figure 2.5: Level 1 Threshold Results at Green Valley School 2009 – 2012 (%)

Source for LEA and Wales data: *STATSWales*.

Table 2.10: Further breakdown (FSM/ Gender) of Key Stage 4 results at Green Valley School in 2012.

	FSM	Non-FSM	Male	Female
Level 2 Threshold (5 A* to C)	33%	70%	51%	75%
Level 1 Threshold (5 A* to G)	93%	89%	86%	93%

Table 2.10 clearly reveals that there is a significant gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils, particularly with reference to Level 2 results. If we consider these findings in respect of the work of Rees et al. (1996) then these results are worrying. Rees et al. (1996) have shown that there is an increasing official emphasis upon the attainment of recognised qualifications and those who do not fulfil such criteria are likely to become especially marginalized (1996: 220)

Estyn inspected the school in November 2009 and wrote that:

Green Valley is a good school with outstanding features in three out of seven key questions. All pupils are valued and nurtured. High levels of mutual respect permeate the whole school. The clear vision for the school, which focuses on high quality provision, enables pupils to achieve

their potential...Leaders and managers take very good account of the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government. In addition to very good progress in the development of 14-19 learning pathways and the inclusive ethos in the school.

(no source data is provided to protect anonymity of the school)

More recently, all secondary schools in Wales have been placed in a banding group of between one and five. These bands are based on an assessment of a school's performance in the academic year 2011-12, with Band 1 being the highest and Band 5 the lowest. The banding works by assessing school performance within four broad categories to produce an overall score:

- The percentage of pupils achieving five A* to Cs at GCSE including English or Welsh and mathematics;
- The best eight GCSEs of pupils;
- The performance of pupils at GCSE in English or Welsh and mathematics;
- Attendance.

Within each category, a school's score is modified to take into account the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM. Most of the categories also take into account a school's progress over time, to reward schools that are making improvements in performance. Within the four broad categories, schools are scored on 12 separate measures in total. In 2011 Green Valley School, along with every school (except the Welsh medium secondary school) in the same county was placed in Band Four. In 2012 two schools dropped to band five, four schools were placed in band four (this included Green Valley School) and one school moved up to band one.

Similar to the headteacher commentaries that were requested in the famous Newsom Report (1963), I asked the headteacher at Green Valley School to provide some information about the school and local area. His comments clearly show the social, cultural and financial challenges faced by the whole neighbourhood and how these effects are felt across family generations. His comments resonate with many of the headteacher commentaries in the now 50 year old Newsom Report. There is a clear awareness also of the importance that working class families place on locality and familiarity (Gewitz, Ball and Bowe, 1995; Reay and Ball, 1998) and how this could inhibit aspirations.

The term “deprived area” covers a multitude of perceptions based on relativity and definition. Green Valley School serves an area where over 25 per cent of pupils are entitled to FSM, but where a further significant percentage are from homes where incomes are relatively low. There is no significant professional parental presence in the catchment area.

*The main challenge is the lack of aspiration amongst a significant section of the community. This is often based on a poor educational experience on the part of the parents (poor being defined as either academically unsuccessful and/or disengaged from a process that appeared irrelevant). This is **not** the generation of parents who could have achieved but never had the chance due to economic pressure and a low school leaving age – this generation of parents is post-ROSLA and post-welfare state they had a chance! The problem of low expectation from education is compounded by the poor state of the economy in the area. The bulk of the jobs, where they can be found, are relatively low paid. The number of high-skilled, well-paid jobs is at a premium. This creates an issue of motivation i.e. what's the point of qualifications . . . the jobs aren't there?*

A further problem is created by the situation post-16. Green Valley School is an 11-16 school where pupils must leave (and travel further) for post-16 education. There is no free transport, hence education suddenly bears a cost to the poorest families. For any with the vision and ambition for higher education, there is the perception (and possibly the reality) that a university education is too expensive, both in terms of tuition and living costs. Consequently, the post-16 situation does not encourage our youngsters, it hampers them!

Another problem in the South Wales valleys is the mutually supportive comfort zone that acts as an aspirational barrier. Most of our young people are happy in an environment that can still boast the influence of extended family kinship. For the boys (and indeed some girls) there is the influence of the rugby tradition

which provides both a sporting and social outlet. Many would ask themselves “why leave?” – the home life for many is supportive and comfortable. Consequently, this makes motivating our young people with the vision of a university life or life in a good job beyond their immediate surroundings.

The reality is that every school has challenges and whilst ours can be frustrating, success when it comes brings a huge sense of achievement for staff and pupils. Our pupils are generally receptive to our advice and guidance and regard teachers and support staff as a supportive element in their lives, certainly while they’re in school. The staff are remarkably dedicated and committed to enabling our students to make progress and offer a vision beyond the immediate experiences of the pupils. It must also be noted that many parents do want the best educationally for their children, are prepared to support them to the nth degree and support us in our role as educational facilitators – there is always a danger of painting too black a picture, when in reality the picture is all shades of grey, with significant pockets of blue.

For all the frustrations and challenges we face, working in with the Green Valley School community (i.e. the pupils, staff, parents, governors and wider community) is a privilege and a pleasure.

(Green Valley School, headteacher’s Commentary. December 2012)

Catchment Areas for Green Valley School

The pupils who attend Green Valley School live in 14 separate residential areas that lie within a catchment radius area of 8 miles. Pupils were asked in the first survey questionnaire, which area they lived in, the analyses of their answers was as follows:

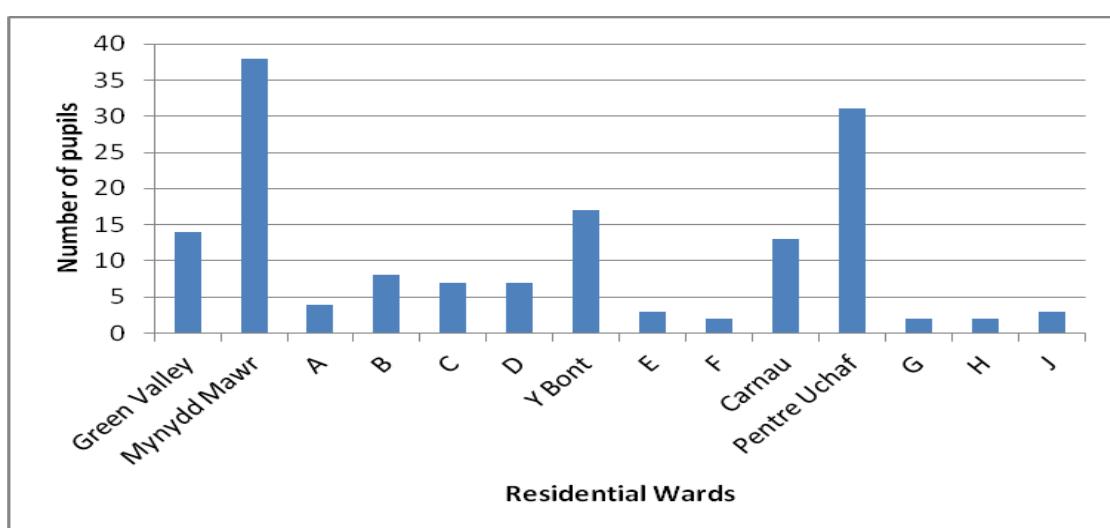


Figure 2.6: Distribution of the school’s pupil population by Ward (the identity of Wards have been protected through the use of pseudonyms and individual letters for those areas where a minimum number of pupils reside)

As the literature review will argue, consideration of a person's family, school, local and wider community where they grow up is considered integral to the understanding of how aspirations are formulated and affected. Therefore, the following section provides brief cameo descriptions of the socio-economic and industrial features of the school catchment areas from where the pupils originate.

Green Valley

The school itself is situated in the small town I have called Green Valley which has a population of 6,826 (Census 2001). In the 2001 Census, 11.4 per cent of residents were qualified to Level 4/5⁶, which compares with 17.4 per cent across Wales. Green Valley has a lower proportion of owner occupied households at 64.6 per cent than for example Berllan 68.3 per cent and Wales as a whole which has 71.3 per cent.

Green Valley was a thriving industrial centre in the 19th century, particularly for iron production. The principal ironworks were built by the British Iron Company in 1825; it passed to the New British Iron Company in 1843 and to the Ebbw Vale Company in 1852 but closed in 1889 (GFWI, 1994). Due to the influx of families into the area seeking work, Green Valley School was opened in 1914.

⁶ Level 4/5: First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HNC, HND, Qualified Teacher status, Qualified Medical Doctor, Qualified Dentist, Qualified Nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor.

Mynydd Mawr

Mynydd Mawr is a small town and Welsh heritage site set high up on a hillside with a population of 5763 people. Mynydd Mawr grew around an ironworks opened in 1788, part of which is now a museum. The steel-making and coal mining industries followed, boosting the town's population to over 20,000 at one time, but since the ironworks closed in 1900 and the coal mine in 1980, the population has declined dramatically (GFWI, 1994). Mynydd Mawr has a lower proportion of owner occupied households at 63.7 per cent than Berllan 68.3 per cent and Wales as a whole 71.3 per cent. Only 10.1 per cent of residents are qualified to Level 4/5, compared with 13.6 per cent across Berllan and 17.4 per cent across Wales. Gorard, Lewis and Smith (2004, p142) suggested that these low scores were interlinked and that these relationships identified an underlying pattern of cause, termed variously '*deprivation*', '*exclusion*' and '*disengagement*' with the latest of these being the '*poverty of aspiration*' discourse (Roberts and Atherton, 2011).

Y Bont

Y Bont has a population of 1527 people. It has the highest proportion of owner occupied households in Berllan at 80.3 per cent. However, still only a low percentage of residents (10.1 per cent) are qualified to Level 4/5.

Pentre Uchaf

Pentre Uchaf is a small village which has a population of 3684 people and has been awarded Communities First status. It has the lowest proportion of owner occupied households in Berllan at 46.3 per cent, in fact, 42.7 per cent of properties are

rented from the local authority. Similarly gloomy is the statistic that only 7.9 per cent of residents are qualified to Level 4/5. The English medium secondary school closed in 2005 and all pupils were transferred to two other schools in the area, one of them Green Valley School.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a contextual overview of the background to the professional doctorate in which I set out to investigate and explain the variety of influences that could affect pupils' educational and occupational aspirations. This chapter has described the educational and socio-economic backdrop at macro, micro and meso level for this study. My research journey has reminded me of the importance of adopting longitudinal multidisciplinary approaches when planning educational interventions and these interventions must begin at a young age.

The policy review has highlighted several key themes, such as the level of poverty in Wales and the impact of poverty on aspirations, self-esteem and how it can limit horizons and the need to 'stay close'. I have come to realise and appreciate the importance of creating and shaping a curriculum which is flexible and considers the holistic development of a pupil within the society they live. There is a great need, however, for this curriculum to shape and challenge aspirations from a young age. For example, when considering the early years' curriculum for young children in Australia, Arthur, et al. (2003) wrote:

Sociocultural perspectives suggest that children learn best when a curriculum is connected to their everyday lives and interests. Effective programs are flexible and responsive to children's ideas...and enable children to engage in processes of exploration, investigation, problem-solving, and discovery in collaboration with others.

(Arthur et al., 2003: 10)

The next chapter will provide a thematic literature review and in doing so will consider how the policy context has been and could be shaped by Welsh, national and international academic research.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

This chapter explores and reviews recent and current literature relating to the aims of the research and research questions (Hart, 2003). Briefly, those questions framing the study at the outset were:

- How are pupils' aspirations formed?
- To what extent does gender affect pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?
- How do individual pupil's educational and occupational aspirations change over time?
- What are the main roles and responsibilities involved with the post of personal tutor? How could this role be developed to raise pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?

In the opening section, the methods employed to review the literature are outlined.

In the second section, the works of Ray (2002, 2006) and Appadurai (2004) are considered to show the contextual nature of aspirations and to advocate viewing individuals' aspirations as a cultural capacity. The third section considers the developmental nature of aspirations, in that they are influenced by changes and life transitions as one matures. The theory of *Circumscription and Compromise* (Gottfredson 1981, 1996, 2005) provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals develop cognitively and form aspirations introspectively over a period of time. It is the intention that an inter-disciplinary literature review will

reveal important linkages between the formation of aspirations, poverty, and educational outcomes, each of which deserve further consideration as each element can contribute to '*aggregations of inequality*' (Byrne, 1978).

The final section considers the evolution of the role of 'personal tutor' within the school setting and discusses a range of recent literature which has explained and analysed the impact of school initiatives that involve providing one-to-one support for pupils. Of course, considering so many different school based interventions might 'muddy the waters' but it was decided that combining contrasting research perspectives and empirical data would provide a more comprehensive picture and assist in the identification of the important issues. Furthermore, an eclectic literature review will offer suggestions that have not been considered previously and illuminate potential explanatory claims that to date have not been considered in combination.

2. Literature review: Process and Scope

In order to ensure that the literature review focused on the key aims and objectives in this research project and that all the relevant literature was considered, clear parameters were devised for undertaking the search (Machi and McEvoy, 2009).

The literature review was divided into four main parts, these are shown overleaf in table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Structure of literature review

Review	Purpose
Theoretical definition of aspirations	Deeper understanding of individual's aspirations and how these are affected by internal and external factors.
Educational Aspirations	Investigate the relationship between gender and aspirations.
Occupational Aspirations	Consider the work of Gottfredson and her theory of circumscription and compromise.
Mentoring, tutoring and coaching	Explore a wide range of mentoring, tutoring and coaching initiatives that have been implemented to support pupils' pastoral and academic needs.

In order to review each of these areas, three avenues were explored in order to find and review the literature:

Review references, research and theoretical literature distributed during the EdD taught modules

A number of the taught EdD programme modules which I studied addressed directly the research approach intended for this project. For example '*quantitative and qualitative research methods*' and '*social contexts of education*' provided an excellent starting point. Thus, reading lists, seminar notes, handouts and assignments for these short and intense modules were identified for close scrutiny and further focus. I maintained an active index of subjects and authors in readiness for re use during the later thesis stage of the professional doctorate.

Library Catalogue Searches

Access to the electronic academic library catalogue allowed further investigation of themes identified in the previous stage of the literature search and an assessment of relevance to this research. Using *MetaLib*, which is a huge searchable database of electronic journals, made it possible to identify key journals, articles and authors

and build up a comprehensive and historical review of developments within this field. For example, two key phrases in this research project ‘educational aspirations’ and ‘occupational aspirations’ were entered and 84 and 83 abstracts/journal articles which focused on these areas were identified. Each link was followed and this provided an excellent starting point upon which to build up a longitudinal and geographically diverse picture of the research undertaken in these areas. The oldest publication which attempted to empirically test pupils’ aspirations dated back to 1967 (Brookover, Erickson and Joiner, 1967). In this four year study of 377 male pupils in years 8 to 11 from three separate city high schools, Brookover et al. (1967) explored the correlation between educational aspirations and plans with academic achievement and SES. Similar to the findings presented by Gorard, See and Davies (2012) and Cummins et al. (2012), Brookover et al. (1967) found no evidence of a positive relationship between educational aspirations and SES when educational plans were controlled. They concluded that aspirations and expectations were distinct concepts and that college expectations were more likely to be associated with academic performance and socioeconomic status.

Internet searches using key terminology

The internet has become a powerful search mechanism and it was felt that search engines such as *Google* and *Ask* might identify education based projects which had not been found in the steps outlined above. Internet searches enabled me to read about educational and community based projects in Wales and the UK that aimed to raise aspirations, such as *AimHigher* and *First Campus*, both of which focused on

encouraging children from socio-economically deprived areas to proceed to higher education.

3. Aspirations

Quaglia and Cobb (1996) *conceived of aspirations as the:*

Students' ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals.

(Quaglia and Cobb, 1996: 130)

In their work, they traced some of the key historical perspectives of the constructs of aspirations to determine how pupils' aspirations are formed. They began by describing the work of Dembo (1931), who first defined the concept of 'level of aspiration' within the context of a specified controlled task which people were asked to complete. Dembo was able to observe the processes people followed to set themselves goal levels, identify determinant factors associated with fluctuating goals, and link goal-striving behaviour to other behaviours. Although this work contributes to our understanding of the construct of aspirations, the environment was false and findings could not be directly transferred to explain how or why pupils' aspirations vary, change and develop. As this discussion will show, aspirations are not simply individual preferences but '*form parts of wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norms*' (Appadurai 2004: 67). The degree to which they can be successfully enacted depends on people's relative access to social, cultural and economic resources (Sellar, Gale and Parker, 2009). Therefore, consideration of how pupils' educational and occupational

aspirations are formed and interact with their environment, at school, in a community and at home is essential.

The impact of aspirations on education and occupational goals has continued to feature in research (Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Gutman and Akerman, 2008; Strand and Winston, 2008; St. Clair and Benjamin, 2011; Kintrea, St. Clair and Houston 2011; Gorard et al., 2012) and researchers have begun to understand how aspirations are influenced and shaped by culture and society (Appadurai, 2004; Ray 2002; Ray, 2006). This process of reviewing literature was a bold reminder of the importance of considering the wider social aspects, such as home, family backgrounds and the community and localities where one lives. Just as Ray (2002, 2006) and Appadurai (2004) assessed the impact of aspirations on an individual's behaviour, I consider these works provided a suitable construct for my study which set out to understand better the expectations and aspirations of the pupils at Green Valley School and also the role played by the personal tutor, Mrs James in supporting these.

In this study, a consideration of pupils' 'ideal' and 'realistic' aspirations, as conceptualised by Kintrea et al. (2011) was made:

- *Ideal: What the individual would do for a job if there were no real world constraints.*
- *Realistic: What the individual expects to be able to do for a job given the circumstances within which they live.*

(Kintrea et al., 2011: 13)

These authors insist that the difference between ideal and realistic aspirations is an important one. Ideal aspirations can tell us a great deal about the general direction of a young person's ambitions even if they may be, by definition, unrealistic. Realistic aspirations may, in contrast, reflect perceived individual and structural constraints; the two types tend to be highly correlated (Andres et al., 1999). Individuals with high hopes for an ideal world also tend to have high hopes for the real world. Also since this study, like many others (Helwig, 2001; Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Schoon, Martin and Ross, 2007) was influenced and underpinned by human development theories (Ginzberg et al., 1951; Vondracek et al., 1986; Gottfredson 2005, 2006), it is understood that this approach carries with it the assumption of a gradual stabilization of one's attitude as aspirations become more realistic (Falk and Salter, 1978). The ages of the pupils involved in this study ranged from 11 to 16 years and this period corresponds approximately to the tentative and realistic stages defined by Ginzberg et al. (1951) and stage 3 (orientation to social valuation) and stage 4 (orientation to internal, unique self), as described by Gottfredson (1981).

A review of the literature revealed that the terms *idealistic, realistic, aspirations* and *expectations* are used interchangeably. In this study, the findings presented in chapter five, in respect of pupil's imagined futures are discussed using the terms aspirations and expectations. This terminology supports the work of Gorard et al. (2012) whose recent meta analysis considered *The Impact of Attitudes and*

Aspirations on Educational Attainment and Participation. The authors offered useful summaries of these two terms:

This review defines aspirations as what individuals hope will happen and expectations as what individuals think will happen.

(Gorard et al. 2012: 13)

Stifled Dreams

The economist, Ray has explored extensively the link between aspirations and individual economic behaviour and warned that the relationship between aspirations and poverty is a self-perpetuating trap. Ray (2002) argued that aspirations are multidimensional and are socially embedded in cultural norms. Poverty itself leads to a failure of aspirations, as it '*stifles dreams*', or at least the process of '*attaining dreams*' (Ray 2002: 1).

Ray (2002) presented a conceptual framework that posed two critical questions; how are aspirations formed and how do they affect an individual's behaviour? He introduced three helpful concepts as follows:

- aspirations window: the individual's cognitive world and what s/he views as attainable;
- aspirations gap: the standard of living that is aspired to and the standard of living that one already has;
- 'aspiration failure': typically occurs when poor people consider the aspirations gap to be too large and subsequently presume there is no way to achieve their aspirations.

Ray argued that such a scenario is seen in polarised, low socio-economic areas where those individuals and role models who have aspired to and achieved high dreams are not from such areas and such success stories are not experienced within the locality (Ray, 2001: 1-5).

Capacity to Aspire

According to Appadurai, the capacity to aspire (2004: 12), which is based on an economic model, is not evenly distributed in society. All people have aspirations, but the degree to which they can be successfully enacted depends on people's relative access to social, cultural and economic resources. Appadurai explained that people from more affluent societies are more likely to be aware of and familiar with the links between their fundamental aspirations and the available commodities (2004: 11). People from more deprived communities have fewer opportunities to experience relating aspirations to commodities. Moreover, they have fewer opportunities to experience how a choice of a commodity influences their fundamental well-being. This limited capacity to form conjectures and refutations about the future is a hallmark of poverty. In a connected society, for example, it is 'more possible' to achieve aspirations, while in a polarised society, there are no 'linkages' between the rich and the poor, thus rendering it more difficult for poor people to achieve their aspirations. Aspirations are seldom simply 'lacking', but are differently constituted according to the normative contexts in which they are formed and are differently enacted depending on the means available to different groups (Sellar et al., 2009: 3).

Appadurai likens the capacity to aspire as a navigational capacity in that it provides a range of pathways that leads to future success. In order to move in the right direction in life one needs to be equipped with the correct navigational aids to follow the pathways to success. The map landscape metaphor is used by other researchers who have compared pupils' educational experiences as journeys and pathways (Bok, 2010; Ball, Maguire and MacRae, 2000; Watt and Paterson, 2000); the Welsh Government's publications highlighting the new 14-19 learning agenda has the title 'Learning Pathways' (WAG, 2004b, 2006). In order to move along the pathway, pupils need to know what decisions to make, this knowledge will stem from experience and advice (Ball et al., 2000). The notion of an aspirational map, particularly when it relates to education, can be conceived in ways that resonate with Bourdieu's concept of field (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). The social, cultural and economical factors at play in the navigation of the educational 'field' or 'map' can strengthen or render more brittle the navigational capacities of young people and their families (Bok, 2010). For example, if pupils successfully navigate their schooling years, this will strengthen their capacity to aspire to further and higher education, because according to Appadurai (2004), '*the capacity to aspire, like any complex cultural capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture and refutation*' (2004: 69).

If pupils are to develop their capacity to aspire, their families and other people within their local communities must have experience navigating maps to follow the correct pathways. A recent study that demonstrates the power of Appadurai's

theory is found in Strand and Winston's work (2008) which sought to assess the nature and level of pupils' educational aspirations. As well as showing how young people's ethnicity is a key factor associated with their level of educational aspiration, they also suggest a number of mediating factors. High among these is what they term as 'home educational aspirations', the level of expectation among parents but also from extended family groupings (Strand and Winston 2008: 264). Although their work supported other research that has highlighted the effects that parents and the extended family can have on childrens' aspirations, (Harris and Goodall, 2008; Schoon and Parsons, 2002). Strand and Winston (2008), also highlighted the need for schools to 'fill the gaps' where families did not encourage high aspirations:

if the capacity to aspire is essentially a cultural capacity, then it will require more than an additional strand of skills within the national strategy; rather, schools will need to reassess themselves as cultural institutions and find ways to connect their normative values of aspiration with the lived curriculum of their pupils.

(Strand and Winston, 2008: 26)

Seller, at al. (2009) in their work, which explored the aspirations of those pupils from disadvantaged areas towards higher education also considered the concept of aspiration as a cultural capacity. They stressed the need to rethink and develop policies and practices that sought to '*provide resources and experiences that strengthen the capacity of less wealthy and powerful groups to pursue their aspirations*' (2009: 3).

Capital, Habitus and Fields of Relation

The concept of capital (social, cultural, economic) was developed throughout the work of Bourdieu (1990) who considered the way it was continually transmitted and accumulated in ways that perpetuate social inequalities. For example, Bourdieu described how economic capital, by allowing for opportunities and experiences, can be translated into embodied dispositions and capacities, and thus more cultural forms of capital, over time (Bok 2010). Such ‘prosperity’ can affect how people are able to negotiate particular social spaces, such as the field of education (Tramonte and Willms, 2010). Rather than trying to *‘isolate the influence of any one factor’* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 87) it is the combined effects of a student’s cultural capital, class and other factors that should be examined in order to determine how students are able to navigate the educational field (Bok, 2010).

Also relevant to this study is Bourdieu’s theory of habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus represents a set of dispositions that are acquired and develop over time as a result of everyday experiences. By its own definition, habitus is isomorphic with the structural conditions in which it emerged and can only be understood in the context of a particular set of social relations or what Bourdieu referred to as a *field* of relations (Connolly, 2004). The local area within which the pupils in this study live is viewed as field of relations and is considered to influence and shape the way they think and behave – in other words, their habitus. This is where the link between Bourdieu’s habitus, Ray’s aspiration window and Appadurai’s capacity to aspire lies. In a Bourdieusian sense, the field is the historically, politically and socially defined

context in which people as agents are differently positioned to behave in particular ways.

A recent empirical study that demonstrated the formative qualities of *habitus* and the way it impacts on the decisions children make can be seen in the work of Connolly (2004) when he wrote:

young working class children raised on socially-deprived housing estates may well not know of anyone who has stayed on at school and gone to university. Their experience gained through their local estate and of family and friends living there provides the parameters for their worldview. It tends to shape the way they think and forms the boundaries within which they make decisions. 'What they know', then, is that everyone leaves school at 16 and finds work locally or attempts to make a living in other ways. Staying on at school and aiming for university is just not part of their practical experience, of their habitus.

(Connolly, 2004: 85)

This suggestion that children do not have role models within their families to talk with about continuing their education post-16 could lead to transgenerational transmission of low aspirations.

Ray, Appadurai and Bourdieu's work provide an insight into the main cultural factors that can influence pupils' aspirations. Exploring the concept of aspiration as a cultural capacity, rather than an individual trait, allows the effects of the unequal distribution of social, cultural and economic capital on the capacity to aspire to be considered. In fact, recent Government initiatives have highlighted the importance of building a culture of high aspirations through community projects (WAG, 2006c) to increase social and cultural capital and help increase social mobility (Sinclair,

McKendrick and Scott, 2010). In the next section, I discuss and compare a wide body of empirical studies that have sought to understand how aspirations affect educational and occupational choices.

Gender and Educational Aspirations

Empirical studies concerning the relationship between gender and aspirations have produced mixed results. Strand and Winston (2008) in a study of 849 pupils across five inner city secondary schools in the West Midlands found no significant association between gender and educational aspirations. Conversely, Marini and Greenberger (1978), in a study some thirty years earlier with 2,495 eleventh grade students in Pennsylvania, found that males both aspired to and expected higher levels of educational attainment than did females. In 2007, Strand undertook secondary analysis of data collected by the DfES in 2004 through the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE). LSYPE interviewed a nationally representative sample of over 15,000 young people in Year 9 of school (i.e. those aged 13 or 14 years) about a wide range of topics. The study also interviewed their parents/guardians about their involvement in their children's education. Strand (2007) found that females had higher educational aspirations than their male counterparts with 83.3 per cent of girls wanting to stay in post-16 education compared with 70.9 per cent of boys. Despite the continuing improvement in girls' examination results however, they continued to choose sex segregated educational and occupational pathways (Pilcher et al., 1989; Delamont, 1990; Salisbury, 1996a; Salisbury and Riddell, 2000; Foskett et al., 2004); each author has stressed the

importance of early career intervention to combat continuous stereotypical choices. Salisbury and Riddell (2000) argued that '*failing to develop women's skills and increase labour market participation will lock Wales into a low skill, low pay economy*' (2000: 58).

If we consider, for a moment, how the educational achievements of males and females have changed over a notable time, this may help us understand the different conclusions that have been drawn with regards gender and educational aspirations in the research outlined above. In the 1970s, the underachievement of girls in the educational system was a major concern (Ofsted, 1996). However, by the early 1980s the situation had started to change and girls were more likely than boys to have obtained school-leaving qualifications, and were increasingly participating in higher education (Schoon et al., 2007). During the 1990s these gains in educational attainment were further consolidated and girls were now more successful than boys in terms of achieving GCSE and A-level qualifications (Ofsted, 1996). The work of Archer and Leathwood (2003) emphasized the importance of understanding the complex interaction between participation in higher education and hegemonic masculine identities. Their findings showed that male pupils from working class backgrounds regarded the experience of being a higher education student as antithetical and they often failed to aspire to study in university as they viewed participation '*as incompatible with notions of working-class masculinity*' and as '*entailing numerous costs and risks to masculine identities*' (Archer and Leathwood 2003: 181).

If we now consider how the relationship between gender and educational aspirations has evolved since 1970, we can see a similar pattern with regards gender and educational aspirations as we can with regards gender and educational achievements. Older research in this area found that males had higher educational aspirations than females (Thomas and Falk, 1978; Wilson and Wilson, 1992), but most recent research has shown that females have higher educational aspirations than males (McDaniel, 2010; Freeman, 2004). Combining the results of two studies (McDaniel, 2010; Freeman, 2004) allows us to begin to understand the influence that gender has on educational aspirations and how it has changed over the years. McDaniel's work provided a wide geographical impression of teenagers' educational aspirations by considering the results of PISA⁷ assessments administered in 29 different countries at one point in history (in 2005); Freeman's longitudinal quantitative analysis spans over 21 years and provides a historical perspective.

McDaniel (2010) found that females had higher educational aspirations (termed educational expectations in the paper) than their male counterparts in all participating countries except Japan and Korea:

⁷ PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international study which began in the year 2000. It aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in participating countries/economies. Since the year 2000 over 70 countries and economies have participated in PISA.

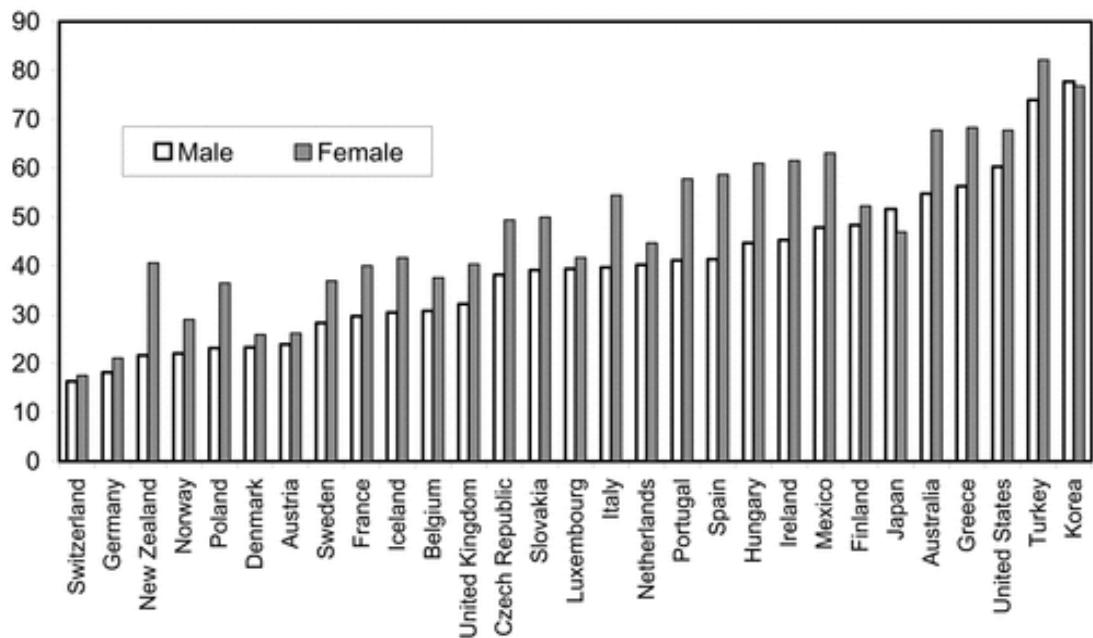


Figure 3.1: Percentages of 15-year-olds expecting to complete academic tertiary education, by country and gender: Using data from the 2005 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

(SOURCE: McDaniel 2010: 29)

Freeman (2004) analysed data from the University of Michigan and found that females had higher aspirations than males while in high school and were more likely to enrol in college immediately after graduating. A longitudinal study of pupils' aspirations regarding completion of degrees showed that since 1980, although male aspirations had increased, female aspirations had increased at a faster rate. For example, in 2001, 62 per cent of female high school seniors planned to graduate from a four-year-college, compared with 51 per cent of male students (Freeman, 2004: 9).

Freeman's research provides a comprehensive quantitative analysis of male and female educational aspirations and how they have changed over a period of time. However, because Freeman adopted quantitative methods, no suggestions were

made in this research, as to how aspirations are formed and why they have changed over the years. It is not until we discuss Leung, Conoley and Scheel's (1994) research in the following section that we can begin to understand the reasons why this shift in aspirations has occurred over time. The fact that female aspirations have changed over a space of time demonstrates the dynamic nature of aspirations and Vondracek's contextual-development theory which is outlined below argues the need to consider the social and historical context within which aspirations are influenced and formed.

Gender and Occupational Aspirations

Research within sociology has demonstrated that jobs are not gender-neutral spaces (Adkins, 1995; Cockburn, 1985) and gender segregation in the labour market remains extraordinarily robust, vertically, horizontally and contractually (Parken and Rees, 2011: 117). Schemes such as WISE (Henwood, 1996; UKRC, 2012) and GIST (Kelly, Whyte and Smail, 1984) have sought to explore the influence of gender on occupational aspirations and provide opportunities for educational establishments and employers to break down 'traditional' gender gaps.

Some studies have suggested that occupational aspirations and expectations are influenced by sex stereotyping. For example, Falk and Salter (1978) found that 60 per cent of the 138 young women in their study aspired to occupations that were sex stereotypic for females, *e.g.*, beauticians, nurses, stenographers, and teachers (1978: 20). However, Dunne, Elliott and Carlsen (1981) found that the effect of sex stereotyped occupations on the occupational aspirations and expectations of

females was lessening with females aspiring to a broader range of jobs (1981: 65) and that overcoming sex stereotyped occupational selection may actually be more difficult for males than for females.

Leung, Conoley and Scheel (1994) offered suggestions as to why female occupational aspirations have changed over a prolonged period of time. In their research they designed a retrospective questionnaire which was administered to 194 pupils labelled as 'gifted' (69 boys and 125 girls) about a range of issues surrounding career development counselling during a one day career counselling workshop. They were able to discover in their research that females were less determined than were boys to fulfil their career aspirations through postgraduate education and training. In order to try find out why so many 'gifted' females were willing to sacrifice high achieving careers because of low education aspirations, Leung et al. (1994) speculated that the female pupils involved in the study were unsure how to balance a working life and having a career with being a mother and raising a family. Further follow up questionnaires confirmed this to be the case. As a result, Leung et al. (1994) argued the case for long term pastoral support for pupils when deciding occupational pathways, so that any '*internal sex role conflicts*' could be recognized.

Socioeconomic Status and Aspirations

There is a growing body of recent research that has explored causal links between socioeconomic background educational and occupation aspirations. Some research

has suggested that lower SES itself does not transfer into lower aspirations (Gregg and Goodman, 2010; Kintrea et al., 2011; St. Clair and Benjamin, 2011; Gorard et al., 2012; Cummings et al., 2012;) However, Gilby, et al. (2008) and Gutman and Akerman (2008) found that socio-economic status was a key differentiator when considering the educational aspirations of children and their parents, with those in better off households more likely to want to continue studying and attend university. Similarly, Egan (2010) concluded that the influence of class on achievement is probably three times more powerful than ethnicity and gender (2010: 75).

The results of a longitudinal study exploring pupils' ideas of their futures in schools in Glasgow, London and Nottingham (Kintrea et al., 2011) found that:

young people's aspirations towards education and jobs were high. Most aspired to go to university, and young people aspired to professional and managerial jobs in far greater numbers than the proportions of those jobs in the labour market. There was little evidence of fatalism in the face of depressed labour markets or that not working was seen as an acceptable outcome.

(Kintrea et al., 2011: 4)

However, if the data offered in this study are explored in greater detail, it is possible to observe differences in aspirational levels. In the school in Nottingham, most pupils were from white working-class communities and whilst 78 per cent of pupils aspired to go to university and have professional jobs, the aspirations of the young people were lower than the other cities at age 13, and remained low at age 15. A larger number of young people were interested in traditional roles, with boys

aspiring to trades and girls to care occupations (Kintrea et al., 2011: 6). In Glasgow, the school drew pupils from some of the poorest parts of Scotland as well as some more affluent areas; this resulted in aspirations being formed in a far less homogeneous milieu than the others (2011: 6). In the school in London, pupils lived in a diverse, ethnically rich community and they held the highest aspirations; other research has shown that aspirations vary according to ethnicity (Gutman and Akerman 2008). For example, in the LSYPE, Indian, Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils had higher educational aspirations than White British pupils (Strand, 2007). Kintrea, et al. (2011) did not consider the effect of ethnicity on pupils' aspirations in this study. The report does begin to highlight the complexity of aspirations, but by considering three separate groups of pupils as if each was homogeneous Kintrea, et al. misunderstand the dynamic nature of the formation of aspirations.

Using data from four separate large-scale sources, namely the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) and the British Cohort Study (BCS), Goodman and Gregg (2010) were able to consider ways that affluence and disadvantage influenced children's educational attainment between the ages of 3 and 16. They found that:

parental aspirations and attitudes to education varied significantly by socio-economic position, with 81% of the richest mothers saying they hoped their 9-year-old would go to university, compared with only 37% of the poorest mothers. Such adverse attitudes to education of disadvantaged mothers are one of the single most important factors

associated with lower educational attainment at age 11. This factor alone is associated with 6% of the attainment total gap between the richest and poorest children at age 11, even after accounting for differences in prior ability.

(Goodman and Gregg, 2010: 7)

Other researchers have been able to assert the hypothesis that parents from privileged backgrounds have higher aspirations for their children, provide greater access to financial resources, offer more educational opportunities, occupational knowledge and role models than less privileged parents (Vondracek et al., 1986; Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Gilby et al., 2008; Gutman and Akerman, 2008).

In an attempt to further understand how aspirations are formulated over time, I now consider the work of the educational psychologist Gottfredson which is heavily influenced by human development theories.

4. Human Development Theories

Human development theories provide an understanding of the different stages of growth a person moves through in their life (Vondracek et al., 1986). People pass through different developmental stages at stipulated ages that are marked by particular characteristics, tasks, and skills that need to be developed (Ginzberg et al., 1951; Trice and McClellan, 1994).

Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (2001) have also shown that career interests develop relatively early in the formative years, especially regarding science related

occupations and these aspirations have also been found to shape the course of future career development and adult occupational attainment (Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Schoon et al. 2007). The study of early influences on career development is therefore of special importance for a better understanding of occupational aspirations. For these reasons a sound theoretical understanding of child development and career development as it pertains to children is crucial. The theories of Piaget (1971) and Super's life-span, life-space theory (Super, 1963; Super and Knasel, 1981) are often used to conceptualise the development of children from a cognitive and psychosocial perspective; if space allowed these theories would be outlined here. However, the work of the developmental psychologists Holland and Super have all influenced subsequent theoretical work of Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2005) and it is hoped therefore that a discussion of her theory of circumscription and compromise will allow a better understanding of the career development of children.

Circumscription and Compromise

Gottfredson's theory (1981) of *circumscription and compromise*, adopts a sociological and developmental perspective and considers the compromises people make when deciding upon their occupational aspirations. Gottfredson builds on Super's notion of self-concept (Super 1963) and Holland's theory of careers and vocational choice based upon personality types (Holland 1973). She considers career choice as having a developmental trajectory, whereby people's judgements about job-self compatibility evolve within an individual over time as their self-

concept develops. Gottfredson (1981) highlighted SES, ability, gender-role socialization, and individual values and interests as determinants of self-concept. Gottfredson believes that occupational choice is largely based on people's social identity.

With age, youngsters develop more sophisticated and complex views of the world, relating many disparate pieces of information into more unified and coherent understandings of themselves and others. It is more informative, then, to view vocational development as growth in the capacity to apprehend and organize relevant information about self and jobs than to view it simply as the accumulation of information.

(Gottfredson, 1981: 556)

Gottfredson's work is of particular interest for this study as she proposes four stages of cognitive development, which children pass through when deciding upon their occupational aspirations, albeit they will pass through these stages at different rates. It also realises the impact of micro and meso factors on gendered occupational choices.

Stage 1-(around ages 3-5) *Orientation to size and power* - Children begin to understand the concept of being an adult through the realisation of differences in size and power between adults and themselves;

Stages 2-(around ages 6-8) *Orientation to sex roles*- Children begin to develop a gender self concept. They begin to believe certain jobs or occupations are for boys and others, for girls;

Stage 3- (around ages 9-13) *Orientation to social valuation-* Children begin to understand more abstract and complex concepts and judge occupations as being suitable based on social class and ability level;

Stage 4- (around ages 14 +) *Orientation to internal, unique self* – Adolescents adopt a more introspective view and become more self-aware, they begin to become more aware of their self-concept and occupational aspirations. Compromise with regards occupational choice occurs in this stage as people become aware of barriers that may exist between them and their aspirational careers.

At the very beginning of this doctoral research project, the pupils involved in completing the initial questionnaires would have been 11/12 years old and in the middle of 'stage three', they were then questioned again about their occupational aspirations when they 14 and then again when they were 15 years old (thus moving to 'stage four'). The analyses in this thesis will therefore focus on stage three and four of Gottfredson's theory.

Gottfredson's work highlights how perceptive children are and how quickly they consider, even at a very young age, what work is typically undertaken by men and women. The processes of socialization and cultural learning which begins very early in life determines what children accept as appropriate sex-type behaviour and which professions are seen as having prestige.

Most youngsters circumscribe their aspirations according to sextype and prestige by age 13.

(Gottfredson, 1981: 577)

'Since its inception in 1981, Gottfredson's theory has only received limited attention in the empirical literature' (Leung 2008: 124) and many aspects of the theory remain untested (Leung and Plake, 1990). Gottfredson's theory is difficult to test empirically mainly because:

- (a) most of the hypothesised variables, such as sex-type, prestige, circumscription, and compromise, are difficult to operationalise, and*
- (b) the hypothesised developmental process should ideally be tested via longitudinal research design requiring substantial time and resources.*

(Leung 2008: 124)

The theory of circumscription and compromise has been examined and has been met with mixed support. Helwig's (2001) findings from a ten year qualitative longitudinal study that examined the occupational aspirations of a group of students as they moved through Grades 2 to 12 (the sample size diminished from 208 students to 103 students during this time) were consistent with Gottfredson's theory. Helwig's findings showed that the social value or prestige of childrens' occupational aspirations increased into the early high school years and then dropped off at the senior year of high school, when personal interests became more salient. Helwig was also able to observe a significant shift toward more realistic occupational aspirations with age because of self-awareness and knowledge of the world of work.

Leung and Plake's (1990) work did not support the compromise principles in Gottfredson's theory. Adopting a quantitative methodology, 246 undergraduate were asked to complete an Occupational Choice Dilemma Inventory. Occupations were paired together to represent three choice dilemma situations or systematic variations in prestige and sex type levels between the two occupations. For each pair of occupations, the respondent had to either sacrifice a certain degree of prestige or sex. Leung and Plake found that women were more likely than men to sacrifice sex type for prestige and also found that the zone of acceptable alternatives in terms of prestige and gender traditionally actually expanded, rather than narrowed during the adolescent years.

Summary

Gottfredson's work is key to the present study because it identifies the different self-concept stages children pass through as they mature and we are able to begin to understand how, when and why occupational aspirations change, with particular consideration to gender stereotyping. Likewise, we are able to consider effective counselling/tutoring strategies that can be employed to support pupils.

However, Gottfredson's (1981) developmental theories of educational and occupational aspirations respectively, fail to acknowledge two issues. Firstly, the concept of human development implies that people move through different stages of cognitive development as they get older. However, authors (Vondracek et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) have argued that child development is a complex dialectical

process characterised by periodicity, unevenness in the development of different functions, metamorphosis, intertwining of external and internal factors, and adaptive processes which overcome impediments that the child encounters; therefore, natural progression through each of the stages may prove impossible.

Secondly, Gottfredson's work considers development of the individual in something of a vacuum and does not consider how the 'external' could impact on their development. Vondracek, et al. (1986) argue that the individual and context are embedded in each other and it is necessary to consider the two in parallel. Their concept of dynamic interaction explains the way in which individuals influence the contexts that influence them and argues fervently that no one level of analysis in isolation can be considered the 'prime mover' of change (Vondracek et al., 1986: 71). The model also considers the importance of the historical context, acknowledging that individuals live within a particular historical period and just as they move through life they move through a changing set of contexts:

The idea of embeddedness is that the key phenomena of human life exist at multiple levels of analysis; at any one point in time variables and processes from any and all of these multiple levels may contribute to human functioning...Rather, the variables and processes at one level influence and are influenced by the variables and processes at the other levels, that is, there is a dynamic interaction among levels of analysis, where each level may be both a product and a producer of the functioning and changes at all other levels.

(Vondracek et al., 1986: 69/70)

5. Supporting Pupils

The first UK national initiative designed to promote support for school pupils on a one-to-one basis was introduced in the paper *Excellence in Cities* (1999a); this flagship policy was designed to try and reduce underachievement in urban schools. It was launched in 400 secondary schools in England. Since this time, the role of the mentor within secondary education has been introduced and developed in many schools across the UK in recent years (Rose, 2008). Some schemes have been shown to have contributed to combating bullying, improving behaviour and reducing underachievement (Hylan and Postlethwaite, 1998). Other schemes are reputed to have reduced exclusion rates, pupil truancy and other forms of unauthorised absences (Tierney and Grossman, 2000). However, although mentoring has diversified and been introduced into numerous schools across the United Kingdom, there is remarkably little empirical evidence as to its efficacy (Reid, 2002; Hall, 2003), particularly from the pupils' viewpoint (Rose and Doveston, 2008). Learning mentors are in a unique position to exert considerable influence over pupils' attitudes and behaviour through a directive style of intervention in a one-to-one context (Rose and Doveston, 2008). The following sections will provide brief synopsi of the different forms of individual support programmes that have been introduced into secondary schools so that an understanding of the role of learning coach, mentor and personal tutor can be gained.

Title Pedantics

Since the introduction of mentoring schemes into forty English school in 1999, other initiatives have been introduced which are also designed to support individual

pupils' development. These schemes refer to the role using different titles: mentor, coach and tutor. Although an indepth study may identify subtle differences between the different terms, the titles appear to be interchangeable, it is suggested, therefore that the link to mentoring, coaching and tutoring is associative and not direct.

Mentoring

Entering the term 'mentoring' into *Metalib* as a starting point for this part of the literature review quickly revealed that an understanding of the term 'mentoring' and how such schemes are structured varied quite significantly. Hall (2003) suggests that:

- *mentoring is an ill-defined concept which is deeply contested by some critics who see some manifestations of it as built upon a questionable 'deficit' model.*
- *mentoring exists in many forms which are at least partly defined by the origin, purpose, nature, and site of the mentoring relationship.*

(Hall, 2003: 1)

Klasen and Clutterbuck (2004) acknowledged too there is no clear definition of the term mentor, but they do identify the following key aspects of this role:

- *supporting individuals in discovering and defining their own development needs and setting their own objectives;*
- *Allowing individuals to raise and talk about their issues, occasionally clarifying, reflecting back and challenging;*
- *Helping individuals to reflect on their beliefs, feeling, thought and behaviours, and to view issues from multiple perspectives;*
- *Guiding and encouraging individuals in the self reliant analysis and solution of their problems and opportunities;*
- *Enabling people to become effective decision makers;*
- *Supporting the solution of issues by embracing an integrated approach.*

(Klassen and Clutterbuck, 2004: 16)

Table 3.2 below summarizes at a glance the typical range of mentoring/tutoring activities that have been conducted over the last decade or so. These have focused on pupil support.

Table 3.2: A description of different mentoring/tutoring schemes that have been established to support school pupils.

Type of Mentoring	Description of support	Research Examples
Learning mentors	School-based employees who work with underachieving pupils.	Rose and Doveston (2008)
Teacher mentors	Affording teachers and/or senior members of staff 'free time' to work with pupils in order to target underachievement.	Younger and Warrington (2009); Hylan and Postlethwaite (1998).
Cross-age tutoring	Training pupils to work with and help other pupils.	Morrison et al. (2000)
Business mentors	Arranging for employers and employers from local companies to work with pupils to help raise attainment.	Miller (1999)
Student mentors	Funding undergraduates to work with pupils in local schools.	Mehan et al. (1996), Goodlad (1998), Huddleston et al. (2005), Baxter et al. (2007)
Volunteer mentors/tutors	Allowing parents and members of the local community to work with pupils.	Miller (1999), Ritter, et al. (2009), Tierney and Grossman (2000)
E-mentoring	Connect pupils with online support from industry professionals.	Miller and Griffiths (2005)
Peer mentors/tutors	Pupils work with other pupils to provide pastoral/academic support.	Maskell (2002), Tymms et al. (2011)

It is not necessary here to consider the strengths and weaknesses, or the merits of each of the mentoring/tutoring programmes listed above in this particular study. Instead, the findings of three of the papers listed above will be considered as they provide valuable suggestions that should be considered when the findings in the later empirical chapters of this research are considered.

Rose and Doveston (2008) considered the role of a learning mentor which was introduced in English schools as part of the *Excellence in Cities* Programme (DfEE 1999a). They considered the role of mentor from a theoretical and empirical perspective by drawing upon Vygotsky's (1962) work and Egan's (1990) person-centred theory, and considered how these theories contributed to an understanding of the mentoring process in thirteen schools. Adopting qualitative research methods they interviewed over a two-year period 36 learning mentors and 33 pupils who had received mentoring because they were identified as having social difficulties. The semi structured interviews adopted a narrative approach and sought to provide a personal interpretation of mentoring and its impact on the pupils involved. This paper raised several issues with regards personalisation of the curriculum and pupil empowerment. Most pupils quoted in the research valued the support of their learning mentor and felt that they helped them address a number of concerns at academic, emotional and personal levels.

Younger and Warrington (2009) used pupil voice to investigate the role and impact that mentoring and target-setting in English secondary schools had on GCSE results. In the extant literature they argued that '*there was little tangible evidence about the effectiveness of such schemes*' (2009: 170). In their own empirical study, they interviewed thirty-six boys and thirty-three girls once they had progressed from an 11–16 secondary school in Northern England to either the sixth-form college (6FC) or further education (FE) college in the same town. They also interviewed senior staff at the three institutions to gather their views on the mentoring process. The

students were interviewed individually or in same-sex pairs, through semi-structured interviews which followed a common interview guide to ensure that both interviewers covered the same topics; wherever possible, the male interviewer talked to the boys, the female interviewer to the girls (2009: 171). They concluded that although mentoring had contributed to improved academic results, the mentoring process needed to begin earlier than year 11 in order to have a sustained effect on individual aspirations.

Strand and Winston (2008) adopted a multi-methods approach to assess the nature and level of pupils' educational aspirations and to elucidate the factors that influence these aspirations. Over 800 pupils across five inner city schools in England completed a questionnaire and then a sub sample of 48 pupils took part in focus groups. The research and results are then discussed in relation to theories of aspiration which stress its nature as a cultural capacity. Strand and Winston (2008) found that low aspirations were most strongly linked to '*poor academic self-concept and low educational aspirations in the home*' (2008: 249). They, like Younger and Warrington (2009) highlighted the importance of working with pupils before Year Nine and stressed that this is '*the key to increasing participation in post-compulsory education*' (Strand and Winston, 2008: 250).

Coaching

Coaching is a rapidly expanding field with interdisciplinary roots and broad application (Brock, 2006). It is a goal directed, multifaceted process for enhancing

people, work and life (Griffiths and Campbell, 2009). There appears to be little research which explicitly examines the learning process in coaching and only minimal literature which currently draws links between coaching and specific learning theory. Due to this poor evidence base, coaching still rests on relatively weak foundations (Griffiths and Campbell, 2009).

The multifaceted nature of coaching makes it more difficult to study the processes and nuances of this role. The coach must therefore harness a range of personal skills and qualities and draw from them as appropriate. The process of coaching draws heavily on the work of Schon (1990) as there is a huge need to engage in reflective practice. The coach's legitimacy does not depend on his scholarly attainments or proficiency as a lecturer but on the artistry of his coaching practice. The question is not how much you know, but rather how effectively you can help others to learn (Schon, 1990).

Tutoring

Tutoring remains a popular form of instruction worldwide (Ritter et al., 2009), and the effectiveness of tutoring as a pedagogical method has been documented extensively in educational literature (Goodlard, 1998; Morrison et al., 2000). Miller (1983) perceived of the tutor as a guide helping to overcome the potential blocks to learning. He lists six components of guidance:

- *its aims;*
- *stages of intervention;*
- *the tutors' task;*
- *values held;*

- *skills required;*
- *the context.*

(Miller, 1983: 44)

In addition to viewing the tutor as a guide, Miller included counselling within the role. He viewed the guidance role of the tutor as multifaceted. Griffiths (1995) believed too that the basic principle of all tutorial and guidance work was to help students, but tutoring focused on showing students how to '*take increased and increasing responsibility for themselves, for their academic work, for their behaviour and for their actions*' (Griffiths 1995: 76).

6. Conclusion

This review of the extant literature has sought firstly to offer an informed opinion on the development of aspirations. The belief is that aspirations are far from static and will change considerably throughout an individual's life and reflect the influence and interaction of many different individual, social, cultural and environmental factors, including economic, social, neighbourhood and household. Policies that are designed to raise aspirations must view aspirations in the context of wider factors, including educational and economic opportunities and resources.

Second, a detailed review of the development of an array of national and international mentoring, tutoring and coaching initiatives has been offered. The review highlighted the diverse nature and aims between each programme, as well as considering strengths and weaknesses.

Clearly, this selective review of the literature is not a definitive one. It has deliberately focused on key themes, the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis (see section 1.2) and evidence pertinent to the applied professional doctoral investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Methods and Strategies for data collection: A teacher's account of insider field work and mixed methods in a school based investigation

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, the different methods available to a researcher when undertaking a study are discussed and considered. This introductory section then leads into a personal justification and a rationale for the mixed-methods approach adopted to address the research questions set out in section 1.2. Finally, a contextual description provides an overview as to the many processes, decisions and ethical and logistical issues that needed to be considered whilst collecting the required data. Reference is made at the same time to the limitations of the study and how the various data were prepared for analysis.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

De Vaus (2001) argued '*the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible*' (2001: 9). Finding, collecting and understanding the type of evidence that is needed to answer the main research questions and test the theories is the first challenge. It is too easy to begin the actual process of gathering data before contemplating what information is needed to answer the research. Forgetting the 'bigger picture' and not considering the research design at the outset of a project

can lead to weak conclusions that do not provide sufficient substance to answer the original questions framing the research. This doctoral project began with an initial set of aims and these became refined during reading the literature and also as a result of changing priorities and innovations at Green Valley School where I am employed.

Fighting Familiarity

Researchers such as Spindler (1982) Delamont and Atkinson (1995) and Delamont (2002) have long argued the case for researchers to divorce themselves from the research setting as far as possible and attempt strategies to 'make the familiar strange'. The need to '*make strange social context that we assume to understand by virtue of taken for granted cultural competence*' (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003: 47) is highlighted as a fundamental issue. These concerns are related to issues of objectivity and subjectivity, familiarity and identity. As a teacher that wished to undertake research within the school where I had worked for eleven years, issues of familiarity with and towards research topics needed to be considered from the outset and continually reflected upon to achieve critical distance.

Familiarity with a research setting can inhibit a researcher and make it very difficult to form an unbiased opinion or actually gain some analytical distance. For example, Becker (1971) wrote that when things are so familiar:

It becomes impossible to single out events that occur in the classroom as things that have occurred, even when they happen right in front of

you...it takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing the things that are conventionally "there" to be seen. (Becker, 1971:10)

The concept of defamiliarization was first introduced and developed by the Russian, Victor Shklovsky. He explained this idea as follows:

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.

(Shklovsky 1965: 5)

Shklovsky believed that people's awareness of common, everyday situations and tasks diminishes with time and become habitual. For example, if one considers the design of our front door, something we have walked through many times, would we be able to draw it? After we see an object several times, we begin to recognise it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it – hence we cannot say anything significant about it. Habituation therefore causes problems with regards qualitative research. The researcher needs to adopt an unbiased approach, one ideally that is not affected by predefined ideas and experience.

Delamont, Atkinson and Pugsley (2010) offer five strategies for fighting familiarity:

- *Revisiting 'insightful' educational ethnographies of the past;*
- *Studying learning and teaching in formal education in other cultures;*
- *Taking the standpoint of the researcher who is 'other' to view the educational process;*
- *Taking the viewpoint of actors other than the commonest types of 'teachers' and 'students' in ordinary state schools;*
- *Studying learning and teaching outside formal education settings.*

(Delamont et al., 2010: 5)

Reflecting upon the work of Weis (1990, 2004), encouraged me to 'look outside the school gates' and consider the socio-cultural and historical context within which aspirations were formed and affected and also to explore gender traditionalism in career and educational choice. Secondly, it was hoped that by employing quantitative research methods to collect and analyse some of the survey data gathered during the research project, this helped make the familiar setting of a school unfamiliar or at least less familiar. To explain, organising a questionnaire for pupil completion generated a mass of data that were coded and analysed. These data were anonymous and an attempt to depersonalise the research process.

Finally, I also hoped that by employing a diary-interview technique with Mrs James, the personal tutor at Green Valley School, I would be able to identify a range of issues for further exploration in a series of subsequent interviews. This would provide a different perspective from which to investigate the various influences on pupils' educational and occupational aspirations. Such an approach was used in the research works of Zimmerman and Weider (1977) when they undertook an ethnographic study of counter-culture in California. Also, Morrison and Galloway (1996) when they investigated the types of work undertaken by supply teachers analysed the diaries of seventeen such teachers which were completed over eighty working days. This allowed the voice of an almost invisible temporary professional in educational provision to be heard. These supply teachers often felt marginal, reported little job satisfaction and were suffering low status occupational identities.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research.

(Willig, 2001: 10)

The virtue of *reflexivity* is about a self-awareness of the extent to which the research process and research findings have succeeded in terms of the researcher's aims and objectives. Reflexivity is about questioning ourselves and the way we have done things and asking such questions as: What have we learnt from the research process? How have we developed as researchers? What things would we do differently next time? These are vital questions that all researchers need to keep asking themselves (Willig, 2001: 10). Here, a useful distinction may be drawn between personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity (Willig, 2001). Personal reflexivity involves reflecting upon the ways in which our own beliefs, backgrounds, interests, values, aspirations and social identities have shaped the research. Epistemological reflexivity requires us to interrogate critically the way in which we have conducted research through such things as the design of the study, the questions asked and the analysis of the results.

To demonstrate the continual reflexive approach that I strived to adopt throughout this study, my thoughts as a researcher are 'peppered' throughout each chapter to show how I have reflected on research processes and findings. During the research process, I also kept a diary and I have included extracts from this diary in various chapters, I found that keeping a research diary helped me reflect on my findings

(Burgess, 1988). A reflexive preface is also included at the beginning of this thesis which draws upon the research diary kept throughout my entire EdD candidature (2008 to 2013). It is, in a sense an 'auto ethnographic' section which provides readers with an 'insider' or an emic perspective telling, as it does, a less sanitized account of my experiences when I was growing up and how these shaped some of my thoughts and findings during the empirical phases of the study.

3. Research Strategy

The three different research methods that can be employed in a research study depend upon different epistemological and ontological positions. A brief summary of each method is offered before a discussion of the decision I finally made as to which approach was most appropriate and best suited for the particular research questions of this project.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research adopts an inductive approach and tries to establish theory from research. Qualitative research methods were introduced and developed in social sciences to allow researchers to study and understand social and cultural phenomena (Denzin, Lincoln and Smith, 2008). In such studies, an hypothesis is created following the research process, because a limited amount of information exists on the subject matter. The variables are largely unknown and the researcher concentrates on the context that may shape the understanding of the phenomenon

being studied (Creswell, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe this collection of processes involved in qualitative research as bricolage – ‘*a pieced-together, close-knit set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation*’ (2011: 5) and further elaborate about some of the key skills of the bricoleur:

The ...bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting personal and historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection. The...bricoleur reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many paradigms that can be brought into any particular problem. The bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting. ..The product of the bricoleur’s labour is a complex, quiltlike bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage.

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 9)

Considering the references to fighting familiarity and reflexivity, which were discussed in the previous section, I think that Denzin and Lincoln’s likening of qualitative research processes to a rich quilt or collage acts as a powerful reminder of the need to consider the many threads and strands that are involved within a research process. I would hope that the inclusion of a reflexive preface, life histories and the detailed vignettes that are included in this thesis demonstrate my ability as a researcher to consider the ‘wider picture’, not only to understand the socio-cultural context in which aspirations are formed but to ensure that data are reflected upon and triangulated.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research adopts a deductive approach and seeks to test a theory through research. Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to help understand natural phenomena. This type of research typically uses surveys, experiments and includes data collected and presented in graphical forms, tables, charts and other numerical methods such as mathematical modelling. Supporters of this method argue that such an approach is not subjective and can uncover large-scale social trends (Bryman, 2012). For example, Gorard, Rees and Salisbury (1999) drew heavily on quantitative research methods and the analyses of large scale secondary data sets when trying to ascertain if an achievement gap existed between boys and girls in Wales. They found, that during the years examined (1992 to 1997), the only indication of an increase in the achievement gaps was confined to higher levels of attainment. Otherwise the achievement gaps were static or declining (Gorard et al., 1999: 151).

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research, also known as the '*third path*' (Gorard and Taylor, 2004) combines qualitative and quantitative paradigms in a single study (Creswell, 2011). Such a multi-dimensional method approach could provide opportunities for triangulation and validate data or analysis, thus providing a fuller picture of the phenomenon (Bryman, 2006; Bryman, 2012). Mixed methods is considered to be an intensely comprehensive technique for research in social sciences through amalgamation of both thematic qualitative data and statistical data (Tashakkori and

Teddlie, 2003). Mason (2006) advocated the use of mixed methods as it can offer a creative palette with which to research social experiences and lived realities:

social experience and lived realities are multi-dimensional and that our understandings are impoverished and may be inadequate if we view these phenomena only along a single dimension.

(Mason, 2006: 10)

The opportunity to combine different research methods to triangulate findings from different sources was considered the best approach to understand further the complex nature of aspirations. The following section will now offer a more detailed account of the mixed methods used here.

Summary of Chosen Research Methods

This study adopted a mixed methods approach for several reasons not only the complementarity of data and the triangulation opportunities (Bryman, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). First, the research design sought to gather views from a number of pupils via a survey to form a theory and then to explore key themes highlighted through the data analysis via more intense and focused work with smaller groups of pupils. Second, aspirations are influenced and shaped by social experience and lived realities (Mason, 2006; Gutman and Akerman, 2008; Turok, et al., 2009). To understand and explore the multi-dimensional and multifaceted (Vondracek et al., 1986) effects on an individual's outlook, one needs to adopt a mixed methods approach to allow for more rigorous triangulation and help build up a fuller picture of the phenomenon under study (Bryman, 2006). Strand and

Winston (2008) adopted a multi-methods approach in their research to assess the nature and level of pupils' educational aspirations and to elucidate the factors that influence these aspirations. I considered that this methodology complemented the research aims, objectives and assisted in addressing the research questions set out in section 1.2. This approach also allowed for a more reflective response to the data that were collected (Bryman, 2012) and helped to validate and analyse data in a number of different ways. The process of continually reflecting on data ensured that findings were more robust (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989: 259) noted five advantages of adopting such a mixed methods approach in a research project:

Table 4.1: Five approaches to mixed-method design evaluations.

Approach	Purpose
Triangulation	<i>Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods.</i>
Complementary	<i>Seeks elaboration, enhancement, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method</i>
Developmentally	<i>Seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method.</i>
Initiation	<i>Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks and the recasting of questions or results from different methods.</i>
Expansion	<i>Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry.</i>

(Greene et al., 1989: 259)

4. Research Methods

Methods and Instruments

Research methods are the means or instruments (Cohen et al., 1982) a researcher employs to collect data. For the current study, data were collected primarily in three ways: questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. However, unknown to me

at the time, I had commenced data gathering back in 2007 when the cohort of the study arrived at Green Valley School.

Table 4.2: Main Research Methods and Strategies of Data Collection

Method	Whom	Date
Year 7 Time Capsule	52 pupils (31 male /21 female)	July 2007
Questionnaire Survey 1	152 pupils (68 male / 84 female)	October 2010
Questionnaire Survey 2	137 pupils (62 male / 75 female)	July 2011
Single Sex Focus Groups	9 males 7 females	28 th September 2012 28 th September 2012
Diary Interviews	Mrs Kim James (personal tutor)	3 rd October 2010 20 th January 2011 16 th March 2011 12 th July 2011

All the pupils in Year Six in July 2007, during a ‘transition day’, were asked to write down their dream jobs, as we wanted to bury this information in a time capsule which would be dug up before pupils left Green Valley School in July 2012. I managed to correlate these very early responses from fifty two of the pupils. Next, two questionnaire surveys were distributed to pupils in Year Ten, one which was completed at the beginning of the academic year (October 2010) and another which was completed just before the end of the academic year (July 2011), following an interim period of personal tutoring. Responses from these questionnaires were then analysed and further opinions and perspectives were sought from a sub sample of pupils in two separate focus groups (September 2011). Single sex focus groups were drawn from original survey respondents and careful consideration of the answers provided in this survey was made to ensure that a wide range of educational and occupational aspirations would be present (see

tables 4.6 and 4.7). I also interviewed the personal tutor, Kim James at Green Valley School, firstly to compile her life history and then on a termly basis to record the work she had undertaken with the year group and see how she was settling into her new role.

A brief summary of the advantages and limitations of each of these methods within this research is presented below. A more detailed account is then provided to explain how the data collection process was organised.

5. Data Collection

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be administered in different forms, e.g. postal, mail, email and web (Bryman, 2012). Utilising well designed questionnaires in a research study will allow a researcher to keep costs down and gain views and opinions from a wide audience fairly quickly. However, there are some limitations as well that include the respondents' abilities to interpret each question in the way it was intended, postal surveys typically result in a lower response rate and it is advised that a large number of open questions are avoided because of the analysis process: this makes exploring issues difficult.

Designing the First Questionnaire

Questionnaire design is by no means the first stage in carrying out a survey. Many weeks of planning, reading, design, and exploratory pilot work will be needed before any sort of specification for a questionnaire can be determined. (Oppenheim, 1992: 24)

Initially, I first began writing the questionnaire thinking that pupils would complete a hard copy written sheet and that I would collate the answers over the subsequent weeks. On speaking with a colleague in school I discovered that it was possible to write a web based questionnaire using the digital platform '*Moodle*'; pupils would be able to access this survey instrument online in school and all answers would be collated automatically. I would then be able to download the file and analyse the responses using Excel and/or SPSS software, a computer package used for statistical analysis.

Moodle is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites. A number of schools and Educational Authorities are making use of this electronic platform and encouraging teachers to create resources using this application. Several years ago, I attended an INSET course organised by the school where I currently work to learn how to use the application and was impressed with the possibilities and the flexibility it allowed during the learning process. Brace (2008) comments that a web based questionnaire can allow a researcher to present questions with more flair and imagination: this should help to make its completion more pleasurable. Before logging onto the Moodle website I spent several months researching effective questionnaire design and initially wrote the questionnaire out on paper. The reading age and ability of the pupils I intended to question varied significantly and I wanted to make sure that everybody could understand the questions and could therefore respond accordingly.

Various questionnaires from similar studies were studied to determine how best to structure the questions (Oppenheim, 1992; Phtiaka, 1997). Gorard (2003) recommended including an introductory section in every questionnaire so as to help the people completing the questions familiarise themselves with the nature of the research and ensure they completed everything as accurately as possible.

The first section of the questionnaire sought to gather general information about the pupils with regards to what teaching class they were in, what area they lived in and who they lived with. From these questions I wanted to see if there was any correlation between academic achievements and post-16 choices and similarly any correlation between family makeup, post-16 academic choices and career paths.

The second part of the questionnaire sought to find out what qualifications family members had achieved and if this could have any effect on pupils' future choices.

The final part of the questionnaire required the pupils to consider and reflect upon the advice they had received with regards what to do after they reached the compulsory school age and if they felt they needed to speak with somebody in Year 11 (their final year at Green valley School) for further guidance.

The majority of the questions were closed and required pupils to choose from a range of answers. I did this purposely, so as to keep the process of responding as simple as possible (Bryman, 2012) and to avoid any ambiguities. I did allow pupils to choose 'other' as a response to these questions and then allowed them sufficient space to expand their answers. I did this so as to ensure that all pupils were able to

answer the questions as accurately as possible and did not feel constrained by the options supplied (Converse and Presser, 1986).

There were only three open questions:

- What is your dream job?
- What job do you expect to get?
- If your dream job and expected job are different, try to explain why you might not be able to get your dream job?

These questions remained open because I felt that pupils needed to be given the opportunity to respond to them as freely as possible. Finally, in order to try to keep the response rate as high as possible, I made the software require that every question was answered before it was submitted. This led to a 100% completion of all questions.

Piloting the First Questionnaire

Oppenheim (1992) notes that:

Pilot work can be of the greatest help in devising the actual wording of questions, and it operates as a healthy check, since fatal ambiguities may lurk in the most unexpected quarters.

(Oppenheim, 1992: 26)

After creating the electronic questionnaire, I worked very closely with the Information Technology Support Advisor in the school where the questionnaire was to be administered to set up all the passwords and access codes needed for pupils

to complete the questions. Following guidance offered in literature (Oppenheim, 1992; Brace, 2008), I discussed the questionnaire with my supervisors and asked five pupils to complete the questionnaire. This collaborative approach meant that any errors, misunderstandings/anomalies were discussed and rectified. I carefully chose the pupils who took part in the pilot because I wanted to ensure that they were as similar as possible to those pupils who would be chosen in the main study; as Oppenheim (1992) wrote:

any differences in educational background and literacy may produce very different levels of understanding, misunderstanding, and capacity to respond.

(Oppenheim, 1992: 29)

The main purpose of the pilot was to:

- ensure the technology worked and pupils could access and submit the questionnaire;
- check that pupils had sufficient options to choose from when answering closed questions;
- make certain that pupils could read and understand the questions;
- ascertain how much time pupils needed to complete the questionnaire;
- discover if pupils felt they could respond to any more questions in order to elicit any opinions about any links between mentoring and aspirations.

Following the pilot, all pupils were given the opportunity to talk about the questionnaire and raise any concerns or issues they felt needed to be addressed. Following these discussions, the order of some of the questions were rearranged so that the questionnaire could be divided into separate sections, also further options

were added to several closed questions so as to allow for a wider response. See appendix one for the final version of the first questionnaire.

Administering the First Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed by 152 pupils on 5th October 2010.

In the weeks prior to the questionnaire, I spoke with all the pupils in the year group during an assembly and explained the main aims and objectives of my research and how I was going to use any findings to help the school support future pupils as they progressed through secondary education. I explained to pupils that I needed to inform their parents about my research and seek their permission; this is explained further below. The presentation concluded with further details about the questionnaire and I asked pupils to begin to find out answers to four questions:

- Has anybody in your house studied at a Further Education College?
- Has anybody in your house studied at university?
- What is the highest qualification held by somebody in your house?
- Who holds that qualification?

Form tutors of these pupils were asked to keep reminding the pupils in their classes that they would need to be able to answer the questions when completing the questionnaire.

When administering the first questionnaire, the year group were divided into four sections. Each group of pupils were asked to come to the technology area in the school where I explained the purpose of questionnaire again, demonstrated the options pupils needed to choose when accessing, completing and submitting the

questionnaire, reminded everybody that responses were anonymous and then allowed pupils twenty minutes to answer the questions. As they completed the questionnaire, I circulated around the pupils and answered the queries arising. The majority of queries were technical and related to logging on to the questionnaire (as pupils had never used this website before); however, I did answer two specific queries related to individual pupil family contexts:

Table 4.3: Queries posed by pupils during first questionnaire and summary of responses provided by myself

Query	Response
<i>What option do you want me to choose if I live with my mum during the week and then stay with my dad on the weekend?</i>	<i>I advised the boy to choose mum and dad and include any other relations from either household.</i>
<i>My mum works as a dental nurse, but I cannot remember what qualification she has got.</i>	<i>I advised the girl to choose 'other' and then add the information about her mum's job. The girl finally decided to ring her mother to get the answer!</i>

Analysing the First Questionnaire

The pupils' responses were first downloaded from the Moodle website into an Excel spreadsheet; these data were then saved as a SPSS file. From here, I was able to recode the information and label each of the variables accordingly. As Gorard (2003) noted:

analysing usually proceeds via the essential, but mostly trivial stages of coding, transcription and cleaning of the dataset generated by your study.

(Gorard, 2003: 29)

For each variable, I had to code each answer with a number that corresponded to the set responses I provided. Responses to some of the 'open ended' questions were grouped into set categories to allow for analysis. At every point during the

analysis stage, caution was taken when interpreting the results, as Oppenheim advises:

surveys cannot usually show a causal connection; all that they can do is indicate associations or correlates, and so we must be careful in our interpretation of results.

(Oppenheim, 1992: 6)

A quantitative analysis of each question involving rigorous cross tabulation was then undertaken to identify any anomalies in opinions, with regards gender bias, socioeconomic background and immediate family background.

Categorising Aspirations

For the purpose of this study, the educational aspirations of the pupils were considered against their wish to continue studying past post-compulsory age in sixth form, further education college or work based training. (Green Valley School is an 11-16 school and if pupils wish to continue their studies they have to move to other schools or colleges).

The author acknowledges that there are many routes into the working world and pupils can choose from an ever changing selection of 'courses', training opportunities and qualifications to meet their abilities and interests. Vocational education has diversified over the 20th century and now exists in industries such as retail, childcare, tourism and the trade sector. The focus in this study on routes into higher education is not meant in any way to ignore the breadth and width of

learning pathways pupils can choose, it was intended to act as a focus point from which to explore gender and class bias (see the discussions on p.167 to p.169) . As a teacher, my first and most important aim in my day-to-day work is to ensure that every child and young person in my care is given every opportunity to achieve their full potential in life in whatever way they choose.

The occupational aspirations of the pupils were categorised according to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) (ONS, 2010). This divides jobs into nine categories based on the types of work performed and level of skill required:

1. Managers, Directors and senior officials
2. Professional occupations
3. Associate professional and technical occupations
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
5. Skilled trades occupations
6. Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations
7. Sales and customer service occupations
8. Process, plant and machine operatives
9. Elementary occupations.

Within each category there are breakdowns referring to specific jobs, but at the level of the nine main groups the SOC is hierarchical—jobs seen as more skilled, better rewarded and more desirable are at the top end of the chart.

Designing the Second Questionnaire

The second questionnaire was scheduled for July 2011. Most of the questions remained the same as the first questionnaire because I was trying to discover if

pupils' aspirations had changed following the intervention of a personal tutor. I did, however, add two more sections to the questionnaire which asked pupils to comment on their work with the personal tutor and their participation in the Work Experience Week which was organised by the school.

Finally, an analysis of the first questionnaire revealed that a significant number of pupils said they did not know anything about their parents' education. I was keen to explore this further in the second questionnaire, so as well as including these questions again, I also included a final question which asked pupils to explain why they said did not know this information.

Piloting the Second Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted with four Year 11 pupils at the beginning of July 2011 and it was shown to my academic supervisors.

The main issue arising from this pilot was the length of answers that pupils could provide. It appeared that the 'essay' button had to be clicked instead of the 'text' button if pupils were to be allowed to give quite lengthy answers. Several other issues with regards pupils not understanding some of the terms used in questions 32 and 40 were also raised and it was decided that reference to these terms should be included in the introductory talk before pupils began the questionnaire to avoid any ambiguity (Bryman, 2012), see appendix two for final questionnaire.

Administering the Second Questionnaire

Although a specific date had been agreed with the school well in advance of the second questionnaire, alterations to the school calendar meant that this scheduled opportunity was lost. I was keen to complete the questionnaire survey before the summer holidays as this would provide an ideal opportunity for data analysis. Therefore, I worked closely with the school leadership team and arranged to meet with the pupils over the course of three days. I was able to divide the year group into four groups and run the online questionnaire survey during free lessons.

To ensure that each pupil understood and was given the same information before completing the questionnaire (Bryman, 2012), I produced a powerpoint slide presentation which was used as a guide to explain everything and also acted as an aide mémoire for myself. On analysing the questionnaire data I found that I had worked with 137 of the original 152 pupils questioned during the previous October. Of these fifteen pupils, eleven were absent from school when the second questionnaire survey was administered and a further four pupils (three girls and one boy) had left the area and moved to another school. The findings are presented in chapter five.

Analysing the Second Questionnaire

Vondracek, et al. (1986) warned that the research they had reviewed often suffered from inadequate and inappropriate data analysis (1986: 96). In order to ensure that all the anomalies were rectified before the analysis process, a significant amount of

time was spent scrutinising the answers provided to ensure that answers were cross referenced correctly with the previous questionnaire and open answers were categorised and coded appropriately. A quantitative analysis of each question involving rigorous cross tabulation was undertaken to identify any differences and anomalies in opinions, with regards to gender bias, socioeconomic background and immediate family background. Pupils had to answer more questions in this second survey instrument as opinions were sought about the structure of work experience and the personal tutoring support. Again, opinions were considered according to gender, socioeconomic background and immediate family background. The findings from the data analysis form the core of the later empirical chapters.

Focus Groups

There are a range of issues that the researcher has to consider in order to compose and conduct a successful focus group, which is both homogeneous and productive. The following chart was used as a check list to ensure the focus groups were efficiently organised:

Table 4.4: Focus Group check list

Number of groups/ Group composition	<p>It was decided that there would be two focus groups: one for male pupils and one for female pupils. It was thought that this would encourage pupils to be honest and open when expressing their views (Kitzinger, 1995).</p> <p>Groups are usually composed of between five and eight participants (Robinson, 1999). I invited ten pupils to participate in each focus group, this would allow for any pupils who withdrew or were absent when we met.</p>
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Duration of groups	Each group was scheduled to last approximately 40 minutes (Bloor et al., 2001).
Geographic location	The meetings would take place in Green Valley School during the school day. This would ensure that most pupils who were invited to join the groups would attend. A bright airy meeting room was chosen for the meetings, away from the main school so that there were no interruptions.
Ethical considerations	All parents were contacted by letter and were asked to withdraw their child if they did not want them to participate. Seven pupils (3 boys and 4 girls) were withdrawn from the study by their parents.

(Bloor et al., 2001)

Robinson (1999) described focus groups as in-depth, open-ended group discussions, usually lasting for between one and two hours, which explore a specific set of issues on a predefined topic. Most focus group studies use purposive sampling frames which aim to draw together homogeneous groups of individuals to deepen and enrich a researcher's understanding of a topic (Bloor et al., 2001). Particularly pertinent to this study, focus groups allow researchers to meet with groups of people who may otherwise find individual interviews scary or intimidating (Madriz, 2000). Focus groups, however, are not without their critics; Bloor, et al. (2001) reminded us that the success of focus groups depends, at least in part, on the unpredictable social dynamics between the individuals in the group. Also, the results cannot be regarded as representative of the wider population and should therefore not be generalized (Robinson, 1999).

The focus groups were included in the time schedule for this study (appendix three) from the outset of the research. The composition of the group and the timing and locations were finalised at the beginning of September 2011 so that pupils' parents could be contacted, a suitable room could be booked and Dr Salisbury (joint supervisor of my studies) could attend the meetings as a moderator (Bloor et al., 2001). On the day of the meetings, I had access to the room in the morning and I was able to organise all the resources and set the audio recorder up before pupils arrived.

At the beginning of each focus group, Dr Salisbury was introduced as a person interested in young people, schools and training and the purpose of the focus groups was explained. The use of an audio recorder was explained and pupils were asked to say their names so that they could be identified when transcribing the discussions (Bloor et al., 2001).

Individual Focusing Exercise

In order to allow pupils to feel comfortable within the group, an individual focusing exercise (Bloor et al., 2001) was introduced. The exercise involved pupils placing eight professions on a cognitive map (Gottfredson, 1981) (appendix four) whilst considering gender and prestige level. The occupations chosen for this exercise were identified by pupils as possible careers during the first or second questionnaire surveys that were administered; also, they were carefully considered to encourage pupils' to explore their perceptions of a wide range of occupations

according to the prestige level and sextype. Before pupils began the exercise, a definition for the word *prestige* was offered to minimize the potential for confusion or misunderstanding; in fact the term was explained several times in the male focus group. The decision to ask pupils to create a cognitive map, similar to the one that was described by Gottfredson (1981: 552), was taken in an attempt to make the familiar strange (Mannay, 2010). This activity allowed for deep and meaningful discussions which formed the main part of each focus group.

When pupils had finishing placing each occupation a discussion around the placings then allowed pupils to consider what influenced occupational aspirations. A number of photographs were shown at different points in the discussion in order to act as *visual elicitation* to focus and reengage pupils. Pupils were encouraged to not only reflect on their knowledge and experiences but also to explore what they thought, how they thought and why they thought that way (Kitzinger, 1995). Photographs of each pupil's chart were taken for recording and analysis purposes (see appendix five).

I was able to triangulate (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) a number of findings in the focus groups. For example, the analysis of the second questionnaire revealed that occupational aspirations were very gender stereotypical as 50 per cent of boys aspired to traditional male occupations and 40 per cent of girls aspired to traditional female occupations (see tables 5.7 and 5.8). Discussions in both the male and female focus groups revealed gender biased images that had been formulated

from a very young age. For example, one conversation in the male focus group when discussing male and female nurses showed, even from a young age, pupils had developed a gender self-concept and perceived occupations as traditionally male or female.

Mrs Golding: [...] Do you think that some of your decisions regarding the way you perceive the sextype of an occupation have been influenced by what you have experienced in your life?

Mark: Kind of. When I was little and went to the hairdresser it was always a woman. Also, when I was little I was proper shocked to find out that you could get male nurses.

Ollie: Yeah I agree with that.

Sam: There was a doctor and he said a nurse would come to see me and a man walked in with a blue pinny thing on and I couldn't believe it.

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

I also felt that the opportunity to speak with a smaller number of pupils on key issues helped me explore and understand key findings that were identified following a quantitative analysis of the answers gathered from each questionnaire. For example, at the end of each focus group Dr Salisbury led a short discussion about the careers advice that was offered to pupils at Green Valley School and found that a number of pupils wanted more guidance:

Dr Salisbury: [...] could schools do anything else to help individuals to frame their futures? Obviously schools need to get good results, but what else could they do? I know that Emma and Amelia are undecided about their futures, could schools do more?

Katy: I think maybe if we knew more about our options, I know that there are people you can go to but maybe in a few more life skills lessons we could learn more about not the jobs you could do but what is involved in jobs. The only way I found out about medicine was going off and asking people. I think this advice should be more readily available for people because if you do not have the idea you will not aspire to it and that is why I think people fall short of their full potential.

Emma: I think it would be good if people came in with that job and talked about what they have to do and give more people information about it.

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

If time had permitted, I would have allowed for the focus groups to have lasted slightly longer, but I do feel that I had collected sufficient data and information.

The Process of Coding Focus group Discussions

For the purpose of this study, I decided to follow the five staged analytical process described by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) to identify key themes from the focus group discussions. The five key stages outlined are: familiarization; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; mapping and interpretation. I intend to describe each stage in detail and provide a brief summary of the work undertaken in this research.

Familiarisation: This refers to the process during which the researcher familiarises themselves with the transcripts. They can do this by listening to recordings of the focus groups and/or reading the transcripts.

To familiarise myself with the transcripts I listened to the tapes and typed up the focus group discussions. I found this work invaluable, as I was able to 'relive' the discussions as I typed. Even at this stage, I was able to begin to identify key recurring themes.

(Extract from research diary)

Identifying: This second stage involves using the notes that were produced in the first stage. Key themes, as expressed by the participants should be identified and highlighted in the margins.

After printing the transcripts, I sat down one evening with a pen and pencil and began writing various notes in the margins which I felt showed links with the research questions. For example, in the male focus groups, two boys began sniggering when others talked about their hopes and dreams regarding higher education. In the margin at this point in the transcript, I wrote "masculinity: Weis, Willis, Archer, Gottfredson" this identified a link between aspirations and gender as raised in one of the research questions and provided a link to key research authors discussed during the literature review.

(Extract from research diary)

Indexing: Quotes need to be sifted and portions of texts that correspond to a particular theme should be identified. For the sake of convenience Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text (1994).

Four research questions guided the work in this study, therefore any themes identified from the focus group transcripts were numbered according to the research questions. I also added two further numbers, to highlight discussions about work experience and to highlight any other discussions that did answer the research questions, but still warranted further consideration. I also added the page numbers of these quotes to the exercise book I kept which set out the quantitative analysis of each question in both surveys. I found this process extremely interesting and exhilarating as I was able to begin to triangulate themes using multi-methods.

(Extract from research diary)

Charting: This stage involves moving the specific pieces of data and quotes that were indexed in the previous stage and arranging them in charts under headings and subheadings that were decided in response to each of the research questions.

I sat down one afternoon and created a table in 'Word' which involved copying and pasting sections of the transcript under different headings. I then printed each section out and displayed these on the wall in the office where I worked. This visual referencing provided a valuable resource when writing up the findings in response to each research question.

(Extract from research diary)

Mapping and interpreting: This final stage involves analysing the key characteristics as set out in each chart. This analysis should provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon and allow the researcher to interpret the data accurately. It is at this point that the researcher is cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis, which are: '*defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies*' (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994: 186).

Using a pritt stick and scissors, I created a simple schematic diagram using the charts created in the previous diagram. I linked quotes and themes to key literature reviews and began identifying influences that could affect aspirations and adding possible strategies for further interventions at micro, macro and meso level to raise occupational and educational aspirations. I also added some of my own thoughts, reactions and feelings alongside some of the comments.

(Extract from research diary)

The Diary-Interview Method

Diaries are used in different ways (Burgess, 1994). They can be standalone methods of data collection or form part of a larger study incorporating interviews, questionnaires and observation. In 1977, Zimmerman and Weider used diaries in their ethnographic study of California counter-culture as a preliminary to interviews; this made the participant the observer and the informant. In an article on their

diary-interviews method, they discussed the role of diaries as an observational log maintained by subjects which can be then used as a basis for intensive interviewing (Zimmerman and Weider, 1977: 481). The intention was the same in this study, I asked Mrs James, the personal tutor at Green Valley School to keep a diary of the work she undertook during her first year in post. In this diary, I encouraged her to write freely and include whatever information she wished. I think such a method and approach allowed me as researcher to gain a further insight into the work undertaken and the impact it was having on pupils from somebody else's perspective; this diary acted very much as detailed field notes but from an informant who was also a subject of the study. Again, I think that this is another way of 'fighting familiarity' (I was unable to observe the majority of Mrs James' work in the personal tutor role as I was on maternity leave). Thus the diary that Mrs James kept acted as a wonderfully rich resource which I could use to learn about the tutoring work that was being undertaken in my absence. I was able to reflect on this written diary with Mrs James through a series of interviews which were undertaken. The diary interviews were undertaken on four dates throughout the academic year:

- 12th October 2010
- 20th January 2011
- 16th March 2011
- 12th July 2011

Ahead of each interview, I read Mrs James's diary regarding the work she had completed that term and compiled a list of questions and prompts to explore a number of themes I had identified. For example, I could see from the diary that

Mrs James was trying to speak with every pupil to help them set short term goals with regards post-16 destinations; I was keen to try and find out if she could identify any differences in pupils' aspirations:

Susan Golding: In your diary you mention your work with pupils when trying to help them set targets for post-16 destinations, did you find that any particular pupils, group of pupils had noticeably higher or lower aspirations?

Mrs James: There were considerable differences between them. The higher ability groups definitely knew which line of work they wanted to go into for employment e.g. physio, doctor forensic science. A lot of them have had discussions at home with parents/ family and this showed up in our conversations. The lower ability groups – some seemed to aim for nothing higher than cleaning for a living (not that there's anything wrong with this profession mind you!), whilst others clearly didn't know what they wanted to do and when asked, they were typically following mum or dad's employment. I think more work needs to be done with these in the future.

(Extract from interview with Mrs James: 16th March 2011)

Similar to the approach used by Burgess (1988: 201), I was keen to design a series of interview questions that encouraged Mrs James to elaborate on her diary entries during our interviews with the intention of building on the information she had written (Burgess, 1994: 309).

6. Research Management

The Sample Size

Gorard (2003) has suggested that '*successful identification of social patterns is assisted by...having a large sample*' (2003: 62). The researcher must be sure that they can achieve the required 'confidence level' in their results when undertaking quantitative analysis. Gorard continued by warning about the dangers of not

'considering a sampling strategy and the potential biases that this introduces' (2003: 89). With due consideration, it was therefore decided that all pupils within a year group in one secondary school would be asked to participate in this research so as to increase the reliability of the results. As will be discussed later in this chapter, 152 pupils participated in this study (there are currently 935 pupils on roll in the school). So proportionally, this is a healthy sample of pupils at Green Valley School.

Pupil Profile

Some brief characteristics of the cohort of pupils are now presented.

Age and Gender

There are a total of 174 pupils in this year group, 7 pupils did not want to take part in the study and the other 15 pupils were absent on the day the questionnaire was distributed. All the pupils questioned in this project were in the same year group in one secondary school. In total, 152 pupils completed the first questionnaire in October 2010.

Table 4.5: Breakdown of pupils who completed the first questionnaire

	Female	Male	Total
N	84	68	152
%	55	44	100

Of these pupils, 11 pupils were 15 years old and 141 pupils were 14 years old.

Table 4.6: Breakdown of the pupils who completed the second questionnaire.

	Female	Male	Total
N	75	62	137
%	54	45	100

Ensuring that broadly the same number of pupils completed both questionnaires allows for direct comparison between both sets of answers. Of the fifteen pupils that did not complete the second questionnaire, four pupils had moved to other schools (three girls and one boy) and eleven pupils were absent on the two days the questionnaire was administered.

When deciding upon which pupils would contribute to the focus group discussions, careful consideration of the answers provided in response to the both questionnaires was made to ensure that a wide range of aspirations and opinions would be present in the final groups. Pupil responses were considered for the following questions/areas and a cross selection of male and female pupils were chosen based on their answers to the following:

- What do you want to do when you leave school? Do not know / Find a job / Go to college / Go to Sixth Form;
- Answers to questions relating to family members' educational achievements. Who had studied at a further education college? University? Who could not answer these questions?
- Aspirations: Who had high/low aspirations? Who felt they could not achieve their high aspirations (i.e. their dream jobs differed greatly from their expected jobs)?
- Who was in receipt of free school meals?

With these considerations in mind, the following two tables overleaf describe at a glance the pupils who were chosen to participate in each of the single sex focus groups:

Table 4.7: Brief description of each pupil in the female focus group

Name	Educational Aspirations	Educational Expectations	Occupational Aspirations	Occupational Expectations	FSM	Level 2 Threshold 2012
Amelia	Sixth form	Sixth form	Pilot	Office based job	No	Yes
Amy	FEC	FEC	Not sure	Hairdressing	No	Yes
Emma	Sixth Form	Sixth Form	Don't Know	Don't Know	No	Yes
Hannah	Sixth Form	Find a job	Teacher	Working with children	No	No
Katy	FEC	FEC	Doctor	Doctor	No	Yes
Kelly	Find a job	Find a job	Hairdresser	Hairdresser	Yes	Yes
Nerys	FEC	Find a job	Work in beauty	Work in beauty	Yes	No

Table 4.8: Brief description of each pupil in the male focus group

	Educational Aspirations	Educational Expectations	Occupational Aspirations	Occupational Expectations	FSM	Level 2 Threshold 2012
Harry	FEC	FEC	Performer	Programmer	No	Yes
Mark	FEC	FEC	Play rugby for Wales	Carpenter	Yes	Yes
Matthew	FEC	FEC	Actor	Actor	Yes	Yes
Michael	Sixth Form	Sixth Form	Structural Engineer	Structural Engineer	No	Yes
Ollie	Find a job	Find a job	Electrician	Electrician	No	No
Osian	Sixth Form	Sixth Form	Crime Scene Investigator	Crime Scene Investigator	No	Yes
Richard	Find a job	Find a job	Builder	Builder	Yes	No
Robert	FEC	FEC	Something in Sport	HGV Driver	No	Yes
Samuel	FEC	FEC	Singer	Builder	No	No

The pupils chosen for the focus groups represented the full range of academic ability, socioeconomic background and educational and occupational aspirations. A careful sampling process ensured that all the themes identified from the questionnaires could be represented by a pupil or pupils in each of the focus groups

(Kitzinger, 1995). The decision was made to divide the male and female focus groups in order to ensure that any conversations about sex segregation or gender stereotypical roles were not inhibited.

Academic Ability of Participants

At the end of Year 6, the last year of primary school before transferring to secondary education, the pupils in this cohort had completed end of key stage tests with their teachers and achieved the following results in the three core subjects English, Maths and Science:

Table 4.9: End of Key Stage Two results in core subjects for the study cohort

	English (Level 4+)		Maths (Level 4+)		Science (level 4+)	
	Male(60)	Female(69)	Male(60)	Female(69)	Male(60)	Female(69)
N	45	48	41	48	48	56
%	75	69.5	68.3	69.5	80	81.1
LEA %	67.0	81.3	73.4	79.5	81.2	87.7
Wales %	73.2	84.3	79.5	82.6	83.7	86.6

Females achieved more Level 4+ in Maths and Science, compared with males at school, county and national (Wales) level. Interestingly, males achieved the highest Level 4+ results in English at school level. (Pupils are expected to achieve at least Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)).

At the end of Year 9 (July 2010), the third year of secondary school, the pupils in the year group completed Key Stage Three (Years 7 to 9) and received their final SAT

results⁸. In the three core subjects, English, Maths and Science, pupils achieved the following results:

Table 4.10: Breakdown of Key Stage Three results for the study cohort

	English (Level 5+)		Maths (Level 5+)		Science (Level 5+)	
	Male(68)	Female(84)	Male(68)	Female(84)	Male(68)	Female(84)
N	28	63	41	67	54	71
%	41	75	60	79	79	84
LEA %	58.1	75.5	70.8	73.8	77.8	82.3
Wales %	63.3	78.3	72.1	74.9	73.7	77.5

The percentage gap between females and males achieving Level 5+ in English is noticeable at school, county and national (Wales) level. Females achieved more level 5+ in all core subjects at every level. The gender gap increased in each subject area when comparing end of Key Stage results (table 4.6 and 4.7).

Green Valley School partly base their predictions for pupil progress on data received from Fischer Family Trust⁹. The table below sets out the school's targets and results at Key Stage Four for the year group involved in this study when they sat their examinations in June 2012 (figures 2.3 to 2.5 provide results for the previous four years):

⁸ SATS (Standard Assessment Tests) tests are given at the end of year 2, year 6 and year 9. The tests in Year 9 were introduced for the academic year ending July 1998 but were scrapped at the end of the academic year ending July 2009; most schools now rely on teacher assessments. The assessments record attainment in terms of National Curriculum attainment levels, numbered between 1 and 8. Pupils in Year 9 would be expected to achieve a level 5.

⁹ Fisher Family Trust provide reports which include value-added analyses that are based on pupils' prior-attainment from the previous Key Stage.

Table 4.11: Breakdown of Key Stage Four headline results at Green Valley School

	2012	FFT(D)	School Target
	%	%	%
Level 2	65	54	60
Level 2 (+E/M)	30	38	40
Level 1	89	89	89
No Qualifications	0	N/A	0

Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

Of the pupils who completed the first questionnaire, 24 pupils in Year 10 were currently in receipt of free school meals (this compares with 215 pupils (22.9%) in the whole school). Pupils are entitled to free school meals if their families receive Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or the guarantee element of State Pension Credit. They are also eligible if their parents are in receipt of Income Related Employment and Support Allowance.

Table 4.12: Number and percentage of pupils in this study in receipt of free school meals.

	Male	Female	Total
N	8	16	24
%	9.5	23.5	15.7

In order to put these figures into context, the table below (which was taken from the school census 2010) sets out the number and percentage of secondary school pupils eligible for free school meals. In 2009/2010, 17.1 per cent of pupils of secondary school age were eligible to receive free school meals. Therefore, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in Green Valley School is slightly higher than the Welsh average (+4.9%).

Table 4.13: Number of secondary school pupils on roll in Wales and number of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Secondary school	07/08	08/09	09/10
Number on roll in secondary school in Wales	178,626	176,314	173,920
Entitled to free school meals	27,820	28,713	29,805
% entitled	15.6	16.3	17.1

SOURCE: Schools Census, 2010 (Wales)

A review of previous research has highlighted a possible correlation between underachievement and pupils in receipt of free school meals (Smith, 2003; West, 2007). Free school meals is a proxy for social class and this it is not just achievement that is affected, it has also been shown that pupils eligible for free school meals progress at a slower rate (DfES, 2006).

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of pupils and any possible causal relationship with aspirations will not be considered because the vast majority of pupils who took part in this study were white British pupils.

Ethical Considerations

Following BERA's (2011) revised ethical guidelines, pseudonyms were used for geographical places, the school, staff and pupils who participated in this study. Before commencing work, ethical approval was sought from the Ethics Research Committee, based in the Social Sciences Department at Cardiff University. During the proposal, consideration was made towards seeking appropriate permission from parents so that their children could be questioned during the empirical part of

this project. Leaflets explaining who I was, what the research project entailed, how I would gather information and who to contact if they had any further questions were prepared for parents and pupils (appendix six). Opt out letters were also written for parents/carers to complete and return if they did not want their children to take part in the research (appendix seven). All pupils and parents were assured confidentiality throughout the project and any pupils' names and/or school names would be changed in the thesis to protect identities.

As explained in chapter one, I wanted to complete this research *with* pupils, not *about* pupils (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000; MacBeath et al., 2003, Rudduck and Flutter, 2004). To explain the reasons behind the research I spoke with all the pupils in a school assembly and distributed leaflets and letters to them describing my work. I contacted the pupils' parents at the same time (September 2010) providing information about the research and gave parents and pupils a period of two weeks to return the opt out letter if they did not wish to take part in the research or ask for further information. The opportunity to opt out was chosen by seven pupils who withdrew completely (i.e. did not want to complete the questionnaire or take part in the focus groups) and two pupils did not wish to participate in the focus groups.

The decision to use data collected from the time capsule which was organised in July 2006, was considered opportunistic. In order to gain consent from pupils to use these data, I asked these individuals to stay behind after a year group assembly; I reminded them that four years previously they had recorded their dream jobs. I

explained to pupils that I thought it would be interesting to evidence how their aspirations had changed over a five year period, again I reassured pupils that all information was anonymised and they did not have to give permission for me to use this information. I asked pupils to think about our conversation and come to speak with me if they wanted to know more or if they wanted to withdraw from the project. I also explained that pupils could withdraw from this part or any part of the project using the 'opt out' sheets that had been distributed during the previous year group assembly and sent home. No pupil withdrew from this part of the project.

Dual Role of teacher - researcher

BERA (2012) guidelines state that in line with Article 12 of UNCRC, children should be facilitated to give fully informed consent. They should also be informed of their right to confidentiality and their entitlement to withdraw from the research at any time (2012, p.5/6). As the pupils' progress manager, I was aware they could feel a sense of obligation to take part in the research I was conducting. In an attempt to help pupils see a separation in my role as teacher and as researcher, I decided to dedicate one of our year group assemblies to explain my research work.

I began by explaining that I was studying at Cardiff University during my free time. As a progress manager I wanted to try and understand how everyone's dreams for the future, concerning their post 16 destinations and dream jobs changed and were influenced as they became older. In order to complete this work I wanted any

interested pupils in our year group to complete two questionnaires. I would then like a smaller number of pupils to take part in a group discussion. I stressed that pupils were not obliged to take part in this research and explained an 'opt out' form could be completed at any point during the project, either verbally or in writing. I explained that any information gathered would be anonymised, even the name of the school.

I had summarised everything in the leaflets I wanted the pupils to take home and also explained that I had posted a separate information leaflet home to their parents which also contained an 'opt out' form with both leaflets. If pupils did not wish to take part in the project, they needed to return this form to their form tutor before the first questionnaire, which was to be scheduled for completion in four weeks. I did not keep reminding pupils about this project over the next four weeks, to avoid placing undue pressure on pupils, I asked the form tutors to collect any opt out forms.

I hoped to further distance myself from my role of teacher by collecting the majority of data through an electronic questionnaire. Although I introduced the questionnaire when the pupils arrived in the ICT suite in school, I hoped the process of asking pupils to log on to a laptop and complete an online questionnaire would distance me from the research process. I would not have to physically ask pupils any questions and they could complete answers anonymously. Again, I hoped that

this ‘online’ approach would allow pupils to offer honest answers and not feel inhibited or pressurised to respond in a particular way.

Limitations

Gorard (2003) argued the need for a large sample size when undertaking a research project so that the counts in multivariate questions are kept as large as possible. This way the ‘confidence interval’ is increased and the results can begin to be representative of a larger audience. I am aware that this research project has been undertaken in just one school and only 152 pupils were questioned. Although it could be argued that this is a limitation, the intention was always to focus on the pupils in one school because I wanted to understand the influences the pupils experienced in the geographical area where I work currently. Hopefully, this particular decision is not considered ‘short-sighted’, but having come from a deprived area in a different south Wales valley myself and now working with so many pupils from families who are experiencing so much poverty I felt this research project would help me understand what is actually influencing pupils make the decisions they make with regards their academic and career paths when they leave full-time education. It was hoped that the project would offer advice, primarily to the case study school, on suggested timings for interventions and how different approaches to tutoring could help pupils that exhibit signs of disaffection choose to stay in education longer.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research methods that were used in this study. A brief summary of the main data collection methods employed were offered and the reliability and validity of each research instrument approach was considered. My role as researcher and the necessity of adopting a reflexive approach has been highlighted. The chapter concluded with a detailed profile of the pupils involved in this study and any ethical considerations and limitations were described. The chapter which follows presents and discusses the results in relation to the research questions which guided this professional doctorate study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Considering Aspirations within a Socio-Cultural Context

1. Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. This first considers the data collected in three separate questionnaire surveys administered to the same group of pupils. These data are further explored in the discussion of qualitative data generated from two focus groups. The results from these group interactions are also considered to triangulate findings (Greene et al., 1989; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Bryman 2012, see also chapter four). The second section of this chapter considers the work of Mrs James, the personal tutor at Green Valley School. Data were collected through a diary outline, a series of interviews with Mrs James and an electronic questionnaire which was administered to 137 pupils who had accessed the tutoring support during the academic year. This section concludes with a brief analysis of the work experience organised and undertaken by the 152 pupils that took part in this modest explorative study.

It must be acknowledged at the outset of this chapter that a huge range of possible contributing factors affecting aspirations could be discussed, considered and explored. However, this study focused on key determinants which affect pupils' short term educational and occupational aspirations. For this reason, the following research questions were used to focus the research findings:

- How are aspirations formed?
- To what extent does gender contribute to pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?
- How do individual pupils' educational and occupational aspirations change and evolve over time?
- What are the main roles and responsibilities involved with the post of personal tutor? How could this role be developed to raise pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?

The main findings discussed in this empirical chapter have been organised by key themes and will be presented under the following four headings:

1. Family engagement in learning and education;
2. The impact of gender on educational aspirations and expectations;
3. The impact of gender on occupational aspirations and expectations;
4. The role of personal tutor.

2. Family Engagement in Learning and Education

Before the questionnaires were administered in October 2010 and 2011, pupils were informed about the survey, the types of questions and how the responses would be used. A leaflet was distributed to explain my work in greater detail (appendix six). Pupils were asked on several occasions to find out the answer to four questions as prior preparation. Whilst it is widely recognised that 'household' and 'family' hold different meanings (Beck, 2001), for the purpose of this study they are considered together and pupils were asked to only consider those family

members who lived in the same house as themselves. The results of these four questions are presented below:

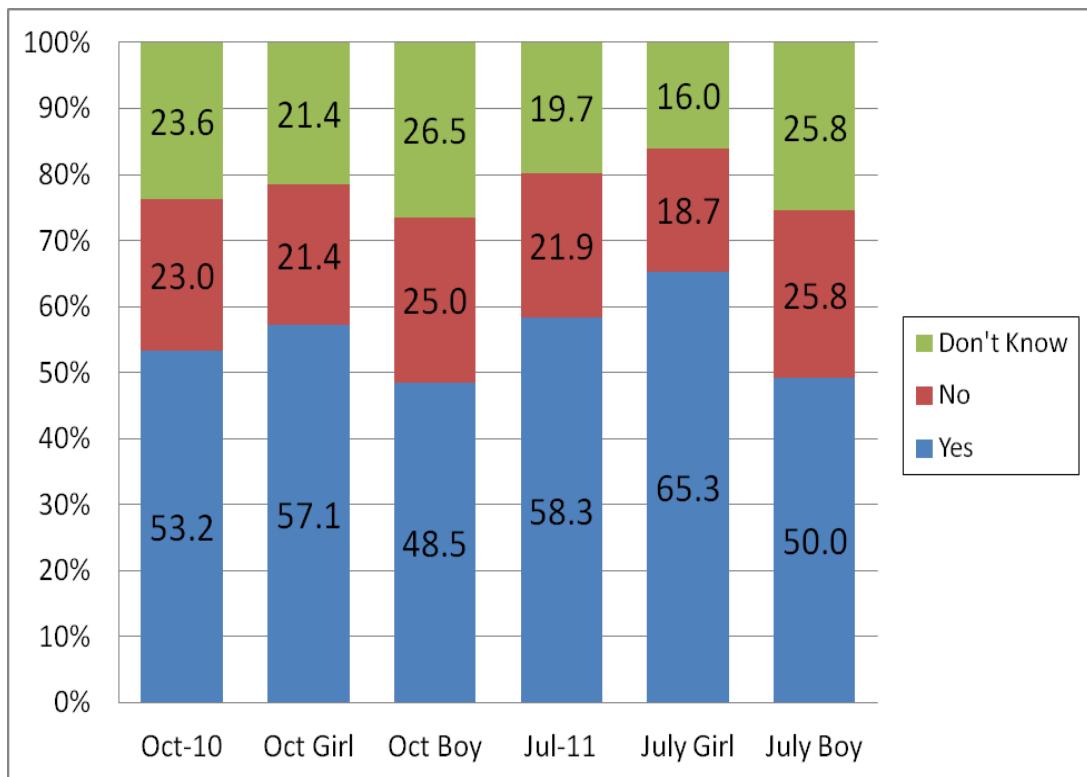


Figure 5.1: Has anybody in your household studied or is currently studying in a further education college or sixth form?

When pupils were asked about the educational backgrounds of the people who lived in their household, 49 per cent ($n = 75/152$) of pupils in October 2010 and 58 per cent ($n = 80/137$) in July 2011 said they knew a family member in their household who had studied, or was currently studying in a further education college or sixth form. These percentages correspond with the 2010 Annual Local Labour Force Survey¹⁰ which recorded that 46.4 per cent of working adults in

¹⁰ The annual Local Labour Force Survey (LLFS)/Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets are derived from a sample of approximately 23,000 people of working age across Wales, with a minimum of around 800 people of working age in most local authorities in Wales.

Berllan were qualified to NQF level 3 or above and compares with the Welsh average of 51.5 per cent. A cross tabulation analysis of responses by gender did reveal that more girls than boys knew somebody who had studied in college. Repeating the same questions in July 2011 did not yield a higher percentage of pupils being able to answer these questions. A slightly higher percentage of girls are showing awareness of their immediate family member's educational backgrounds in July 2011 with regards those who have studied in post-16 education.

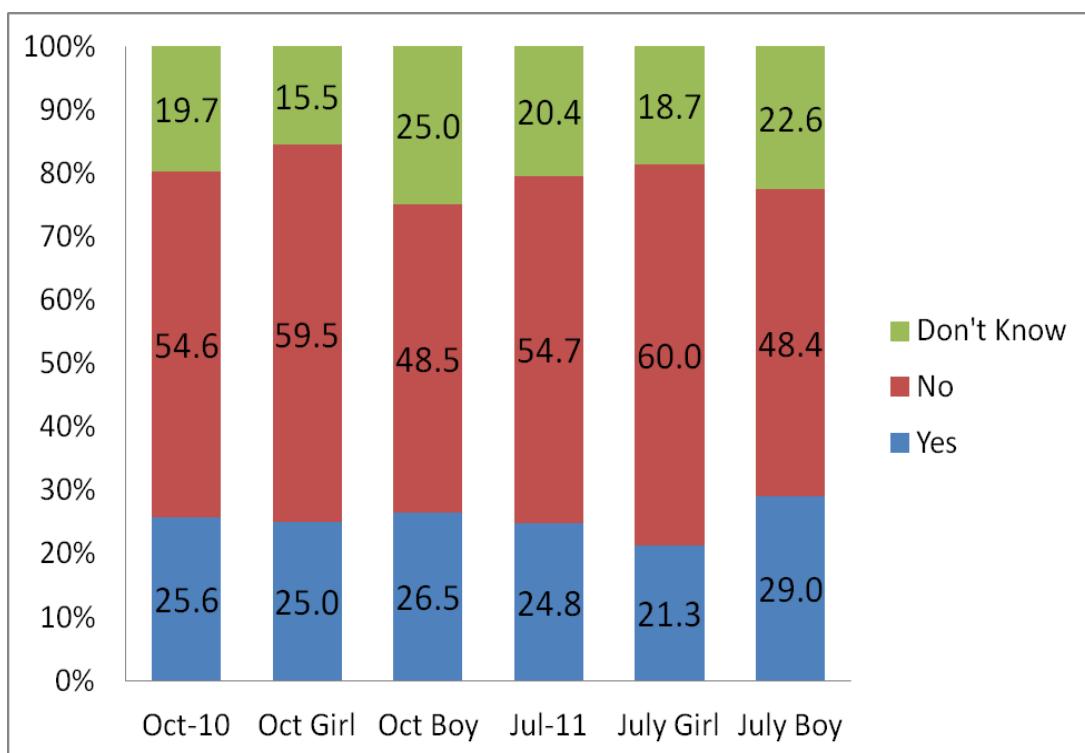


Figure 5.2: Has anybody in your household studied, or is currently studying at university?

The percentage of pupils aware of somebody in their household having studied or currently studying at university was 25 per cent in October 2010 and 24 per cent in July 2011. These percentages correspond closely with the 2010 Annual Local Labour Force Survey which recorded 24.9 per cent of working adults in Torfaen were qualified to NQF level 4 or above, and is slightly lower than the Welsh average of

30.6 per cent. As Ball, et al. (2002) noted, for the majority of working-class young people, not going to university is part of a 'normal biography' (2002: 54). Kintrea et al. (2011) also commented that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend universities in the same proportion as their more advantaged peers (2011: 8) Later on in this chapter, we can read about two pupils - Richard and Ollie - who are both from working class backgrounds and found it very 'uncomfortable' to listen to other boys in the same focus group talk about their aspirations to study at university.

If we compare the data presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 with the percentage of pupils who aspire to continue their studies in post-16 education and university, we can begin to ascertain if there is any relationship with families' educational background and pupils' educational aspirations. Figure 5.1 shows that 58 per cent of pupils (n=80/137) recorded knowing somebody in their household who had studied or was currently studying in a further education college or sixth form. Of these 80 pupils, 71.2 per cent (n=57/80) aspired to study in post-16 education (45.6 female (n= 37) and 24.6 male (n=20)). Of the 41.6 per cent of pupils (n=57/137) who recorded not knowing anybody in their household who had studied in a further education college or sixth form, 61 per cent (n=35/57) of these pupils aspired to stay on to post-16 education (36.8 females (n=21) and 24.5 male (n=14)). Thus, there appears to be a small correlation between pupils' aspirations to continue to post-16 education and their own immediate family members' educational

experience of post-16 education. Reflecting on this finding, I would recommend that Green Valley School considers:

- establishing further initiatives to challenge pupils' educational aspirations, in the hope that an increasing number of pupils will choose to stay on to post-16 education or training, regardless of family background (see recommendation three on p.229);
- reviewing the range and accessibility of information offered to families to help them support their children when choosing different learning pathways at key transitional points in their educational careers (see recommendation four on p.231).

Figure 5.2 shows that 24 per cent of pupils (n=34/137) recorded knowing somebody in their household who had or was currently studying in university. Of these 34 pupils, 76.4 per cent (n=26/34) aspired to study in further education and 50 per cent (n=17/34) (10 males and 9 females) aspired to careers that required a degree (e.g. teacher, doctor). Of the 75.1 per cent of pupils (n=103/137) who recorded not knowing anybody in their house who had or was currently studying in university, 60 per cent (n=62/103) of these pupils aspired to study in further education and 36.8 per cent of these pupils (38/103) (13 males and 25 females) aspired to careers that required a degree.

To further cross tabulate, ten pupils stated their mother had a degree and four pupils said their father had a degree. Of the ten pupils who knew their mother

possessed a graduate qualification, one girl hoped to find work based training when she left school, four girls hoped to proceed to a further education college and five girls hoped to go to sixth form. Seven of the girls *aspired* to careers that required degrees, but only four of the girls *expected* to work in degree entry careers. Of the four pupils who knew their father had a degree, one male and one female hoped to go to sixth form, one boy hoped to go to a further education college and one hoped to find a job when they left school. Two boys *aspired* and *expected* to enter degree level professions. There is a 42 per cent chance that a pupil will proceed to university amongst those pupils whose parents had been to university. This percentage probability is significantly lower than that recorded by Fitz et al. (2005) who recorded 71 per cent probability in their study. However, the small sample size inhibits the certainty of this hypothesis and further analysis of larger datasets is required.

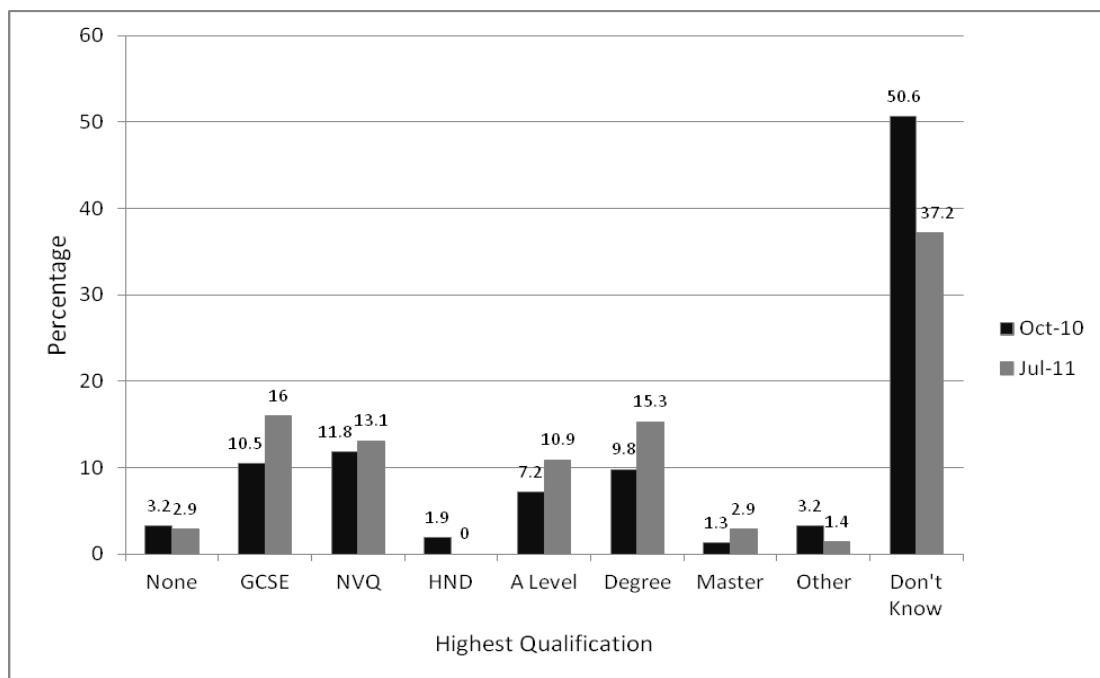


Figure 5.3: What is the highest qualification held by somebody in your household?

The range of qualifications that pupils were able to ascertain that the people living in their household had achieved was fairly broad and depicted varied educational backgrounds. However, figure 5.3 shows the most striking answer to this question, namely the high percentage of pupils who reported they did not know what the highest qualification held by a member of their household was; 50 per cent (n=77/152) of pupils in October 2010 and 37.2 per cent of pupils (n=51/137) in July 2011. This issue of not knowing their immediate family member's educational backgrounds can also be seen in response to all the four questions presented to pupils in the questionnaire. Figure 5.1 shows that 37 per cent (n=57/152) of pupils in October 2010 and then 19.7 per cent (n=27/137) of pupils in July 2011 reported not knowing if anybody in their household had studied in further education. Figure 5.2 shows that 27 per cent (n=42/152) of pupils in October 2010 and 20 per cent (n=28/137) of pupils in July 2011 reported not knowing if anybody in their household had studied at university. Figure 5.3 shows that 36 per cent (n=55/152) of pupils in October 2010 and then 42 per cent (n=58/137) of pupils in July 2011 reported not knowing who held the highest qualification in their household. In order to investigate further the reasons for this supposed lack of knowledge about immediate family member's educational backgrounds, pupils were asked in the second questionnaire in July 2011 to say why they could not answer any of these four questions.

Table 5.1 below records the number and percentage of pupils who responded 'do not know' to these questions and figure 5.4 overleaf presents their recorded reasons for not knowing.

Table 5.1: Pupils' reporting not knowing household members' educational backgrounds by gender.

Question	n	October 2010			July 2011		
		Male (68)	Female (84)	Total (152)	Male (62)	Female (75)	Total (137)
Has anybody in your household studied or is still studying in a further education college/sixth form?	n %	18 26.5	18 21.4	36 23.6	15 24.1	12 16.0	27 19.7
Has anybody in your household studied or is still studying in university?	n %	17 25.0	13 15.4	30 19.7	14 22.5	14 18.6	28 20.4
What is the highest qualification held by somebody in your household?	n %	37 54.4	40 47.6	77 50.6	27 43.5	24 32.0	51 37.2
Who holds the highest qualification in your household?	n %	24 35.2	31 36.9	55 36.1	32 51.6	26 34.6	58 42.3

Of the 35 pupils who chose to offer a reason why they could not answer some, or all of these four questions, Figure 5.4 shows that 16 pupils indicated they had forgotten to ask for the information and 14 pupils claimed they had asked but later had forgotten the answers. There is no discernible difference between pupils' knowledge when gender is considered.

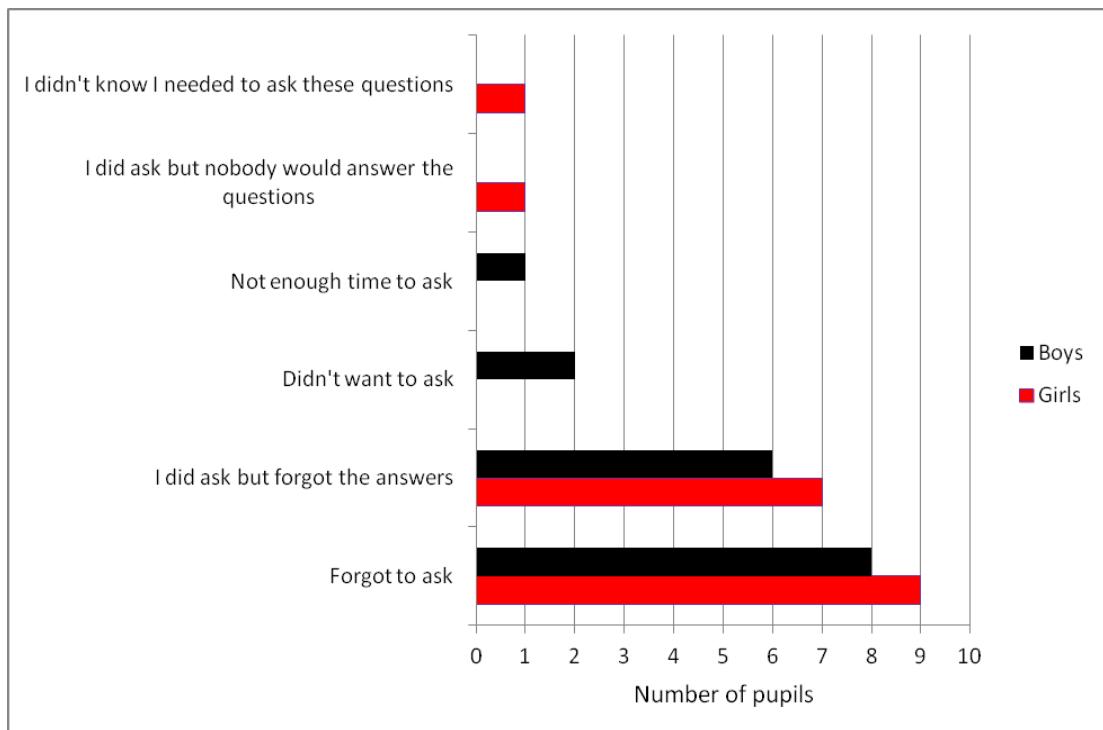


Figure 5.4: Why were you unable to answer a question about your household members' educational backgrounds (July 2011)?

Various reasons could be suggested for the pupils' lack of knowledge about their immediate family's educational qualifications. Firstly, some pupils may not have wanted to have shared this information with me. As their progress manager I am aware the pupils see and know me as their teacher rather than a researcher and although every effort has been made to separate the teacher/pupil relationship (see section 4.2), this may have proved difficult for some. Secondly, some pupils may not have understood the different qualifications that older generations could have studied for and gained. For example, currently pupils sit G.C.S.E (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations at the end of year 11. However, the O-level (Ordinary Level), also known as the General Certificate of Education (GCE) was introduced in the 1950s; In England and Wales, pupils would have sat

this examination or CSEs (Certificates of Secondary Education) until they were replaced in 1988 by the G.C.S.E.

Finally, it could be possible that some relations felt embarrassed about their lack of qualifications and did not wish to discuss them with pupils in the study. The Leitch Review (2006) warned that parents with low aspirations inhibited the attainments of their children and this created a cycle of disadvantage that locked generations of the same family into persistent poverty (Leitch 2006: 22). Similarly, Gilby et al. (2008) showed that there was a clear link with parents' own achievements and their self-esteem; the report noted that those who did not have any qualifications, who admitted difficulties with basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, and those who considered their own educational achievements to be well below average all experienced higher than average levels of low self-esteem (Gilby et al., 2008: 25)

One in eight parents lacked confidence in helping their child or approaching teachers at school... Parents with a low self-esteem in terms of their own abilities appeared to need particular support when guiding children through the post-16 period of their education.

(Gilby et al., 2008: 25)

As a result of these findings, the school would be advised to consider utilising the career development programme described by Palmer and Cochran (1988), as discussed on p.234. With the support of Careers Wales, parents could be helped to work with their children to help them create a career plan, this could in turn improve and develop conversations in the home (see recommendation four on p.232).

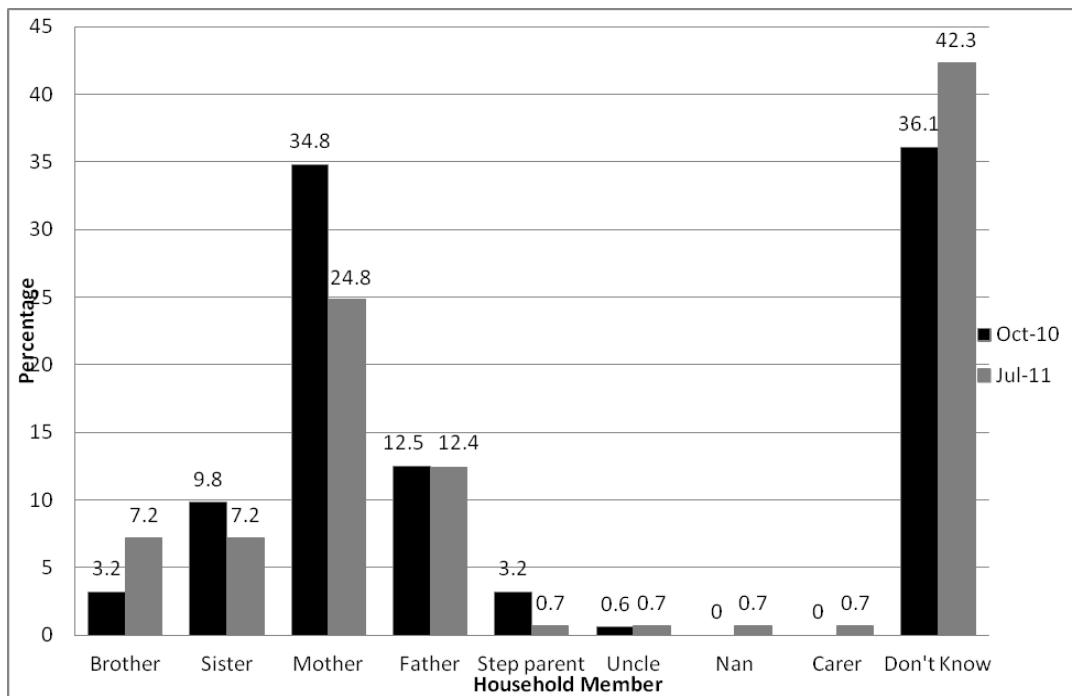


Figure 5.5: Who holds the highest qualification in your household?

Figure 5.5 shows that mothers are more likely to hold the highest qualification than fathers, (34% and 12.5% in October 2010 and 24.8% and 12.4% in July 2011). The gap reduces somewhat when considering brothers and sisters holding the highest qualification (9.8% and 3.2% in October 2010 and 7.2% and 7.2% in July 2011). Such a statistic requires us to ask a number of questions:

- Does this result show that the older female relations of the pupils in this study are excelling further in their formal education than their male counterparts? If so, why?
- Were older males choosing to leave education earlier in order to secure jobs? Could this suggest that a gender barrier towards post-16 education existed a decade or so ago? (Istance and Rees, 1994a)

Or

- Is this a reflection that female relations are happier, or more ready to talk about their qualifications and offer support to their children about their educational choices? (Macrae, Maguire and Ball, 1996; Pugsley, 1998)
- Are the attainment and participation gaps between males and females decreasing over time? (Gorard, 2000)

A Further breakdown of the qualifications held by each household member is possible:

Table 5.2: Who holds the highest qualification in your household (July 2011)?

Qualification N.Q.F level	G.C.S.E Level 1/2	N.V.Q Level 1/2	A. Level Level 3	Degree Level 5	Masters Level 7	Total
Mother	8	10	4	9	1	32
Sister	2	3	2	3	1	11
Father	4	4	6	4	0	18
Brother	1	1	3	4	1	10
Nan	0	1	0	0	0	1
Uncle	0	0	0	0	1	1

Although these data suggest that gender could be an influence for the qualification levels one actually achieves, the small sample size (n=75) inhibits the certainty of this hypothesis and further analysis of larger datasets is required. The Annual Population Survey for Wales allows us make comparisons and identifies trends and patterns with regards gender and qualifications.

Table 5.3: Percentage of adults of working age qualified at each National Qualification Framework (NQF) level (2007-2010) (Source: STATS WALES)

Year	Gender	Level 2	Level 3	Levels 4-6	Level 7-8
2010	Male	21	23	23	7
	Female	22	18	25	8
2009	Male	20	23	21	7
	Female	22	17	25	6
2008	Male	20	25	20	6
	Female	22	17	24	7
2007	Male	20	24	20	7
	Female	23	16	23	6

Table 5.3 shows us that since 2007 in Wales, men have consistently achieved more Level 3 qualifications (Weiner, Arnot and David, 1997) than females each year, but women have achieved more Level 2 (Source: StatsWales) and Level 4-6 qualifications than men annually.

Of the four questions put to the pupils in the study about their household members' educational backgrounds, the percentage of pupils who chose the option 'do not know' in response to each of these questions fluctuated between 27.6 per cent and 50.6 per cent in October 2010 and 19.7 per cent and 42.3 per cent in July 2011 (figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4). The first impressions of these data would seem to suggest that discussions at home involving family engagement with learning and education are minimal. However, figure 5.6 presents a different picture about individual pupils' relationships with their parents in that 84.5 per cent of girls (n=71/84) and 77.9 per cent of boys (n=53/68) stated they had spoken with a parent/carer to seek advice about what to do when they left school.

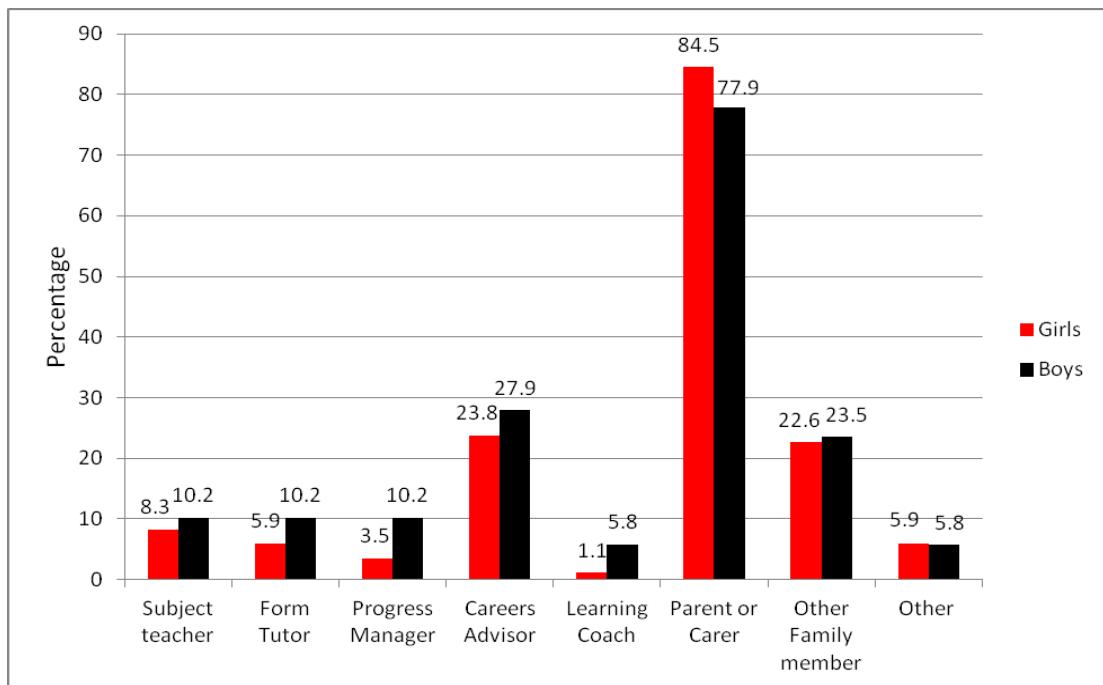


Figure 5.6: Who have you spoken with to get advice about what to do when you leave school (October 2010)?

The results seem to suggest boys are slightly more willing than girls to talk with a range of people about their future aspirations. However, we can clearly see that the vast majority of pupils are relying on their parents when seeking advice about post-16 education. This would suggest that there is a dichotomy between the *types* of conversations parents are having with their children when helping them consider their aspirations, this is in relation to the high percentage of pupils who did not know their immediate family's background which was discussed earlier in the chapter.

In order to understand why some parents are reluctant to get involved with their children's schooling, researchers have spent a considerable amount of time trying to identify and understand these barriers (Gilby et al., 2008; Harris and Goodall, 2008; Pugsley 1998). Gilby et al. (2008) found that one in eight parents lacked

confidence in helping their child or approaching teachers at school. This finding was linked to parents' own education, although parents' *perception* of their educational achievement was more important in this context than parents' *actual* achievement. Gilby et al. (2008) found that parents with a low self-esteem in terms of their own abilities appeared to need particular support when guiding children through the post-16 period of their education. Only 20 per cent of parents said that they had not discussed option choices with their children, girls were more likely than boys to discuss their option choices with an adult and most children would prefer to discuss their options with their mother. This lack of communication was most typical in families with lower incomes and with low parental qualifications (Gilby et al., 2008: 98). By contrast, parents who felt they had done well educationally were more likely to feel confident helping their child at all ages (2008: 108/109). Ball, et al. (2000) referred to these parents as '*connected choosers*'. Moreover, Ball et al. (2000) and Pugsley (1998) found that many families lacked sufficient knowledge about further and higher education and consequently could not advise their children. Pugsley (1998) demonstrated the consequences of this lack of knowledge with a discussion about several pupils currently studying in a sixth form and further education college who had chosen the 'wrong' subjects and submitted applications to study at university too late.

A number of research studies have stressed the importance of family involvement with a child's education and the positive effects it could have on their academic aspirations and achievements and later occupational attainments (Ball et al., 2000;

Goodman and Gregg, 2010; Kintrea et al., 2011). Ball, et al. (2000) found in their research on post-16 choices of pupils in London regions that parents were the main advice and support-givers with regards discussion about post-16 destinations. When members of the dyad take an active interest in each other, the dyad becomes more powerful and the members become more influential on each other's development (Vondracek et al., 1986; Schoon and Parsons, 2002). Goodman and Gregg (2010), writing more recently found that:

young people are more likely to do well at their GCSEs if their parents think it likely that the young person will go on to higher education (HE), spend time sharing family meals and outings, quarrel with their child relatively infrequently, and devote material resources towards education including private tuition, and computer and internet access.

(Goodman and Gregg, 2010: 7)

3. Educational Aspirations and Expectations

The literature review in chapter three highlighted and discussed a range of studies that had explored educational aspirations and expectations. Weis' ethnographic studies in Freeway were considered relevant to this study as they were undertaken in an area similar to that of this study (i.e. an area of high unemployment and social deprivation) and also focused on pupils from working class backgrounds, as in this study. Weis (1990, 2004) concentrated on gender and argued that teenage girls' emerging identities exhibited an initial challenge to the domestic code. Their new identity embodied a critical moment of critique and challenged the underlying premise of patriarchy. Through her longitudinal research, Weis was also able to

show how the loss of well paid, secure, industrial and manufacturing jobs deeply affected the towns and cities that relied on these industries, and overtly disadvantaged some subgroups of men over others.

The following section considers responses to the questions asked about post-16 intentions and destinations. Pupils in the study were asked about their immediate destinations after leaving Green Valley School. The questions were posed 'What do you HOPE to do when you leave school?' and 'What do you EXPECT to do when you leave school?' Figures 5.7 and 5.8 display the data for both genders revealing some interesting shifts.

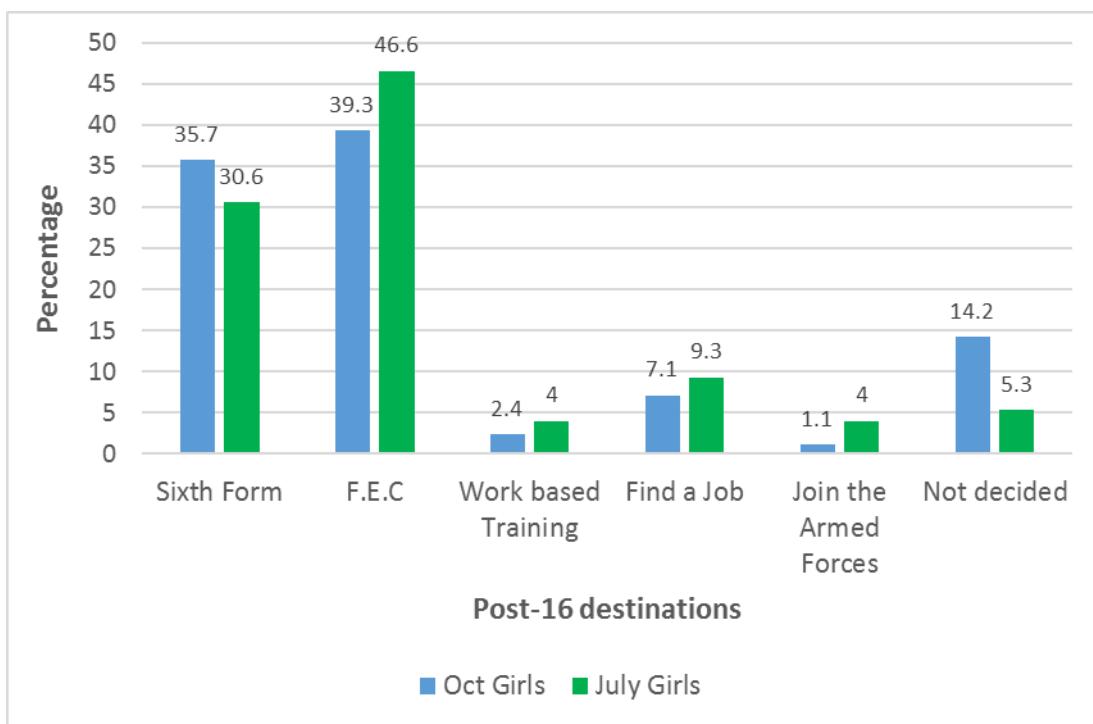


Figure 5.7: What do you HOPE to do when you leave school (GIRLS)

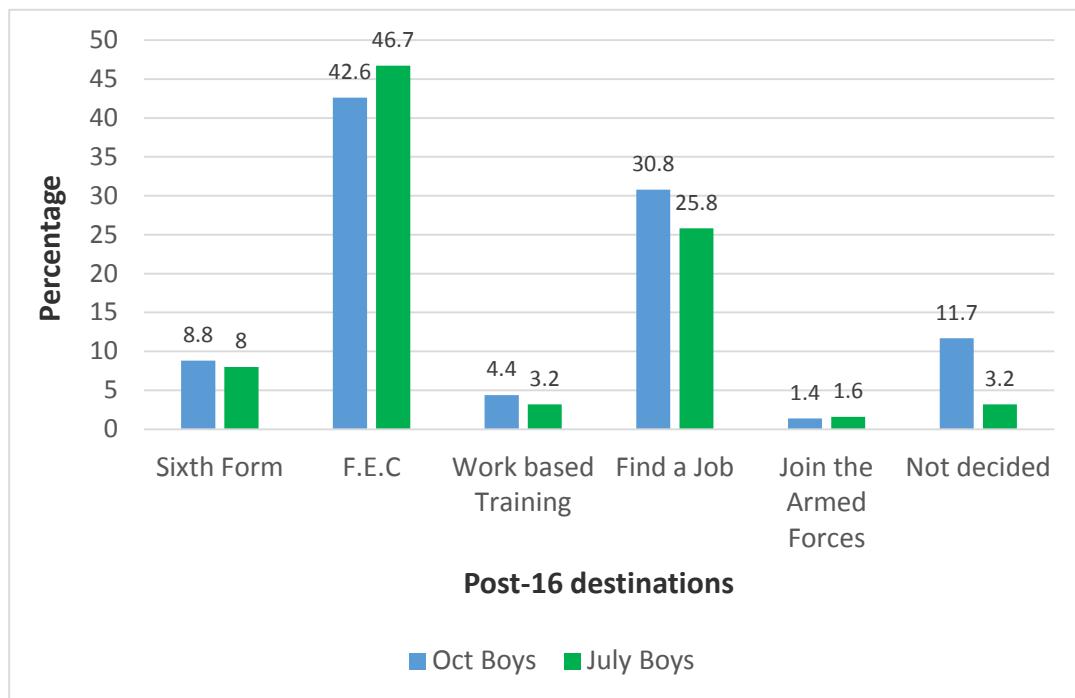


Figure 5.8: *What do you HOPE to do when you leave school? (BOYS)*

In October 2010, 67 per cent of pupils at Green Valley School said they hoped to continue on to post-16 education (77.3% female n=65/84 and 55% male n=38/68).

In July 2011, this figure increases to 70 per cent of pupils, (81.3% female n=61/75 and 58% male n=36/62). The increase in pupils wanting to stay in post-16 education is encouraging and Gilby et al. (2008) found too that the desire to carry on studying increases with age. However, the educational aspirations of the pupils in this study were lower than the cohort of pupils (n=1154) involved in Gilby et al.'s study where 73 per cent (2008: 115) of 15 year old pupils wanted to stay on to post-16 education and were significantly lower than the cohort of pupils (n=490) involved in Kintrea et al.'s study (2011) from London and Nottingham:

	London	Nottingham	Glasgow
College	97	91	79
University	87	78	81

Table 5.4: Percentage of pupils aspiring to attend college or university, when aged 13.

SOURCE: Kintrea et al. (2011) The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations.

When comparing the educational aspirations of female and male pupils, we can see that similar to the findings reported nearly twenty years ago by Istance and Rees (1994), more girls than boys were hoping to stay on to post-16 education. The percentage of girls wanting to remain in post-16 education is comparable with the female Welsh average for 2011/2012 which was 82 per cent (table 5.5). However, the percentage of boys hoping to stay on in post-16 education is significantly lower than the male Welsh average for those who remained in education in 2011/2012, which was 78 per cent (table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Recorded number of male and female pupils in further education aged 16 to 18 in Wales between 2004 and 2010. (SOURCE: WAG 2013)

			06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<i>Post-16 Education</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>n</i>	43,760	45,080	45,900	45,660	45,760	45,930
		<i>%</i>	70.9	73.6	75.8	76.4	77.4	78.5
	<i>Female</i>	<i>n</i>	45,300	45,720	46,220	46,210	45,860	45,590
		<i>%</i>	77.1	76.9	78.4	80.3	81.8	82.8
<i>Population</i>	<i>Male</i>		61,700	61,200	60,500	59,700	59,100	58,500
	<i>Female</i>		58,700	59,400	58,900	57,500	56,000	55,000

This notion of girls wanting to participate in education for longer than boys was discussed at some length in the female focus group conducted in September 2011:

[...]

Amy: I think, not being sexist, boys have had enough of school. I know some boys do not get on in classes and they struggle, it just happens. They may prefer to get on and find a job. If girls want to do something high and get on and maybe become a gynaecologist, I don't know what that is, although it is a big word, they have to study for it and they may

have more energy to push themselves. Boys just want to get on with life.

Nerys: Boys are more hands on. I think that they are keen to find jobs and earn money, whereas girls want to stay in education to get somewhere further.

Amelia: I agree, I think that more girls prefer learning and boys just want to go out and get jobs.

Katy: I do not think boys strive for freedom, but independence. I think for a long time men have been the providers and I think that although times have changed now some aspects of their personality may not have changed. They want to get out and get their own money and provide for themselves and other people. I think girls are more educated, maybe not driven to provide for anyone so they can better themselves. [...]

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

I think that Katy's final comment '*girls are ...maybe not driven to provide for anyone*' is very interesting as her comments seem to challenge and suggest a personal shift away from the domestic code which was also challenged by the girls in Weis' study (1990, 2004) and the historically stereotypical views of a young woman from a working class background leaving school at the age of sixteen to 'settle down' and start a family (Arnot, David and Weiner, 1999; Connolly and Healy, 2004). The use of the word 'provide' shows that some girls still seem to think that this notion of altruism and patriarchy exist within their community, but there is a belief that education can break this traditional cycle of family life and the role of the mother and father. At present, however, research suggests that there are inequalities in relation to participation in post-16 education that young women from working-class backgrounds must face (Archer, Halsall and Hallingworth, 2007). Opportunities for women to secure graduate and professional employment on a par with men are still constrained by their domestic and family responsibilities. A number of studies

across the decades reveal this (Vondracek et al., 1986; David, 2005; Schoon et al., 2007).

Green Valley pupils participating in focus group discussion illuminated some powerful themes. Katy wants to be a doctor and clearly she is focused on her own personal goals at this point in her life. This mindset seems to be affecting Katy's aspirations and motivating her to push her academic abilities and intention to climb the career ladder. The challenge for Katy might come later in life if she decides to start a family and she has to begin to balance working life with parenthood (Vondracek et al., 1986; David, 2005). At present, I believe that Katy's self esteem and positive self concept are giving her the personal confidence and motivation to aspire to an occupation that requires a high degree of academic ability and commitment. According to Gottfredson's (1985) theory, occupational aspirations are a reflection of one's self-concept. Gottfredson perceives self-concept in terms of two major dimensions: Identities and self-esteem.

- *Identities refer to the content of one's perceptions and beliefs about oneself;*

- *Self-esteem refers to how one evaluates or feels about oneself.*

(Gottfredson 1985: 159)

Self-concept is the total of all the beliefs people hold about themselves, including personality, interests, and perceived place in society. If we consider Katy's comment later in the focus group discussion, the occupation she aspires to holds

a high level of prestige and she seems to be trying to 'break away' from the working class background.

Katy: [...] My mum works in personnel in county hall. My dad has worked in a factory all of his life. He has been a working man all his life, that is why I have a strong opinion on that....

Mrs Golding: What do you mean by this Katy?

Katy: I have seen my dad struggle working long hours and working shifts. His job has been threatened many times, as the factory where he was employed was going to close several times. He left school when he was very young without any qualifications and he has always encouraged me to work hard in school and make sure I get a good education and a good job.

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

Interestingly, when Katy was asked to place a series of occupations on a cognitive map (Gottfredson, 1981) to measure pupils' perception of prestige and gender levels, she placed 'doctor' as neutral for gender and regarded it at the highest possible prestige. Katy considered the possibility of working as a doctor to be 'highly compatible' with her imagined future.

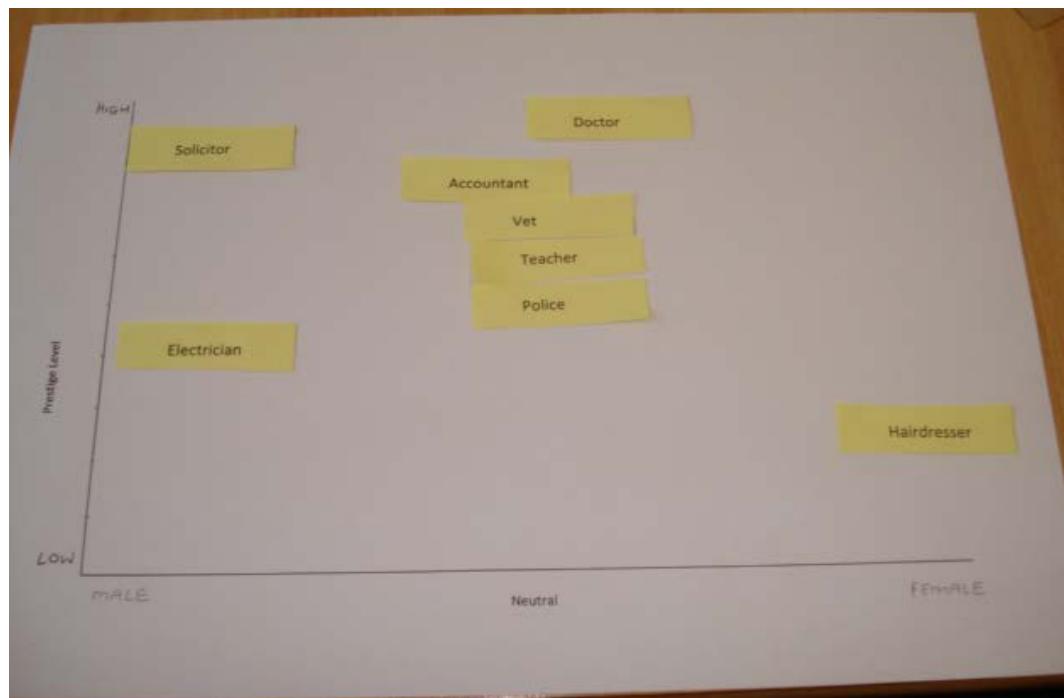


Figure 5.9: Katy's map of occupations according to prestige level and gender.

What has to be key now, with regards Katy's hopes and dreams for the future, is the access routes that are offered to her with regards further and higher education. Similar consideration is needed with regards the variety of support mechanisms that can be coordinated to ensure that Katy is guided and helped to achieve her future aspirations. Such a necessity to keep pupils' aspirations '*on track*' has been highlighted in recent literature by Kintrea et al. (2011) and Cummings et al. (2012) when they wrote:

The focus on aspirations, locus of control and valuing school should be more about keeping them on track over time through a range of different interventions. Aspirations may be unrealistic in terms of the opportunities available, so the focus might be on improving opportunities and information.

(Cummings et al., 2012: 5)

There is a need for continual support at every stage of young people's development, and there have to be mechanisms to ensure that young people who do not take advantage of opportunities at traditional school age are not marginalised for life.

(Kintrea et al., 2011: 8)

Reflecting on these research and empirical findings, careful consideration of any career programme designed for pupils in secondary school, needs to be mindful of an individual's aspiration and how this may change over time. Every effort should be made to encourage, challenge and support these aspirations so that every pupil achieves their full potential in life. To this end, Estyn should make schools more accountable for the quality of the careers guidance programmes they plan for pupils and include this area of support within a school inspection (see recommendation two, p.229).

Within the female focus group, six of the seven girls aspired to continue to post-16 education, but only four of the girls expected to achieve this goal. Within the full cohort of girls, 77.3 per cent said they aspired to continue to post-16 education and exactly the same percentage of 77.3 per cent said they expected to continue to post-16 education.

In the male focus group, two boys hoped to find jobs when they left school and two said they hoped to study at sixth form and university and expressed their desire to follow a more traditional educational pathway. The remaining seven boys hoped to continue their studies at a further education college, these boys gave the impression that the environment in which they learnt and the 'control' and rules that were followed in school made the learning process seem unattractive as they got older:

Robert: Girls are more academic...

Mark: [...] and boys want to get out of school as soon as possible. Bit stereotypical, but I want to get out of school as soon as possible. I want to go to college where it is not as controlled. I still want an education.

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Those boys who wanted to continue their studies in university were able to speak about long term aspirations. Richard and Ollie, who were keen to leave school and become a builder and electrician, seemed slightly uncomfortable when these boys were speaking about their educational aspirations:

Ollie: I want to get an apprenticeship to be an electrician.

Robert: First of all when I did the questionnaire you distributed at the beginning of Year 10 I wanted to get a job, now I want to go to sixth form.

Dr. Salisbury: People do change.

Michael: I want to go to sixth form then university. Hopefully, I will be an engineer.

Richard: Oh God!

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Richard and Ollie's awkwardness, when other boys in the focus group were talking about their aspirations to proceed to university, was easily visible when they began shifting in chairs and sniggering under their breath. Kitzinger (1995) discusses the particular strengths of focus groups for revealing dynamics and other interpersonal data:

Group work also helps researchers tap into the many different forms of communication that people use in day to day interaction, including jokes, anecdotes, teasing, and arguing. Gaining access to such variety of communication is useful because people's knowledge and attitudes are not entirely encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions.

(Kitzinger, 1995: 300)

This notion of gender identity and the perception of a general incompatibility between 'educational' and 'hegemonic male' identities (Archer and Leathwood, 2003) 'lads' and 'earholes' (Willis, 1977) is clearly evident when considering the behaviours displayed by Michael and Richard. Michael seemed to demonstrate a 'softer' form of working-class masculinity, which Ward (2012), like Willis (1972) characterised as school conformists, being more articulate, less aggressive, macho and boisterous.

Furthermore, the suggestion that the perceptions and choices of prospective HE students are constructed within a complex interplay of social factors that are underpinned by basic social class and working class young people positioning themselves outside higher education (Ball et al., 2002; Archer and Leathwood, 2003) is equally apparent. Both Ollie and Richard appeared eager to leave school and not continue their studies, this issue of participation in further and higher education has been found to be particularly salient for working class young men as it can conflict with their image of masculine identity because of the need to work, earn money and buy symbols of status and masculinity (Archer and Leathwood, 2003; Baxter et al., 2007). This notion of adopting forms of economic activity which prioritized short term rewards was also discussed by Rees et al. (1996). Richard's reactions to Michael's desire to continue to sixth form remind us that the problems faced by working-class white boys in the south Wales valleys in the post-millennium era are not the same as those from other backgrounds. Ward (2012) makes the point and asks the question:

Young men in the former industrialised regions of the South Wales have not been freed from the structural positions they find themselves in and are not in a position to reproduce the working cultures of their fathers and grandfathers. If masculinity is shaped, at least in part, by its relationships to an industrial labour market, what happens when these industries are taken away? (Ward, 2012: 35)

Richard wants to be a builder when he leaves school and Ollie wants to be an electrician. Both pupils are able but have been suspended several times at Green Valley School for being rude to their teachers. Throughout the focus group, Richard especially, tried to assert his masculinity during several conversations:

Mrs Golding: What does anybody else think in the group about women becoming electricians?

Richard: Shouldn't do it.

Mrs Golding: Shouldn't do it?

Richard: I am only joking.

Dr. Salisbury: We have got one or two images...(holds picture of female plumber up to group). That is a picture of a female plumber. Does anybody know a female plumber?

Richard: No.

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

I felt that the dynamics of the male focus group allowed for interesting and open conversations and challenged some preconceived ideas that the boys held about their education and occupational aspirations. Some of the discussion sequences proved very interesting and as well as confirming themes which were evident from the electronic questionnaire surveys that had been completed in the previous year. New themes were evident in the talk of pupils, in particular this dominant masculine persona that a noticeable number of boys at Green Valley School still felt they had to portray and how this conflicted with education. This ability to explore

and discover new themes through dynamic relationships in focus groups is highlighted as a strength by Kitzinger (1995).

The discovery that so many pupils held gender stereotypical views with regards educational choices highlights the specific need for pupils to be given the opportunity to discuss and consider both female and masculine viewpoints, as well as trajectories within post-16 academic and vocational participation. As Gottfredson (1981, 1996) has shown in her research, stereotypical aspirations are formed early in life and any pastoral/careers programmes designed to challenge gender stereotypes need to be delivered from a much younger age (see recommendation three, p.230).

Katy's thoughts about boys striving for independence were apparent during discussions in the boys' focus group, but I think this notion of independence stretched further than merely finding a job and earning a wage. Firstly, there seemed a need for greater autonomy within the learning process. Five of the seven boys wanted to continue to post-16 education but wanted to study in a further education college, all citing the reasons for this choice that they felt college life was less authoritarian. Millar (2004) and Salisbury and Jephcote (2008) also found when speaking with students studying at a local college that they too enjoyed the freedom they were granted at college, they felt that '*free time*', '*no uniform*' and '*being able to call their teachers by their first names*' made them feel '*more like adults*' and they felt *the college 'created an environment in which they felt they*

were recognised as an individual person' (Salisbury and Jephcote, 2008: 152-155).

Moreover, Pugsley (1998) described the somewhat anomalous position that was created when pupils stayed in post-16 education; while they were legally 'adults' they remained financially dependent upon their parents (1998: 74).

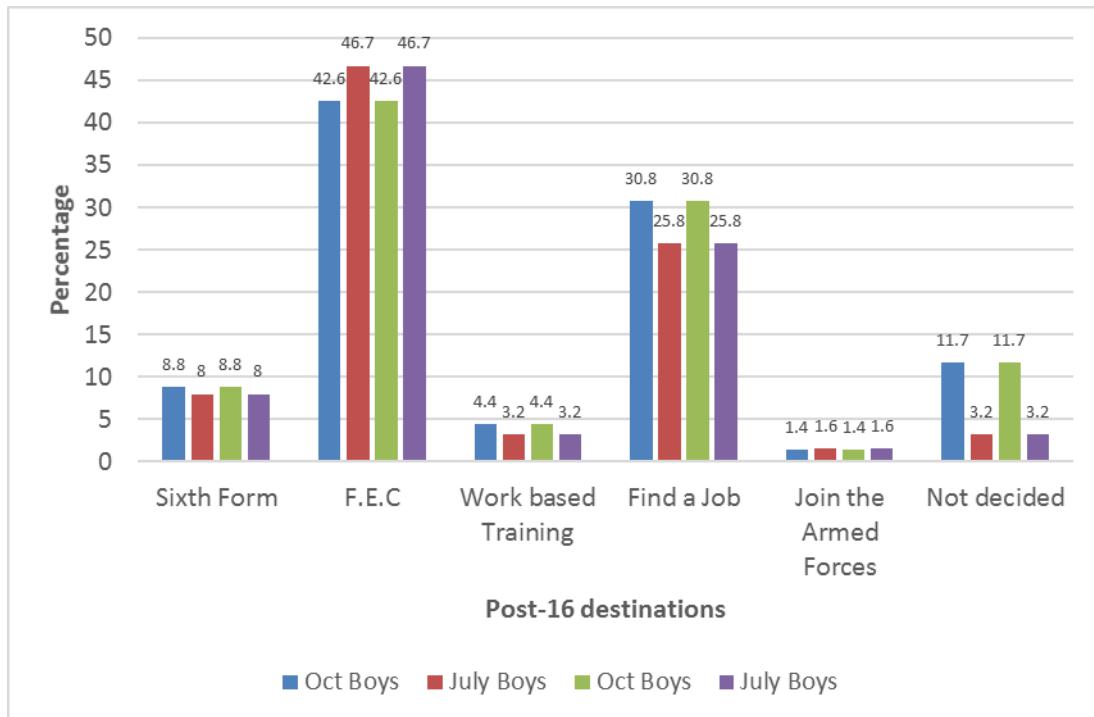


Figure 5.10: *What do you HOPE to do when you leave school? Pupils' preferences by gender and choice*

Figure 5.10 shows the different routes pupils wish to choose when they leave school at the end of Year 11. It displays their preferences as collected in questionnaire survey one and two, some 10 months apart. Overall, the most popular route was to study at a local further education college, with 46 per cent (n=35/75) of the female pupils and 46 per cent (n=29/62) of the male pupils identifying this pathway. Foskett et al. (2004) analysed post-16 markets and pupil choices in England and found that the majority of pupils in schools without sixth forms preferred to continue their studies in post-16 colleges (2004: 2). Similarly, the

percentage of pupils wishing to follow work-based training options was low (Foskett et al., 2004), this pattern could be a reflection of poor information about actual options.

Figure 5.10 also shows that there was a sharp difference in male and female pupils hoping to continue to sixth forms with 35.7 per cent of girls and 8.8 per cent of boys choosing this option in October 2010. These figures change slightly to 30 per cent of girls and 8 per cent of boys in July 2011. Similar findings were found by Istance and Rees (1994) in Wales and Foskett et al. (2004) in England when they concluded that women were more likely to pursue academic than vocational training courses. Gilby et al. (2008) also found that parents supported similar gendered aspirations with regards post-16 choices:

There were also differences in parental aspirations based on the sex of the child. While 62 per cent of parents of boys said they would like them to continue in full-time education, this was somewhat lower than the 72 per cent of parents of girls who gave this response. Instead, parents of boys were relatively more likely to want them to start learning a trade or start an apprenticeship at the age of 16: where the child was a boy 16 per cent of parents expressed this aspiration compared with just five per cent of parents where the child was a girl.

(Gilby et al., 2008: 112)

When we consider the recorded number of male and female pupils across Wales studying in sixth form contexts between the years 2006 and 2012, there have consistently been more female than male pupils. However, the significant gender divide that has been identified in Green Valley School in respect of post-16 education is not reciprocated at such a wide level as it is across the whole of Wales.

Table 5.6: Recorded number of male and female pupils studying full-time in sixth forms aged 16 to 18 between 2004 and 2010. (Source: WAG, 2013)

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Male	13,790	14,060	14,750	15,350	15,360	15,400	15,110
Female	15,910	16,450	16,630	16,950	17,130	16,990	16,380

Clearly these figures to an extent represent a ‘supply side’ effect and are beginning to decrease as Wales reduces the number of sixth forms and restructure tertiary further education provision.

I think it is very important, as explained in chapter four, that a professional doctorate allows for continual reflection and consideration. The fact that the data are suggesting a contrast in the percentage of male and female pupils wishing to proceed to sixth form and this is not seen on a micro Welsh level is noteworthy. These issues are explored further throughout the current and following chapters.

Questions about the family habitus and Green Valley School’s institutional habitus (Ball et al., 2000) could be considered; also the structure of post-16 opportunities within the county where Green Valley School is situated could be influencing decisions and aspirations (see recommendation six on p.236). I do wonder also, if informal influences in the school and community through what have been termed as the ‘hidden curriculum’ and cultures of schooling (Bernstein, 1971) have influenced pupils’ aspirations? By studying vocational courses such as Modern Apprenticeships or national diplomas students not only become gendered, but also become classed subjects (Reay, 2006) as the traditional A level is seen as a direct entry into university and a route into more professional or middle class occupations, whereas vocational courses often lead straight into forms of skilled or semi-skilled employment (Ward, 2012: 52).

(Extract from research diary)

The survey instruments tried to differentiate between aspirations and expectations (Brookover et al., 1967; Andres et al., 1999; Helwig, 2001; Kintrea et al., 2011) and figure 5.11 overleaf captures two snapshots of pupils' views regarding expected post-16 destinations:

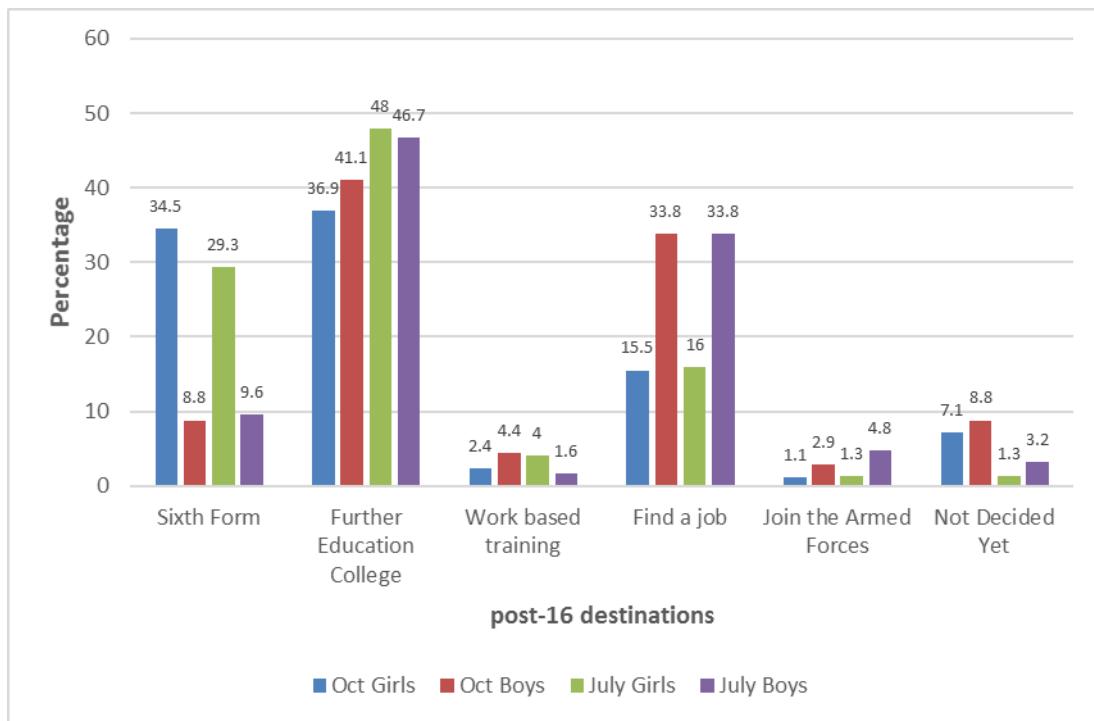


Figure 5.11: What do you EXPECT to do when you leave school? Pupil's preferences by gender and choice

As noted by Helwig (2001) the educational aspirations and expectations of the majority of pupils involved in this study are fairly similar and show an increased understanding of available post-16 options. The only difference between the girls' and boys' aspirations and expectations can be seen with regards finding a job; those pupils who were unsure what their dreams were after leaving school, said they would expect to find a job. This does encourage the same question to be asked, do

these pupils have high aspirations and is it the lack of choice and support that is inhibiting their dreams? (Cummings et al., 2012; Gorard et al., 2012).

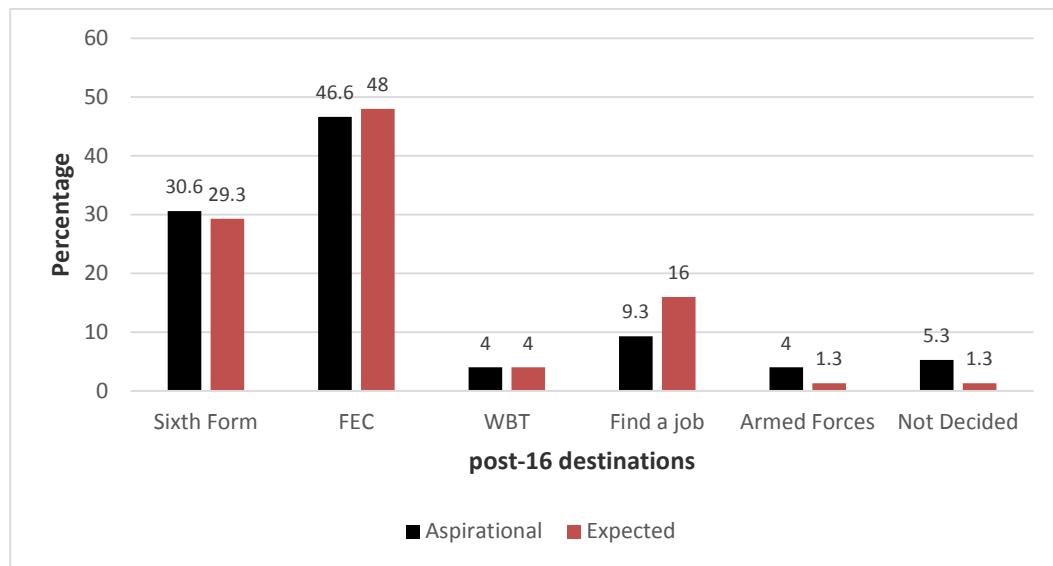


Figure 5.12: Aspirational and expected post-16 destinations of female pupils (July 2011)

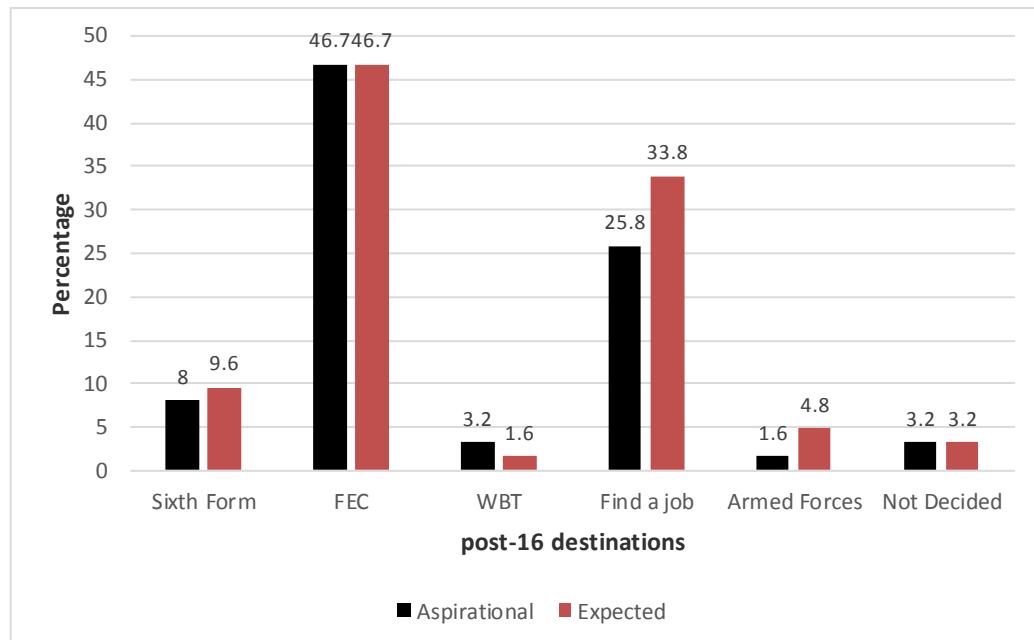


Figure 5.13: Aspirational and expected post-16 destinations of male pupils

4. Occupational Aspirations and Expectations

The *aspiration window* is determined by the individual's observations of his or her peers to form comparisons, as well as of the information and economic opportunities of the local environment (Ray, 2002). This 'window' is particularly highlighted at several points within this study. Firstly, tables 5.7 and 5.8 show the four main dream careers identified by the male and female pupils who completed the questionnaires administered in October 2010 and July 2011:

Table 5.7: The boys' four most frequently chosen dream jobs

		Rugby/Football player	Trade	Mechanic	ICT	Total
October 2010	n	9	12	9	8	38
	%	13	18	13	12	55
July 2011	n	11	11	4	5	31
	%	18	18	6	8	50

Table 5.8: The girls' four most frequently chosen dream jobs

		Work with children	Work with animals	Nurse/ Midwife	Hairdresser	Total
October 2010	n	17	10	8	6	41
	%	20	11	10	7	48
July 2011	n	13	5	4	8	30
	%	17	7	5	8	40

Tables 5.7 and 5.8 show that in July 2011, 50 per cent of boys aspired to traditional male occupations and 40 per cent of girls aspired to traditional female occupations. Although these percentages are lower than the older findings of Falk and Salter (1978) when they found that 60 per cent of the 137 young women involved in their study aspired to traditional female occupations, there still remains a gender bias towards a number of occupations. Kintrea et al. (2011) also found that a larger number of young people in a school in Nottingham where they undertook research

were interested in traditional roles, with boys aspiring to trades and girls to care occupations (Kintrea et al., 2011: 6).

More recently there has been an increase in the number of social care jobs (Parken and Rees, 2011) and ancillary staff in schools, in particular, the number of staff who work as 'learning support assistants' (LSA) (Owen, 2011). Owen (2011) found that 79 per cent of LSAs working in England were female. Saunders, when preparing a report on the first cohort of Learning Coaches in Wales (WAG, 2008a) found that 66 per cent were female. Parken and Rees (2011) analysis of gender and occupation in Wales found that women dominated jobs in the public sector. In Green Valley School, at the time of writing, there were twenty one LSAs of which two are male. The proportion of male and female teaching staff has steadily changed over the years at the case study school and at present there are 37 female teachers and 23 male teachers. Ray's (2002) notion of the '*aspiration window*' is helpful here; it could be considered that the gender distribution of staff within Green Valley School is signalling to the pupils that the female workforce in schools is increasing and future generations may begin to view jobs in school from gender stereotypical perspectives. This could be part of a significant hidden curriculum and recommendation three on p.229 encourages schools to consider carefully the careers curriculum that is planned for pupils and from what age delivery should commence. The following description of the conversation had in one of the focus groups elicits this point further.

During the two focus group interviews, the majority of boys and girls in their 'sort tasks' (Gottfredson, 1981) agreed that most primary teachers were female and an increasing number of women were employed by schools to support learning in roles such as learning support assistants and personal tutors. The boys discussed their teachers in primary school and some felt that females tended to be more patient and enjoyed working with children.

Harry: You normally get female teachers in primary schools, they are more patient.

Corey: Female teachers like bothering with kids more.

Robert: But if a man can do it, then a man should do it

Harry: They teach you the basics. You usually get female primary teachers because they are more patient...oh they are so cute...

Corey: But when I was in primary there were two male teachers...

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Consistent with Ray's (2002) research on aspirations, pupils' aspirations are being shaped by what they see and experience every day in the communities where they live. Parken and Rees (2011) also illustrated the contextual constitution of gender relations, and how their legacies can operate as gender cultures embedded in social practices repeated over time within communities.

The boys in the male focus group thought that most hairdressers were female, when discussing this occupation, but did accept that some men may want to work in hairdressing. However, their choice of vocabulary when describing men in this profession was very biased, stereotyped and somewhat homophobic, with some boys expressing ideas that if a male wanted to be a hairdresser he would probably be 'gay' or 'feminine'.

Mrs Golding: Do you think the girls on a hairdressing course would accept a boy choosing this as a subject?

Mark: They would probably love them, not being stereotypical, but they would love them as their as if they were their gay best friends... if you know what I mean.

Corey: Girls like a bit of quiet and calmness.

Mrs Golding: So any lad opting for hairdressing studies may find himself popular and well liked?

Corey: The boys [studying hairdressing] may have a feminine side to them and that's why they could get picked on a lot.

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Similarly, in the girls' focus group, strong views were expressed about the sex of hairdressers and how gender affected where somebody worked:

Katy: I don't think that it isn't the fact that men can't do it. It's as if we have been 'programmed' that men won't do hairdressing. I have only seen one male hairdresser around where I live.

Mrs Golding: So it's your experience. Am I right in thinking that what you see in society, what you see happening where you live influences how you feel about something and whether it is normal or acceptable?

Katy: Yes, I suppose so. I think as we grow up we try to take in what is happening around us and this shapes our outlook on life.

Mrs Golding: Does a man or woman cut your hair?

All girls: Woman.

Nerys: But men do cut hair, Men cut other men's hair.

Mrs Golding: Okay, so do men work in barbers and women work in salons?

Girls: Nod agreement.

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

Although the girls did agree verbally that men could cut hair, their cognitive maps showed a different opinion. All of the girls placed 'hairdresser' on the far right of the graph (appendix five) as they felt that the vast majority of people that were hairdressers were female. As a teacher and as a researcher reflecting on these findings, this gender bias would need to be addressed before option choices are made for Key Stage Four if Green Valley School is to address gender stereotyping

(see recommendation three on p.229). However, such a gendered school curriculum has a strong historical legacy (Paechter, 2004) and other researchers have found similar gender segregation in an array of curriculum areas (Weiner et al., 1997; Archer et al., 2007; Pennington, 2008):

The vocational curriculum is the most gender segregated aspect of the entire education system in the UK. Faced with choices around vocational classes and qualifications, boys and young men overwhelmingly choose engineering, ICT and manual trade-based courses, while girls and young women opt for those clustered around health and social care, nursery nursing and hairdressing.

(Paechter, 2004: 91)

When reviewing the prospectuses of 29 post-16 providers, Pennington (2008) found that of the nine further educational colleges that included pictures in their promotional material, seven colleges used gender stereotypical images. For example, only female pupils could be seen following the hairdressing course and only male pupils could be seen following the construction and engineering courses. A brief review of the prospectus for the nearest further educational college to Green Valley School showed that of the seventeen pictures used to depict available courses, nine used gender stereotypical images, again these were centred around qualifications in hair and beauty and construction. This promotional material will do nothing to challenge and change these gendered social norms (Pennington, 2008: 113).

Another example of how a person's gender concept of an occupation is influenced by socio-cultural context was demonstrated by Amy. Amy's account of how her

‘window of aspiration’ was different from the other girls in the focus group refers to the time she spent in Northern Ireland. When the group were discussing the gender balance in the police force most girls had felt that the police force was now gender balanced. However, I could see that Amy had chosen to place ‘police’ on the male side of her chart (by the end of the focus group, Amy had moved ‘police’ to the neutral position).



Figure 5.14: Amy’s cognitive map of occupations according to prestige level and gender.

When I explored her reasoning behind this decision, Amy was able to show the rest of the girls how her perception of the society and culture that we grow up in impacts on our aspirations:

Mrs Golding: I can see that you have placed ‘police’ on the male side of the chart. Can you explain why you did this?

Amy: I thought it was a man

Mrs Golding: Okay, why did you say that?

Amy: It's just that when I think of the police I think about policemen not policewomen. Not being sexist, but that's what I thought.

Mrs Golding: Okay, does anybody want to comment on that?

Nerys: I do not agree with that because when you think about the police you think about women being in the police too.

Mrs Golding: What have you based your ideas on Amy? Do you only know policemen?

Amy: Yeah, I only know policemen, that is based on the fact that I come from Belfast and women don't do those jobs.

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

Women are employed in the police force in Northern Ireland, but because Amy had only seen policemen when she lived in Belfast, we can begin to see and understand the processes that some individuals may go through when associating occupations with gender (Gottfredson 1981, 2005, 2006) and begin to understand the cognitive processes involved in career choices within the context of life development (Vondracek et al., 1986). Gottfredson maintains that children begin by considering jobs firstly in terms of their masculinity/femininity characteristics (sextype) followed closely by their social desirability (prestige) and only then are interests, aptitude and ability considered. This process of eliminating possible occupations occurs over an extended period of time, a process described as '*circumscription and compromise*'. Those occupations that are left constitute a '*zone of acceptable alternatives*' (Gottfredson, 1981) from which the individual will ideally choose a job or career. For example, a young boy will circumscribe 'masculine' jobs with high prestige value (e.g., footballer, FBI agent, entrepreneur) as potential jobs/careers before selecting a job against personal interests and individual ability; these dreams also represent the 'fantasy aspirations' as described by Sewell, Haller and Straus (1957) and Lent et al. (1994, 2000). However, in reality, a compromise is likely to be

required whereby the individual relinquishes his/her most preferred alternatives (based on ability levels, resource limitations) for more 'accessible' jobs/careers. In doing so, it is predicted that individuals will choose work in a different field according to personal interests (e.g., engineering) within their social space rather than compromise on either prestige or sextype (e.g. an interest in biological sciences might otherwise imply a career in nursing). This awareness of gendered occupation occurs at an early age and data presented in table 5.9 seems to support Gottfredson's work.

Table 5.9: What is your dream job, responses from pupils in Year 6 (July 7) by gender (alphabetical order)

Occupation	Male	Female
Animator	1	0
Billionaire	1	0
Carpenter	1	0
The next Doctor Who	2	0
Estate Agent	1	0
FBI	1	0
Hairdresser	0	8
Heart Surgeon	0	1
Lorry Driver	1	0
Musician	2	1
Professional sports person	20	5
Shop keeper	1	1
Scientist	0	1
Singer	0	1
Vet	0	3
Total	31	21

The time capsule materials that were collected from pupils when they were about to leave their junior schools in Year Six were very revealing. Collected on a 'taster day' to help transition from junior to secondary school, all pupils were asked to identify their dream job. Eighty per cent (n=25/31) of the boys chose jobs when

they were in Year Six that had high masculine and prestige levels, with some careers representing their fantasies (animator, billionaire, the next Dr Who, professional sports person). Thirty eight per cent (n=8/21) of the girls in the sub sample aspired to be hairdressers. These results echo Helwig's (2001) and Lent et al.'s (1994,2000) work about '*fantasy aspirations*' and also resonates with Gottfredson's (1981) work when she notes, that although some of the preferences shown by the children towards certain occupations may appear quite childish, they are already sextyped at an early age. These results are also consistent with the notion that pupils dream less about fantasy occupations as they get older (Gottfredson, 1981; Lent et al., 1994, 2000; Helwig, 2001).

Young children, when playing 'grown ups' during their play time will often assume various job roles; this fantasy time will decrease with age. Social cognitive theory (Lent et al., 1994, 2000) suggests that with age, maturity and self awareness, such fantasy occupations will not be considered. Table 5.9 shows us that the most common fantasy occupation for boys was professional sport. In Year 6, 20 boys (65%) were very keen to push their sporting skills and become professionals in their chosen fields (the interests ranged from cricketer, footballer, boxer and rugby player). In comparison, the girls in year 6 did not appear to have as many 'fantasy aspirations' as their male counterparts, whilst five girls aspired to be professional sports people, the other girls seemed to be aspiring to more 'grounded' occupations such as hairdressers and vets (see table 5.10). By Year 10 only four of these same boys still aspired to be professional sportsmen (see table 5.11).

Table 5.10: Comparison of girls' occupational aspirations in Year 6 and Year 10

Dream job(Year 6)	Dream job (Year 10, 2 nd questionnaire survey)
Surgeon	Doctor
Vet	Animal worker
Singer	Own my own pub/hotel
Musician	Musician
Vet	Being a midwife
Prof netballer	Air hostess
Hairdresser	Army nurse
Prof horse rider	Vet
Hairdresser	Don't know
Hairdresser	Work in spain
Hairdresser	Working with animals
Hairdresser	Animal carer
Hairdresser	Police officer
Hairdresser	Forensics
Vet	Photographer
Prof horse rider	Don't know
Scientist	Pathologist
Hairdresser	Hairdresser.
Shopkeeper	Teacher
Prof netballer	Midwife.
Prof netballer	Work with children

Table 5.11: Comparison of boys' occupational aspirations in Year 6 and Year 10

Dream job(Year 6)	Dream job (Year 10, 2 nd questionnaire survey)
Prof footballer	In I.C.T
Animator	Football player
Prof footballer	Vet
Prof footballer	GP Doctor
Prof rugby player	Entrepreneur
FBI	Fire service/police
Prof rugby player	Plumber
Carpenter	Prof footballer
Prof footballer	Archaeologist
Prof paintballer	Builder
Prof rugby player	Don't know
Prof footballer	ICT
Prof footballer	Prof footballer
Shop owner	Carpenter
Estate agent	Dot com millionaire
Billionaire	Fighter pilot
Prof footballer	Sport physiotherapist
Prof footballer	Prof footballer
Lorry driver	Mechanic
Prof tennis player	Graphic designer
Musician	Music Composer
Prof boxer	Plumber

Musician	Mechanic
Prof rugby player	Plumber
Prof cricketer	Prof rugby player
Prof rugby player	Prof rugby player
Doctor who	U.S. Marines
Prof footballer	work on computers
Prof tennis player	Forensic Pathologist
Prof footballer	Plumber
Doctor who	Performer

Gottfredson's theory suggests that for children, the social value of occupational choice will increase during the school years until the child reaches Year 8. Then, pupils will begin to choose careers which will reflect their vocational interests. This transition can be seen between stages three and four of Gottfredson's theory:

- *For pupils still in the third stage, the social value of occupational aspirations predominates. They eliminate from further consideration all occupations that are too low in prestige for someone like themselves, as well as all that seem out of reach in terms of ability or effort required;*
- *For pupils in the fourth stage, personal interests and aptitudes will guide occupational choice. They are now also better able to make out their own interests, values, and goals.*

(Gottfredson, 2006: 168)

In order to test this theory, pupils were asked to write down their dream jobs at three points during their secondary school career (July 2007, October 2010, July 2011). Figures 5.16 and 5.17 show that the percentage of pupils aspiring to professional, technical and managerial occupations (class one and two) increased with age from 17 per cent in July 2007 to 23 per cent in October 2010 and 37 per cent in July 2011. In each of these three questionnaires, a greater number of girls than boys aspired to occupations in Social Class One and Two; it would appear that

the girls consistently have higher occupational aspirations than their male counterparts (Schoon et al., 2007).

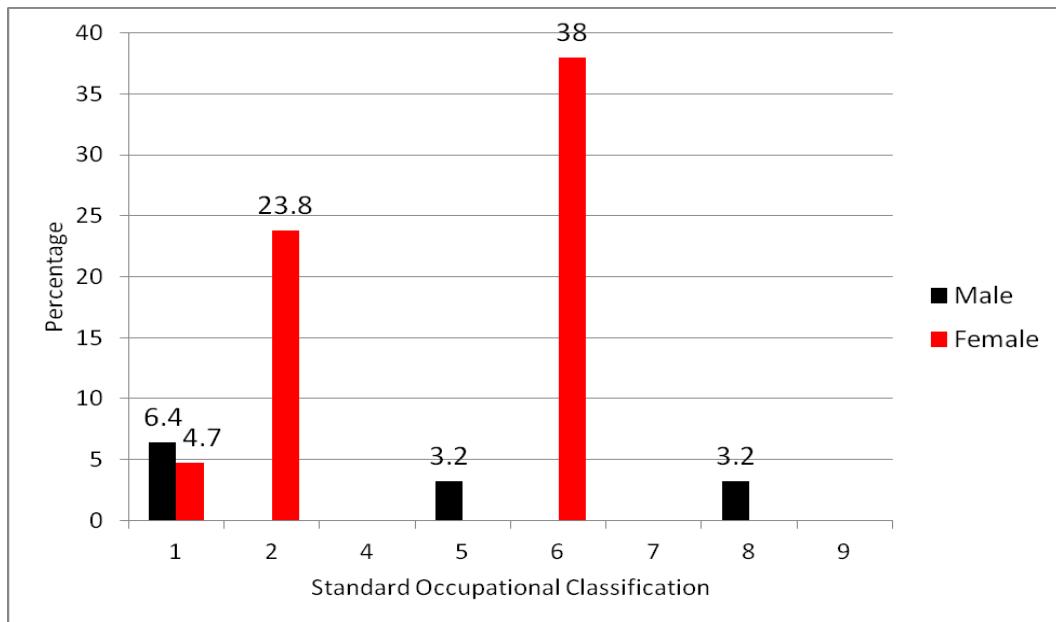


Figure 5.15: *What is your dream job? Responses from pupils at the end of Year 6 (July 2007)*

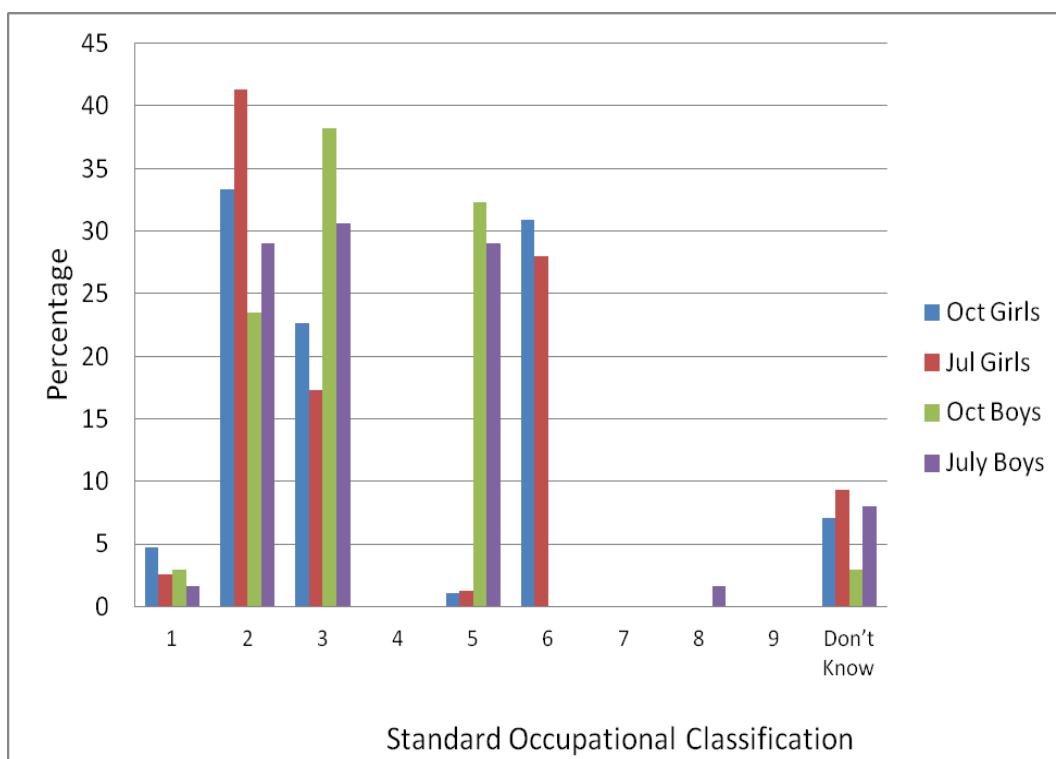


Figure 5.16: *What is your dream job, responses from pupils at the beginning of Year 10 (October 2010) and the end of Year 10 (July 2011) by gender and SOC.*

Comparing pupils' aspirational occupations with their realistic occupations the median Standard Occupational Class (SOC) for aspiration and expected occupations is 3 for October 2010. In July 2011 this changes, the Standard Occupational Class for aspirational occupations is 3, but this drops to Class 5 when finding the median for expected occupations. By gender, the expected occupation class for females is 4.5 and for male it is 5. Twenty eight per cent of the girls and 29 per cent of boys aspired to administrative, skilled trades and caring, leisure and other service occupations (SOC 4-6). This percentage differs from the findings of recent similar research by St. Clair and Benjamin (2011); just 15 per cent of the young people questioned in their research project aspired to these kinds of occupations.

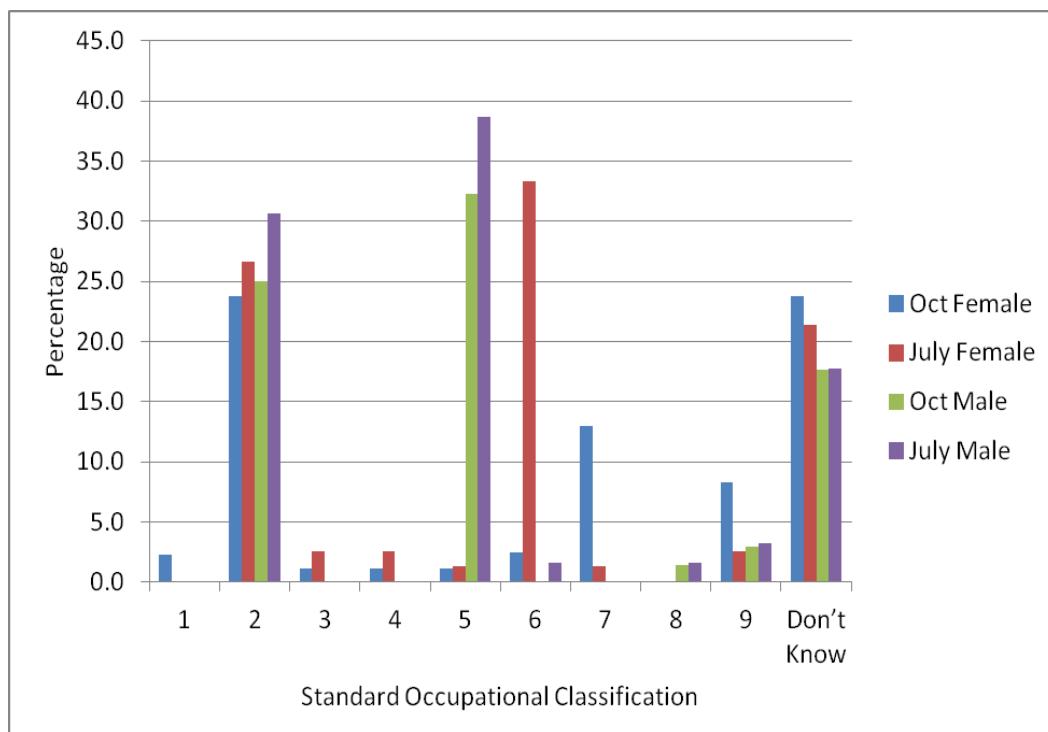


Figure 5.17: What is your expected job? Responses from pupils at the beginning of Year 10 and the end of Year 10 by gender and SOC.

These data, (figures 5.18 to 5.19) are suggesting clearly that the pupils' occupational aspirations are higher than their occupational expectations in this

doctoral study. Again, this noticeable difference in the amount of boys who aspire to careers in the sporting sector but expect to work in manual jobs is significant. Comparisons can be made with the work of Cummings et al. (2012) when they argued that for a shift in emphasis from 'raising aspirations' to 'keeping aspirations on track' (2012: 5).

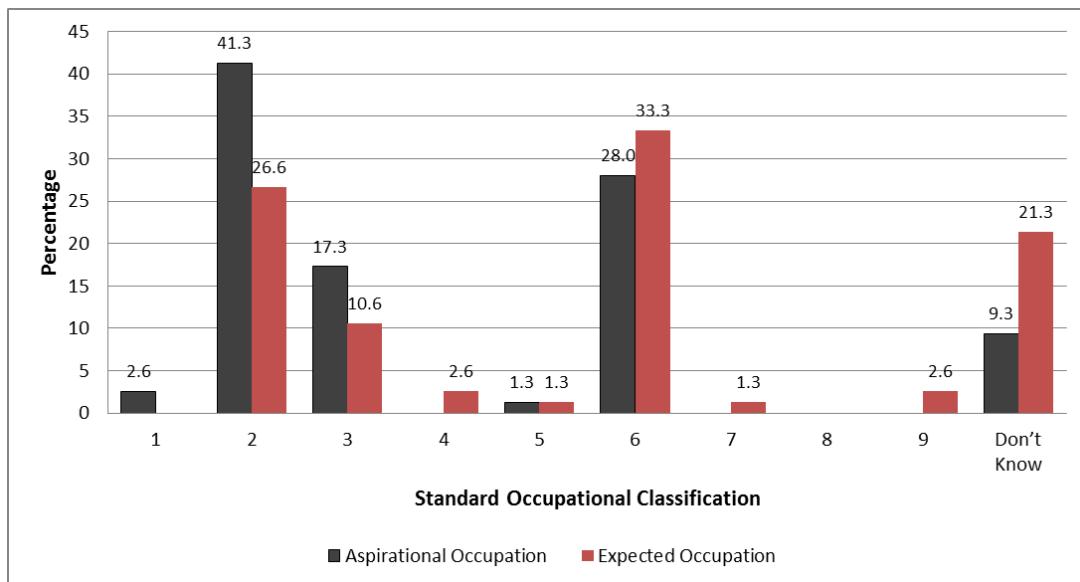


Figure 5.18: Aspirational and expected occupations of female pupils.

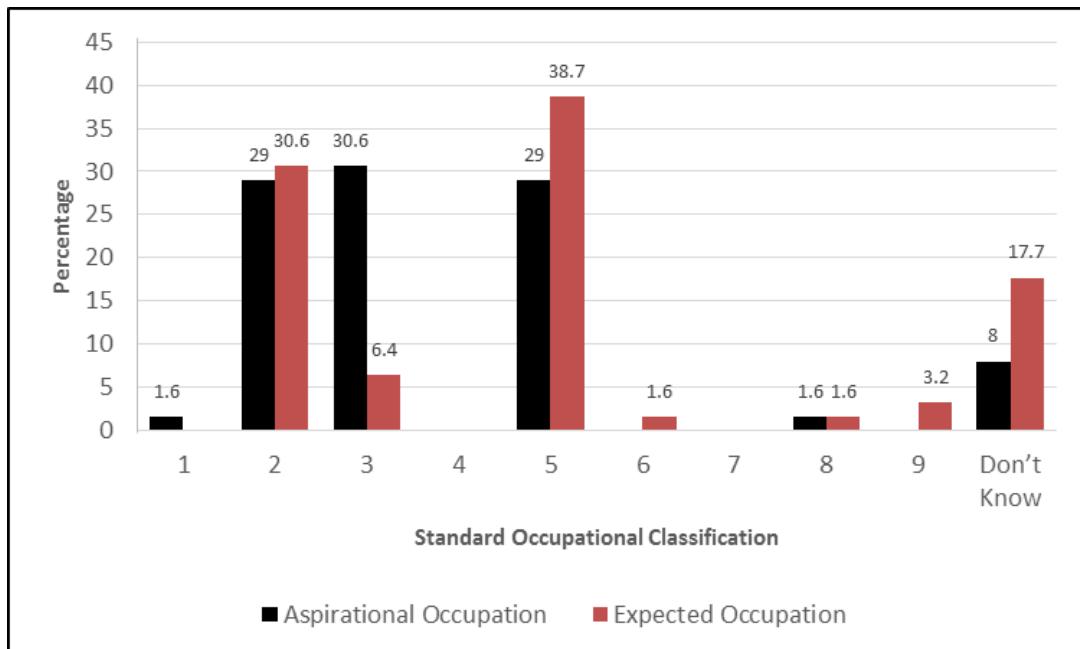


Figure 5.19: Aspirational and expected occupations of male pupils.

Fifty four pupils (35%) offered a reason with regards why their dream job and expected job differed in response to the questionnaire administered in October 2010. Forty six pupils (33%) explained the difference in occupations in the questionnaire that was administered in July 2011. The individual reasons offered for the question which listed a pre-identified set of responses (from the questionnaire survey in 2010) included a lack of confidence, a lack of focus and genuine concern about funding further education.

Table 5.12: Why are your dream job and expected job different? (Presented in descending order)

	Survey 1 October 2010		Survey 2 July 2011		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
I am not intelligent enough	8	5	5	5	23
May not get the necessary qualifications	8	5	6	2	21
I do not know what job I want	10	6	3	1	20
There are limited jobs in this field of interest	3	2	0	1	6
I may have set my goals too high	2	1	0	0	3
Not enough money to support my studies	0	0	0	3	3
It is too much hassle	1	0	0	1	2
I may change my mind	2	0	0	0	2
Not realistic	0	0	0	2	2
I am not fit enough	1	0	0	1	2
I want to challenge myself	0	0	0	2	2

The first two rows of results show the number of pupils who believed that they would not achieve their dream job because of their self confidence and belief in their ability (n=26 (October 2010) / n=18 (July 2011). These figures account for 32 per cent of the pupils across the two questionnaire surveys. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2005, 2006) has raised concern about self concept affecting aspirations and

the responses from the pupils have supported these findings. Seven per cent of pupils (n=20/289) across the two questionnaires have indicated they are unsure about their occupational aspirations because they do not know what job they want. Cummings et al. (2012) have argued in their research that the focus should be on providing information and opportunities to families from disadvantaged areas rather than changing attitudes (2012: 5), this research would support that evidence and recommendation four on p.231 elaborates on this conclusion further. Three male pupils attributed financial concerns as barriers to their occupational aspirations. Considering the concerns that were raised in chapter two with regards the transport costs that pupils have to meet if they wanted to continue to post-16 education in this area and the recent changes in student financial arrangements and new fee university levels, the fear of financial debt could prove to be a key deterrent for those pupils for whom widening participation initiatives are targeted (WAG, 2006a: 27; Baxter et al., 2007: 79). The necessity for all counties to consider the transport links and financial support offered to pupils in post-16 education and/or vocational training is highlighted in recommendation six on p.236.

In order to consider the pupils' occupational aspirations and expectations within a broader context, the ideal and realistic occupational expectations were compared to the overall breakdown and profile of the United Kingdom workforce. These secondary official statistics were gathered from the Labour Force Survey conducted

between July 2011 and June 2012 of 256,000 people aged over 16 in the United Kingdom¹¹.

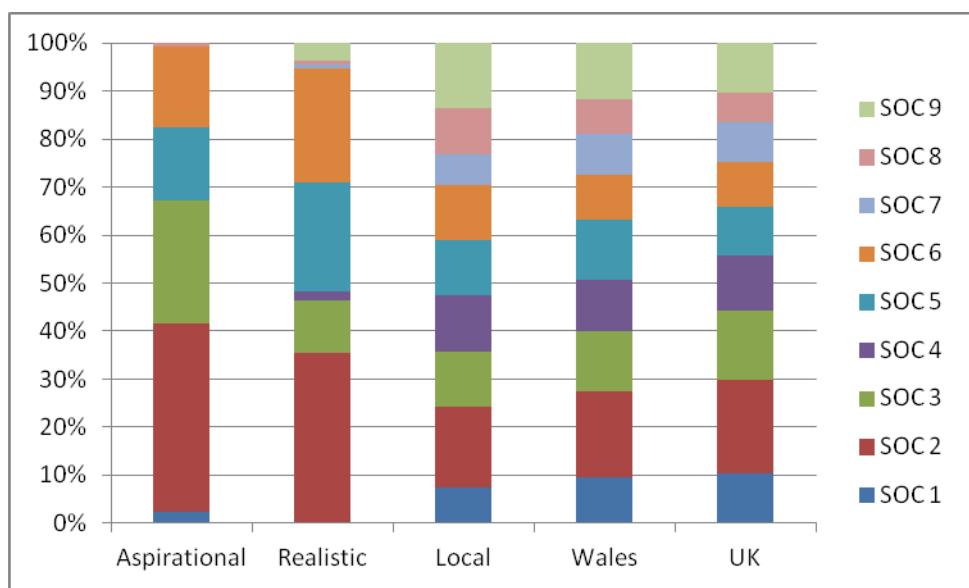


Figure 5.20: Pupils' aspirational and expected occupations with local, Welsh, UK job availability occupational categories (SOC) (%)

The graph in figure 5.20 indicates that the proportion of young people hoping for work—both aspirationally and realistically—are choosing occupations that are extremely clustered within four SOC categories, namely, 2, 3, 5 and 6 and the concern is that the availability of these jobs in the current labour market may not be as readily available as pupils perceive. Bynner, et al. (2002) have shown how the shrinking labour market has had such a huge impact on young men, where the favoured established pattern was to enter the labour market upon leaving school, the opportunities for 16-year olds leaving school have reduced significantly.

¹¹ Data Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

SECTION TWO

This section begins by considering the work of the personal tutor, Mrs James employed at Green Valley School. Data were collected through this key informant via a diary outline, a series of semi-structured interviews with Mrs James as well as an electronic questionnaire survey which was administered to 137 pupils who had accessed the tutoring support during the academic year.

This section concludes with a brief analysis of the work experience organised and undertaken by the 152 pupils who participated in this study.

5. The Work of the personal tutor at Green Valley School

In September 2010, the school introduced the Welsh Baccalaureate at Key Stage Four and sought to employ a full-time member of staff to become personal tutor. A female was appointed in July 2010 and took up post in the September. The vignette of Mrs James which was presented in Chapter One revealed that she was new to this role and was unsure at first how best to plan her interventions and support. In order to provide sufficient information about her work, a brief outline of her diary over the three terms during this research project is provided in this section and is intersected with personal reflections from Mrs James.

Diary outline of Mrs James: Personal tutor at Green Valley School

Autumn term 2010

During the first half term, Mrs James met with each pupil in the year group individually. During the meetings, she explained her role as a personal tutor within the Welsh Baccalaureate course and outlined the topics pupils would be studying. In order to try and engage with pupils, Mrs James spent some time trying to get pupils to talk about their interests and hobbies and what type of work they would be interested in applying for during work experience week in May 2011.

I told them I am treating them as young adults, not pupils, and they can use my room to do homework during lunchtime and afterschool, providing I'm here, and that it will be up to them to check their planners and see me at the times stated. I get the feeling that quite a few of them will be glad of the one-to-one sessions as they are a bit afraid of the course and the amount of work involved, especially the lower ability pupils.

(Interview: 12th October 2010)

Mrs James found it very difficult at first to ensure that pupils received individual messages from their form tutors about the times of their meetings. Firstly, if pupils were late to school they would not see their form tutor in the morning and consequently not receive any messages. Secondly, form tutor sessions can be very busy times in a school day. In Green Valley School the form tutor session is scheduled for 25 minutes at the beginning of the school day, during this time various activities have to be undertaken, the register has to be marked, absence

notes need to be sought from pupils, planners¹² and school uniform needs to be checked and form tutors need to deliver the ‘thought for the week’.

It was very cumbersome rearranging meeting times for those pupils who had failed to attend. I would have to find out which lesson they were in and then go to that classroom with a new appointment slip. Some weeks, I had to rearrange appointments with at least 20 pupils.

(Interview: 12th October 2010)

In order to improve the appointment system Mrs James decided that she would contact pupils directly via their school email accounts to give them their next appointment time and began meeting with pupils in small groups. It was hoped, that with time pupils would become more organised in their approach and remember to excuse themselves from lessons without having to be reminded.

[...]The group meetings are great if you have a particular deadline to meet and need to see pupils quickly. Most of the pupils like this as they can bounce ideas off one another. However, I get the impression that the lower ability ones prefer a one to one session, as they can get quite overwhelmed. Perhaps something I need to look at is trying to keep the lower ability ones together in a group session rather than mix them all up. The nice thing is that there are a lot of pupils across the spectrum that come to see me now without an appointment if there is a query I have open access during breaktimes and lunchtimes should they need to see me.[...]

(Interview 12th October 2010)

Winter term 2010

During this half term, pupils were asked to think about what type of work they would like to complete in the community over the next two years. As part of the

¹² All pupils are issued with a planner in Green Valley School every academic year which they use to record homework when set.

Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, pupils needed to complete the module '*Personal and Social Education*'. This module requires pupils to undertake 15 hours of community work which could include fundraising, awareness raising and helping others. Pupils also completed a self review sheet which encouraged them to reflect on their attendance and performance in school. Mrs James discussed the contents of this sheet with the pupils when it had been completed and helped each of the pupils identify areas for improvement in their school work (appendix eight). This process of encouraging pupils to reflect upon their own performance is a recognised principle within the tutoring process (Griffiths, 1995) and often improves results:

Effective strategies for raising individual achievement often involve the setting or the negotiation of challenging, appropriate, specific and achievable targets...which are monitored and reviewed regularly.

(Munby, 1995: 147)

Mrs James also began meeting with the pupils in small groups to help them complete some of the work covered in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). To complement the subject knowledge developed through this course, pupils need to participate in a range of activities and develop a range of skills. One of these Key Skills is '*Improving Own Learning and Performance*': this involves pupils making decisions about their learning by setting targets and planning how to meet them (appendix eight).

[...] It was thought that I would discuss two target areas within school, like attendance or a particular subject and get the pupils to write about how they can improve in the form of an action plan.[...]

(Interview: 20th January 2011)

Spring term 2011

This term Mrs James met with pupils several times on an individual basis to begin reviewing the targets pupils had set themselves during the previous term. For the second part of this meeting, she then began discussing work experience placements and the choices that needed to be made:¹³

Whilst helping the pupils complete the work experience forms I realised that there were a lot of pupils who did not know what to do, where to go, or what qualifications were needed to do the job they wanted. One of the ideas I have is to take a group of 6-8 pupils at a time and take them to the careers section in the library and look up a few details about what they would like to do, or options available. Some pupils are already asking about 'A' levels in the area and apart from sixth forms, there are no 'A' level opportunities in our area, the nearest being Aber College, two bus rides each way per day for these pupils.

(Interview: 16th March 2011)

A number of pupils did find it difficult to think about where they could undertake work placements:

We had a lot of discussions about types of placement available and other factors like transport, realistic places of work. For example, a pupil may want to be a pilot when they leave school, although this is great for the future, it is impractical to try to offer this opportunity for a work placement.

(Interview: 16th March 2011)

In order to help pupils begin thinking more actively about their choices after leaving school at the end of Year 11, Mrs James began exploring what information and

¹³ In May 2011, all of the pupils in the Year Group would be expected to attend a work placement for a week. Pupils have to arrange this placement themselves and make contact with the employer.

resources she could utilise in school to help guide pupils accordingly:

I am concerned about the lack of knowledge they seem to have and low aspirations, and I have spoken to the careers advisor and asked if she can bring in some prospectuses for local colleges and sixth forms. I have asked her if she minds me getting involved with this, not to tread on her toes...and she was keen.

(Interview: 16th March 2011)

Such a pro-active approach on the part of Mrs James demonstrates her suitability for the role of personal tutor. The role of personal tutor involves a plethora of responsibilities and the necessity to fully embrace such a varied job specification requires an individual who is willing to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to their work. If Mrs James is to help pupils create individual action plans, as set out in the guidance published by the WJEC (2010), then discussions about post-16 destinations will be inevitable and necessary.

Pupils were encouraged to take prospectuses for local colleges and sixth forms home and begin discussing post-16 options. Maguire, Ball and MacRae (2001) have shown how the marketing of post-16 choices both by 11-16 schools and by post-16 providers has a strong influence on the perceptions that are formed by pupils and hence the decisions those young people make. Pupils were also encouraged to use the 'Kudos' section in the Careers Wales website which allows pupils to answer a series of questions about their likes and dislikes and then read through a list of suggested occupations and learn about access routes, salary ranges and the main job responsibilities of each of these careers. Mrs James found when meeting with

each of the pupils in the year group that they had various different hopes and dreams for their imagined futures:

The higher ability groups definitely knew which line of work they wanted to go into for employment e.g. physio, doctor, forensic science. A lot of them have had discussions at home with parents/ family and this showed up in our conversations. The lower ability groups – some seemed to aim for nothing higher than cleaning for a living (not that there is anything wrong with this profession mind you!), whilst others clearly didn't know what they wanted to do and when asked, they were typically following their mother or father's employment. I think more work needs to be done with these in the future.

(Interview: 16th March 2011)

Summer Term 2011

During the Summer term, a number of the small group and individual tutoring sessions were organised to help pupils plan for their work experience. Pupils were given the details about their working hours, dress code, nature of the work involved and if necessary, appropriate transport arrangements were discussed.

The last part of this term was spent helping pupils think about the assessed area 'Community Participation'. This work was introduced during the Winter Term 2010 and pupils were expected to continue this work during their free time. It did become apparent in these meetings, that some pupils had not made sufficient progress in this area and further support was necessary:

Some pupils lack the confidence to contact shops and local groups to ask if they can volunteer and many pupils will not ask their parents to help them. I have contacted places for pupils and established links. This year, however, a number of pupils worked through their lunch hours to make and sell Easter chicks to raise money for a local hospital that provides cancer care.

(Interview: 12th July 2011)

Again, this work demonstrates the diversity of the role of personal tutor and shows the pastoral and curriculum knowledge they need to possess, along with a broad range of skills and personal attributes. Considering the discussions earlier about the benefits of involving families in their child's education, and the reluctance of some parents to offer any academic support, for whatever reason, I was keen to see if Mrs James knew why pupils were reluctant to ask their parents to help them find placements to complete the community participation in the WBQ:

There were several reasons. Firstly, a lot of pupils thought that their parents wouldn't have the time to sort it out as they work all day and had no links with anyone in the volunteer industry.

I also think that some pupils just generally did not want to do any volunteer work, and used their parents as an excuse. Some pupils felt that they were involved in school projects and therefore should not be asked to give up their time in the evenings/holidays.

Finally, other pupils, especially the AEN group, could not grasp what was expected of them and did not see voluntary work as important enough to ask parents.

(Interview: 12th July 2011)

I think that Mrs James' observations are interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, There were those pupils who were uninterested in doing more 'school' work during their free time and there is also the possibility that some of the less able pupils did not understand the structure and purpose of this unit of work. Mrs James felt that some pupils considered their parents too busy with their own jobs and working life to ask them for support with their school work. I do wonder if these are the same pupils who appeared reluctant to ask about the qualifications of other household members; the need for the school to explore more ways to

support families and pupils when making educational and career plans is highlighted in recommendation four on p.231).

Pupils' Reflections and the personal tutor

In July 2011, 137 pupils were asked a series of questions in an electronic questionnaire survey about the structure of the personal tutor support they received during the academic year. The responses are set out as follows:

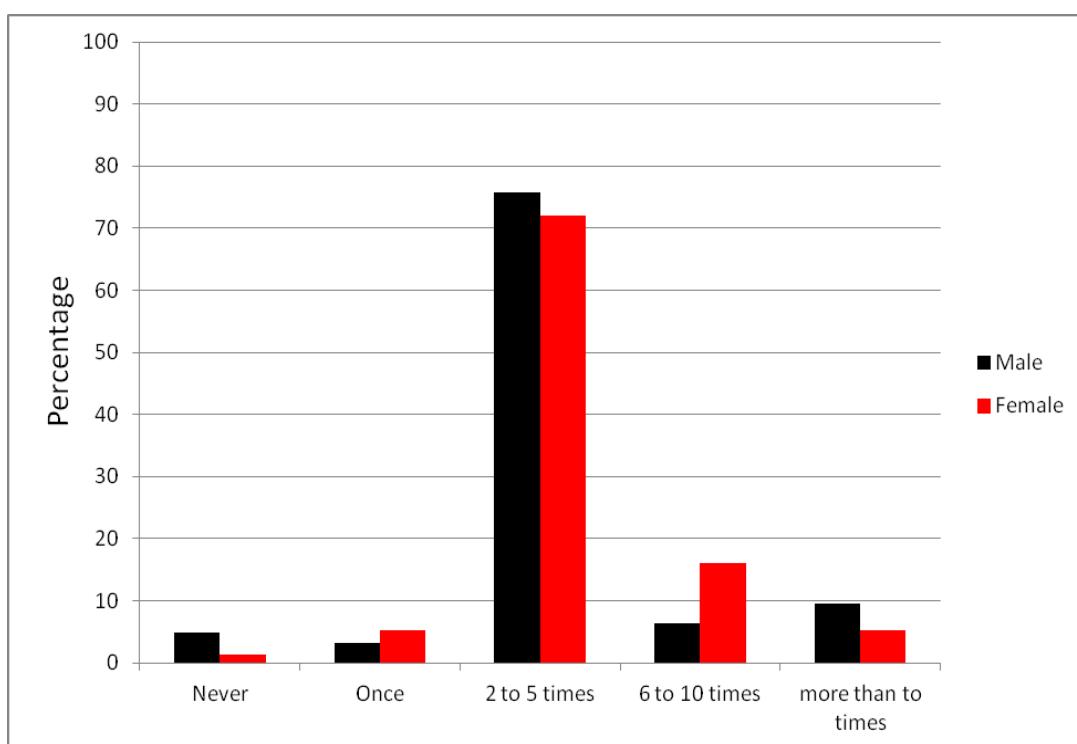


Figure 5.21: How many times have you met with your personal tutor this year?

The WJEC (2010) official guidelines for the WBQ require pupils to meet with their personal tutor at least six times during every academic year. Figure 6.1 shows that the majority of pupils have met the tutor between 2 and 5 times during the current year, this is below the required time specified. There is no noticeable difference

between the frequency of times that male and female pupils have met with the tutor.

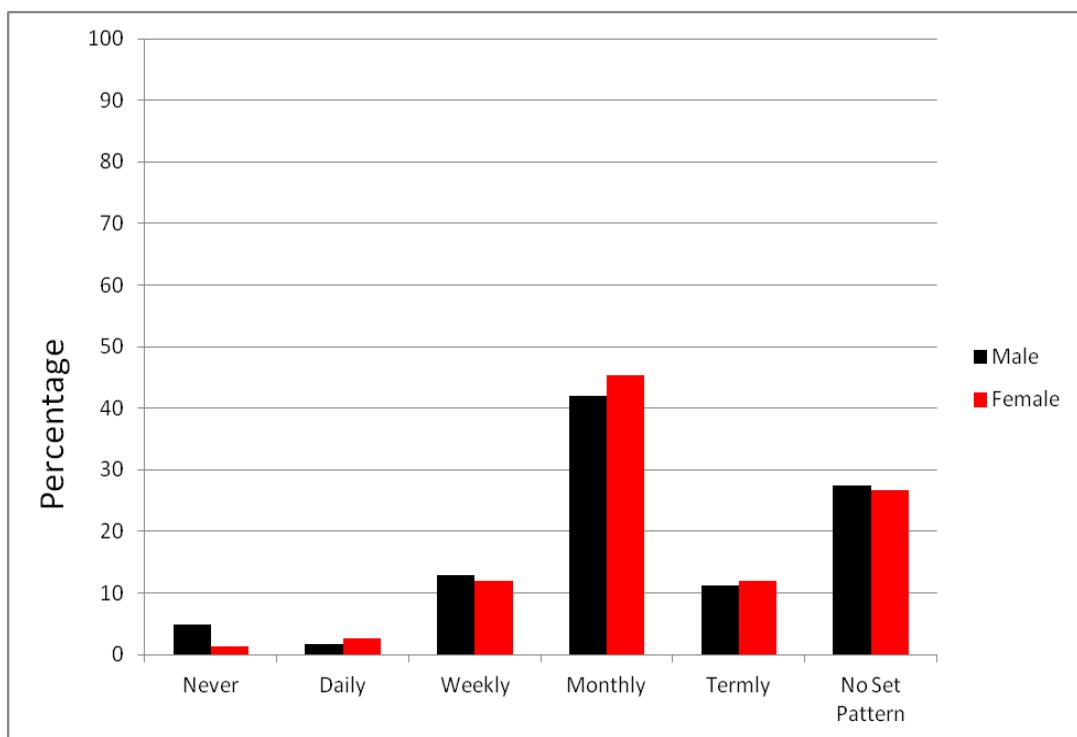


Figure 5.22: How frequently did you meet with your personal tutor this year?

The WJEC (2010) official guidelines require pupils to meet with their personal tutor every half term. The majority of pupils state that they are meeting with their tutor monthly. However, 25 per cent of pupils did not feel that there was a set pattern to their meeting times. Mrs James has reported that she encourages an 'open door' policy and having built up a stronger relationship with pupils she has seen a greater number of individuals choosing to 'pop in' to see her during their free time. Some pupils used this time to access laptops to complete coursework, whilst others continued their WBQ '*individual investigations*'. This should account for the varying pattern in meeting allocations. Such an approach is similar to the 'mentoring'

relationship Egan (1990) described and its focus on the four values respect, empathy, genuineness and empowerment.

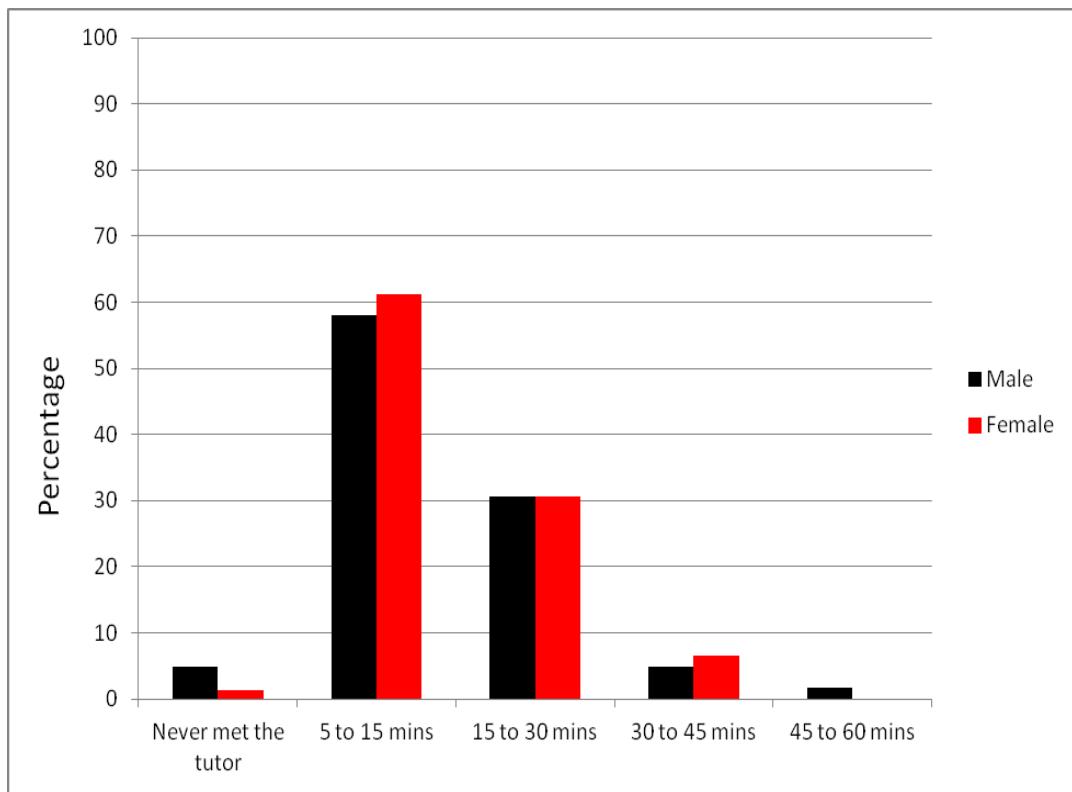


Figure 5.23: On average, how long were the meetings with the personal tutor this year?

The WJEC (2010) guidelines require pupils to meet with their personal tutor for a half hour one-to-one tutorial. Figure 5.23 shows that meeting times are slightly short of this allocation for the majority of pupils. Mrs James has indicated, as explained earlier in the Chapter, that it proved very difficult for one person to meet with every pupil in a year group on a one-to-one basis.

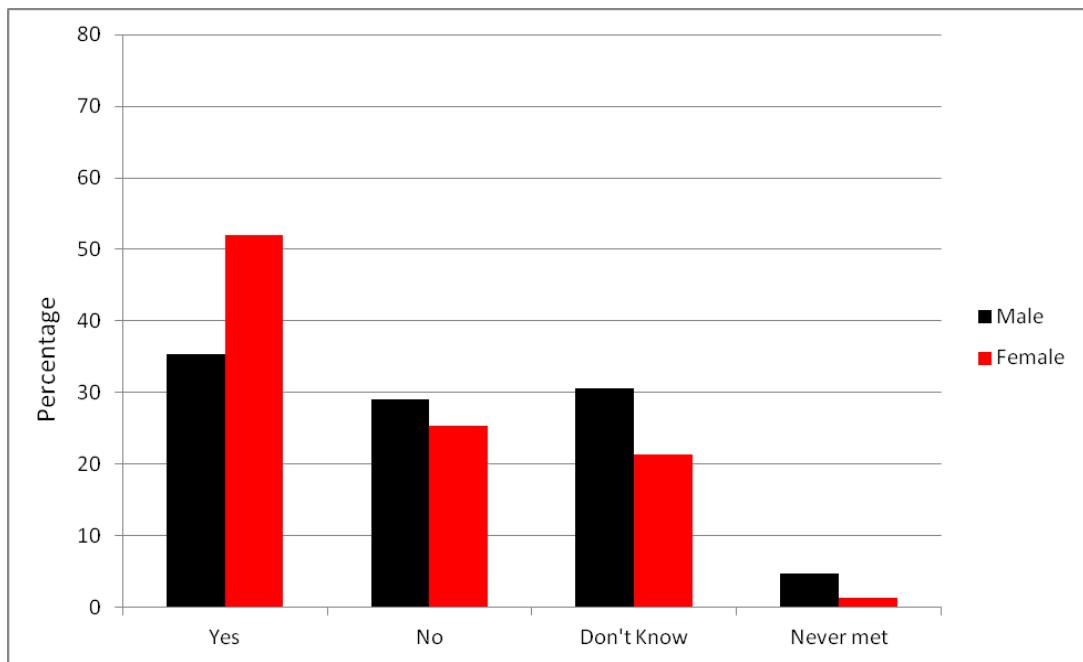


Figure 5.24: Would you have liked to have met with the personal tutor more frequently?

The responses to this question are mixed with slightly more girls indicating that they wanted to meet on more occasions with their personal tutor than boys.

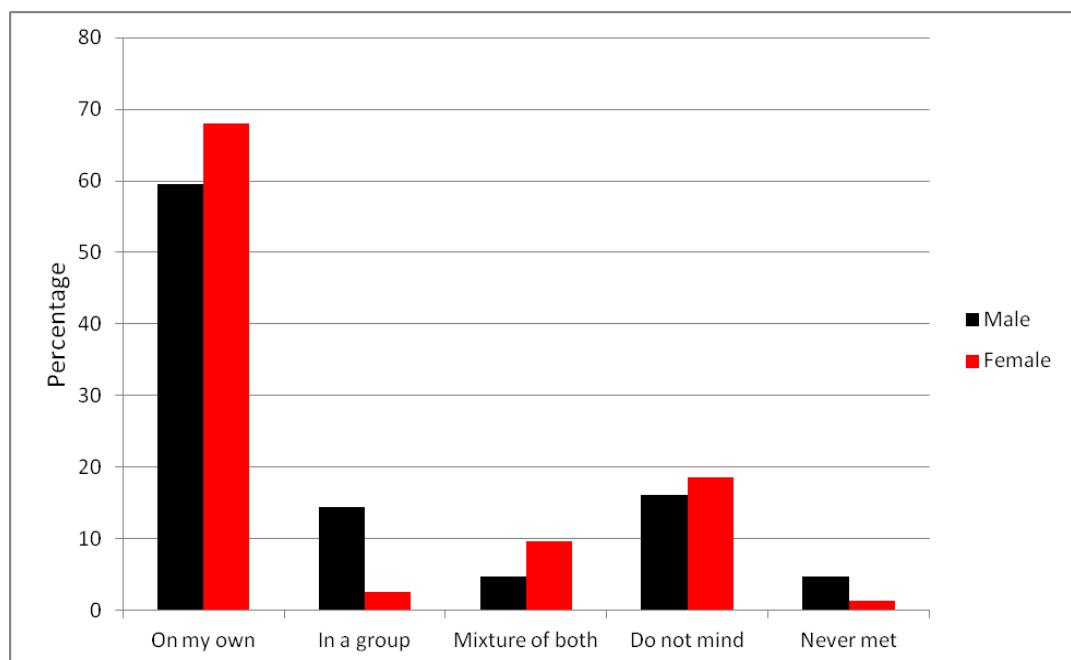


Figure 5.25: How would you prefer to meet with your personal tutor?

The WJEC (2010) guidelines require pupils to meet with their personal tutor on a one-to-one basis. The results from this question would indicate that the majority of pupils would have preferred to have met with their personal tutor individually.

Owing to time constraints, this has proved difficult to timetable. The pupils, however valued the time they spent with their personal tutor and were keen to meet with her on their own to discuss aspects of their work.

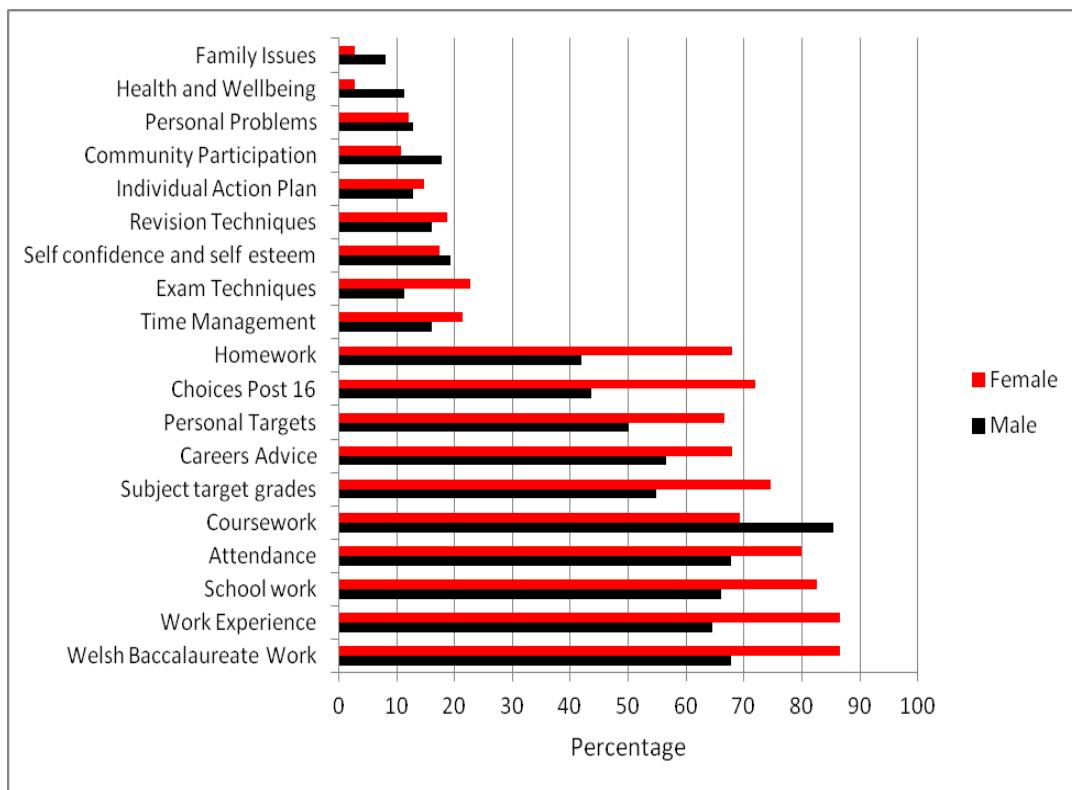


Figure 5.26: What did you discuss with your personal tutor this year?

Figure 5.26 demonstrates the width and breadth of issues that pupils reported having discussed with the personal tutor. The majority of conversations focused on academic issues, but 62 per cent and 59 per cent of pupils have sought careers advice and information about post-16 options. Encouragingly, 64 per cent of pupils (n= 88/137) indicated that meeting with the personal tutor helped them consider what to do when they left school at the end of Year 11:

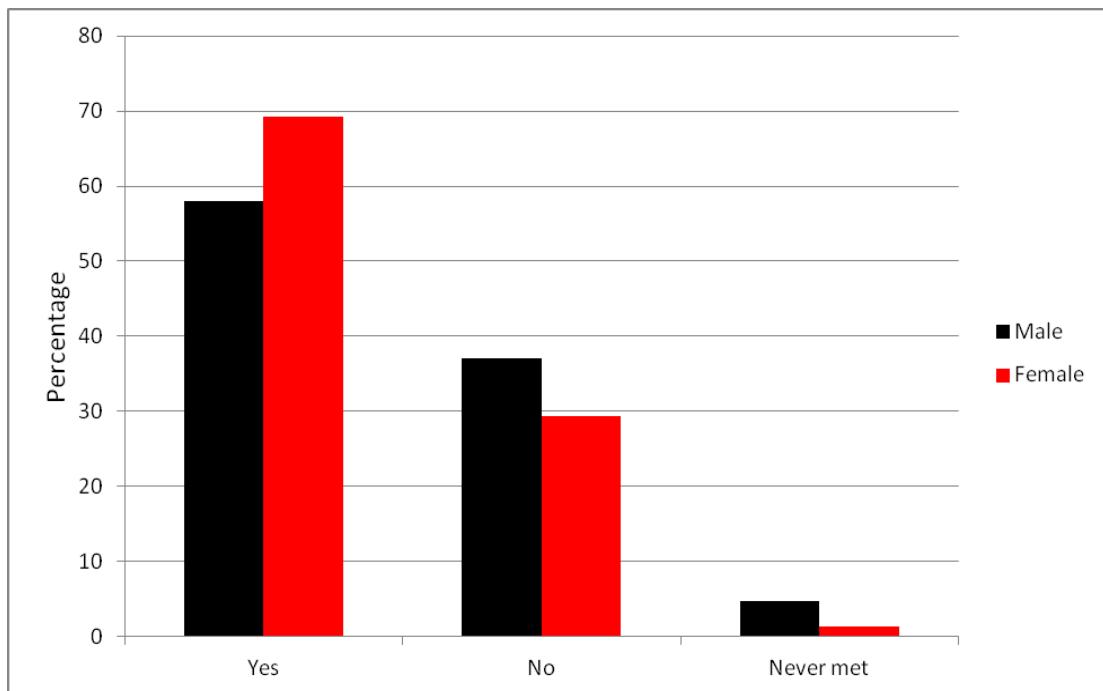


Figure 5.27: Has your personal tutor helped you plan what to do when you leave school?

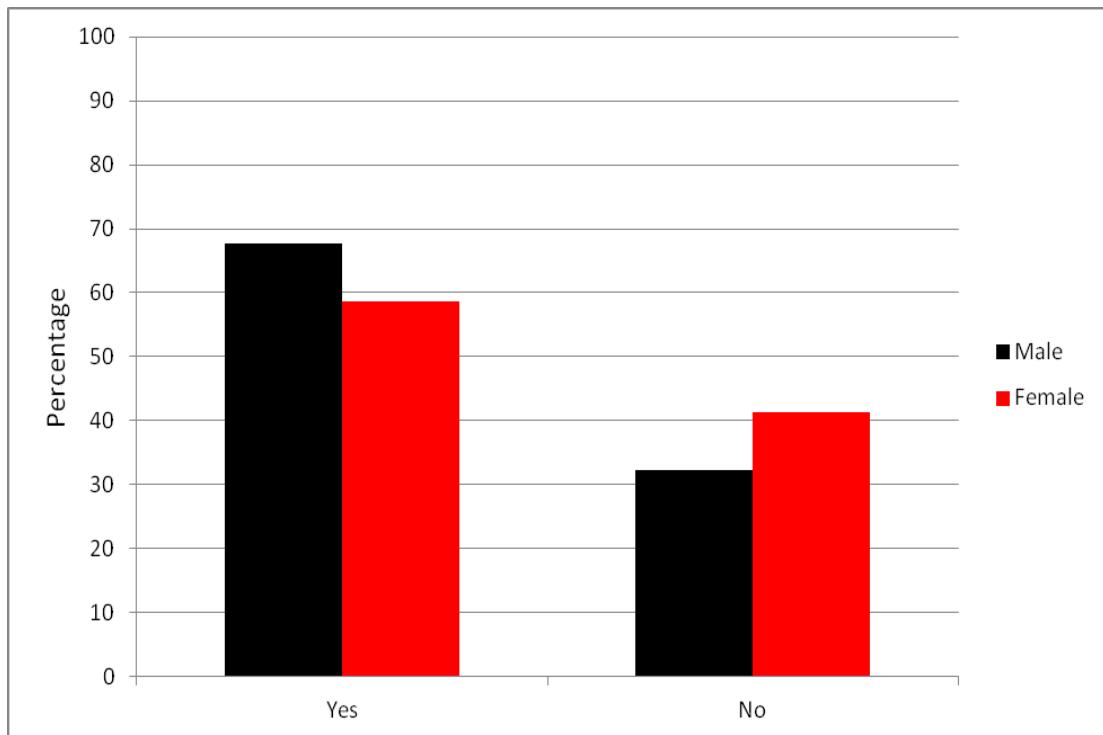


Figure 5.28: If given the opportunity, would you have liked to have met with a personal tutor before Year 10?

Interestingly, a slightly higher percentage of boys compared to girls expressed an interest to meet with a personal tutor earlier in their secondary school life (before

Year 10). The vignette of Green Valley School offered in Chapter Two, coupled with the findings presented in Chapter Five do indicate that a number of boys are disengaging from education and have lower educational aspirations than their female counterparts. The possibility of extending ‘academic’ support to pupils in Years 7 to 9 and further developing a careers programme that challenges and keeps aspirations on track is discussed further in recommendation three and four in the final chapter.

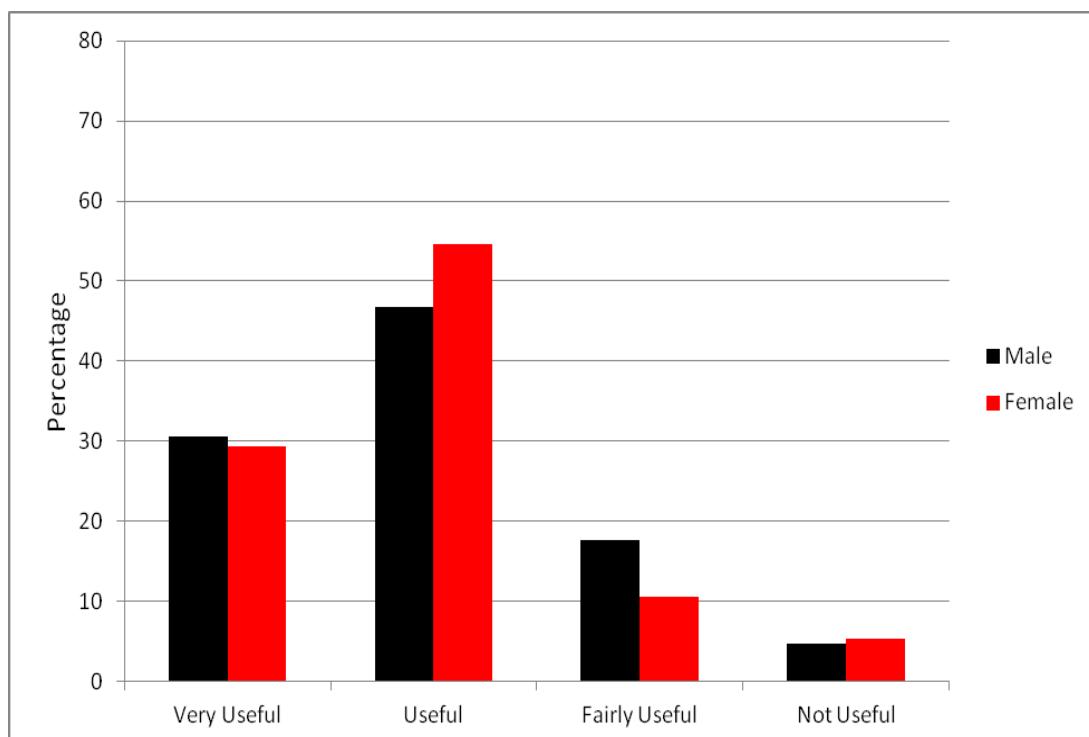


Figure 5.29: How would you rate the tutoring support you have received this year?

The importance of the role of personal tutor is emphasised by the WJEC (2010) and how it is considered a ‘key element in the success of candidates following the Foundation Diploma’ (WJEC, 2010: 35). Eighty one per cent of pupils (n=111/137) described the tutoring they received this year as ‘very useful’ or ‘useful’.

In order to gauge pupils' opinions about the level of support they were receiving in school to help them consider their short term aspirations, the question was posed about further support which could be provided in their final year.

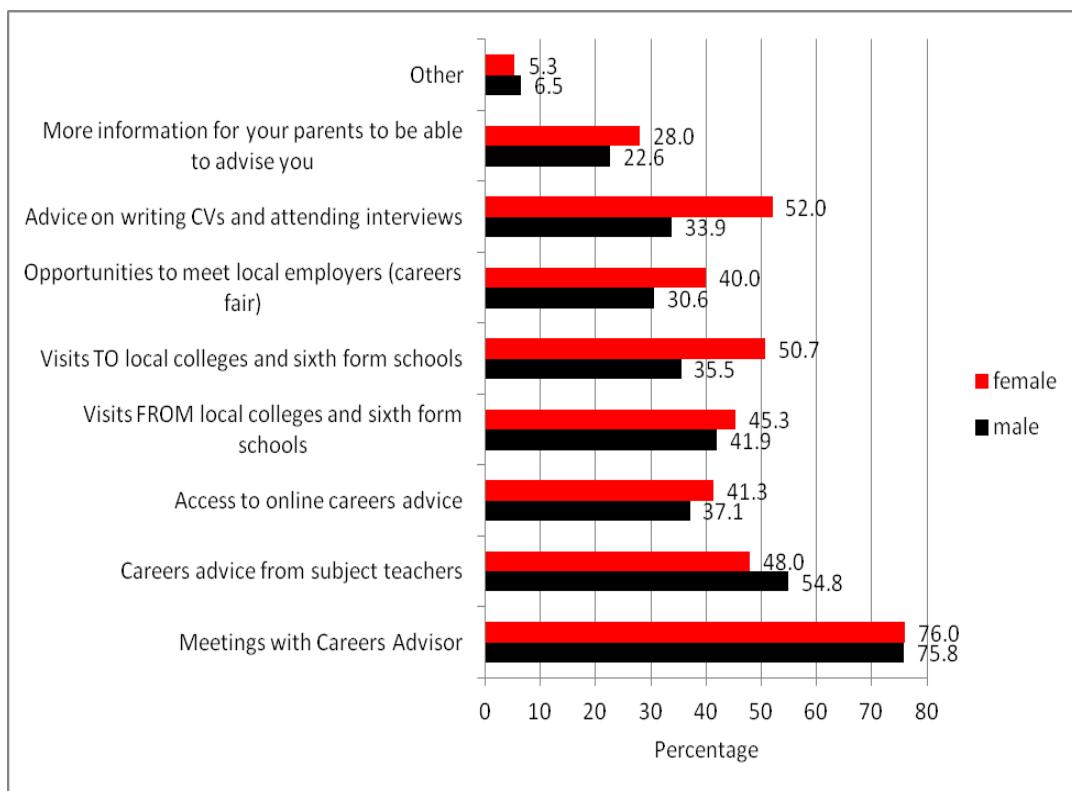


Figure 5.30: What further support would you like in Year 11 to help you achieve your short term aspirations?

Seventy one per cent of pupils still felt that they wanted to speak with a careers advisor to discuss their post-16 plans. During the focus group discussions, some boys still had not met with the careers advisors and pupils from both groups felt that more careers advice should be offered in school, especially when pupils were choosing subject options.

Dr Salisbury: Could schools do anything else to help individuals to frame their future? Obviously schools need to get good results, but what else could they do. I know that Emma and Amelia are undecided about their futures, could schools do more?

Katy: I think maybe if we knew more about our options, I know that there are people you can go to but maybe in a few more life skills lessons

we could learn more about....not the jobs you could do...but what is involved in jobs. The only way I found out about medicine was going off and asking people. I think this advice should be more readily available for people because if you do not have the idea you will not aspire to it and that is why I think people fall short of their full potential.

Emma: *I think it would be good if people came in with that job and talked about what they have to do and gave more people information about it.*

Dr. Salisbury: *Knowledge is power. Does anybody else want to comment?*

Amy: *I remember we had a meeting with Mrs James last year and she showed us a booklet which helped us consider what we could do when we left school. I found this was useful but we could have had longer and more career sessions. It is difficult for me to go and speak with colleges about the courses they offer as nobody drives in my family and my mum is too ill to come with me on the bus. I would have liked to have spent more time with Mrs Farmer to talk about the jobs I am interested in to find out what they actually involve and the qualifications that are needed. If we have more information then we can realise if it is something we have been pushed towards; I want to be a hairdresser when I am older but I don't know if there are any other jobs I would enjoy too.*

(Extract from female pupils' focus group)

Dr Salisbury: [...] *The one man who wants to be an engineer. You seemed sure about that, how has the school helped you make those decisions?*

Michael: *The career session with Mrs James helped me decide what to do. I want to study engineering in university and become a structural engineer. I haven't spoken with the careers advisor yet, to be honest because Mrs James works in school I am able to pop up to the computer room during my breaks and speak with her. She helped me understand the different courses I could study and I have even begun to think about the universities I would like to consider.*

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Foskett et al. (2004) have highlighted the importance of the role of careers guidance, especially where young people from social backgrounds with no family traditions of, or experience of, post-16 education make a choice to pursue such a pathway (Foskett et al., 2004: 12)

Pupils were asked in next section of the questionnaire to identify any areas of further support that they would like to receive in Year 11 to help them achieve their target examination grades.

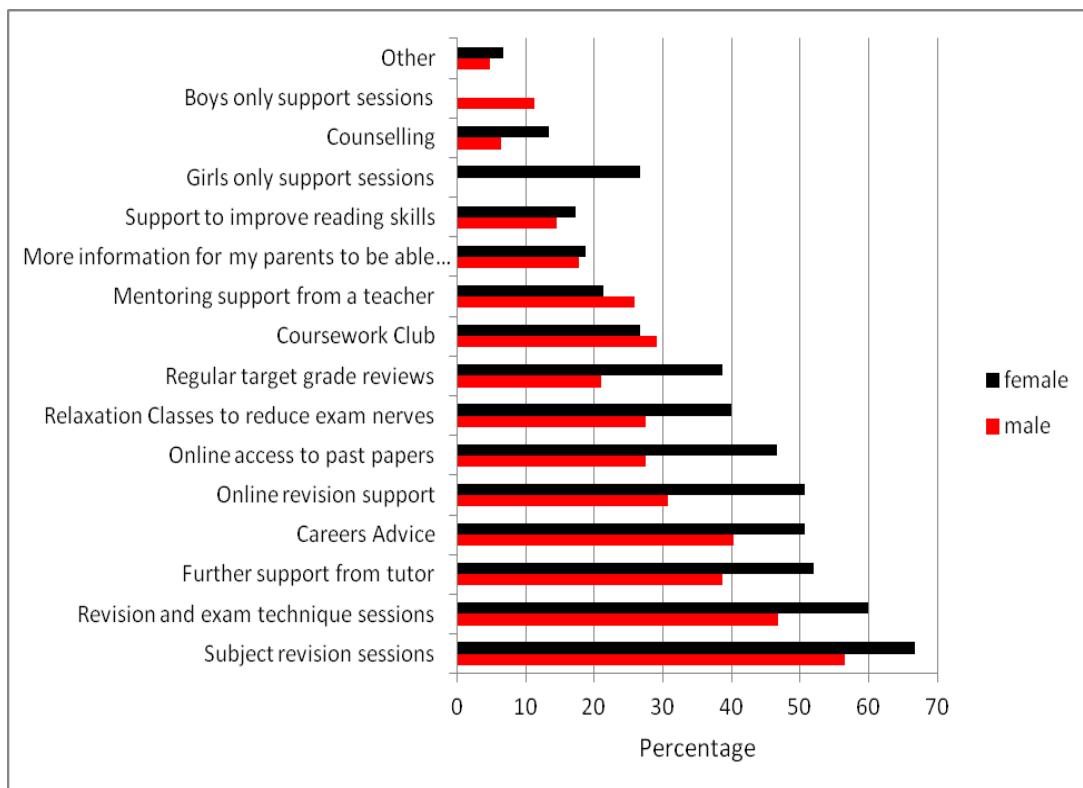


Figure 5.31: What further support would you like to receive next year to help you achieve your target grades?

Sixty two per cent of pupils expressed interest in attending subject revision sessions and 52 per cent of pupils said they would like to attend revision and exam technique sessions. Forty five per cent of pupils stated they wished to continue working with their personal tutor and 44 per cent of pupils recorded wanting more careers advice. More girls than boys showed greater interest in accessing further help in Year 11 to help them achieve their target grades. However, more boys wanted mentoring support from a teacher and wanted to attend coursework club.

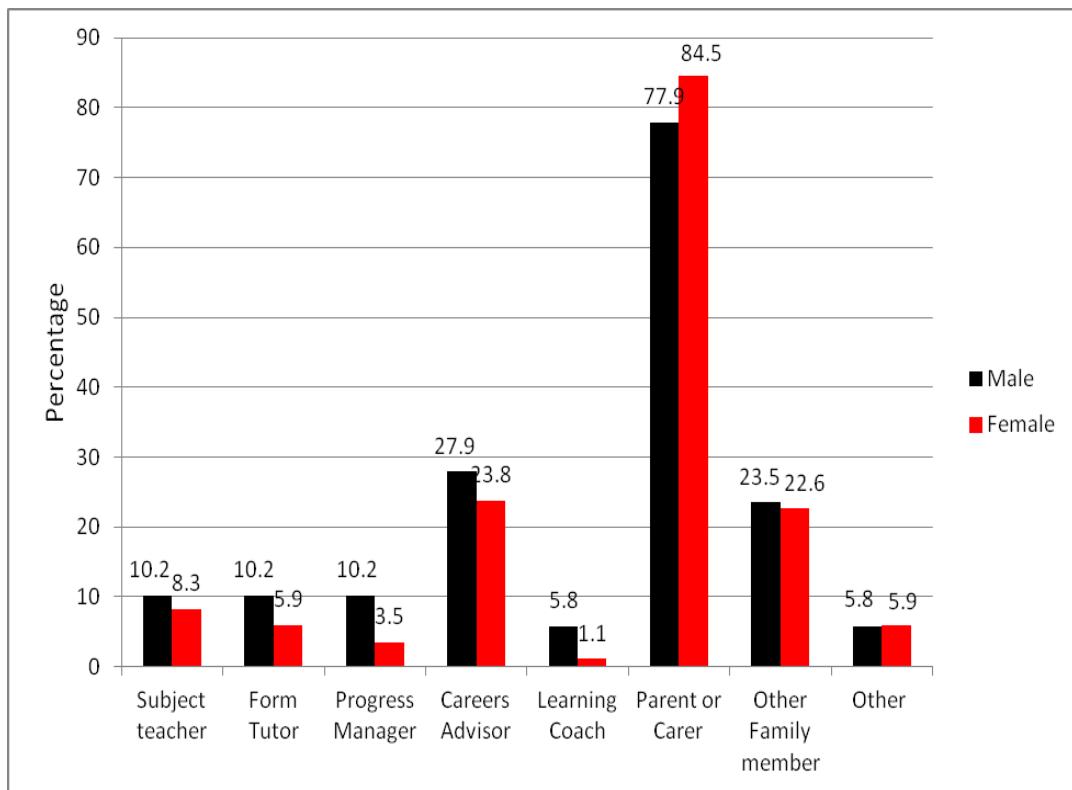


Figure 5.32: As well as your personal tutor, who would you like to speak with next year to get advice about what to do when you leave school?

Most pupils, 59 per cent of pupils said they would like to speak with their parents next year to get further advice about post-16 options. The balance between genders was fairly equal; however boys seem slightly more willing to talk with people in school about their post-16 destinations.

6. Worked Related Education: Work Experience

As part of the WBQ, pupils have to complete a 30 hour work placement. Green Valley School organise this experience to take place within a one week block during May of Year 10. In order to complete this activity, Careers Wales assist the school and encourage pupils to identify possible work placements through the completion of a set proforma. Cowell, Rees and Read (1981: 23) concluded from their research

undertaken some 30 years ago that '*work experience appeared to be contributing absolutely nothing to raising the young people's levels of aspirations and rather are simply confirming their dismal expectations*'. Chapter Two briefly outlined an array of policies in Wales which have been published to offer schools and colleges sufficient guidance about the type and volume of careers advice as well as opportunities for work experience that should be offered to pupils (WAG 2008b, 2008c; WJEC 2010). Salisbury (1996b) discussed the challenges of providing work experience placements in more rural localities in Wales where schools are demanding places in the same industries and businesses. I was keen to see if any of the recent Government recommendations and policies had begun to address the concerns raised in earlier research concerning work placement availability (Cowell et al., 1981; Salisbury, 1996b), gender inequality (Francis et al., 2005; Hatcher and Gallais, 2008) and lack of focus (Adams et al., 2008). These data gathered are set out overleaf:

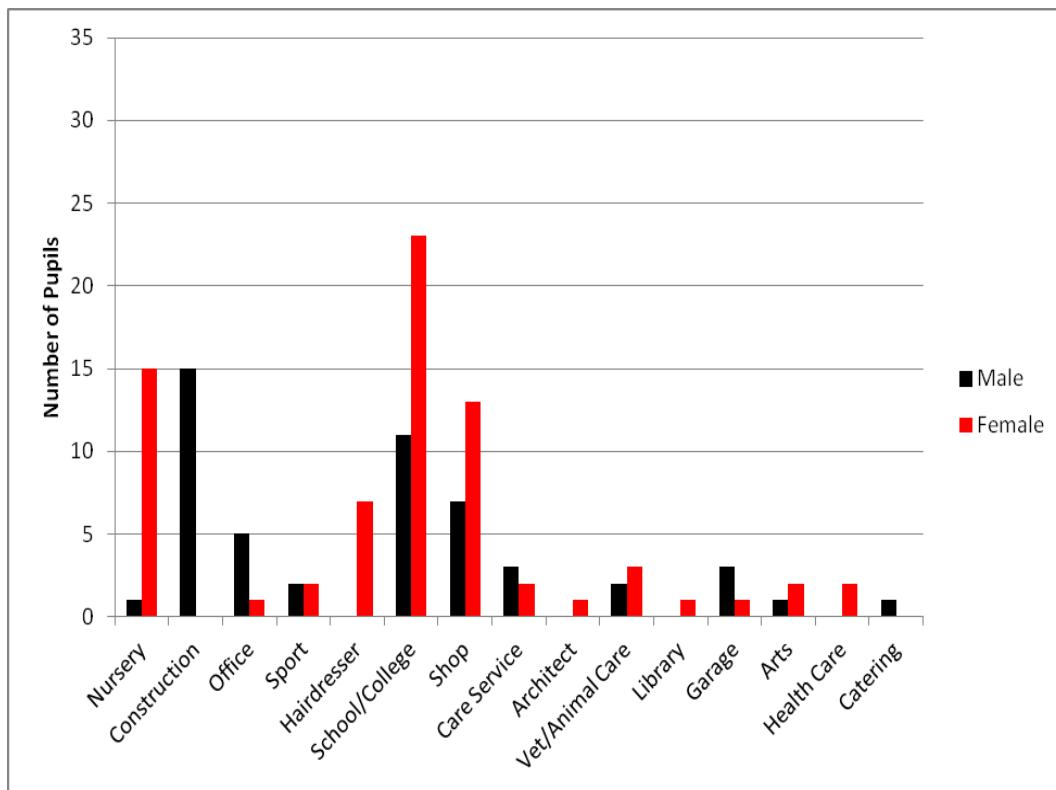


Figure 5.33: Where did you complete your work experience (results have been categorised)

Pupils accessed a fairly limited range of careers to complete their work experience week. This inhibited view of occupations was also apparent in Cowell et al.'s (1981) study and was attributed to the '*depressed environment*' in which the pupils lived and '*the constraints which this imposed on them*' (1981: 20). In more recent research, Hatcher and Gallais (2008) highlighted the fact that due to certain health and safety issues, some areas of employment, such as medicine and engineering, do not offer work experience placements to school pupils. This limited career choice was exemplified in during the girls' focus group, Katy said she wanted to be a doctor, she intended to continue her studies in a local further education college and then move on to university. Her learning pathway therefore is clear and directional. However, this lack of clarity seems to disappear when we consider her work

experience choice; Katy said she went to work in a local hairdressing salon because it was near her home. Such a decision must call in to question the purpose and validity of work experience and contradicts official guidelines:

Work placements can help students clarify their personal goals and encourage them to set ambitious targets for themselves.

(WAG, 2008c: 32)

Similar concern was raised by the boys during the focus group when we discussed the organisation of work experience placements:

Dr Salisbury: [...] is there anything a school could do to help people know and show what a job involves? For example somebody here thought a nurse was a trainee doctor. How could the school do more?

Tim: Better work experience.

Sam: Work placements. I know somebody who goes to a Welsh school and he goes to a work placement some days a week and school other days.

Corey: They offered me this but I would have to stop doing some GCSEs and I didn't want to do this,

Dr. Salisbury: So in your personal pastoral sessions, or through careers, do you have a message for the school about how we could do things differently?

Zach: I think work experience should be longer, possibly another week and try to get a place that means something. I went on work experience and it meant nothing...

Sam: I agree.

Zach: I just sat on a chair all week.

Mrs Golding: How was your placement decided?

Zach: By the careers officer.

Corey: Yeah, they pick anything.

Sam: We had to write down five, or three options and they would get whatever they could. My first one was carpentry, my second plumbing and my third back to primary school or something like that. I ended up going to a football academy and ended up mopping changing rooms.

(Extract from male pupils' focus group)

Figure 5.25 also shows a high degree of gender stereotyping with regards work placement allocations and choices, this gender inequality is also seen in the work of Francis et al. (2005). Although National Guidance encourages schools to challenge stereotyping when pupils choose work placements:

Stereotyping should be challenged and students should be given extra support when choosing non-stereotypical placements. Institutions should check that their programmes are free from both overt and covert stereotyping. Placing students in areas of work in which they feel uncomfortable will tend to be counterproductive but strong encouragement should be given to those considering non-traditional placements.
(WAG 2008c: 38)

Rees (1994) has argued that, owing to the fact that the Welsh labour market remains heavily sex segregated, this '*social norm reinforces rather than challenges the sex-stereotyped views that young people may already have*' (1994: 60).

Only three pupils went outside their locality to find a placement and these worked in Newport, Carmarthen and the Brecon Beacons, all involving significant travel. All other placements were in a close proximity to the school (Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995; Reay and Ball 1998). Interestingly, figure 5.26 shows us that 9 per cent of pupils recorded the close proximity of the work placement as a pragmatic reason for its choice.

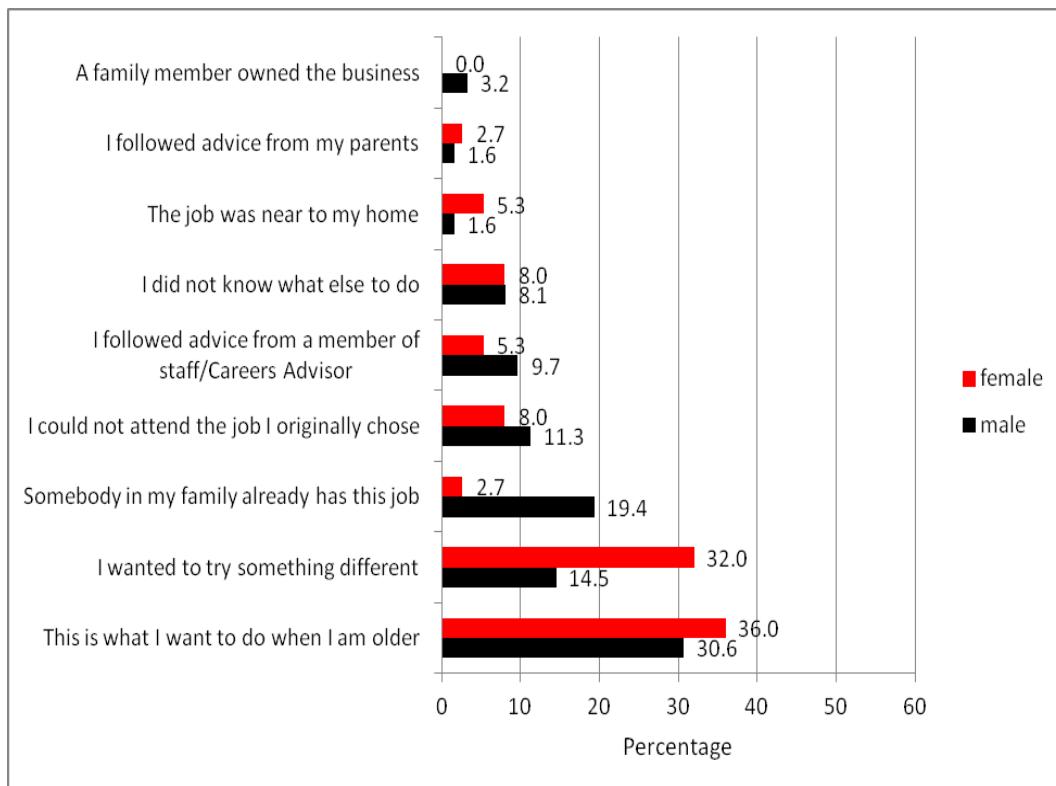


Figure 5.34: Why did you choose this job for your work placement?

The two most popular reasons offered for choice of work placement by pupils are completely opposite; in that pupils want to follow this career when they are older, contrasted with pupils wanted to try something totally different. This response seems to suggest the 'complete openness' of the work experience opportunity for pupils. Interestingly, more girls than boys chose work placements that gave them the opportunity to try something different; whereas, more boys than girls chose placements in jobs that were already held by somebody in their family.

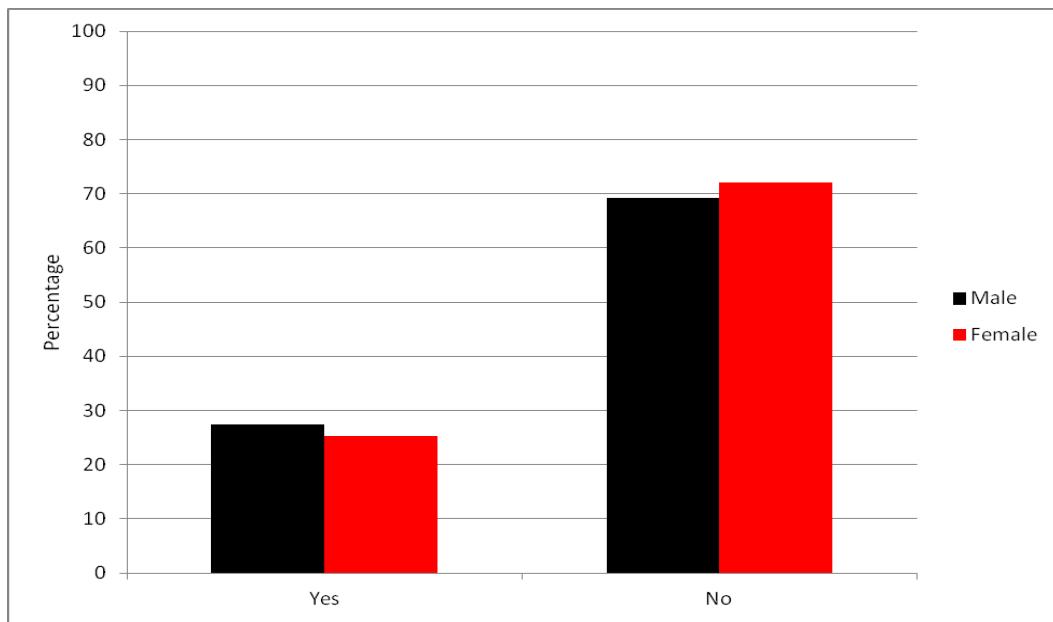


Figure 5.35: Did work experience affect your occupational aspirations?

Similar with the findings in the study by Cowell et al. (1981), the majority of pupils in this study did not feel that work experience affected their occupational aspirations. Twenty seven per cent of males and 25 per cent of females did feel that their aspirations had changed. These pupils felt that the opportunity to work in their aspirational careers had helped them realise that they did not want to do this work for the rest of their life. They felt that the jobs were '*boring*' and '*did not interest them*'.

Opinion about the structure of the current work experience provision was fairly equally split amongst the pupils. Fifty eight per cent of males and 46 per cent of females felt that the work placements should be organised for two weeks not one week (Adams et al., 2008). Research has shown that the more time pupils spend in work placements, the greater the impact on choices that are made by pupils when

they leave school (Alloway et al., 2004). The school does meet current guidelines with regards the length of work placements (WJEC, 2010).

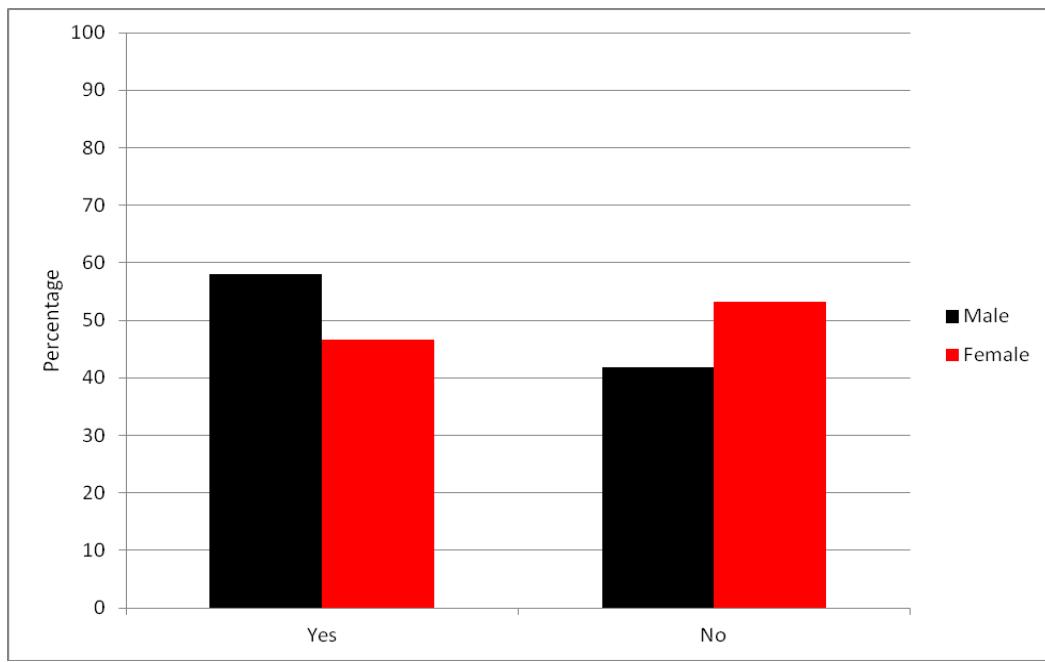


Figure 5.36: Should the school make any changes to the current work experience provision?

In light of these findings, recommendation five on p.234 asks that pupils are given the opportunity to access a larger database of local employers who are willing to provide work related education opportunities and are actively encouraged to experience jobs outside their locality to improve their '*capacity to aspire*'. Further to this, the possibilities of extending work experience opportunities to those pupils who are able to find placements outside their community for extended periods of time should be considered.

7. Conclusion

Some of the findings in this chapter paint a depressing picture. Although research has highlighted inequalities and the Welsh Government has introduced a plethora of new policies to tackle such issues as disengagement from education (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007), gender inequality (Weis, 1990; Rees, 1999; Salisbury and Riddell, 2000; Archer and Leathwood, 2003), a shrinking labour force market (Bynner et al., 2002) and the increasing number of families living in poverty (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007; Sellar et al., 2009), still so many concerns remain.

In response to the research questions set out at the beginning of this study, it is clear to see that aspirations are shaped and influenced from a very young age. Broadening an individual's aspiration window by strengthening the voice of the community and planning progressive career programmes, will go some way to ensuring that pupil's aspirations remain high and remain on track. For this reason, the quality of careers programmes offered in schools are considered in recommendation one and two on p.228. Secondly, a number of responses to the questionnaire surveys (see figs 5.10, 5.11, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17 and tables 5.7, 5.8) and discussions in the focus groups (see p. 167, p.177/178) demonstrated the extent to which gender contributed to the educational/occupational expectations and aspirations of pupils. The work of Gottfredson again highlighted the need to challenge stereotypical views from a young age as cognitive skills develop – this viewpoint is furthered in recommendation three on p.229. Another way to support and raise aspirations, is through the role of the personal tutor. The diary interview

demonstrated the wide plethora of responsibilities within this role and the inclusion of regular discussions and offer of support to help pupils plan for future vocational and academic pathways would prove beneficial to those pupils who come from families that are unaware of the options available to their children. Considering all of the research questions as a whole helps us understand that if we are to raise or maintain high aspirations, we need to adopt longitudinal multidisciplinary approaches that are considerate of the socio-cultural context within which aspirations are formed and influenced.

The next chapter summarises the key findings of the research in relation to each question and then sets out recommendations and strategies for change.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary of findings, strategies for change and final reflections

1. Introduction

This final chapter presents and considers the key findings with reference to the main research questions which framed the doctoral research project. The overarching aim was to try to identify key factors that affect pupil's educational and occupational aspirations so that the role of personal tutor which is an integral part of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification could be enhanced in the research school – Green Valley School. The research questions were:

- How are aspirations formed?
- To what extent does gender contribute to pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?
- How do individual pupils' educational and occupational aspirations change and evolve over time?
- What are the main roles and responsibilities involved with the post of personal tutor? How could this role be developed to raise pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?

The first section summarises the main findings of the literature review and explains how they contributed to and shaped the empirical research that was undertaken.

The second section differentiates the main findings for each research question.

2. Summary Of Research Findings

How are aspirations formed?

In this study, the ideas on the formation of aspirations which are developed by the economist Ray (2002, 2006) and the anthropologist Appadurai (2004) act as a strong reference point. Their work provided a conceptual framework with which to facilitate a better understanding of the ways in which the educational and occupation aspirations of the pupils could be affected. Ray describes the *aspiration window* and how:

it is formed from an individual's cognitive world, her zone of "similar", "attainable" individuals. Our individual draws her aspirations from the lives, achievements, or ideals of those who exist in her aspirations window. (Ray, 2002: 1/2)

Appadurai (2004) extends our understanding of aspirations further and stresses the importance of the '*capacity to aspire*', which is perceived as a navigational and cultural capacity.

Gottfredson (1981, 2005, 2006) has theorised that occupational aspirations are shaped from a very early age by social influences such as gender expectations, social prestige, and the perceived difficulty of the career. This study has shown that the pupils at Green Valley School had already *compromised* their aspirations within *circumscribed* gender stereotypical boundaries by the time they had moved to secondary school (aged 11).

- To what extent does gender contribute to pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?

Educational Aspirations

The study has revealed a significant lack of interest by male pupils to continue studying in a sixth form in neighbouring schools. Thirty per cent of girls compared with 8 per cent boys hoped to study in a local sixth form; this trend cannot be seen across Wales (see table 5.6) and the literature search revealed that the transitional process from 11-16 schools to further education colleges or into neighbouring 11-18 schools could prove to be a difficult process (Salisbury et al., 2006; Salisbury and Jephcote, 2008). During the focus groups, a number of boys who had not chosen to continue their studies in a sixth form said that they felt continuing their studies in a school context made the learning process seem very formal and they were keen to study more vocational courses.

Supporting the transition to post-16 education is vital and the growing public concern with the number of young people who are not in some kind of education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales acts as a constant reminder that the 14-19 vision and provision within every Welsh county needs to be clear and efficient. However, collaboration in 14-19 education and training between schools, further education colleges and work-based learning providers was described as weak across Wales several years ago (WAG, 2006a). At the time of writing this thesis, restructuring at all levels is occurring and the pursuit to improve the education system in Wales continues. Despite some stiff opposition, the Welsh Government is choosing to close many sixth forms in 11-18 schools and are trying to base 16-18

education in newly merged further education colleges. The twenty-two local authorities in Wales are being re-clustered into four local consortia (North, South West, South East and Mid-Wales) with a view to penetrating local authority boundaries that have governed and restricted collaboration between various learner settings (Estyn, 2006; Nuffield 2008).

Occupational Aspirations

Table 5.9 in Chapter Five showed 64.5 per cent (n= 20/31) boys wanted to be a sportsman and 38 per cent (n = 8/21) girls wanted to be a hairdresser at the end of Year 6 (aged 11). By the end of Year 10 (aged 15), 50 per cent of boys aspired to a sex typed career and would hope to choose a trade or work in ICT. Forty per cent of girls aspired to a sex typed career and wanted to become a hairdresser, nurse or work with children or animals. The results show that gender stereotyping is having an effect on the pupils. In particular, the female pupils seemed to be influenced by the increasing number of female staff working in schools as support assistants and teachers and many pupils are hoping to follow these same career paths. These findings support Ray's theory about the 'aspirations window' and the fact that pupils' aspirations are being influenced by those people who feature in their everyday lives.

- **To what extent do pupils' educational and occupational aspirations change and evolve over time?**

In October 2010, 67 per cent of pupils at Green Valley School said they hoped to continue on to post-16 education (77.3% female n=65/84 and 55% male n=38/68).

In July 2011, this figure increased to 70 per cent of pupils, (81.3% female n=61/75 and 58% male n=36/62). The percentage of girls wanting to continue at sixth form dropped slightly from 35.7 per cent to 30.6 per cent and more interest was expressed in going to further education college (39.3% to 46.6%). The educational aspirations of the boys was fairly static over the ten month period with twenty nine boys hoping to proceed to further education college in October 2010 and July and five boys hoping to proceed to sixth form in both questionnaire surveys.

Occupational aspirations were recorded at three time points in this study: July 2007, October 2010 and July 2011. Consistent with Gottfredson's (2002) research, the number of pupils identifying with 'fantasy' occupations decreased with age. In July 2007, 65 per cent boys (n=20/31) wanted to be a professional sports person, when asked again in July 2011, only 4 of these boys still aspired to this career. The girls chose more realistic occupations in July 2007 with 38 per cent girls (n=8/21) wanting to be hairdressers, this dropped to 1 in July 2011 when questioned again.

Another area of interest concerning pupils' occupational aspirations and their career expectations was the prestige of their occupational selections. The overall mean occupational class for female career aspirations in July 2011(M = 3.4, SD =

1.8) was lower than the expected occupational class ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 2.0$) (Kintrea et al. 2011).

- **How could the role of personal tutor be developed to raise pupils' educational and occupational aspirations?**

Seventy one per cent of the pupils stated they wanted more careers advice to help them plan what to do at the end of year 11. This statistic, combined with the clear gender segregation which has been highlighted throughout the research would lead to a recommendation that the role of personal tutor be extended to broaden pupils' capacity to aspire with regards post-16 educational and occupational destinations.

Whilst following the WBQ, pupils should be supported by the personal tutor to undertake a rigorous two year career development plan that links with the course unit titled '*Work Related Education*'. This plan needs to challenge individual pupil decisions as Gottfredson (1996) asserted:

Exploration should probe the boundaries of unacceptability set earlier in life to see if they are appropriate. (Gottfredson, 1996: 217)

Pupils should be encouraged and supported to explore a wide range of careers that are linked to their interests and abilities. Whatever careers are considered, pupils need sufficient information to help them understand the main roles and responsibilities of these jobs, what qualifications are required to achieve a job in

this area so that access routes are fully understood and pupils' aspirations can 'stay on track' (Cummings et al. 2012).

From this study, it would seem that close and regular contact with a personal tutor, who acted more like a surrogate parent would be advantageous. Mehan et al. (1996) highlighted the importance of providing 'social scaffolding' to those pupils from lower social class groups to encourage academic success and support enrolment at college. The AVID co-ordinators, who were part of this social scaffolding, closely supported pupils in their college applications by accompanying them on visits, liaising with college admission tutors and sometimes even personally delivering the applications. Of course, it is acknowledged that this work cannot be undertaken solely by the personal tutor, partially because of the time constraints that have been highlighted in chapter five and because this role should look to create a greater synergy by building up closer links with multi external agencies.

3. Strategies for Change

The results thus far paint a picture of circumscription and compromise (Gottfredson, 1981, 2005), narrow windows of aspiration (Ray, 2006) and gender segregation (Weis 1990, 2004). Research has shown that pupils' dreams about their futures are imagined from a very young age (Vondracek et al., 1986; Trice and McClellan, 1994) and schools should consider starting careers education and guidance from as early as Year 7 (Foskett et al., 2004). However, simply trying to

raise aspirations by focusing on providing support for individuals will not suffice (Appadurai, 2004; Kintrea et al., 2011). Raising aspirations has to be mindful and considerate of external and internal factors (Appadurai, 2004; Ray, 2006) and these influences are dynamic (Vondracek et al., 1986) and often deeply rooted from a young age (Rees et al., 1996). For example, living in rural areas and communities that are experiencing high levels of unemployment can inhibit dreams (Cowell et al., 1981; Ball et al., 2000), therefore support programmes need to ensure that families and pupils are provided with sufficient knowledge and suitable role models (Mehan et al., 1994; Mehan et al., 1996; Chiapa, Garrido and Prina, 2010) to ensure they can make the right educational and occupational choices (Kintrea et al., 2011; Cummings et al., 2012; Gorard et al., 2012).

The following section discusses the possibilities for change at macro, meso and micro level in light of the findings. Firstly, recommendations are presented in an attempt to increase enthusiasm within the education sector to improve career support provision in schools and challenge gender stereotyping (Pennington, 2008). Secondly, the need to work with families more closely when disseminating information about future choices is recommended and the chapter concludes by encouraging learning networks to increase the range of businesses within their locality that offer work experience opportunities to school pupils. The author acknowledges that some schools and networks may already be implementing some or many of these recommendations. However, it is felt that this research has demonstrated that there needs to be a coherent, planned approach to the

development and delivery of any careers programme to maximise its effectiveness within a community.

Recommendation One: The Welsh Government should encourage or even mandate more schools to work towards the Careers Wales Mark.

Since it was introduced in 2010/11, only 92 schools and colleges across Wales have been awarded the Careers Wales Mark. Whilst Careers Education is not part of an official curriculum it will be delivered unevenly across Wales (see section 2.3: 34-36).

Recommendation Two: Estyn should assess the quality of career guidance in schools during inspections.

The Nuffield Review (2008) recommended that all inspections of schools, colleges and work-based training organisations should report on the quality of guidance and careers education (2008: 8). Similarly, current Estyn guidelines recommend that:

Inspectors should assess the coherence and effectiveness of the provision for personal and specialist support. A carefully-structured and co-ordinated guidance programme includes careers education and guidance, and should take account of the Frameworks for Personal and Social Education and for Careers and World of Work Guidance.

(Estyn website: Accessed 8th September 2012)

Despite this guidance, of the twenty five Welsh secondary school Estyn Inspection reports that have been published during this calendar year, none of the reports commented on the standard of careers education and guidance that is offered in

the secondary schools. Only a limited number of general comments have been made by Registered Inspectors about the Personal and Social Education Programme (PSE) and the transition process to Key Stage Four and post-16.

The third section in Estyn's key question two (care, support and guidance) of the standard report should be extended to require inspectors to judge and evaluate a schools' careers provision with reference to the CWow Framework. This would increase the accountability of schools and require them to ensure that career programmes are planned, developmental, evaluated and responsive to pupils' needs. Young people need informed and detailed help to take the pathways that are likely to lead to fulfilment of the longer-term ambition (Kintrea, et al., 2011).

Recommendation Three: Schools should ensure that pupils are able to access career guidance from a young age.

The introduction of the 14-19 Learning Pathways in Wales highlighted the issue that one of the major reasons why young people become disengaged from education before the age of 16 and do not stay in education or training after 16, is because of personal problems and/or a lack of advice on their learning and career options (WAG, 2001: 13). A recent report published by Estyn (2011) revealed that schools were not providing sufficient information for pupils to consider their educational and occupational aspirations:

Even in schools where disadvantaged learners were generally well supported and happy in school, many did not have high-enough aspirations and those who did were unsure about what they needed to do to realise these ambitions. Many learners in the schools surveyed

were unsure about the option choices they needed to make and did not think that the school did enough to help them plan for their future careers.

(Estyn, 2011: 13)

Careers Scotland (2002) found that there was clear and systematic evidence that school pupils with career goals had higher attainment levels than those without. This research has shown that aspirations develop over time, and will shift considerably throughout an individual's life (Kintrea et al., 2011). If young people are to understand how to achieve their aspirations, development career programmes that challenge stereotypical views need to be designed for pupils at a much younger age. Donnelly (2012), when considering the influence of the 'school effect' on pupils' educational aspirations suggested that:

Form tutors should talk to their form groups on a daily basis about making university choices, and prepare them early on to begin making their decisions about university. This constant mention of HE to students might go some way to making it more of an assumed progression.

(Donnelly, 2012: 250)

The results of this study support previous investigations (Trice and McClellan, 1994; Magnuson and Starr, 2000) that indicated that important decisions are being made by children from a very young age about the types of careers they wish to have and expect to have. For pupils from low socio-economic background in schools without a sixth form the school was a very important source of advice (Foskett et al. 2004).

Encouraging and supporting children to set high aspirations for their futures is central to economic vitality, entrepreneurship and invention. Schemes such as WISE (Henwood, 1996), GIST (Kelly et al., 1984) and STEM have all sought to work with employers; professional bodies; education institutions; the government and many others to promote gender equality (UKRC, 2012). The fact that high aspirations are both a predictor and a product of one's abilities, personal attributes, socialisation and experiences (Gutman and Akerman 2008) and the period of 11 to 14 years being a key time when children move from idealistic to realistic ambitions (Gottfredson 2005) requires a multidimensional approach to support pupils' aspirations. Because they are multi-dimensional they cannot be affected by short term policies, rather any intervention programmes designed to raise aspirations need to be viewed long term (Super, 1963; Vondracek et al., 1986). The study would recommend a regular and developmental career programme be offered by the school from Year 7 to all pupils (Foskett et al., 2004). The programme would need to encourage all pupils from year 7 to consider their educational and occupational aspirations to ensure that compromise and circumscription do not inhibit the capacity to aspire.

Recommendation Four: Schools should offer more support to families to encourage them to play a more active role in their children's learning and decision making.

Parents should play a key role in encouraging their children to lead fulfilling lives; in fact the literature review has highlighted the impact that parents could have on

their children's aspirations (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980; Ball et al., 2000; Leitch, 2006). A number of pupils in Green Valley School live in very deprived areas in the South Wales Valleys and poverty has been shown to affect the way people think and make decisions (Ray, 2002), which causes the poor to have limited aspirations and as a result, might cause them to under invest in the education of their children thereby generating a self-sustaining poverty trap (Appadurai, 2004; Ray, 2006). Chapter Two has shown that The PROGRESA project (Chiapa et al., 2010) has had a noticeable effect on raising parents' educational aspirations for their children. Part of this success can be attributed to the fact that the programme increased the social exposure of parents and families in lower socioeconomic areas to highly educated professionals. For example, parents needed to attend health clinics to get educational talks about vaccinations, nutrition, contraception, and hygiene once a month. Chiapa et al. (2010) found that the project contributed to a 15 per cent increase in the proportion of parents who aspire for their children to finish college.

The issue of encouraging and improving parental engagement in a child's education has been discussed at length in literature (Gilby et al., 2008; Harris and Goodall, 2008). For policy, supporting aspirations means working with families as well as young people, particularly where families face disadvantages themselves (Kintrea et al., 2011: 9). When discussing reasons for pupils consistently choosing sex-stereotypical careers, Delamont also stressed the importance of directing initiatives at all audiences, not just girls. Delamont (1990) stresses the importance of initiatives being directed towards all stakeholders:

Teachers blame parents, pupils and the labour market; parents blame schools, pupils and employers; employers blame schools, parents and young people; young people complain about adults. No group admits it can change the status quo.

(Delamont, 1990: 104)

Delamont is right in her conclusion, no *one* group can change the status quo; Likewise, Vondracek et al.'s (1986) concept of dynamic interaction shares the same philosophy, the concept explains the way in which individuals influence the contexts that influence them and fervently argues that no one level of analysis in isolation can be considered the '*prime mover*' of change (1986: 71). Interventions to raise aspirations must be multidimensional, co-ordinated and longitudinal. Therefore to consider the society the pupil lives and learns in and vice versa to consider what a pupil learns and how this affects the way they live their life, i.e. the decisions they make, stresses the importance of considering family and community background when designing initiatives. These interventions need to help families learn about the educational and occupational choices that are available to them to ensure they understand what it will take for their children to fulfil their ambitions (Kintrea et al., 2011).

Palmer and Cochran (1988) reported on a careers programme which was introduced in Canada for parents of pupils in Year 10 and 11. *The Partners Program* contained a series of self-directing activities for parents to complete with their child with a view to increasing involvement in their career decision making. Albeit a small research project that worked with forty families, the study was able to conclude that parents '*can function effectively in fostering the career development of their*

children, when provided with a structured program that they can follow' (1988: 71).

Harris and Goodall (2008) warn that:

We do not know enough about how to design programmes of intervention that work with different groups of parents in different settings and creating such knowledge of design requires more in-depth research into parental engagement that captures the voices of parents and students in a serious and authentic way.

(Harris and Goodall, 2008: 281)

Most schools see engaging parents as the biggest challenge to becoming more community-focused and tackling the underachievement of disadvantaged learners (Estyn, 2011). A recent focus on the use of newsletters, a school website, text messaging and open door policies are having a positive impact on a school's relationship with its parents (Estyn, 2011). However, more could still be done and schools need to consider carefully how they involve parents in decision making with regards career and subject choices. Developing activities for parents and pupils to complete and review together as suggested by *The Partners Program* could be a definite starting point.

Recommendation Five: The Welsh Government should ensure young people have sufficient opportunity to experience their aspirational occupations through the completion of relevant work placements.

Work experience was seen by young people as an important influence in the choice processes of the majority of pupils across all schools. It was important in affirming their post-16 decisions and also in gaining experience of the outside world of work.

(Foskett et al., 2004: 3)

Aspirations are both short term and long term and young people may aspire to different things simultaneously. The full range of possibilities for educational outcomes and jobs is often hidden or unimagined, particularly when there is little experience in families of higher education and professional jobs. This means that young people need informed and detailed help to take the pathways that are likely to lead to fulfilment of the longer-term ambitions. This requires better career advice and more access to work experience. (Kintrea et al., 2011: 8) In Wales, Work Related Education (WRE) includes a minimum of three weeks work experience over the 14-19 phase, including at least one week during KS4. In order to ensure pupils are choosing from a wide range of careers when deciding upon work placements, Careers Wales is currently developing a National Database of Work Experience opportunities which young people will be able to access through their website (<http://www.careerswales.com>) in the hope that pupils will be fully aware of the employers they can contact to undertake work experience.

This study would suggest that further interventions are needed in order to enhance the success of work experience at Key Stage Four. Fifty one per cent (n=71/137) of pupils raised concerns about the work experience opportunity that was offered to them at the end of Year 10 and felt that the current programme should be changed. Of the 71 comments that were made, 69 per cent (n=49/71) felt that the work experience should be longer and organised over two weeks and 21 per cent (n=15/71) felt that the placements needed to be better match with personal interests and aspirations. Finally, the range of jobs that pupils accessed to

complete their work placements was limited (See Figure 5.25) and unfortunately the lack of occupational aspiration which has been attributed to poor local labour markets (Cowell et al., 1981; Honess, 1989) is still visible in the pupils involved in this study. Chapter Two provided brief cameos of the area where this research was undertaken and described the low socioeconomic backgrounds of the majority of families who live in this area.

This study drew heavily on the powerful work by Ray (2002, 2006) and Appadurai (2004) and acknowledged why exposure to individuals with a higher educational level and economic status may matter for increasing aspirations and decreasing poverty. Their work assigned a central role in the formation and evolution of individual aspirations to the socioeconomic environment; people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may have narrow aspirational windows and lack the capacity to aspire. Therefore, if schools were to harness the possibilities of regularly arranging opportunities for school pupils and their families to work with highly educated professionals who live in the same area (Chiapa et al., 2010) these projects could, in turn, increase self confidence, improve self motivation and demonstrate what individuals could achieve if they are committed to high aspirations.

Recommendation Six: Local Authorities should ensure that 14-19 Networks provide sufficient opportunities and information for pupils to make informed educational choices.

This study shows that pupils need to know exactly where they can study, what they can study and 11-16 schools should promote and advertise all educational pathways. Lack of clear information about post-16 options (Foskett et al., 2004) and suitable transport links (Spielhofer et al., 2011) may thwart pupils' aspirations and choices (Cummings et al., 2012). It is not enough for young people just to aspire; they also need to be able to navigate the paths to their goals (Kintrea et al., 2011). Maguire et al. (2001) have all shown how the marketing of post-16 choices both by 11-16 schools and by post-16 providers has a strong influence on the perceptions that are formed by pupils and hence the decisions those young people make. Further Education colleges and work-based learning providers are independent organisations, and are currently funded differently from schools and work across a number of LA areas, catering for adult learners as well as 14-19 year-olds. If pupils are to be able to make the informed decisions about their post-16 options they need to be offered sufficient advice and guidance, which should be designed and co-ordinated through '*strongly collaborative local learning systems*' involving schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, higher education, the youth service, voluntary organisations and employers (Hayward et al., 2006: 12). At present, this collaboration to provide post-16 education is limited (Estyn, 2006) and should be prioritized for immediate improvement.

Pupils who live in deprived socio-economic areas may not have sufficient capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004), and Appadurai recommended the use of mentors to help bridge this gap. Those schools who do not have sixth forms should be

supported by local authorities to explore programmes similar to the AVID College Readiness System (Mehan et al., 1994; Mehan et al., 1996; Guthrie and Guthrie, 2000) and seek to increase pupils' awareness of colleges by training students in local colleges to facilitate small tutor groups of school pupils to improve their study and higher thinking skills through writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading (WIC-R).

4. Limitations of the Study

Although this research was carefully prepared, the author acknowledges two key limitations of the study. Firstly, as the research was conducted in a single school, the sample size involved in some cross sectional analysis is rather small. That limits the generalizability of the results so care must be taken when relating the findings to other schools and areas. However, research has shown that aspirations differ significantly between places (Kintrea et al., 2011) and the dynamic nature of the formation of aspirations necessitates consideration of broader social contexts (Gutman and Akerman, 2008).

Secondly, the brevity of the study, tied into a doctoral candidature did not allow for a sufficient longitudinal analysis of pupils' aspirations over time. There remains the possibility to track the educational and occupational destinations of the pupils involved in this study as the basis of a future research project and like Weis (2004) I may be able to explore their long term trajectories and destinations.

5. Possibilities for Further Research

This study has recommended that schools should explore an array of intervention strategies to encourage families to play an active role in their children's learning and provide information about educational choices. Gorard et al. (2012) have called for further research on this to ascertain causal influences between parental involvement and young peoples' participation in post-compulsory education. Clearly, some well-designed longitudinal projects are required here which could address research questions in a large scale systematic research design involving various regions of the UK.

6. Conclusion: A Final Reflection

The process of undertaking this doctoral project has provided me with a greater insight into the different ways that aspirations are formed and influenced. Furthermore, by developing my own research skills I have been able to learn how to explore, analyse and identify effective practice. As an outcome, I feel more comfortable with my abilities to analyse whole school practice efficiently, to advise and to implement long-term strategic plans. The reflexive preface which opened the thesis and extracts from my research diary which pepper various points throughout the thesis have already captured something of the professional learning journey I have undertaken.

I have already begun working with my new Year Seven group who joined us at Green valley School in September 2013. I have met with each of these pupils and

they have written down their hopes and dreams for the future and we have buried them in a time capsule which will be opened in May 2017 following their five years of study at Green Valley School. If we, as a school do succeed to raise and improve the aspirations of the incoming generation of secondary pupils then the next important challenge has to be to ensure that our highly aspirational and skilled workforce can be assured that jobs will be available and they will be able to gain access to them. But if we are to achieve this aspiration, then we will need to work together to do this.

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APPENDIX ONE

Questionnaire Survey One (October 2010)

1 Male or Female?

Choose... ▾

2 What Tutor Group are you in?

Choose... ▾

3 What Teaching Group are you in?

Choose... ▾

4 What area do you live in?

Choose... ▾

5 Who do you live with?

- Dad
- Mum
- Step parent
- Carer
- Brother
- Sister
- Other

6 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please state your answer.

Choose... ▾

7 Has anybody in your house studied at a Further Education College?

Choose... ▾

8 Has anybody in your house studied at university?

Choose... ▾

9

What is the highest qualification held by somebody in your house?

Choose... ▾

10

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

11 Who holds the highest qualification in your house?

Choose... ▾

12 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below.

13 What do you HOPE to do when you leave school?

Choose... ▾

14 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

15 What do you EXPECT to do when you leave school?

Choose... ▾

16 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

17 Who have you talked with to get advice about what to do when you leave school?

- Subject teacher
- Form tutor
- Progress Manager
- Careers Adviser
- Learning Coach
- Parent/Carer
- Other family member
- Other

18 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

19 What is your dream job?

20 What job do you expect to get?

21 If your dream job and your expected job are different, please explain why you might not be able to get your dream job

22 Who would you like to talk with this year to get advice about what to do when you leave school?

- Subject teacher
- Form tutor
- Progress Manager
- Careers Advisor
- Learning Coach
- Parent or Carer
- Other family member
- Other person

23

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

APPENDIX TWO

Questionnaire Survey Two (July 2011)

*1 Are you Male or Female?

Choose... ▾

*2 What Teaching Group are you in?

Choose... ▾

*3

What area do you live in?

Choose... ▾

*4 Who do you live with?

- Dad
- Mum
- Step parent
- Carer
- Brother
- Sister
- Other

5

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please state your answer.

*6

Has anybody in your house studied at a Further Education College?

Choose... ▾

*7

Has anybody in your house studied at university?

Choose... ▾

*8

What is the highest qualification held by somebody in your house?

Choose... ▾

9

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

*10 Who holds the highest qualification in your house?

Choose... ▾

11 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below.

12 If you were unable to answer questions 7 to 12, please explain why. If you could answer all questions, please move on.

Choose... ▾

*13 What do you HOPE to do when you leave school?

Choose... ▾

14 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

*15 What do you EXPECT to do when you leave school?

Choose... ▾

16 If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please type your answer below

*17 What is your DREAM job?

*18 What job do you expect to get?

19 If your dream job and your expected job are different, please explain why.

*20 Where did you complete your work experience this year?

*21 Why did you decide on this job?

- This is what I want to do when I am older
- Somebody in my family already has this job
- Followed advice from my parents
- Followed advice from a member of staff/Careers Advisor
- A family member owned the business
- I wanted to try something different
- The job was near to my home
- Did not know what else to do
- I could not attend the jobs I originally chose

*22 Has work experience made you change your career plans?

Choose... ▾

*23 Please explain your last answer

*24 Should the school make any changes to work experience?

Yes No

25 Please explain your last answer

*26 How many times have you met with the tutor this year?

Choose... ▾

*27 How regularly did you meet with the tutor?

Choose... ▾

*28 On average, how long were the meetings?

Choose... ▾

*29 Would you have liked to have met with your tutor more often?

Choose... ▾

*30 How would you prefer to meet with your tutor?

Choose... ▾

*31 How did you arrange to meet with your tutor?

- Email
- Note in register
- Teacher passed on message
- Asked tutor for an appointment
- Other

*32 What topics have you discussed with your tutor this year?

- Schoolwork
- Homework
- Coursework
- Attendance
- Subject target grades

- Personal targets
- Community Participation
- Welsh Baccalaureate work
- Individual Action Plan
- Careers Advice
- Choices after finishing Year 11
- Work experience
- Time management
- Revision techniques
- Exam techniques
- Personal problems
- Family Issues
- Health and Wellbeing
- Self confidence and self esteem
- Other

*33 Are there any other topics or issues you would have liked to have discussed this year with your tutor? (If yes, please explain)

*34 Has your tutor arranged for you to meet with another professional for further support?

- Yes
- No
- No, but I would have liked to have met with somebody

*35 Has your tutor helped you plan what you want to do when you leave school at the end of Year 11?

- Yes
- No

*36 Please explain your last answer.

*37 Can you make any suggestions to improve the structure of the tutor support?

*38 If given the opportunity, would you like to have met with a tutor before Year 10?

- Yes
- No

*39 How would you rate the sessions with your tutor?

Choose... ▾

*40 What support would you like in Year 11 to help you achieve your target grades?

- Subject revision sessions
- Revision and exam technique sessions

- Further support from tutor
- Mentoring support from a teacher
- Coursework club
- Online revision support
- Online access to past papers
- Regular target grade reviews
- Careers Advice
- Girls only support sessions
- Boys only support sessions
- Support to improve reading skills
- More information for my parents to be able to support me
- Counselling
- Relaxation classes to reduce exam nerves
- Other

41

If you answered 'other' for the last question, please explain your answer.

*42

What support would you like in Year 11 to help you plan what to do when you leave school?

- Meetings with Careers Advisor
- Careers advice from subject teachers
- Access to online careers advice
- Visits FROM local colleges and school
- Visits TO local colleges and schools
- Opportunities to meet local employers (careers fairs)
- Advice on writing CVs and attending interviews
- More information for my parents to be able to advise me
- Other

43

If you answered 'other' to the last question, please explain your answer.

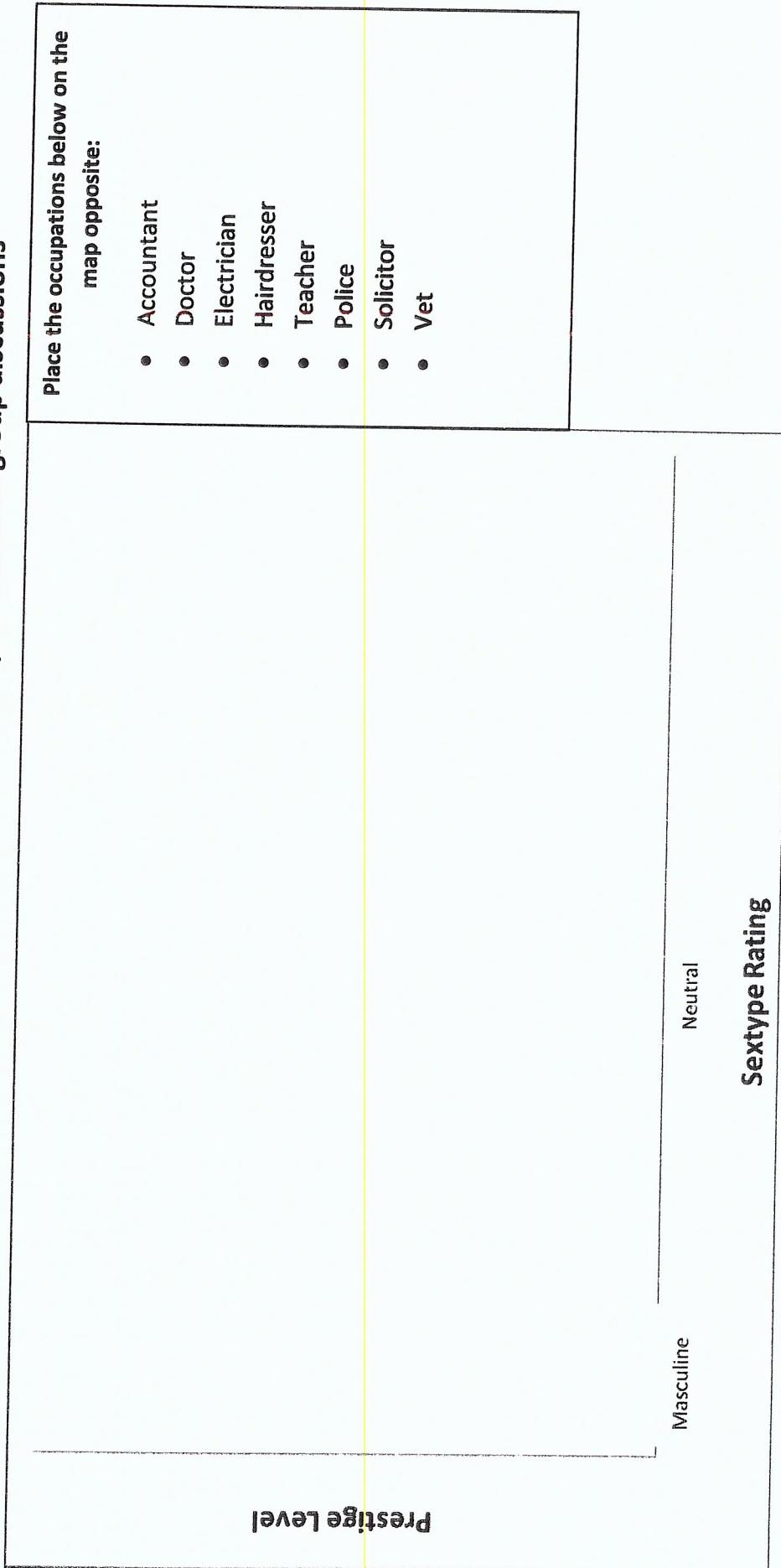
APPENDIX THREE

Gantt Chart Outlining Research Phases

	April 2010	May 2010	June 2010	July 2010	Sep 2010	Oct 2010	Jan 2011	March 2011	April 2011	May 2011	June 2011	July 2011	Aug 2011	Sep 2011
Non participant observation in SLT meeting.	X													
Pupil briefings and informed consent leaflets and letters to parents.					X									
In house pupil individual data collected for year 10 cohort and stored securely.		X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	
Completion of first questionnaire survey.												X		
Tutoring support offered to pupils.						X			X	X	X			
Series of interviews with Personal Tutor							X	X	X			X		
Completion of second questionnaire survey.												X		
Focus groups: male and female pupils.														X
Data Analysis of Questionnaires surveys.								X	X	X	X	X	X	
Transcription of focus group interviews and thematic analysis.														X
Analysis of pupil attainment data and mapping against questionnaire and focus group data.	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX FOUR

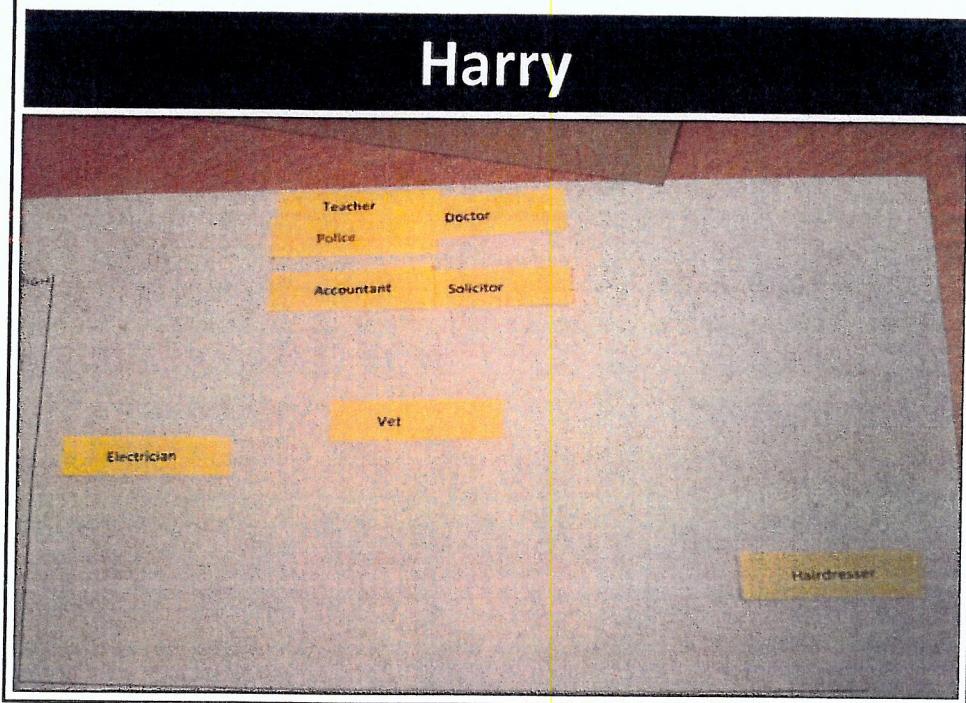
Example of cognitive map of occupations (Gottfredson 1981) used in focus group discussions



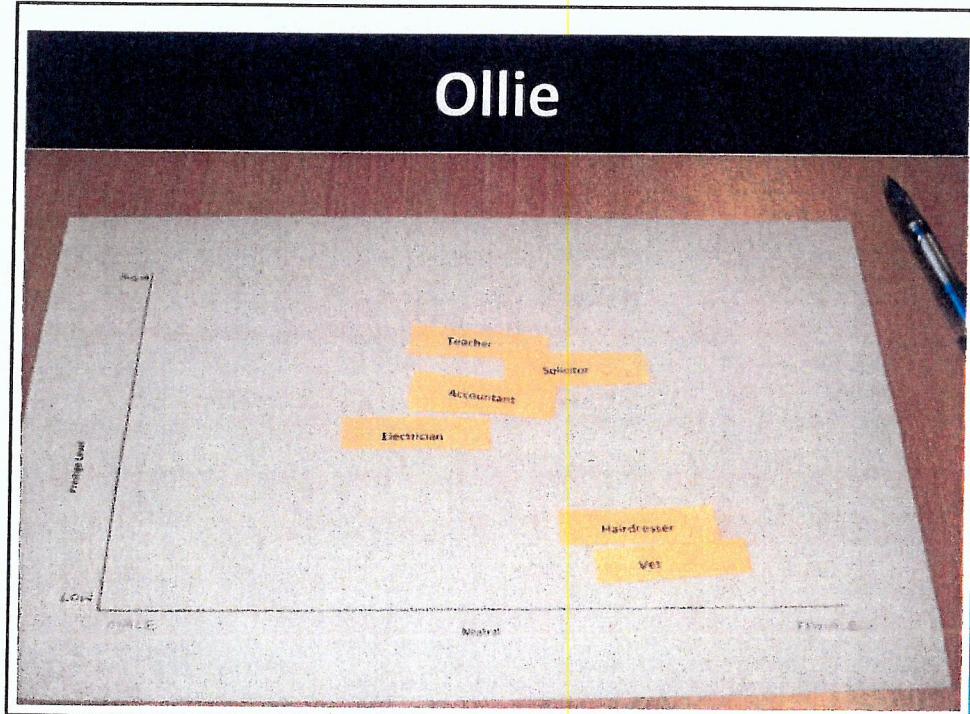
APPENDIX FIVE

Photographs of pupils' work in focus groups

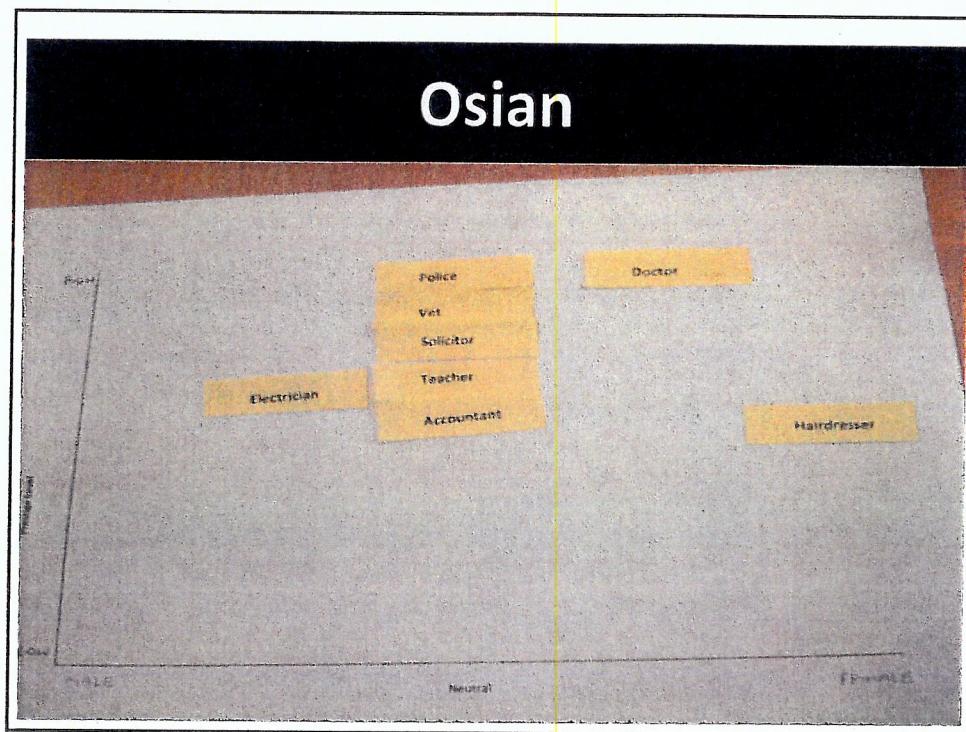
Harry



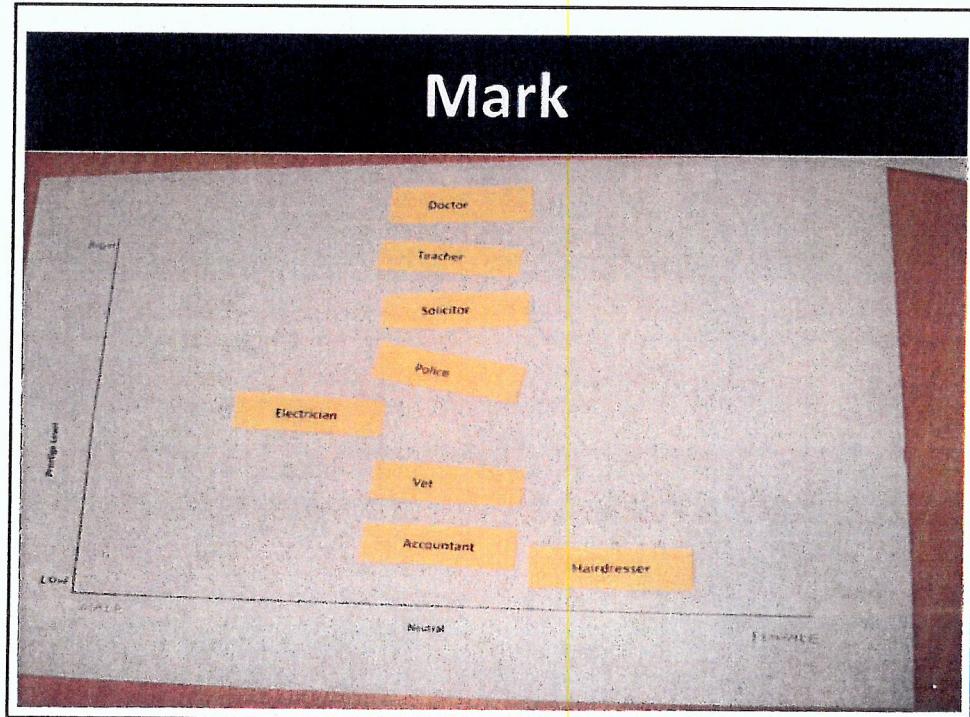
Ollie



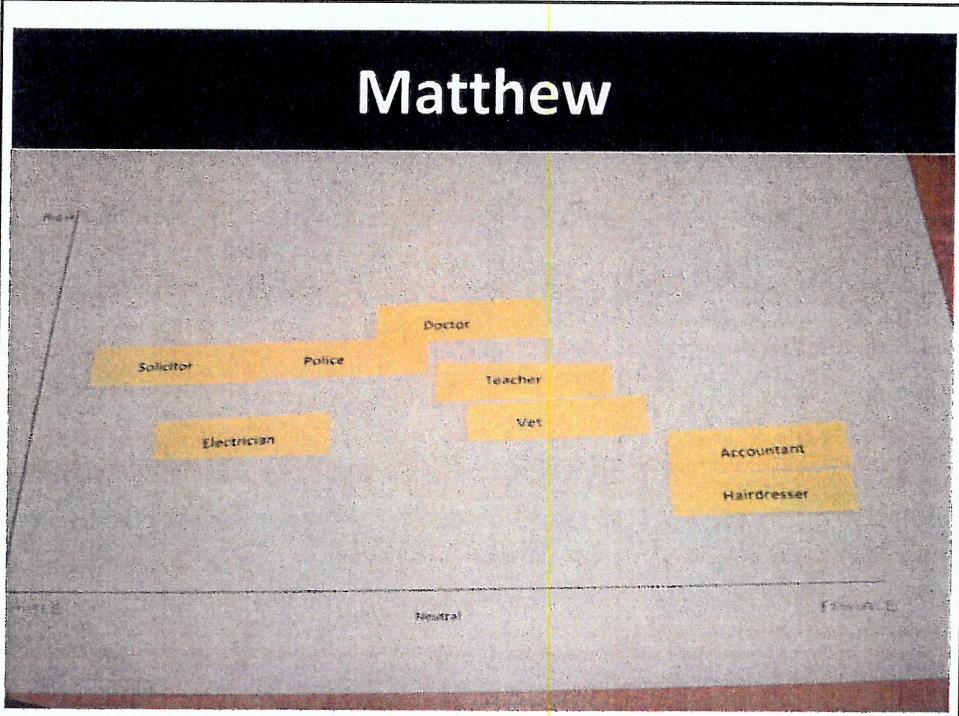
Osian



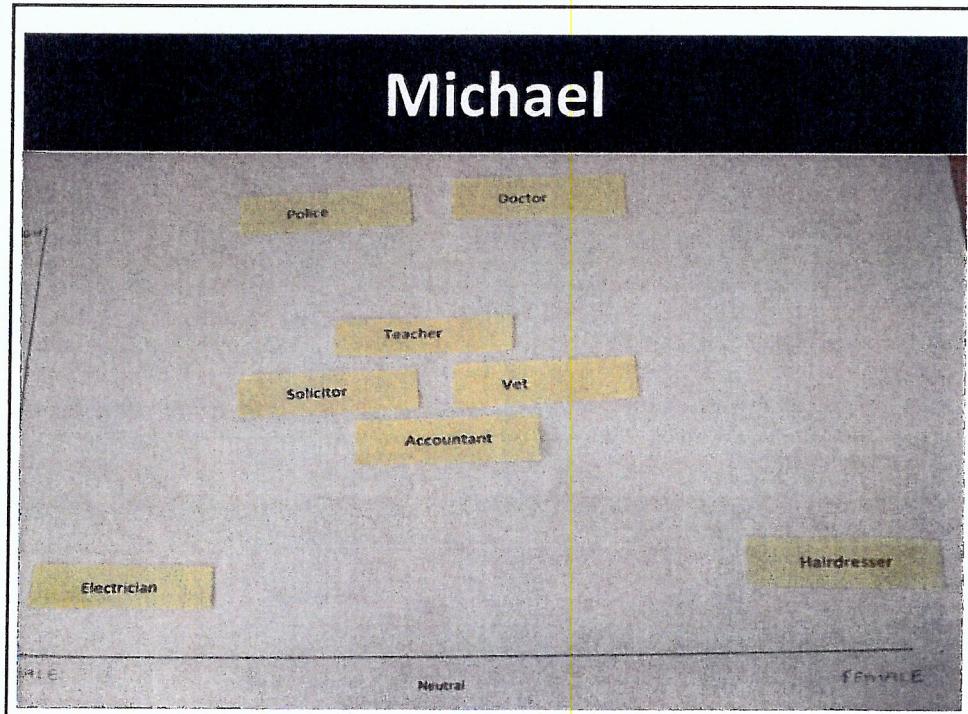
Mark



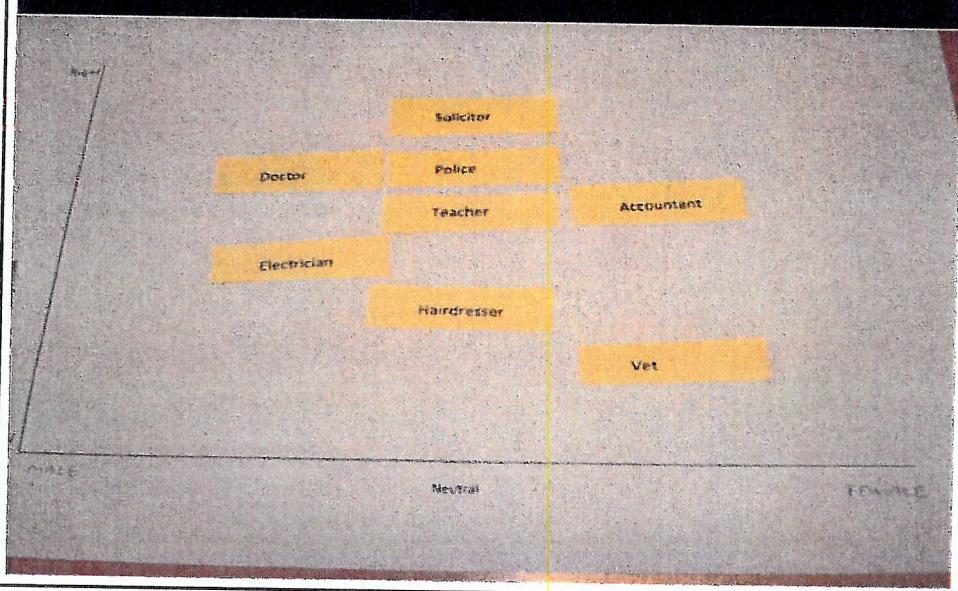
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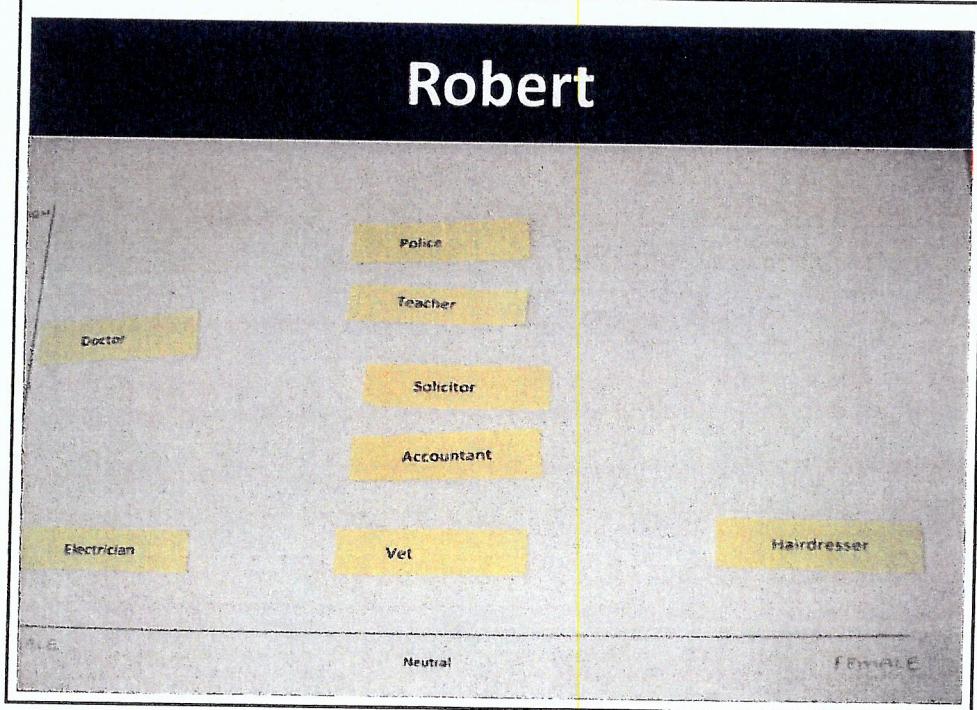
Michael



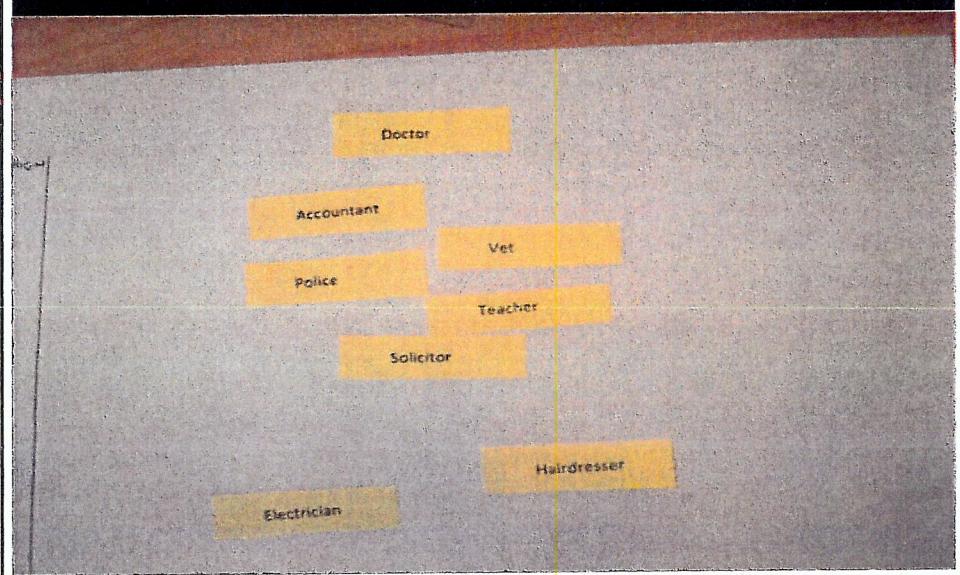
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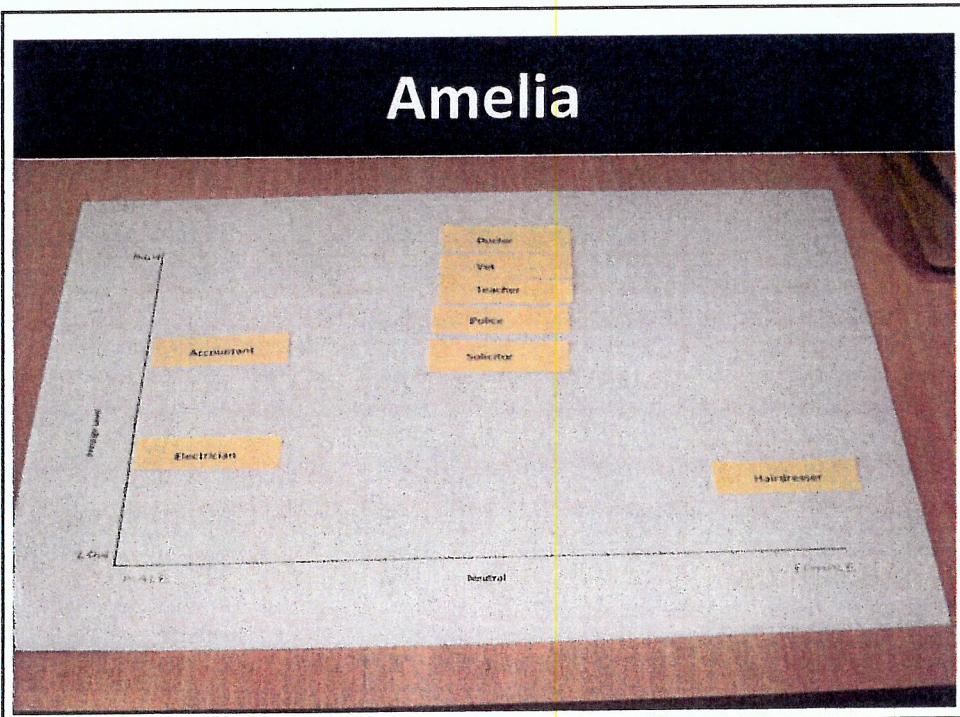
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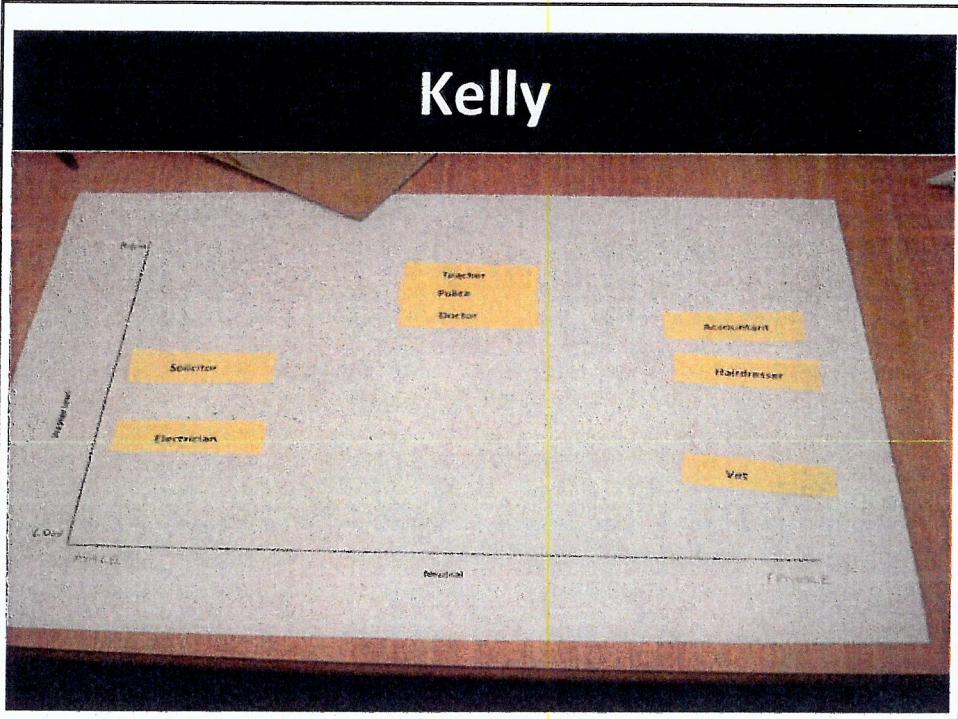
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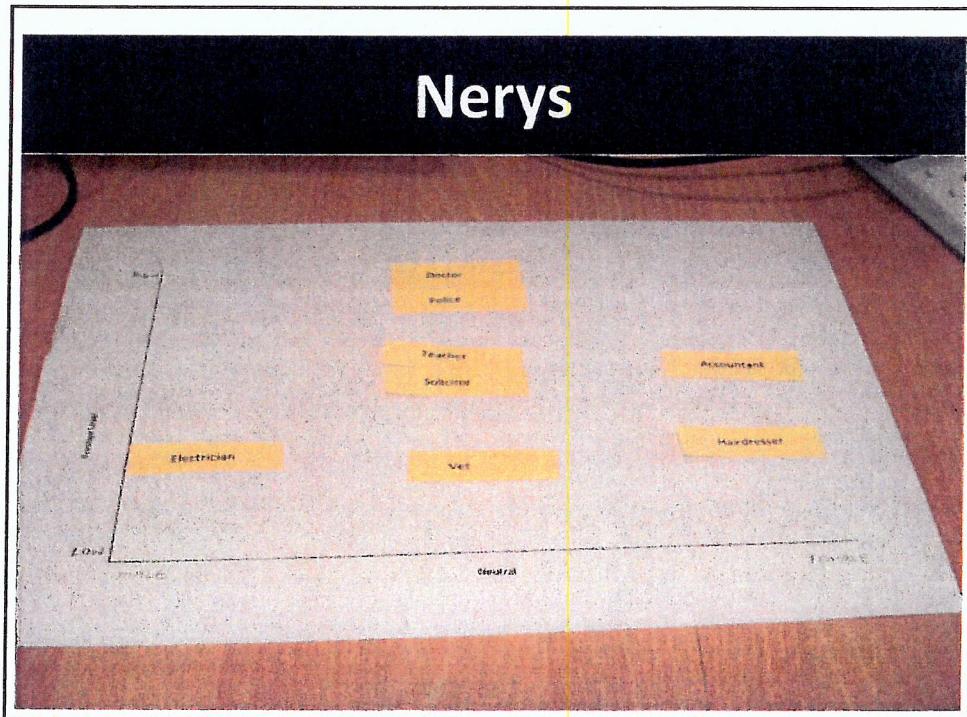
Amelia



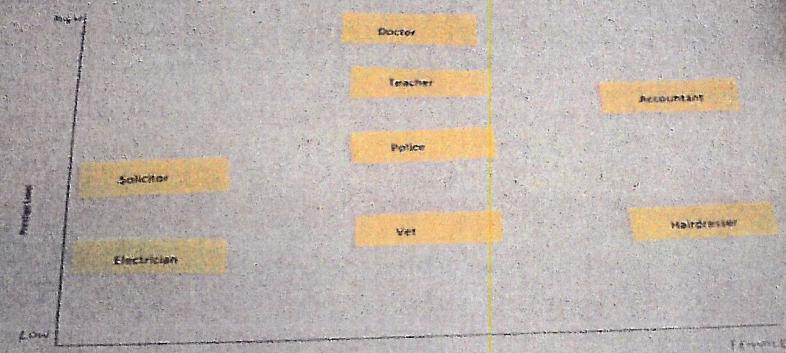
Kelly



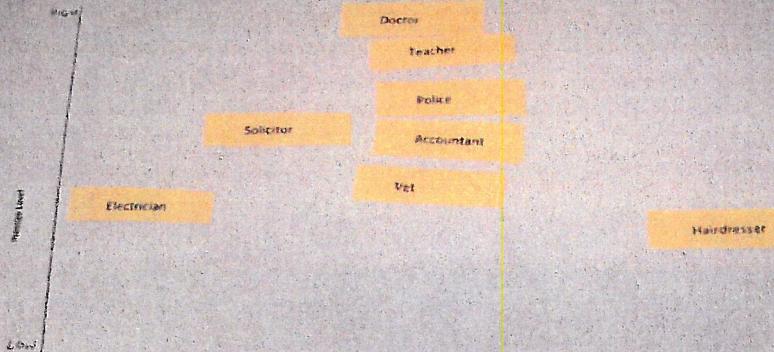
Nerys



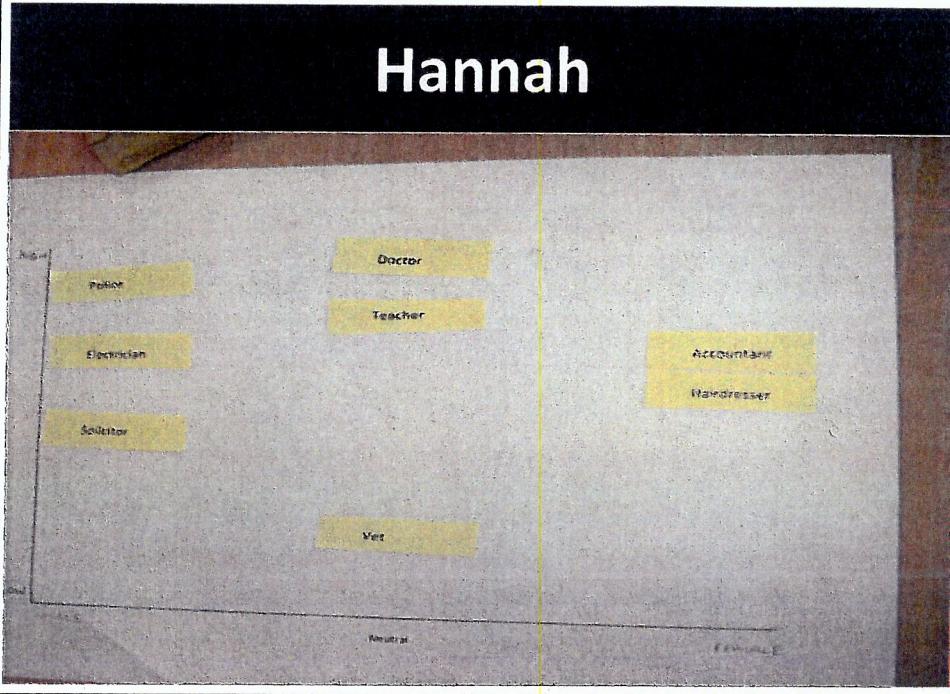
Amy



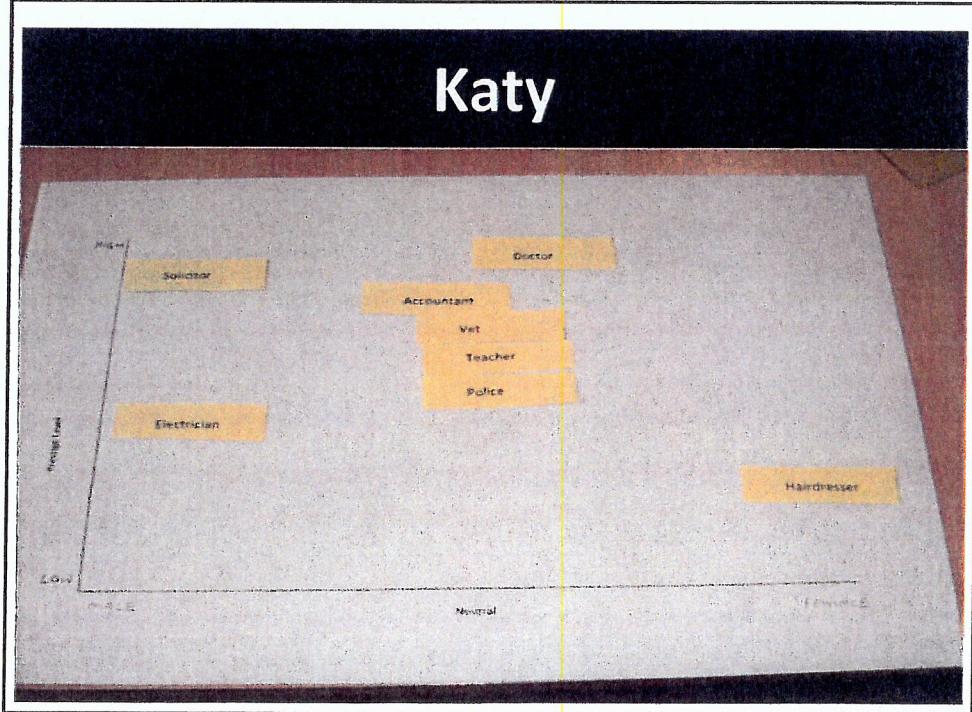
Emma



Hannah



Katy



What if you do not want to take part in the research?

Who am I?

Can Mentoring Improve Pupils' Educational

My name is Mrs Golding and although I work full-time at Green Valley School, I am also studying part-time at Cardiff University. If you would like further information about the study, you can come and see me anytime in school.



If you do not wish to take part in the research project, this is O.K. You will still be meet with the Personal Tutor. All I ask is that you return the attached form to myself by 10th September 2010 if you do not want to take part.

If you do not return the form, you will be automatically included in the study, as long as you are happy to be included.

**THIS INFORMATION
LEAFLET IS FOR PUPILS**

What if I change my mind about taking part?

You are able to change your mind at any point. Just come and see me in school and I will take your name off the list.

If you have any concerns concerning the conduct of the study please contact the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WT.

Mrs Golding would like to invite you to take part in a research project.



What is the purpose of the study?

Green Valley School is introducing a tutoring/mentoring scheme whereby every pupil in Year 10 will regularly meet with a Personal Tutor from September 2010.

Mentoring schemes have run for several years at Green Valley School. I would like to look at how successful this new scheme could be in encouraging pupils to carry on studying after they leave Green Valley School.

The results of my research will hopefully help the school further the good work it already undertakes and continue to support pupils.

What is involved?

- You will complete two questionnaires with the help of your form tutors. One in September 2010 and one in June 2011. The questions will be very easy and will help me find out:
 - what you want to do when you leave school;
 - what you think about the mentoring work in school.

What will happen with the information?

I will use the answers you provide in the questionnaires and any meetings we have to draw conclusions about the mentoring process.

Will taking part be confidential?

YES. I will not tell anybody about who I spoke to. When I begin to write my final essay, I will change all pupils' names and the school name to protect identities.

What if parents/guardians do not wish their child to participate?

If you do not wish your child to take part in this research please complete the attached form and return it to the school by 10th September 2010. If you do not return the form, your child will automatically be included in the study, as long as he/she is happy to be included.

Who am I?

My name is Susan Golding and although I work full-time at Green Valley School, I am also studying part-time at Cardiff University. If you would like further information about the study, you can contact me at Green Valley School.



What if participants change their minds about taking part?

Participation is voluntary and anyone can withdraw at anytime, without giving a reason.

Will taking part be confidential?

YES. Pupils will not be named or identified in anyway. All pupils' names will be changed.



Can Mentoring Improve Pupils' Educational Aspirations?

THIS INFORMATION LEAFLET IS FOR PUPILS OR PARENTS/ CARERS

I would like to invite your child to take part in this research project.

Before you make any decisions about whether or not to participate, may I ask you to consider why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. My work will be supervised by Dr. Sara Delamont from Cardiff School of Social Sciences. Dr. Delamont can be contacted on 02920 874305.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

What is the purpose of the study?

In schools, it has been suggested that tutoring can help improve pupils' achievements.

Green Valley School is introducing a new tutoring scheme this September, which will run alongside the new Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. Every pupil in Year 10 will regularly meet with a Personal Tutor in order to help them achieve their full potential. I would like to investigate the impact that this scheme has on pupils' educational and occupational aspirations.

The results of my research will hopefully help the school further the good work it already undertakes.

What is involved?

❖ Pupils will complete two questionnaires which will try to find out:

- What they thought about the Tutoring process;
- what they want to do when they leave school.

❖ Pupils' academic results will be analysed.

❖ Discussion groups will be conducted with some pupils to understand their views on the tutoring process.

How will information be recorded?

❖ The majority of information will be gathered through two questionnaires. However, with the permission of the participants, discussion groups will be tape-recorded from which written transcripts will be created.

What will happen with the information?

Any information I gather will only be accessible to myself and my supervisors and will be kept securely, in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act. They will not be used for any other purpose.

A summary of my research findings will be made available when I finish my thesis.

Do children have to take part in discussion groups?

No. Only a small number of discussion groups will take place. If you are willing for your child to complete a questionnaire but not participate in a focus group, please indicate this on the attached form.

APPENDIX SEVEN

Opt out letter sent home to pupils and parents/carers at outset of research project

Dear parent/carer

Please find enclosed a leaflet which explains a project I would like to organise in school. I would like to invite your child to take part in this research project.

I work full-time at xxxxxxx school as a teacher, but also study part-time at Cardiff University. As part of my course I am interested in exploring the tutoring work the school currently undertakes in order to consider its impact on pupils' educational aspirations

Before you make any decisions about whether or not to allow your child to participate, may I ask you to consider why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

If, when you have read the leaflet, you DO NOT wish your child to be involved in this project, please sign and return the slip below:

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Golding

** Please delete as appropriate*

* I do not want my child to take part in the research project.

* I am willing for my child to complete two questionnaires, but I do not want them to be involved in the discussion groups.

Name of Pupil _____

Class _____

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX EIGHT

Young Person's Action Plan

Name..

Date of Birth.. 25/3/96..

What are you good at?

Art
Attendance
Time Keeping

What do you need to work on?

Homework
Concentration
Maths

What are your targets?

- Complete homework on time
- Improve concentration skills
- Improve maths grade
- Improve science grade

How are you going to achieve them?

Check planner every night

Set up a revision time table to improve on my concentration

To improve grades in maths and science go to revision classes and do past papers.

Young Person's Signature: ..

Date: 18/10/11

The Action Plan was discussed with:

Staff Name: ..

Young Person's Action Plan

Name

Date of Birth 25/8/96

What are you good at?

- Drama
- Science
- History

What do you need to work on?

- English
- maths
- Homework

What are your targets?

- improving grades in maths + english.
- improve on homework
-
-

How are you going to achieve them?

I can improve by going to revision classes and revise more.

Check my planner every night for homework.

Young Person's Signature:

Date: 5/10/11

The Action Plan was discussed with:

Staff Name: