Exploring social constructions regarding bullying between children in schools by adult stakeholders working in the British education system

By Alexandra Boys

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Portsmouth.

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Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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Acknowledgments and Dedications

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Abstract

A tension between what people consider to be bullying in schools has been identified by reviews of previous positivist research into the phenomenon. Questions have subsequently been raised as to why there is such disparity leading to the application of social constructionism as an alternative means of exploring bullying in schools. The aim of this thesis was to complement the existing literature on bullying by exploring the social constructions regarding bullying in schools from adult stakeholders working with children in the British education system. Four studies were conducted in total with an ethnographic element reflected throughout where I am a practising Educational Psychologist (EP), parent and former teacher. Three studies employed the principles of social constructionism collecting examples of conversations conducted in a social and naturalistic context. The first study explored a conversation between me and my EP colleagues. The second study collected data from the staff meeting discussions at four primary schools. The third study explored government guidance to schools on bullying. In the final study, I shared the data collected from my first three studies with a group of parents and the discussion that followed completed the data collection process. Principles of the Discourse Analytic tradition were employed to analyse the data; discursive practice analysis, Foucauldian Analysis, Critical Discursive Psychology, Critical Discourse Analysis and the Discursive Action Model. The analyses reflected variability in how the different groups constructed bullying due to the contexts, histories, cultures and experiences influencing those involved. Furthermore, each group positioned itself as having the ‘right’ construction of bullying and as being best placed to correct those held by others. From the analyses I would recommend that if a child constructs themselves as being bullied the situation should be addressed rather than debating whether it is bullying.
Chapter 1

Going beyond positivist studies on bullying in schools: A rationale for language based research
Introduction

Bullying as a human interaction has been a topic of interest for many years having an impact across age groups, contexts, countries and cultures. Of particular interest to me as an Educational Psychologist (EP), former teacher and parent is the topic of bullying within educational settings. As of this point, the word ‘bullying’ will refer to ‘bullying in schools’. As a practicing EP, I meet with parents, pupils and school staff to explore issues of concern. Where bullying is mentioned, those with whom I discuss the concern present as considering the same incident differently. These differences are also present when talk turns to methods of addressing the concern. I also noted differences between the way in which stakeholders such as parents, pupils and school staff talked about bullying when I was a teacher. It is a curiosity as to why these differences occur that has prompted an ongoing interest in bullying and the reason I chose to explore this further with a recognition of my personal interests inherent in the process. Specifically, as well as a researcher I am a member of three key stakeholder groups with the potential to influence the way in which pupils talk about bullying and in a position to support children and young people experiencing bullying.

The subject of bullying has generated a number of press releases such as those from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) including “Cyberbullying may force out young teachers, says union …,” (15.11.12), “Pupils hiding talents from bullies, survey suggests …,” (19.11.12) and “Cyberbullying: Horror in the home” (17.08.13) and national papers such as the Daily Mail Online who published a story with the headline “Boy ‘driven to suicide by bullies’ “ (20.02.15). The government has also published guidelines to schools regarding bullying (e.g. DfES\(^1\): Bullying: Don’t suffer in silence, 1994 and 2000; DCSF\(^2\): Safe to Learn, Cyberbullying and Homophobic Bullying, 2007; DfE\(^3\): Preventing and tackling bullying, 2014). There is also a wealth of research conducted by psychologists compiled over several decades, some of

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\(^1\) DfES: Department for Education and Schools
\(^2\) DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families
\(^3\) DfE: Department for Education
which has influenced practitioner guidance. For example, the guidance published in 1994 by the DfES was drawn from the psychological research of Smith and Sharp (1994) based in Sheffield schools. Over time, a number of organisations have also been formed to support parents, children and young people regarding bullying (e.g. kidscape.org.uk, bullying.co.uk, stopbullying.gov). What links these sources of information is the consideration that bullying is something which can be clearly identified, defined and addressed in some form.

A brief history of research into bullying

The modernist paradigm

Much of the previous research into bullying has explored the topic from the modernist paradigm where the individual is paramount and the assumptions made about the social world are drawn from asking the people within it about their experiences. Data has subsequently been collected using an objective ontology; assumptions about the nature of and what constitutes the social world and how things within relate to each other stem from and are understood through the individuals involved. This posits a degree of separation between the individual and the social; they are treated as independent elements in a system. Furthermore, collecting and analysing data has been accomplished through a positivist epistemology (what constitutes valid knowledge about the social world) where what is said about bullying by individuals is accepted as a reality rather than as a construction. Within this positivist framework, while the concepts held by individuals can be adjusted when information provided by the social world challenges them, they are considered to remain stable at the core. Consequently, by obtaining information on the concepts people hold about bullying, knowledge can be gained that is assumed to be applicable to similar instances. More specifically, a universally agreed construct regarding what constitutes bullying is considered to be identifiable.
The most notable early research into the topic employing a positivist framework was completed by Dan Olweus operating in Sweden and Norway from the 1970’s. Olweus began with a large scale study into bullying published in 1973 in Scandinavia, then later America under the title *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys* (1978). Following this investigation, Olweus developed what he named the *Bullying Prevention Programme* which was put in place in several schools in Norway in the 1980’s as an intervention to address bullying. He later published an evaluation of the intervention in his book *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do* (1993). Olweus subsequently completed follow-up studies to continue exploring the effectiveness of his *Bullying Prevention Programme* (e.g. Olweus, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2010) which was consistently discussed as being effective in addressing bullying across a number of countries including England (e.g. Olweus, 2004).

Bullying has continued to be a topic of interest for researchers and further studies have followed the tradition of Olweus where a theme has emerged discussing what constitutes bullying. Olweus himself has adhered to the definition he produced initially in 1986 and then reiterated in 1993 where bullying is discussed as "A student is being bullied or victimised as when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students ...,” (p.9). The key elements included here, namely repetition, constancy and negative acts conducted by one or more individuals towards another, have been employed as a reference for researching bullying and gathering further evidence to reinforce these as what constitutes bullying. However, on closer examination of the language used to discuss what constitutes bullying in research following the Olweus tradition, subtle variations are present. Gini (2006) discusses bullying as "... a negative action aimed at causing physical and/or psychological harm to one or more students who are weaker and unable to defend themselves ...,” (p.52). Here, the negative acts conducted are discussed as having a specific aim (i.e. to cause harm). In addition, the individuals in receipt of these acts are described as 'weaker' and not in a position to employ self-defence mechanisms. The definition employed by Gini illustrates the variation of language used to
discuss the traditional key elements first posited by Olweus. Phillips (2007) discusses a definition of bullying for her research as being "... a specific type of aggression in which 1) the behaviour is intended to harm or disturb, 2) the behaviour occurs repeatedly over time, and 3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one ...,” (p.158). Here again there is an inclusion of the key elements following on from Olweus but with a variation in the language used to describe them. Specifically, the language employed seeks to describe bullying as being a relationship between individuals that is based on power. When reading through other research into bullying there are many examples such as those identified within the work of Phillips and Gini that illustrate further variations in the language employed to discuss what constitutes bullying (e.g. Bosacki, Marini & Dane, 2006; Mahdavi & Smith, 2007; Nguy & Hunt, 2004; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). Furthermore, despite the continued differences in the descriptions of bullying used as a basis for research, the modernist paradigm informing such studies leads to the conclusion that even with variations, because the key elements are included a universally agreed definition of bullying can be identified. The continued differences in the language used to define bullying for the purposes of the research conducted raises questions as to why authors employ subtle variations on the theme of what constitutes bullying. The language variations also raise questions about whether a universally agreed definition can be identified if the research draws on different descriptions.

Through employing a definition, positivist research has led to the identification of characteristics associated with roles of individuals during instances of bullying. Specifically, the role of the bully, the victim and more recently, the bystander(s). Taking these individually, bullies have been constructed as having characteristics such as being ‘physically strong’, (e.g. Sutton, Smith & Swettenham, 1999; Olweus, 1993), experiencing difficulties with the acquisition of academic skills (e.g. Smith & Smith, 2004) and a large social network (e.g. Black & Jackson, 2007). Victims have been constructed as having characteristics like low self-esteem, anxiety and depression (e.g. Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor & Chauchan, 2004,) as well as having a
limited social network (e.g. Mahdavi & Smith; 2007) and presenting as 'physically weak’ (e.g. Olweus, 1993). Lodge and Frydenberg (2005) described bystanders as taking on one of three possible roles; namely supportive of victims, passive in response (i.e. feeling support for neither the victim nor the bully) or supportive of the bully. Sutton and Smith (1999) identified the importance of including bystanders by positing that bullying occurs in a social context. Specifically, they noted that the presence of bystanders influences the actions of those characterised as bullies and victims. Throughout these examples of what constitutes bullying and role characteristics, the constructions are individualistic. More specifically, it is the actions of individuals and the resulting reactions that are constructed as bullying. In addition, it is the individual characteristics of those involved that link to the roles adopted. Furthermore, the positivist research discusses the individuals involved as not having a choice about the role. For example, victims are identified as being victims by virtue of their physical and / or personality characteristics; the same is applicable to those discussed as bullies. By positioning the individuals as having no choice about the roles played in an incident of bullying, the positivist literature provides a blueprint of what bullying is and information about the individuals involved. However, as previously noted the language used within the positivist literature is varied leading to questions about whether the agreed upon blueprint can be universally accepted and applied.

Also through employing a specific definition as a basis for research, positivist studies have reported information on rates of prevalence for bullying. Perlus, Brooks-Russell, Wang and Iannotti (2014) conducted a longitudinal review of bullying and other behaviours exhibited by pupils. They reported that a decrease was noted in occurrences as pupils matured. Within this, a difference was reported between male and female pupils in terms of the level of reduction. Isolan, Abrahao-Salum, Tochetto-Osowski, Hartmann-Zottis and Manfro (2013) explored rates of prevalence amongst Brazilian school children and adolescents. They reported that rates were greater for male pupils and children compared to female pupils and adolescents respectively. In addition, Whitney and Smith (1993) noted that in England, both primary school pupils
and those at secondary school reported some experiences of having been bullied with a greater rate of prevalence amongst the former in comparison to the latter. Although the evidence from these studies indicates that bullying occurs across all age groups and genders, note the variation in reported rates of prevalence between the different groups. This raises questions about why there are differences. Could the pupils involved have considered bullying to be different in comparison to others in different age / gender groups? Are the language differences within the definitions of bullying used as a basis for each piece of research influencing the reported variation in rates of prevalence between the different groups?

There have also been research projects looking into the rates of prevalence of bullying with regard to specific groups of children. For example, Davis, Howell and Cooke (2002) explored occurrences of bullying in respect of children who stutter. As part of this they gave statistics identifying that this group of pupils were more likely to be classed by their peers as ‘victims of bullying’ and also as being a ‘less popular’ member of the class group in comparison to children who did not stutter. The results reported here discuss one group of children, those who stutter, as having the potential to be victims of bullying by their non-stuttering peers due to being considered as socially ‘less popular’. This suggests that those involved considered bullying as being a social popularity issue which is different from the elements discussed in other examples of positivist research. In addition, Van Roekel and Scholte (2010) explored instances of bullying between adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) as considered by teaching staff and the pupils themselves. They noted that the teachers involved reported a greater number of occurrences of bullying than the pupils. This raises questions about why there were differences between the adults and pupils involved regarding rates of prevalence of bullying. It suggests that perhaps there were differences between how these groups considered bullying subsequently affecting reports of occurrences. These considerations may have also been influenced by how the groups interpreted the language used in the definitions given to them by the researchers.
What is interesting to note is the way the evidence leading to rates of prevalence (and indeed, the constructions of what constitutes bullying and role characteristics) has been collected. Fingleton and Grandison (2007) noted children’s self-reports, teacher reports, observational studies, parental accounts and peer nominations as being the five most commonly used methods to obtain information on bullying within positivist research. These methods are individualistic where participants report separately in response to the queries posed. The responses are then drawn together for analysis which culminates in a data set that informs conclusions related to what constitutes bullying, role characteristics and rates of prevalence. This does not necessarily take into account the potential differences of the individuals involved in research and posits that information can be generalised to similar situations.

From positivist research, advice has been developed on how to respond to bullying. For example, in a study exploring children’s perspectives on what strategies might be useful in coping with bullying, Camodeca and Goossens (2005) noted that becoming more assertive was seen as an effective change in character for victims to make. Fingleton and Grandison (2007) reported that parents helping their children to develop effective social skills can be beneficial in reducing incidents of bullying. Another example is the use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in helping individuals to explore incidents of bullying they have been involved with. The use of SFBT was noted as being effective in helping pupils to feel more positive about themselves and their ability to deal with incidents of bullying (e.g. Young and Holdorf, 2003). The language employed within these examples positions individuals as victims and as requiring support to make a change which will then reduce instances of being bullied. This constructs bullying and the means to stop it in terms of individual characteristics. However, the individuals involved in instances of bullying are all different and come to such social situations with their own unique backgrounds, histories and information. In turn, these will influence how they consider themselves and the context they are in and while one may

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4 An approach designed to assist individuals in identifying solutions to past difficulties by talking through previous experiences and subsequently discussing alternative methods of achieving a resolution
describe him/herself as a victim, another may not. This raises questions about whether individual characteristics can be considered as a basis to form a universally agreed definition of bullying and subsequently, methods of addressing instances.

Other research exploring how incidents of bullying could be addressed has focused on the benefits of building a protective social network around individuals classed as victims and giving them skills to maintain these friendships (e.g. Bollmer, Millich, Harris & Maras, 2005; Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005). Further research has asserted that to reduce incidents of bullying, there is a need to support the individual by making changes to the surrounding context. For example, helping children to feel integrated within the social setting (e.g. Davis et al, 2002), ensuring anti-bullying policies exist in schools and are evaluated and changed over time (e.g. Glover, Cartwright, Gough & Johnson, 1998) and the use of peers as mentors for younger students within secondary schools (e.g. Mahdavi & Smith, 2002).

Whether supporting the victim directly, (e.g. through building their confidence or increasing their social skills) or indirectly (e.g. through the use of whole school strategies including the implementation of an anti-bullying policy), there is a theme of focusing resources on the individual. Such processes then position readers as having a means of identifying and addressing bullying as well as identifying individuals who might require support. This construction reflects the previously noted individualistic stance of the positivist framework. It also raises questions about the focus here on the victim; why do only these individuals require support? What about those in the role of bystanders and bullies; why are these individuals not constructed as requiring support?

Within the research community, authors have employed the modernist paradigm to explore what individuals consider to be bullying. For example, Monks and Smith (2006) highlighted differences across age groups in what pupils considered to be bullying. They noted that younger children distinguished between aggressive and non-aggressive acts when considering whether an incident was bullying. In contrast, teenagers and adults considered
bullying against whether an act was physical, social or verbal. The variations highlighted here with how the participants involved defined bullying have also been noted elsewhere (e.g. Smith, Madsen & Moody, 1999; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefooghe, 2002; Smorti, Menesini & Smith, 2003) and reflect the variations of language I have noted within definitions used in research.

Throughout the examples discussed here, there is a theme of bullying considered in terms of individual characteristics that make pupils different from the social norm and where they do not have a choice about these differences; they are constructed as being destined, as it were, to become victims. There is also a theme of language variations in terms of how stakeholders discuss what constitutes bullying. Such variations raise questions as to why the research reflects a universally agreed definition of bullying.

The post-modernist paradigm

For the post-modernist paradigm, the individual and the social are as one for one cannot be without the other. As such, the social world is not ‘out there’ and separate but is socially constructed through human meaning making via people’s efforts to make sense of it and navigate themselves and their lives within it. Furthermore, the language used by individuals is considered valid knowledge about the social world and the means by which social groups share social worlds. Data analysed according to the post-modernist epistemology involves the collection of language as a valid example of how individuals discuss their worlds. It places importance on the influence of the histories and cultures of the individuals on their constructions (e.g. Gergen, 1973). Furthermore, what is said by one person will influence what is said by another. Following this line, an individual could present a number of constructions within the same conversation as they alter their language according to what they hear from others. Given the variations noted in the language used to constitute bullying, exploring the topic from an alternative approach to that offered by positivism would present as beneficial. This argument (i.e. adopting an alternative method to researching topics such as bullying) has been raised in the past. For example, Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton and Radley
(1988) stated that, as a result of focusing on the individual the social nature of language and the way the culture and history of the individuals involved impacts on their constructions are overlooked. This suggests that the differences noted in the language used within the positivist research on bullying are present because those involved have different histories and cultures that influence their constructions. It also implies that research into bullying using the positivist framework focuses on the individual at the expense of the social despite the construction that bullying occurs between individuals. An additional example from Wiggins, Potter and Wildsmith (2001) examined eating practices within familial homes. They argued that within previous positivist research into eating practices, employment of individualistic methods has prevented an exploration of eating as an interactional practice. Indeed, they used their data as a means to illustrate how interactive the mealtime process is where the everyday speech used to discuss food was noted as inextricably linked with the actions used in the context. As part of their conclusion, Wiggins et al noted that exploring instances of eating in everyday life provides evidence that it should be considered an interactional occurrence as opposed to the behaviour of an individual.

Thornberg (2010) is an example of a study exploring bullying from a postmodernist stance. Thornberg conducted interviews with pupils to explore the reasons they considered to be behind occurrences of bullying. Through analysis, Thornberg identified two main themes representing how the pupils constructed causes of bullying; individuals were victims as a result of being deviant in some way from the social norm or because they were in a lower social position in comparison to bullies. These constructions mirror the individualistic stance noted as being within the positivist research as well as the lack of choice for victims who are victims by virtue of their individual characteristics.

A further example from Dixon, Smith and Jenks (2004) explored bullying as a construction of peer dynamics. Specifically, Dixon et al employed semi-structured interviews as a data collection method to explore the relationship between averagely developing secondary students and those with a hearing
impairment. The analysis from Dixon, Smith and Jenks discussed the data as constructing those with hearing impairments as having a stigma which resulted in peer victimisation. This construction again reflects the individualistic nature within definitions of bullying and reasons behind occurrences.

A final example from Harmarus and Kaikkonen (2008) analysed interview data and written accounts to explore how pupils discussed ‘school bullying’. They identified that pupils discussed bullying as being related to individuals having differences outside of the social norm where repeated public identification of these differences achieved group cohesion for the majority. Once again the evidence presented draws attention to the individual characteristics of pupils as a basis for the construction of a cause of bullying.

What is interesting about these examples is the repetition of individual differences being constructed by pupils themselves as a reason for bullying. They also discuss the individuals who are bullied as not having a choice about being bullied. There is also a theme of deviation from the social norm, due to individual characteristics, as the reason for bullying.

**The case for an alternative approach to researching bullying**

The questions raised throughout the previous section as a result of reviewing literature on bullying have been highlighted elsewhere following similar explorations of existing research. For example, in their 2004 text presenting a collection of papers on interventions to address bullying, Rigby, Smith and Pepler highlighted the variations they identified within definitions of bullying employed by the authors reviewed. Rigby et al further noted that throughout the studies explored different types of bullying were referenced. These comments reflect the queries posed earlier regarding the variation in language used to define bullying and the different ways in which individuals describe what behaviours they consider to be bullying.
The individualistic positioning and theme of deviance from the social norm within language based research has also been identified by Thornberg (2011). Indeed, Thornberg discussed the qualitative research reviewed as constructing victims in particular as being victims due to being deviant in some way from the social norm. Thornberg further discussed the qualitative literature explored as constructing "... bullying as social positioning ...," (p. 260) giving examples of social hierarchies, social popularity and group membership as constructions of why bullying occurs. Thornberg concluded that when considering bullying it must be in a manner that encompasses the complexity of the topic rather than "... reducing anti-bullying practices to just focus upon deficits within bullies and victims ...," (p. 264).

In 2008 and following a discussion of commonly constructed definitions of bullying stemming from existing positivist research, Smith and Monks made an intriguing statement:

"Whatever the definition researchers decide on, children and young people, and even parents and teachers, may not necessarily share that definition...," (p. 103).

Here, Smith and Monks alerted the reader to potential differences between the way in which stakeholders (i.e. researchers, pupils, parents and teachers) regard what constitutes bullying mirroring the questions I raised in the previous section. The article by Smith and Monks also noted differences across cultures and nationalities as to the terms people apply to bullying. They noted that there is no single word used to reflect the same defined set of behaviours across all countries. Smith and Monks illustrate here the differences across stakeholder groups (i.e. pupils and adults) as to what constitutes bullying linking with the queries I raised earlier regarding the differences in the reporting in positivist studies.

Smith and Monks further noted that as the way in which we find out about bullying is to ask people about it, this in itself provides the potential for different interpretations and the emergence of differences about what constitutes bullying. For example, do all studies ask participants the same
question about bullying or do the constructions of the researchers differ and in turn, have an impact on the constructions of the participants? From their review, Smith and Monks concluded:

"We have a range of terms with both subtle and sometimes obvious differences in meaning ... In this sense, the social construction of meaning, and its cultural and temporal variability become apparent and explicit. This situation is not a reason for abandoning the scientific endeavour, but certainly is a warning for care and circumspection in the interpretation of results across age groups, languages, cultures, and historical periods ...,” (p. 110).

In essence Smith and Monks invite the continued exploration of bullying but caution the reader to be aware of the differences in how stakeholders describe bullying.

Smith has continued to write on the topic and to additionally report on the differences identified in 2008 between what stakeholders consider to be bullying. For instance, Ucanok, Smith and Karasoy (2011) explored the way in which Turkish school children defined bullying. Within this article, Ucanok et al stated that there was little difference in the way different aged pupils defined bullying through reflecting on cartoon images presented. However, what is interesting here is the application of the word bullying by the researchers themselves. The analysis employed English terms and characterisations for a set of behaviours labelled as bullying while also noting that the comparable Turkish word applies to a set of behaviours that are subtly different. This difference in labels and meanings across countries is further noted by Smith, Del Barrio and Tokunaga (2013) where they reported that there is not a universal definition for bullying. However, there is an agreed upon ‘consensus’ in Western research such as that noted by Rigby, Smith and Pepler (2004) as already mentioned. Smith et al further discuss that there are elements within the Western consensus that are not universally agreed but are ‘widely accepted’. However, Smith et al also noted that despite these differences, there is an agreement regarding the concept represented by the labels and meanings. Within this article, Smith et al reiterate the advice posited in the earlier Smith and Monks discussion: that continued research into bullying would be beneficial but with a cautionary approach.
A move to consider language and the social context

I agree with the statements from Smith and Monks (2008) and Smith et al (2013) that there is a need to continue with research into the topic of bullying. However, the questions I and others have posed about the variations in language and the constructed theme of deviations from the social norm suggest that there is a need to explore why these variations occur and how the theme is constructed. I would therefore suggest that it would be important to explore bullying via an approach which gives consideration to how constructions are built. Social constructionism stems from the post-modernist paradigm and asserts that language is used by individuals to construct versions of reality that might be different in different contexts. Taking this into account as a researcher, parent, EP and former teacher, my constructions may differ following what is said by someone else and the context in which the information is shared. In this way and as Willig (1998) stated, it is important to explore the role played by language in how individuals build versions of reality. Ryan and Morgan (2011) gave a concise definition of social constructionism and one of the key points they made referred to the construction of knowledge as being a social act achieved through the everyday interactions between individuals. In addition, they emphasised that social constructionism considers language as the means by which we construct ourselves as well as the world in which we operate through categories that span both people and contexts. Finally, they noted that constructions are ever evolving as more information becomes available through additional experiences, changes to cultures and adjustments to histories.

Hepburn (1999) also highlighted the relationship in social constructionism between constructions noting that for something to have meaning it needs to be relative to something else. She followed this with the example of ‘freedom’ making sense in a context by being related to ‘oppression’. This emphasises the need for language to be considered in a context. Considering social constructionism in relation to bullying, to explore the topic we must consider not only the language employed to build constructions but also the contexts in which these are aired and how they relate to each other.
More specifically related to bullying, Hepburn (1997) noted that within the existing research such as that by Olweus and the 1994 Sheffield Project completed by Smith and Sharp, the focus on an individual’s behaviour and the relationships between pupils has meant that bullying is explained in terms of who the person is or what the person does (i.e. individualistic). Hepburn stated that this focus on the individual is a barrier to developing our understanding of bullying and other social phenomena. Hepburn also quoted a report from the organisation Kidscape as part of her introduction. The report discussed repeated incidents of aggressive behaviour against one pupil by another in a school context over a period of seven years. Following the quote, Hepburn suggested that while such aggressive behaviours are considered inappropriate in the context of a school, in other contexts such as institutions like the military they could be discussed as ‘character building’. This illustrates the benefits of exploring the construct of bullying outside of the individualistic stance adopted by modernist approaches with the suggestion that different constructions regarding bullying might be present in different situations.

In later research, Hepburn (2000) noted that positivist studies in psychology related to bullying have focused on either the actions of pupils towards one another or the individual characteristics of those involved. She also quoted Smith and Sharp (1994) as reporting that their information was taken from two particular types of exploration; one asking teachers about their ideas on the nature and occurrences of bullying, the other involving the direct study of children deemed as bullying others or on the receiving end of bullying. The subsequent data included information on individual personalities, background, attitudes and influences from the families. Here then, Hepburn illustrated how much of the positivist research into the topic has been individualistic in nature both in terms of data collection and results. She further asserted that there is a need to explore bullying in a way which acknowledges that it is socially constructed as a means of making sense of the world.

A further example of authors raising questions about positivist research into bullying is evidenced by Ryan and Morgan (2011). They noted that in New Zealand bullying has become normalised, seen as an almost necessary part of
the educational experience where it is considered as a ‘normal’ part of maturation. They reported that this normalisation has only started to be challenged in the last three to four decades. Furthermore, they suggested that exploring bullying from a social constructionist stance as opposed to something that is representative of an individual’s characteristics enables analysis of behaviour within the context it occurs thus moving away from maintaining the individualised focus from positivism.

What these studies highlight is the neglect of the social in favour of the individual in relation to research on bullying where positivist studies have not taken into account the interactional nature of the phenomenon. Also reflected is the way in which something can be constructed in different ways by the same person in the same or different contexts. They further raise the requirement of an alternative method of exploring bullying that considers the importance of language and the social context.

**Bullying, social constructionism and Discourse Analysis**

At the beginning of this chapter I stated bullying in schools as being of particular interest to me where differences in the way people talked about the same incident of bullying were noted in my work as a practicing EP and when I was a teacher. I would further acknowledge at this point that as a researcher, I have always traditionally employed a positivist framework. While I intend to explore bullying in the subsequent studies, my research here will employ social constructionism where language and the social context are paramount. This is relevant not only to provide an alternative to positivism when researching bullying but also to take into consideration the roles I hold and the way in which these may influence the constructions I present as I collect and analyse my data. Furthermore, this approach will enable me to consider what role is dominant as I analyse my data particularly where I am a part of the collection process itself.
There are examples of research into bullying where authors have adopted social constructionism as an epistemology. These studies have combined social constructionism with aspects of Discourse Analysis (DA) to explore data and subsequently discuss the constructions of emerging discourses. Potter and Hepburn (2005) and Hepburn and Brown (2001) drew attention to the way language is explored through DA. Hepburn and Brown (2001) reported that information on the way individuals achieve actions, orientate themselves toward particular constructions and build their realities through talk can be gained through exploring the employment of particular resources and the influence of the information received from others in a social context. Potter and Hepburn (2005) noted that the focus needs to be exploring what talk is doing, the sequential relationship between utterances, patterns in the talk and exceptions to these subsequently working towards providing an explanation. In addition, they stated that what they term as ‘psychological issues’ are understood by exploring their interactional relationships rather than understanding them as a result of the cognitive processes within the individual. Potter and Hepburn (2005) further noted that discourses are situated in what they term as ‘three senses’. Firstly, the discourse of one speaker emerges in a sequence of talk and follows the immediate preceding utterance from another speaker. Secondly, the institutional context in which talk is situated will provide a situation for the discourse. Finally, rhetoric (i.e. using language to please or persuade) provides a further situation for discourse. Exploring bullying using DA then would discuss it as a socially constructed process rather than being individualistic in nature contrasting with positivism.

One example of a study employing social constructionism and DA is that of Timm and Eskell-Blokland (2011). They explored the constructions of bullying from stakeholders (i.e. pupils identified as displaying bullying behaviours, families and teaching staff) in three primary schools in South Africa using semi-structured interviews. Through the use of DA, Timm and Eskell-Blokland noted that bullying was constructed as being a disciplinary problem resulting from a loss of status for teachers. In addition, the pupils engaging in bullying behaviours were constructed as being either a ‘good’, ‘bad’ or ‘naughty’ child.
These constructions differ from that drawn from positivist research and position teacher status as causing bullying through lack of discipline as a result of limited status.

A further example comes from Bibou-Nakou, Tsiantis, Assimopoulos, Chatzilambou and Giannakopoulou (2012) who set up focus groups in secondary schools in Greece to explore the constructions of adolescents regarding bullying in the school context. By employing DA to explore the talk, Bibou-Nakou et al reported the participants as constructing bullying as being part of the wider construct of power-relationships and hierarchies between pupils. They further stated that the discussants reiterated stories of occurrences of bullying as a means to legitimize the topic. This study illustrates the employment of narratives to reinforce the construction of bullying as a social issue between peers. This contrasts with the positivist constructionism of bullying developed from statistical analysis of numbers.

An additional international example based in American comes from Phillips (2007) where interviews and group discussions were conducted with male adolescents. Alongside analysing the data collected from the pupils Phillips also explored related media information published at the time. She employed DA and noted that the terms ‘punking’ and ‘bullying were used interchangeably by the data sources to uphold constructions of masculinity. This illustrates the way differing terms can be applied to achieve the same construction. This is in contrast to the positivist construction of bullying which includes the regular employment of the same set of behaviours. Furthermore, the construction of masculinity and methods of achieving this were constructed as influenced by the culture of the individuals. The emphasis placed here on the influence of an individual’s culture illustrates how a person’s constructions may not be applied to others in a similar situation.

A final example from Britain is that of Ringrose and Renold (2010). They explored the discourses constructed regarding bullying by male and female secondary school pupils in Wales using focus group and interview based discussions. The participants involved were noted to construct bullying as a
way to simplify what are complex power relationships between pupils that are influenced by gender, class and race. This is similar to the study from Bibou-Nakou et al (2012) in terms of the construction of bullying as an element of social issues. However here, the analysis discussed the construction of bullying as dependent upon power relationships between peers determined by individual factors that cannot be altered (i.e. gender and race) as well as class which, like bullying, is arguably a socially constructed phenomenon.

While there are other examples of research into bullying from social constructionism and DA that will be mentioned as they relate to specific chapters, the aforementioned highlight the complexity with which those involved constructed bullying and how they move beyond the list of actions and characteristics constructed by positivist research. They also serve to highlight the importance of considering the language people use when they discuss bullying through employing social constructionism alongside DA. In addition, by employing focus groups these examples illustrate the social dynamic at play when constructions are formed. However, they focus on the constructions of pupils and adults in educational settings. While there can be no doubt regarding the worth of this information, there are other stakeholder groups whose constructions regarding bullying would be relevant to consider. Specifically, the constructions of parents and EPs alongside those of teachers. Particularly since these groups have direct contact with each other and pupils and are in a position to influence the way in which children discuss bullying. Furthermore, I argue that the constructions within government guidance to schools on bullying would be worthy of exploration. The discourses here may be presented from a stakeholder perceived as in a dominant position in society and thus with the potential to influence the constructions of the other stakeholders mentioned.

These studies also illustrate the benefits of employing DA to analyse the data obtained. Specifically, DA offers the researcher the opportunity to explore not only the language used but also the context and the social, the wide ranging influences on a speaker’s constructions and the actions achieved within. However, it could be argued that the DA approach to exploring language does
not take into account the specific details of speech that could provide further evidence of how constructions are built. More specifically, DA stems from Conversation Analysis (CA) which is a particularly fine-tuned analysis exploring the ‘turn-by-turn’ nature of social speech. As well as the exploration of the words themselves, CA also goes into detail about the way in which the words are spoken such as emphasis placed, whether speech is quieter / louder / faster / slower than surrounding talk and the length and placement of pauses within conversations. Prominent original authors in the area of CA, namely Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, describe exploring turn taking in speech as being important and relevant due to the prominence of turn taking in social organisation (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). Sacks et al have also highlighted that CA analyses what is said that can be situated independently of the context in which it has been spoken as well as utterances dependent on the situation in which they are occurring. This latter analysis pays attention to the turn-by-turn aspect of speech important to the analysis of discursive practices and in many ways, the foundation for this type of DA. However, for those working with CA, interactional speech comprises discourse whereas for those DA analysts exploring discursive practices it is the relationship between the discourses which is of interest as a further discourse.

The debate between employing CA or DA is a long standing one most notably discussed in the past by Emanuel Schegloff and Michael Billig. Emanuel Schegloff, writing in favour of CA, argued that DA, specifically Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is remise in detailed and systematic analysis when exploring talk or text (1997, 1999). Schegloff further argued that without the aforementioned detailed exploration CDA cannot achieve the contextual analysis that it claims. In addition, Schegloff described CDA as imposing context on the data being analysed rather than identifying the context in which the data has been collected. Michael Billig, writing in favour of CDA, described CA as remise in its analysis by avoiding the exploration of the social context in which the talk or text has occurred (1999). Instead, CA references wider contextual information such as issues of gender or power only if they are mentioned by the discussants themselves within their speech. For those in favour of CDA, the use of CA to explore data therefore does not capture the
way in which the context can influence the talk and vice-versa. Van Dijk (1999) provided a useful summary of the ways in which CA and CDA are similar in their foundations to approaching analysis (Appendix 1). He also asserted that there are occasions when one method would be more appropriate over the other depending on the data and the aims of the research.

In respect of my research, while the turn-by-turn aspect of speech is important, this is in relation to how what is said by one speaker might influence the speech of another rather than how the speaker talks. The interactional nature of the speech will enable an exploration of the way in which bullying is socially constructed. Furthermore, DA will enable the exploration of how one construction might influence another particularly where what is being discussed has been introduced by a socially dominant individual or organisation. Finally, employing DA will enable me to explore how my own roles and subsequent constructions interact with those presented by others during the data collection process where I am both researcher and participant as well as the analysis throughout.

A way forward

The aim then of the research to be presented in the following chapters is to discuss the discourses from EPs, teachers, government guidance and parents as stakeholders in terms of how they are constructed including the influence of the context. The purpose is two-fold; firstly, to discuss the differences between constructions following those noted in previous research and secondly, to discuss implications for future explorations into bullying and mechanisms for stakeholder groups to support pupils. This will be completed with an acknowledgement that I have a personal interest and thus am a stakeholder from the four roles I hold as I move through the research process. Finally, I would note that by acknowledging these roles, a bridge is built between research and practice (i.e. Yardley, 2000).
To acknowledge the subjectivity inherent in this research, I will be using reflection boxes throughout the analysis as I explore the data. The importance of acknowledging personal reflections during analysis is noted by Yardley (2000) in her review of qualitative research within the health sector as a means to negate the possibility of ‘unnatural interactions’. By noting down my reflections as I go outside of the immediate analysis, I am taking ownership of these in relation to the research. It will also allow me the opportunity to discuss how my personal constructions might be impacting on the analysis and vice-versa. The numbering format for the reflection boxes will be the chapter number followed by the box number (i.e. reflection box 3.3). The use of reflection boxes also serves an additional purpose. I have already highlighted that I have moved to social constructionism and DA in research. I am therefore aware that there is the possibility I might under or over analyse the information. Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter (2003) highlighted the potential pitfalls (if you will) that those new to DA might fall into. One of these they entitle ‘under analysis through taking sides’ where the analysis might display, for example, ‘sympathy’ or ‘solidarity’ with the discussants’ constructions. By sharing my more personal comments as I go through the analysis and giving an honest and therefore transparent account of my reflections, I hope to avoid this potential pitfall. Employing reflection boxes will further support addressing the link between myself as a researcher and participant (e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Yardley, 2000) as well as enable a reflexive review of the process, data and analysis (e.g. Berger, 2013).
Chapter 2

A discussion on bullying by practicing Educational Psychologists:
Constructions of professional identity and skill application
Introduction

Exploring the language used by adults in discussing bullying has already been noted as important where they have the potential to influence the way children discuss bullying as well as be in a position to address and prevent bullying from occurring. Consequently, the next step in the research would be to gather evidence from adults using language to discuss bullying. It is at this point that I am introducing my first study involving practicing EPs; representatives from one of three key stakeholder groups identified as potentially being influential in the development of children’s constructions of bullying. As noted in Chapter 1, there is a level of personal and professional interest here as I am a practicing EP where during my work, I have experienced the variability in people’s constructions of bullying. Consequently, this study draws upon some elements of ethnography as well as the aforementioned postmodernist approach both of which will be discussed shortly. For the moment, it is important to explore the role of the EP.

The Educational Psychologist

Understanding the role of the EP is integral to the research. Firstly and as noted previously, I am a practicing EP working in this profession even as I complete my doctoral studies. Secondly (and as will be explored in more detail shortly), I was present during the discussion as both researcher and participant.

At the time this study was conducted EPs worked with pupils from birth to nineteen years of age who have special educational needs\(^1\). The way we operate is highly varied including working with parents, school staff, pupils and other professionals. Within my own work experiences, during discussions with the aforementioned groups, the word bullying is often mentioned as being an issue in relation to a particular situation. What is interesting here are the

\(^1\) Since the completion of the study new legislation has been implemented as of September 2014 where the age range has changed and we now work with pupils from birth to twenty-five years of age
constructions of bullying by these different groups during discussions and the subsequent responses by others. Also as part of my work, I have read through governmental documents (directed towards schools as a means to explain what bullying is and how to address it) and psychological research on the topic from my peers. Within these aspects of my work, I have encountered the variability with which bullying is discussed and constructed also noted in Chapter 1 as being the case with existing research on bullying. The analysis of the talk of EPs thus presented itself as an ideal first study.

**Method**

**Context**

There are many potential routes for gathering language based data including structured or semi-structured interviews (i.e. between the researcher and the participant) and group discussions (i.e. with the researcher facilitating the discussion using structured questions). It became clear that when identifying the context of data gathering, I needed to take into account the fact that I am a practicing EP.

I wanted to gather an example of EPs talking about bullying in a social manner. The use of an interview technique would not be appropriate because this would not take into account the importance of the social. In other words, a structured or semi-structured interview process with myself as both researcher and practicing EP would not provide the opportunity to explore how EPs might change their constructions in light of information shared about bullying during discussions. So what about the use of a group interview facilitated by myself as the researcher? This would certainly enable the opportunity to collect data in a social context where research using DA emphasises that when collecting data, careful consideration needs to be given to the joint production of talk within a social situation. In addition, as Stenbacka (2001) noted, the employment of a free-flow group discussion assists achieving validity in qualitative research where participants who are knowledgeable about the topic are able to speak freely absent of imposed
structures from interview questions. Rather than facilitating the discussions, as a practicing EP I felt that I would need to actively participate which alerts us to the ethnographic element of this study that will be addressed presently. It also draws attention to how such a group discussion would be organised. Asking a group of EPs to get together and discuss bullying had the danger of being contrived.

As well as a social context in which to obtain an example of jointly produced talk, DA discusses the importance of obtaining information using a naturalistic setting showing, for example, everyday interactions. Holmes, Schnurr and Marra (2007) investigated communication in the workplace, specifically identity construction, noting the importance of using what they described as everyday interactions for their data source. Hepburn and Wiggins (2005) in their investigation into discourses about body size and weight, noted the importance of exploration through how these concepts are constructed as an issue by the discussants as opposed to them as researchers by employing naturalistic processes. Hepburn and Wiggins added that the topics of body size and weight are more than just concepts for discussion; they are resources that can be drawn upon within conversations to achieve particular actions. There is however a debate regarding whether data collection can be entirely naturalistic and absent of influence from the research. Potter (1996, 2003) encourages researchers to consider the theoretical *Dead Social Scientist / Psychologist Test* and ask themselves whether the data they have collected would have existed if they had not been there to collect it. While I would acknowledge that the ideal would be for this to be the case within my research, I will be present during the data collection process for this study as both participant and researcher. Under these circumstances, the study would not pass the test suggested by Potter. Griffin (2007) also discussed whether data can be without influence of the researcher when recording equipment could be required and thus potentially influence the data. As recording equipment will be employed here to collect data from the participants, it is possible that the presence of this will influence the process whether or not I am there. Taking these points into consideration, I would turn to the writings of Speer (2002a) who suggests that rather than try to pass Potter’s test, a
researcher should acknowledge and embrace the potential influence he / she might have on the data collected. As I cannot pass Potter’s test for this study (nor indeed two more of my studies), I am instead taking the stance of embracing the influence my presence might have. Consequently, this study will require a naturally occurring setting.

Within the Local Authority (LA) where I work as an EP, our service has a system of peer support meetings where groups of us meet to discuss issues brought by each other thus providing ‘peer support’ (groups are organised on an area basis where those working in particular parts of the LA make up one ‘area team’). The issues discussed during the meetings can be of any kind such as requesting support on a topic of interest or seeking specific advice on a piece of casework. These meetings are attended on an opt-in basis, have a maximum time limit of one and a half hours and are an important part of maintaining our professional standards. I felt that targeting a peer support meeting as a means of gathering EP talk on bullying would provide the naturalistic setting I needed for my research. As such, I attended a peer support meeting where I brought the issue for discussion by asking the question “How can we as EPs support schools in addressing the bullying issue?” at the outset. Once this was asked, the discussion flowed freely where the comments I made were in response to the discussion itself and not pre-planned.

**Ethnography and subjectivity**

Brewer (2000) described Ethnography as having the objective of understanding the social activities of individuals and the meanings of these in a particular context through either association with or direct participation. Brewer further asserts that Ethnography is based on the premise that social sciences aim to explore how people’s actions arise from experiences and then contribute to the expansion of experiences. Brewer also stated that Ethnography involves the researcher being familiar with the way in which social actions occur and give meaning in the context explored on a daily basis. This clearly relates to my research where I have an intimate knowledge of the
day-to-day practice involved in the work of an EP. There are examples available of studies that have used the ethnographic approach within research. For instance, Slade, Scheeres, Manidis, Iedema, Dunston, Stein-Parbury, Matthiessen, Kerke and McGregor (2008) employed Ethnography to explore the discourses of clinicians and patients within hospital emergency departments. Slade et al collected data through observations in the field and ad-hoc / unplanned conversations with clinicians during these periods. This approach meant that the researchers became part of the research by observing within naturally occurring settings and engaging in conversations with the participants. Within my research I take this one step further by actively engaging in a discussion with my peers as a practicing EP while also being the researcher.

Participants

My colleagues, all female with ages ranging from early twenty’s to late fifties and a white British background, were approached before the meeting to ascertain whether they would be attending (Appendix 2a) and if they would give their consent to the discussion being recorded via audiotape (Appendix 2b). As previously noted, the meeting itself had a maximum time allowance of one and half hours and participation was voluntary. On the occasion of this discussion which lasted approximately one hour, there were a total of five participants including me. The discussion took place in a meeting room within our office building and was therefore a familiar environment for us. Four of us were practicing EPs with lengths of service ranging from three years to over twenty years and one a trainee EP working with the service as part of her course. Of those of us who were practicing EPs, one was the Senior EP for the area team in which we were all working.

Transcription

Following the discussion, I provided my colleagues with a de-briefing letter (Appendix 2c) and began the transcription process. During this, all identifying names used in the discussion were changed (e.g. where the name of the LA
was mentioned this was replaced with the words \textit{COUNTY NAME}). In addition, with the exception of myself all participants were given a pseudonym where it should be noted that Rose is the Senior EP previously mentioned and Lily is the trainee. The transcription followed the code set down by Gail Jefferson (Appendix 3) and noted as predominantly employed in the analysis of talk (e.g. Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Hepburn & Brown, 2001; Wiggins, Potter & Wildsmith, 2001). Once the transcription process was complete, a copy of the transcript (Appendix 4) was given to all participants to review. No changes were identified by the discussants and as such, the transcription was agreed to be an accurate reflection of the discussion.

\textbf{Analytical procedure}

To explore the data obtained, two branches of the Discourse Analytic tradition were employed. Firstly, the analysis of discursive practices to identify at the micro-level the rhetorical devices utilised during the discussion. This focuses on identifying the strategies and practices used within talk and then trying to identify the tactical purpose of each one. The focus is to understand the use of discourses in particular situations by examining specific instances of language in use. The principle of analysing discursive practices is that speech is a social practice. When language is used by people to talk to each other it is used purposefully where what is said has a function often linked to what the individual wants to achieve more than with what is overtly being expressed. Hepburn and Brown (2001) noted that discursive practice analysis examines the speech of individuals against what has been said before by another person. This ‘turn by turn’ exploration of speech allows the researcher to identify how one speaker alters their construction according to the information received from others in the discussion. The analysis of discursive practices further asserts that language use and speech behaviour will change according to what the individual is trying to achieve at the time. More specifically, during talk, a particular version of reality is constructed which makes sense at the time of expression but which changes as new information is shared and the person’s construction shifts. In relation to this, Hepburn and Wiggins (2005)
stated that the constructions of the individuals will underpin the actions they are trying to achieve within their talk.

Secondly, the use of Critical Discursive Psychology (CDP, Edwards & Potter; 1992) to explore the more global consideration of how the discussants constructed their identities. Edley (2001) employed CDP as a means to explore people’s talk on the subject of masculinity. Edley stated that within the use of CDP sequences of talk are situated in a context which is historically influenced. Edley further explained that within CDP the language that people use to talk about particular topics will involve those people making choices. These choices are based on the historical contexts available in relation to that subject. What Edley highlighted is that different historical contexts are not always equally available as over time some become more dominant than others. As such, these more dominant contexts start to become socially accepted norms. Edley noted that as well as looking at the action orientation of the language being used to talk about a subject, CDP explores how dominant historical contexts come to be normalised within society. To summarise CDP, Edley stated that:

"It acknowledges that people are, at the same time, both the products and the producers of discourse .... It aims to examine not only how identities are produced on and for particular occasions, but also how history or culture both impinge upon and are transformed by those performances ... draws attention to the productive capacities of discourse, showing how it comes to structure both subjective experience and our sense of who we are ....," (p. 190 – 191).

Furthermore, as has been noted the discussants held a range of experiences as practicing EPs including a member of staff who was the senior EP and another who was a trainee. Taking this into account, it is possible that issues regarding power play from the roles held within the team might be present in the discussion. Furthermore, as the person who introduces the topic for discussion I take the lead and this may give rise to potential power play.

Throughout the analytical process, I will be seeking peer reviews from my supervisory team in addition to continued self-reflection as a means to maintain transparency in the research (e.g. Yardley, 2000; Berger, 2013). In
addition, to identify the discourses the transcript will be read through several times thus familiarising myself with the content as an analyst.

Data analysis

Reflection Box 2.1
As someone who has as part of this research moved from a traditional positivist framework to the post-modern approach, I have found starting the analysis challenging. I think this has been partly due to the data including my own speech and being ethnographic in nature and also hesitancy over where to start. I had initially started with trying to identify examples within the data of rhetorical devices such as stake inoculation that have been found by previous authors. I did find this difficult and tried the alternative approach of identifying themes first. However, this proved to be equally challenging. I now understand that my data is unique to the context of my research and as such, I need to start with ‘stepping back’ from the data to explore the discourses inherent then identify how these are expressed through the participant’s use of rhetorical devices.

The discussion gave rise to five distinct discourses; Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies, EP identity, Barriers to the application of our skills, The absence of psychology and Reconstructing existing stakeholder constructions. The discourses have been analysed in the order they were identified rather than one being more important than another.

I would take this opportunity to state that for ease of analysis, some of the extracts have been split into sections due to their length. In addition, where extracts contain information that is not relevant to the discourse they are illustrating, the omission of lines has been indicated by the line numbers removed shown in brackets (as already stated, the full transcript of the discussion can be found in Appendix 4).

Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies

Throughout the discussion, we use a variety of terminologies to refer to bullying. These subsequently lead to different constructions about bullying and ultimately, an unspoken consensus about the use of the traditional terms (i.e. bullying, etc.). Extract 1 derives from the beginning of the conversation and
illustrates how three of my colleagues each choose a different way of talking about bullying.

Extract 1

11 Lily I think the first thing to kind of come to my mind but (laughs) I’m not really sure if it’s right um (.) kind of helping them to develop a (.) strong bullying policy (.) so that the whole staff knows (2.0) what to do (.) =
12 U Hmm
13 Lily = you know and as an EP helping them to develop that so that it’s got clear guide lines (2.0) =
14 U Hmm
15 Lily = so that everybody knows what happens when somebody is being bullied and the procedure to follow (2.0)
16 U Hmm
17 Alex Do schools ask you about bullying policies ‘cause that’s I have to say that’s not something I’ve ever (.) come across (.)
18 Mia They ask me about anti-bullying policies (laughs)
19 Alex Do you think that’s an important turn of phrase? (.)
20 Mia (‘Possibly yeah’) (2.0)
21 Alex How about any anybody else? (5.0)
22 U Hmm
23 Rose I think they um: sometimes incorporate it into ways in which they they take a look at behaviour management within their (.h) the school setting as a whole (.h) and a that a strand of that is around “how do we reduce or .h umm (.h) promote positive (.h) err peer relationships?” =
24 U Hmm
25 Rose = so if you look at it positively and helping young people to: learn how to interact with each other more constructively by default (.h) you don’t get bullying (.h) =
26 U Hmm
27 Rose = and so sometimes it’s about trying to (.h) talk with staff err (.h) about engendering a positive behaviour and a positive peer approach (.h) umm rather than (2.0) seeing it as a separate issue (2.0) =
28 U Hmm
29 Rose = so that I would I would like to see something like that (.h) >I agree with you< I think there has to be (.h) in essence I think all schools have to have (.h) what would be described as an anti-bullying ‘policy (.h) but I think it needs to be set into (.h) um a total framework of the ethos of the school which is around promoting positive interactions with peers and adults (3.0)

Just to remind you, I opened the discussion with the question “How can we as EPs support schools in addressing the bullying issue?” and as such the word ‘bullying’ was inherent in the discussion from the outset. Lily also uses this word (line 12) but Mia chooses to introduce the alternative ‘anti-bullying’ (23). Further on, Rose introduces the idea of ‘it’ (line 28 initially) reverting back to this throughout her speech and attempts to talk about ‘positive behaviours / interactions / peer approach’ (lines 33 to 39) rather than ‘bullying’. At this
point I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate the scene of the discussion as it may be discussed to have a bearing on the direction of the conversation. I have already highlighted that the discussion took place within a naturally occurring setting (namely that of a peer support meeting). I have also already said that prior to the discussion group starting my colleagues were provided with a recruitment letter and informed consent form detailing the nature of the research and the process they would be entering into (Appendix 2a / 2b). As such, my colleagues were aware before the discussion not only of the question that I would be asking but also that I would be exploring the language that we use within the conversation. Within Extract 1 Rose shows an awareness of this when she employs alternative phrases to the traditional ones used by Lily and I. However, we do not join Rose in using the alternatives presented. No matter what terminologies were used however, we were all still talking about bullying and this pattern is something that we return to later in the discussion (Appendix 5). The fact that I am introducing the topic for discussion could be argued as putting me in a position of power over my colleagues; a position which they acknowledge by entering into the discussion. However, although they do not challenge anything that I say at the outset, they equally do not offer any particular agreements but rather take up the opportunity to share their discourses. This suggests that the power I hold in bringing the topic for discussion is short lived.

What is interesting to consider here is why we continue to revert back to the familiar terminologies used when talking about bullying. In part I would suggest that reverting back to the familiar words and phrases is comfortable for us; it means that we can all ‘understand’ the topic brought for discussion by others in the conversation. This is likely due to these familiar words and phrases forming the basis of the already established and thus well-known ways in which the topic is talked about as demonstrated throughout the traditional positivist research into the topic discussed in Chapter 1. I would also argue that the alternatives to the traditional terminologies put forward by Rose use language that would be familiar to us within our role as EPs but not necessarily to those operating outside of this context. For example, would a teacher, parent, child or society in general want to talk about ‘positive peer
interactions’ rather than ‘bullying’ where the former could be about many different things whereas the latter is ostensibly clear and understandable to all, no matter their background.

Also of interest in this extract is how Lily introduces her comment about the development of a ‘strong bullying policy’ where she says ‘I’m not really sure if it’s right’ (lines 11 - 13). Lily is trying to reduce the impact of what she is about to say to more experienced colleagues. Studies by other researchers have found instances of the same behaviour occurring in talk. For example, Eriksson-Barajas and Aronsson (2009) explored the constructions of pupils about their reading habits / skills focusing on those classed as ‘avid’ and ‘struggling’ readers. They identified how one pupil, Anja, inoculates herself against the possibility that her classmates will see her as bragging when she declares that she read a book in a day by saying that this was because she thought "... then I’ll just be done …” (p.291). Anja declares her stake in the conversation as being one of wanting to get the task completed quickly thus dismissing her own comments and inoculating herself against any negative reactions from her peers (e.g. her classmates seeing her as, for instance, ‘showing off’). It is this device of stake inoculation that is used by Lily to inoculate herself against any negative comments from the rest of us (e.g. that she is ‘wrong’ or is ‘showing off’) and declare her stake (i.e. that the role of the EP is to support the development of a ‘strong bullying policy’). This way of introducing her comments is important to note as it is something that Lily continues to employ at later points within the discussion (Appendix 4). The use of stake inoculation could then be a way of reacting to the power component inherent in the group where Lily is the trainee and thus new to the profession and surrounded by more experienced colleagues.

The exchange shown in Extract 2 (which has been split for analytical purposes due to the length) demonstrates an attempt on my part to generate a discussion about bullying terms and their meanings (a question initially raised in line 24 of Extract 1).
Extract 2a

390 Alex So I when I hear the the term >since doing the the research< and kind of thinking about (. ) my own views on bullying (. ) I've I've started to look at those questions that parents and schools raise in a different way (. ) so if they say to me "my child's being bullied" my usual response now is (. ) "what makes you use that terminology?" (. ) so I can try and to get the nub [of what] =

396 Susan [Ye:s]
397 Alex = ?their perspective is .h but (. ) obviously schools ↓don't (. ) do ↑that (. ) and they might have as you (. ) said earlier >"you know< a different ↓view (. ) and the pupil themselves has another view .h and I just find it interesting about how (. ) how to get people to draw those (. ) together (. ) and understand (. ) what what bullying actually is (. ) =

402 U Hmm
403 Alex = so (. ) I mean do ↑you think↓ bullying has a specific term where we can all say yes this is what it is? (4.0)

Throughout this section of the extract I am constructing bullying as being something that exists and can be defined. Within this construction, I position the stake holders (i.e. parents, pupils and school staff) as each having different constructions of what bullying is and that through drawing these together it is possible to achieve a unified construction of what constitutes bullying. I also position school staff as not exploring all of these separate constructions which I suggest is something that should be done. In saying this, I position EPs as being able to explore and draw together these different constructions. In their paper on positioning, Harre, Moghaddam, Pilkington-Cairnie, Rothbart and Sabat (2009) outlined the historical development of the theory and the way in which it can be applied to the analysis of language. They described positioning theory as being concerned with individual yet linked elements of social situations. More specifically, Harre et al noted that within social encounters, participants identify their positions, their rights and duties, from which they either agree or disagree with the positions posited by others. The patterns of these positions, agreements and disagreements go towards the construction of narratives within social situations. These narratives thus illustrate the actions performed by the participants which can have single or multiple meanings depending on the context in which they are occurring. The action I am performing is to position different stakeholder groups in different ways thus bringing forth my narrative of EPs as being the group who can draw the perspectives of others together to achieve a shared
construction of bullying. The use of positioning also serves to reinforce my construction of bullying as something which can be defined where we are the people able to achieve this. I would also highlight the use of the word ‘obviously’ during my talk (line 397) which allows me to suggest that what I am saying is something that should already been known by everyone else participating in the discussion (i.e. that schools do not draw the different constructions together as we can).

**Reflection Box 2.2**

I must admit to finding the analysis of my speech rather an odd experience. Although I have already acknowledged the necessity and reasoning behind my involvement in the discussion, it is nevertheless disconcerting to consider what ‘actions’ I am performing in my talk. In many ways, in collecting this data first I have made my research perhaps more challenging than it needed to be; that analysing data collected where I had no personal knowledge of either the people or the context would have been easier and the experience would have then stood me in good stead for the analysis of the EP data. As this has however not been the way the research has progressed, the self-analysis must come first.

**Extract 2b**

Rose  I I think you would have a range of responses of what people understood as bullying (.) and even if you share some of that language (.) um (.). I think it’s the contextual nature of it so that .h for example err (..) with a group of friends (.) people will use nick names (.) name calling (.) slightly risqué comments and actually within the context of that friendship group it’s not seen as [bullying ]

U [Hmm]

Rose = but if it’s done .h in a different context (..) it could be construed as that (.).

and and so you can actually have the same behaviour (..) like we often talk about that um would be seen [differently] =

U Hmm

Rose = um (..) in a different context so I think it’s (..) it can be problematic to have an absolute .h I think there may be a range of behaviours that you would get quite a lot of consensus about as being bullying but I think there are probably some fringe ones that are much more (..) contextually dependent but that ‘I I just thought I’d throw into the discussion”

The suggestion at the start from Rose to explore bullying in terms of the context rather than the language used to describe bullying (lines 406 – 407) is a direct response to an earlier question from myself (lines 403 – 404 in the previous section). Rose neither agrees nor disagrees with my construction of bullying being something that exists. Instead, she constructs bullying as existing depending on the circumstances in which behaviours occur. Rose employs a three-part list as a means of illustrating her context dependent
construction. Specifically, Rose states that within a group of friends ‘people use nicknames, name calling, slightly risqué comments’ (lines 408 – 409) which outside of this context might be constructed as bullying. Such lists were originally identified by Jefferson (1990) as a means by which speakers can assign work to each other within discussions or as a resource to perform actions. In the talk from Rose, she uses the three-part list as a means to construct bullying behaviours as being context dependent through the illustration of examples.

Rose then asserts that ‘it can be problematic to have an absolute’ (lines 416 – 417) definition of bullying. However, Rose then states that it is possible to gain a consensus about ‘a range of behaviours’ (line 417). Rose thus offers a contrasting construct about the use of a single definition of bullying; it is not appropriate to seek a consensus but it is possible to achieve one in relation to some behaviours.

Rose’s speech concludes with her employment of the discourse marker ‘but’ to precede her final comment (line 420) which initiates a stake inoculation. Rose is attempting to soften both her construction of bullying behaviours as being context dependent and her comments regarding the appropriateness and possibility of consensus of definition. As Rose is the senior EP for the area, in employing a stake inoculation, Rose is trying to reduce the possibility that the other discussants, including myself, might construe her speech as an imposition of constructions where she is in a position of power in the group.

**Extract 2c**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>‘What do other people think about that?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>422</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>[Yep]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>423</td>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>[Yeah] I’d agree with that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>424</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[That] it’s more [ ?context]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>[Hmm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>= based (.) rather than (.) actually thinking about the term itself (.) you’ve got (.) got to think of it in wider [‘wider] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>[Hmm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>428</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>= terms ° (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Err uh yeah I think it’s important to to ↑start from people’s ↑perceptions um (.) uh and it it is about that very subtle ↓Social understanding [of of] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>[Hmm]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I encourage my colleagues to discuss the comments put forward by Rose where agreement is given by Susan and Mia (lines 422 and 423). I would suggest that this agreement serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows affirmation to be given to the construction by Rose of bullying behaviours as being context dependent which I confirm (lines 424 – 429). Secondly, it allows confirmation to be given to Rose’s position of authority within the group. The agreement given also precedes a further illustration from Rose about her construction (lines 431 – 454). Amongst this repetition of her construction, Rose introduces the notion that as well as being context dependent, the feedback people receive about their actions from others in social situations can influence whether a behaviour is constructed as bullying. Rose also returns to the use of a three-part list as a means to reinforce her constructions by illustrating the feelings that might result from being on the receiving end of a comment outside of a friendship group (i.e. ‘that it was undermining or belittling or whatever’, lines 444 – 454). Throughout this additional talk regarding her constructs, Rose does not raise the issue of consensus of definition nor is this mentioned by the other discussants.

Extract 3 follows on from a discussion about the research of Peter Smith and the Sheffield Bullying project of 1994 (previously noted in Chapter 1). The extract has two distinct sections and each will be analysed in turn.
In talking about the attention given by Peter Smith in his more recent research to the ‘wider context of bullying’, I make a link to Rose’s earlier construction of bullying behaviours being context dependent. Within this there is the continued assumption that social acts can be labelled and described as bullying using the familiar terminologies. Furthermore, there is the suggestion that the familiar terminologies can be applied to anyone associated with an instance of bullying. This is, however, me talking about my opinion on the research of Peter Smith whereas later on in the extract I talk about teachers using the familiar terminologies. In this way, a change of footing is demonstrated where I am talking about the same thing but from a different standpoint. Goffman (2001) explored footing as being a means of demonstrating personal alignment within speech which can change at any time during a discussion.

Alongside a change in footing, I distance myself from the use of the terms I am raising questions about by referring to them as being employed by others. Looking back on the previous extracts, I utilise distancing throughout the
discussion. The question here is why would I want to achieve distancing from the familiar terminologies?

**Reflection Box 2.3**
I have already said that the analysis of my own talk is an odd process. At this point, the distancing I am trying to achieve around the use of the terminologies is a bizarre occurrence. At the time the discussion took place, I honestly thought that I had fully adopted the social constructionist model and that I would see this when analysing the discussion (e.g. I would argue against a single definition and I would not use the familiar terms so readily). I can see now that in putting a distance between myself and the use of the terms, it is as though I have a foot in each camp; I want to question them but at the same time I want to use them. I would reflect now that at the time of the data collection there was still a great deal of positivism about my speech.

The act of distancing has been identified by other researchers as serving a particular purpose. For example, in her analysis of sexist talk, Speer (2002) identified how a participant, Jan, achieves distancing through the use of the personal pronoun ‘you’. When talking in a group seeing an image of women in boxing, Speer highlights Jan as saying ‘you could get some very nasty physical injuries’ and by using the word ‘you’ rather than ‘they’ she distances herself from those women who do participate in boxing. Speer suggests that:

“As an impersonal pronoun, the word ‘you’ helps Jan to account for why people shouldn’t do boxing, leaving their gender (productively) vague ..., " where Jan “... may be working to distance herself from potential accusations of sexism here, since everybody – including perhaps Jan herself – is implicated in her account ...,” (p. 354).

Taking this example into account, I would suggest that in distancing myself from the familiar terminologies associated with bullying I am demonstrating a desire to question the use and relevance of these and not use them directly as this may seem hypocritical.

**Reflection Box 2.4**
It is somewhat embarrassing to consider that, for example, I want to distance myself from something I have been comfortable using for many years. I wonder if there is an element here of fear because I am trying to question something which everyone else in the room does not necessarily see the need to question as it is perfectly serviceable?
In talking about the use of the familiar terminologies, my account is furnished with Extreme Case Formulations (ECFs). Following Susan’s comment about the government documents (which invites agreement via the phrase ‘isn’t there’; line 844), I employ the ECF ‘absolutely’ (line 845). I could have used simply the word ‘yes’ but instead I chose the aforementioned alternative. Pomerantz (1986) identified the use of ECFs as a means to legitimise claims. In relation to my speech, I apply the ECF ‘absolutely’ to provide agreement with and verify Susan’s statement. In addition, I further apply the ECF ‘still’ which is used twice in relation to the way others talk about bullying (lines 848 and 849) as a means to emphasise how ‘true’ my statement is because what I am talking about happens frequently. Furthermore, I use the ECF ‘very’ (line 850) to emphasise the distinctness of the terminologies frequently employed by others. Finally, I use the ECF ‘everything’ (line 851) to highlight how other people emphasise their consideration of the bully and the victim to be at the centre of all interactions. Taking a broader look at the use of the ECFs, they allow me to position the other people I am referring to as having a very definite construction of bullying. This in turn allows me to suggest that this is possibly not the ‘correct’ construction of bullying as can be seen in the questions I pose (lines 853 – 858).

There is something else to consider here about the amount of ECFs within my talk. Lamerichs and Te Molder (2009) investigated the use of self-quotations in the talk of adolescents. One particular discussant, Annabel, is highlighted as using a number of ECFs within her speech. Lamerichs and Te Molder stated that:

"Furnishing an account with extreme case formulations demonstrates the speaker’s orientation to the possibility that her audience might be looking for the illegitimacy of her account, or might treat it as an attempt to find fault with someone ...” (p. 405).

It is therefore possible that I am aware of the potential for my colleagues to question the positioning I put forward of others as having a definite construction of bullying that is not necessarily ‘correct’.
Following Rose’s introduction in Extracts 1 and 2 of constructions to consider regarding bullying, in this section of Extract 3 she introduces another; the change over time of what people might think of when they hear the word bullying. She suggests that one possible reason for the change I note in the work of Peter Smith is that over time people have come to consider more than just the bully and the victim. Rose is suggesting that what people consider to be bullying has become more complex when she says ‘well thirty years ago it really was just bully victim’ (lines 877). Rose also suggests that it ‘just takes time’ (line 885) to alter ‘lots of people’s thinking’ (line 882; to consider the context and bystanders as well as the bully and the victim).

Within this talk by Rose, there are several items of interest to explore. The first is Rose’s description of the change in people’s understanding of what constitutes bullying over time. She introduces a contrast structure; the difference between the past and the present in what people think bullying is. Speer gave a practical illustration of the use of contrast structures within talk. Speer identifies how a participant (also named Rose) talks about women
involved in boxing by drawing on the potential for facial injuries. In her analysis, Speer highlighted how Rose identifies a contrast between the acceptability of men having facial injuries whereas for women to have the same is unacceptable. Speer described the use of contrast structures as a way in which discussants can construct robust arguments. Following this, my colleague Rose is building and maintaining the argument that the passing of time enables a change in what people consider to be bullying but also hinders this slightly in terms of the length of time it takes.

The second point of interest is Rose’s use of the word ‘just’ in reference to the ‘time lag’ (line 880) which conveys a dismissal. Whether this is of the ‘time lag’ mentioned or her own comment is not clear but both are plausible. There are other examples of analysis of talk exploring the use of the word ‘just’. For example, Jeffries and Grogan (2012) explored the talk of young men in seeking advice from primary healthcare services. They note that the use of the word ‘just’ by one participant, Tom, is a means by which he places himself outside of an identified discourse where individuals are constructed as over attending doctor appointments. Jeffries and Grogan noted Tom as listing what he perceives as small issues for which others might seek medical advice which Tom describes as attending ‘just for that’ (p.908). A further example is provided in research from Clarke, Kitzinger and Potter (2004) in their analysis of the talk of lesbian and gay parents in respect of homophobic bullying. They described an instance of a discussant, Glyn, using the word ‘just’ as a means to reduce the impact of his sexuality while making a comment about how other children might use this as a means to ‘tease’ his own child/children. The use of the word ‘just’ by Rose in Extract 3 then is different again from the examples aforementioned indicating the importance of looking at the word within a context.

Extract 4 begins with a suggestion that the use of the traditional terminologies is due to an inability to change (part a). The extract continues with a discussion about why this might be the case (part b).
Extract 4a

914  Lily  And I suppose people get stuck in their ways don’t they (. .) they think “why
915  change (. .) =
916  U  Hmm
917  Lily  = let’s carry on (. .) you know (. .) =
918  U  Hmm
919  Lily  = with that twist to (. .) you know that I thought ‘thought ‘pattern as well’
920  Alex  Yeah (. .) yeah yeah
921  Rose  Well (. .) you know (. .) I think to try: and draw: paralels: with thing:s (. .) li:ke
922  (. .) um corporal punishment (. .) and >you know< there is a popularist view:
923  that “well I got bollocked and it didn’t do me any harm (. .) =
924  U  Hmm
925  Rose  = and (. .) =
926  U  Hmm
927  Rose  = so why don’t we continue it” (. .) =
928  U  Hmm
929  Rose  = um (. .) >if you think about the fact that< we’ve had to (. h) to try and
930  <impose change through legislation> [in quite] =
931  U  [Hmm]
932  Rose  = a number of way:s: [because] =
933  U  [Hmm]
934  Rose  = (. .) uh because (laughs) (. .) in a sense it’s only be making thing:s (. .) um (. .)
935  illegal (. .) that means a number of people are forced not to (. .) but I still
936  remember the times whe:re: (. .) ‘people would say “well it’s >all the victim’s
937  fault (. .) they’re asking for it<” (. .) =
938  U  Hmm

Here, Rose returns to the suggestion that there is a need to look at bullying from a different perspective (i.e. ‘broader categories of behaviour’; line 961). This comes after she puts forward possible reasons as to why people might ‘get stuck in their ways’ (a phrase introduced by Lily in line 914). Rose is providing a contrasting account against the suggestion from Lily despite there being an offering to agree with what has been said (i.e. Lily’s use of the phrase ‘don’t they’ in line 914). Rose’s construction is shared immediately after I offer the agreement that is sought by Lily and do so with the use of a single word repeated three-part list (‘yeah yeah yeah’ in line 920) which allows me to emphasise the agreement. Rose intimates that it is possible to draw a parallel between bullying and corporal punishment (lines 921 – 922) where these are constructed by some as not requiring any changes because no harm was done in being the recipient of either. What is interesting here is the way in which Rose describes the ‘some’ where she uses the term ‘popularist view’ (line 922). This suggests that the ‘some’ are the greater majority of society and if the greater majority of society does not see a need to change, this then drives the continuation of what is already in place. This construction of majority rule is neither agreed with nor challenged by the rest
of the group instead, there seems to be an unspoken acceptance of the normalising of the popularist view.

In talking about the ‘popularist view’, Rose introduces a contrast structure of the difference between how those outside of the EP profession construct bullying and how professional EPs do it. This contrast suggests that because of being professional EPs, we are able to adopt a more advanced construction of bullying whereas those outside of the profession adopt one that is simplistic in comparison. By raising this contrast structure, Rose positions EPs as being more progressive in their thinking; a positioning that the rest of us neither agree nor disagree with.

Reflection Box 2.5

In discussing Rose’s constructs, I am learning that one simple sentence can bear many threads which are interconnected. This can make it difficult to express as the risk is run of making the analysis disjointed and difficult to follow. In my writing I will hopefully be able to ensure that my analysis is clear with individual threads shown as well as their connections.

Extract 4b

939 Rose = if you think about (.) people’s understanding of >rape< (.) [umm] =
940 Alex [Yep “she” was wearing a short skirt she asked [for it”]
941 Rose = [yeah sure] yeah all (.) all those things .h I mean (.) to (.) actually change (.) that sort of (3.0) vast cultural (.) =
942 U Hmm
943 Mia Yeah
945 Rose = err perception: i:s it’s like (.) I make the analogy: (.) that um it’s like
946 it’s like (.) an oil tanker (.) =
947 U Hmm
948 Rose = >you know< an oil tanker has to start .h changing um it’s direction (.) and it
949 will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =
950 U Hmm
951 Rose = and it’s a little bit like society (and] =
952 U Hmm
953 Rose = (.) I think it’s (2.0) >you know< sa:d (.) that: t (.) we quite often have to
954 have legislation to impose the beginning of change [(laughs)] =
955 U Hmm
956 Rose = (.) um and that the >you know the the in a sense there isn’t quite that< legislation (.) ?specific legislation [around] =
958 U Hmm
959 Rose = (.) anti-bullying or bullying =
960 U Hmm
961 Rose = (.) it comes in: to (.) broader categories =
962 U Hmm
963 Rose = (.) of behaviour but (.) it’s those same sorts of parallels =
964 U Hmm
As well as drawing a parallel between bullying and corporal punishment, Rose makes a comparison between bullying behaviours and behaviours in the army. Rose describes this in terms of a culture (line 968) and suggests that within would say that if you sign up to enter you should expect to encounter and potentially be the victim of the types of behaviours exhibited which could be classed as ‘bullying’. Furthermore, if acceptance is not possible then you should not put yourself in that situation and reminiscent of the suggestion put forward by Hepburn (1997) as noted in Chapter 1. In drawing this parallel, Rose intimates that the same could be said of bullying in schools; that when children go to school they should expect to encounter instances of bullying and be able to cope with this. This parallel is similar to that of the majority rule concept introduced by Rose where in both there is an expectation that acceptance from those already dealing with bullying means that others new to this must accept it also.

Rose further introduces the analogy of rape acknowledging that past constructions from some asserted that victims of this are victims by virtue of their own actions (lines 935 – 937). Rose suggests that some would construct bullying in the same way. Rose uses the analogy to illustrate two things. Initially, there is the construction of acceptance and majority rule in the same way as the culture of the army or the use of corporal punishment. Rose also uses the analogy of rape to illustrate the ways in which majority rule can be challenged and ultimately changed. Here, Rose puts forward the idea that if
something is illegal (as is the case with rape) this then forces people to change their constructions and therefore majority rule through legislation. This is reinforced through the use of the word ‘impose’ (line 954) which implies the forceful nature of a change in legislation. Rose further suggests that while putting legislation in place has been successful for rape and corporal punishment, there has been no such introduction in respect of bullying and this is perhaps a reason for continued use of a single definition. In discussing the use of legislation, Rose returns to the comment made in Extract 3 regarding a ‘time lag’ (line 880). Rose also posits that even with the instigation of legislation and the change in legal status of certain behaviours, changing the majority rule and societal level of acceptance takes a considerable amount of time. To illustrate the amount of time it takes Rose uses the analogy of an oil tanker changing direction (lines 948 – 949) where the tanker is society.

Throughout her speech in Extract 4, Rose includes words and phrases that imply extremities. For example, her use of the oil tanker analogy, the word ‘impose’ and the phrase ‘vast cultural perception’ (lines 942 – 945) are statements of extremes. In addition, the examples given from the army culture and the subject of rape are particularly extreme and constructed by Rose as antiquated. Rose could have used other examples, words and phrases such as ‘implement change through legislation’ rather than ‘impose’ but instead she chose to employ stronger terms. The use of the word ‘impose’ could be a means to describe how the legislation needed to be implemented because without this a change would not be accepted. Furthermore, the use of the oil tanker analogy could be a way to emphasise the difficulty in changing the constructions of an entire society as could the use of the word ‘vast’ where the size of the society is a barrier to change in itself.
Having explored four extracts of speech, I began to wonder at what point I should stop the analysis of this discourse. As someone who has come from a traditionally positivist stance I was keen to identify a ‘cut-off point’. It then occurred to me that I was reaching the end of the data set and as such the amount of information available that might relate to this discourse would naturally decline. It also occurred to me that within the extracts I was finding the same examples of the discourse rather than anything new and that this within itself would draw the analysis to a natural conclusion.

Throughout the extracts relating to this discourse there is a tendency for us to construct bullying as something that exists through the language that we employ; that there is a pure thought underneath the language we use which it is possible to access and share. Also through the use of language, some of us intimate that it is possible to change the pure thought while the rest do not.

**EP identity**

This discourse relates to the continued references throughout the discussion to the work of the EP. The question I posed at the start of the conversation did make a point of asking about how the EP might be involved in supporting schools so the emergence of this as a theme is perhaps not unexpected.

Before exploring the associated extracts, let us touch upon the notion of identity. Edley (2001) explored the issue of masculinity using a variety of information sources including extracts of speech between discussants. He describes how critical discursive psychological methods acknowledge:

"... that people are, at the same time, both the products and the producers of discourse ...,” and that it “... aims to examine not only how identities are produced on and for particular occasions, but also how history or culture both impinge upon and are transformed by those performances ...,” (p. 190).

In essence, Edley is describing how, when we are speaking, we construct identities within discussions and for a purpose in that particular situation. As this is achieved, we draw on our personal and social histories and cultures which then influence our talk. In relation to this discourse, we construct a group EP identity which evolves as the discussion progresses.
The first reference to this discourse appears in a section of speech from Susan near the beginning of the discussion and shown in Extract 5. She relays an experience of another professional contacting her for advice having been contacted herself by the parent of a child in a school outside of the LA for which we work. It must be acknowledged that the extract is extremely long and, to preserve its' integrity as well as illustrate the use of narrative by Susan, it has been kept intact.

**Extract 5**

Susan = the case that’s very strongly in my mind that took up most of my year last year (laughs) and it wasn’t it wasn’t a COUNTY NAME school it was actually another school (.h) an out county school (.h) and a parent (.h) err another professional rang me and said “this: child is being bullied (.h) and the parent is very concerned about it and the school are consistently (.h) saying it’s not happening” (.h) so: (.h) I sort of thought “well (.h) what’s that got to do with me (laughs) of all people” “thank you for letting me know” (.h) and I’ll think about how I I move forward on this and I think “well (.h) what would my role be on in this” (2.0) =

Susan = but (.h) the steps that I took were to say to that professional (.h) “i in a way (.h) the first step is for you to talk to the school about it because you’re the person who’s had that complaint”. (.h) she did so then she felt that she still was getting this feedback from the school [that] =

Susan = the (.h) the child was >making it up< (.h) or misconstruing activities of others (.h) she then told the parent that she’d told me and told the parent to ring me as well (.h) so I had two people including the parent (.h) =

Susan = so (.h) I said to the parent (2.0) “we do have this strategy in COUNTY NAME the >anti-bullying strategy< and one of the (.h) things that (.h) that involves is this help line where a parent can directly ring (.h) this anti-bullying help line and get advice” and I said “in a way I think the first call for you is to do that (.h) that is one of things that you can do” (.h) =

Susan = and I think that was really helpful because (.h) that enable her to talk about her concerns to someone who was a specialist in that area (.h) who was set up (.h) in COUNTY NAME to look at those issues (.h) and I checked out with them first of all how they stood in terms of out county schools and they >said “well it’s a COUNTY NAME child< it’s still (.h) an area that we would be interested in” (.h) they assigned an anti-bullying officer (.h) to this family (.h) which was great because they had most done a lot of the groundwork (.h) so (.h) I said (.h) um (.h) that I would (.h) discuss >it with the school< but (.h) um I would attend the annual review and that (.h) would be (.h) a way (.h) of managing the whole thing (.h) I liaised with the special needs section and I said “(in) when’s the annual review?” (.h) they said “it’s this time” (.h) so I said “well through >the annual review we can talk about it” it was quite imminent=.hh the anti-bullying officer went into the school (.h) and talked to all the
parties and just gathered information and talked to everyone about (.)
perception etc. so (. ) the lovely thing was that (. ) she did that mediation
really

Susan = on the on the ground and had the time to do that . h and (. ) that really
helped the mother because >she felt she was being taken seriously< . h it
helped the student because he was involved in the process and he felt he was
being taken seriously . h: nd the school: (. ) =

Susan = felt that they had some vehicle beyond this (. ) conversation between them
and the mother which was helping (. ) to move things forward . h when I went
in >at the annual review< it was: sti:ll an (. ) issue but >not to the extent
had been < but there was still this sense (. ) that a (2.0) "he feels that he's
being bullied a:nd (. ) we've put all these things in place inclu:ding talking to
the anti-bullying officer (. ) and we've done ?all of this stuff and it's still
something the mother is concerned about" . h so (. ) in the meeting we could
?talk about the things that had happened . h we could talk about what the
anti-bullying officer had found out . h and (. ) how they had kind of teased out
the difficulties around language and the confusion um >around kind of peer
interactions etc. < . h: on the basis of that (. ) we had an informed discussion
about (. ) what could be done next (. ) really just to (. ) improve the
communication between the parent (. ) the student (. ) and the school and what
was happening was the parent was saying (. h) the ?student was going home
and saying (. ) "I'm being bullied it's still the same (. ) this is happening this is
happening" (. ) the ?parent would ring the school (. ) they were saying "well
actually we've sorted this out we've worked with the anti-bullying officer and
and this shouldn't be an issue" and one of things that came up in the ?action
plan was the student should be telling the school not his ?mum . h: (2.0) so
we were able to to talk around that =

Susan = the school then decided they would assign one particular person who the
child trusted (. ) and it wasn't rocket science (. ) who the child trusted that he
would be able to felt he was able to talk to (. ) =

Susan = she wouldn't just be talking to the secretary (. ) ?this chap would be giving
time over (. ) if if he he had a phone in his classroom he would be able to talk
to her (. ) so . h: hh I didn't do much of the work and >what I thought was
great< is that we ?have got >practitioners in COUNTY NAME who < can do
that kind of [on] =

Susan = does that help? (. )

The first point to raise here is that this is a substantial section of speech from
Susan where the rest of us are prepared to allow her the time and space for
her narrative. Before exploring this, I want to look further at the start of
Susan’s speech. Having introduced the context of her involvement (lines 114 – 119) Susan then says that her initial thought on being contacted was to ask ‘what’s that got to do with me?’ (lines 119 – 120) and ‘what would my role be in this?’ (lines 121 – 122). With this Susan moves swiftly from considering the situation as not being something she needs to be involved with to questioning what her role would be having acknowledged in the meantime that perhaps she does have a part to play. Susan then states that she encourages the person who has contacted her to go back to the school. This action seems to intimate the role of the EP as being an intermediary. Susan then receives contact once more but from the parent as well as the other professional involved. In response Susan again points in the direction of another service, the anti-bullying strategy, which she describes as being dedicated to addressing concerns regarding bullying through the appointment of an anti-bullying officer (lines 134 – 138). Susan goes on to say how beneficial she found the involvement of this dedicated service where they ‘almost did a lot of the groundwork’ (line 146 and repeated in lines 153 - 157) and that from this, she would be able to attend a meeting as ‘a way of managing the whole thing’ (lines 148 – 149). Susan later explains how this management was achieved by her encouraging those present to discuss the information gathered by the anti-bullying officer, pinpoint specific issues and identify next steps. In this way, Susan moves from defining the identity of the EP as being an intermediary to being a manager and then a facilitator. I would also describe this as being a bottom up process where Susan, in the role of intermediary, identifies the ‘groundwork’ completed by the anti-bullying officer as being a necessary stage prior to her acting as manager and facilitator (lines 192 – 197). Lastly, Susan identifies that contact should continue between the parties already involved (i.e. the school, parent and anti-bullying officer) and in this, confirms the end of her participation in the process. It should be noted that the EP as a facilitator identity is also mentioned by Rose within Extract 1 (lines 37 – 39) and it is possible that Susan’s suggestion follows on.

The way in which Susan constructs the identity of the EP is linked to the context in which the identity is formed. Specifically, the duty and obligation inherent in the role of Susan as an EP participating in the case bound her
activities with the context in which they were occurring. Sacks (1974) defined this method of identity construction as being a category-bound activity. Other researchers have identified category-bound activities as occurring within identity construction such as Torras and Gafaranga (2002). They additionally note that the actions performed by individuals within discussions can themselves stem from and be evidence of the category-bound activities associated with the identity in place.

During her narrative, Susan shares information to justify her actions (i.e. being an intermediary helped because there was a named person, the anti-bullying officer, to achieve gathering evidence which would then allow a focused discussion). She also tends to repeat these justifications which extends the length of the narrative. In putting in place these repeated justifications Susan is performing a stake inoculation perhaps against the possibility that the rest of us might challenge her construction of the EP identity. The use of narrative to construct professional identities has been explored elsewhere including Dyer and Keller-Cohen (2000). They explored how professors used narratives of personal experience within lectures to construct their professional identities and provide self-justification for their opinions as being ‘correct’. With reference to Susan’s narrative, in voicing her initial reactions she achieves the same at the start and throughout via repeated justifications linked to professional knowledge. This construction positions EPs as being more knowledgeable than the other people involved in the narrative shared and this is something the group returns to and expands later in the discussion.

Susan’s use of narratives is something she returns to at later points in the discussion. On each occasion, she uses the opportunity to provide information on her construction of the identity of the EP including justification for her actions within the contexts described (Appendix 6). The use of narratives in the manner employed by Susan has been discussed elsewhere as an effective means of constructing identities (e.g. Ladegaard, 2012). This type of narrative speech is not however something that is employed by the rest of us. We do however take opportunities to talk about the identity of the EP following on
from the constructions shared by Susan. For example, in Extract 6 we see an exchange lead by me that follows on directly from the question ‘does that help?’ posed by Susan in reference to the narrative she has given in Extract 5 (line 200).

**Extract 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Susan</th>
<th>Alex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>yeah I’m just just I suppose there’s just a couple of things really the first one would be .h I wonder why it was that the pupil kept going to his mum to say “I’m being bullied” =</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>um the other thing that strikes me is =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>[I forgot to say he had an ASC so (laughs)]</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[oh right yeah the would do it (laughs)] =</td>
<td>Susan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>is um . is the anti-bullying officer .h i what that person’s background was [what] =</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[I forgot to say he had an ASC so (laughs)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[oh right yeah the would do it (laughs)] =</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[their] understanding of bullying is .h and also the COUNTY NAME guidelines</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>h =</td>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>because (.) again I was reading through them and one of things that struck me was the the lack of mention of the EPS (.) and there was a very brief: (.)</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>um referral to [yourself] =</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[yeah] &gt;but that was i:t&lt; and that was like a paragraph and I was thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>“well .h why didn’t they come to us: (. ) to kind of support that process in setting that up” .h =</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[yeah] &gt;but that was i:t&lt; and that was like a paragraph and I was thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>[yeah] &gt;but that was i:t&lt; and that was like a paragraph and I was thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>= and I was (. ) I went back to all the DfES documents as well .h that are given to schools and teachers and what the teachers have access to and again .h =</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>= again what strikes me is the lack of reference to anything (. ) newer than</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>= again what strikes me is the lack of reference to anything (. ) newer than</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>Olweus which was (. ) in the (. ) eighties (. ) and again I’m thinking “you’ve got a range of professionals on the ground (. ) like ourselves (. ) why aren’t they asking us?” (. ) [so it was just] =</td>
<td>Olweus which was (. ) in the (. ) eighties (. ) and again I’m thinking “you’ve got a range of professionals on the ground (. ) like ourselves (. ) why aren’t they asking us?” (. ) [so it was just] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within this section of the discussion I use the platform given by Susan in her narrative to raise a question about our identity. This question relates to why those developing the guidelines to give to schools on addressing bullying for the LA where we work did not come to our service for advice (lines 211 – 220). I further reinforce the lack of the presence of the EP in developing guidelines when I make reference to the age and origin of information used (lines 222 – 227). I also question the knowledge and experience of the anti-bullying officer involved in the example given by Susan. Rather than exploring these two points separately, it is necessary to review them in tandem as they are linked. I question the knowledge and experience of the anti-bullying officer immediately prior to questioning why we were not consulted as part of the
guideline development process. In doing this, I position the anti-bullying officer as potentially lacking in what I perceive to be the necessary knowledge and experience to be able to support schools, parents and pupils in addressing bullying. This then positions EPs as having the necessary knowledge and experience and thus be in a better position to support schools, parents and pupils. In this, the identity of the EP is as an ‘expert’ with a right and a duty to help schools, etc. address bullying where-as the anti-bullying officer does not. However, I do try and soften this position when, in reference to the national guidelines produced by the government for schools, I state that there is a ‘range of professionals on the ground’ (lines 227) who could potentially be involved. The use of this phrase encompasses not just EPs but others such as those referred to in Susan’s story.

Reflection Box 2.7
I am finding the application of positioning theory to my own speech decidedly uncomfortable. I remember clearly speaking the words within the extract and can honestly say that there was no desire on my part to place EPs as ‘above’ others in terms of knowledge and expertise but to merely enquire as to the knowledge and experience of others to ensure that they were equipped for the task. However, considering this in the light of positioning theory, simply in making the enquiry I am positioning EPs as being better placed than others to help address bullying. Even as I write this, I want to say again this was not my intention as I do not wish my comments to be seen as arrogant or inappropriate. Analysing one’s own speech is truly a very odd experience!

The way in which we, as a group, construct the EP as having an expert identity reveals a contrast structure of the EP as a professional with a higher level of knowledge than those outside of the profession. More specifically, the EP is the professional and those outside are amateurs. These points are further identified later in the discussion as can be seen in Extract 7. As Rose enters into a repetition of the points she raises, a section of speech (lines 1136 – 1165) has been omitted for succinctness (and can be viewed in the original transcript in Appendix 4).

Extract 7

1112  Rose  = I think (.) that (.) perhaps the (.) thing about (.) psychology and
1113       psychological knowledge (.) it (.) it always ends up (.) over time um
1114     (.) I think providing us with more and more (.) sophisticated levels of
1115     understanding [or] =
1116   U [Hm]
Rose = (.) *demonstrating* (.) err *illustrating* the *compl?exities* that what (.) uh
>what when you pick it up looks< like something quite =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) *straight* (laughs) *fo:ward* .h *actually* when you being to *explore* it (.) um
gets increasingly sophisticated [and our] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = own understanding =
U Hmm
Rose = .h becomes more sophisticated and more com:plex =
U Hmm
Rose = .h a:n:d I think err it’s maybe what other people find *frustrating* in us:
(.):s: (.) that (.) they’re still at a: more *fundamental >level of*
understanding a more black and white or< *straight forward*.h and and um (.)
the psychologist coming in and saying “well: >have you thought about it this
way<” and I think that’s part of ou:r (.) job [I would] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = see that our role is about (.) perhaps *challenging* some of that simplicity of
thinking .h and trying to encourage people to: (.) um (.) *look* at things in in a
broader way =

(lines 1135 – 1165 omitted)

Rose = (.) I mean I *think >one of things about* many of our< *psy* (stutter)
psychologist friends is they’re *?really innovative* in their *?thinking*.h and they
*?do look* at things from a totally different *take* (.) err (.) which then allo:ws:
(.). other >avenues of thinking to open up< (.)

Rose constructs, the expert knowledge held by EPs as becoming ‘more and
more sophisticated’ building from initial ‘psychological knowledge’ (lines 1113
– 1114). She then asserts that this allows us to explore what might appear to
be something ‘quite straight forward’ at a greater depth which makes the issue
itself ‘sophisticated and more complex’ (lines 1118 – 1125). Rose suggests
that our identity is one of ‘explorers’ which enables us to demonstrate and
utilise our expertise. Rose further describes those outside of the EP identity as
being ‘still at a more fundamental level of understanding’ (lines 1127). Rose
then positions EPs and those outside of the profession in the same way as I
achieve in Extract 6. This positioning (i.e. the sophistication of thinking of EPs
and the simplistic thinking of those outside of the profession) is repeated
throughout this section of talk and beyond.

What is also interesting about Rose’s speech is how she summarises this
section. Towards the end she starts talking about psychologists as being
separate from EPs describing them as being ‘our psychologist friends’ (lines
1166 – 1167). She also positions the ‘other’ psychologists as being at yet another level of thinking to EPs describing them as ‘really innovative’ and looking at things ‘from a totally different perspective’ which ‘allows other avenues of thinking to open up’ (lines 1167 – 1169). Rose describes a hierarchy where EPs operate at a higher level of thinking than those outside of the profession and where ‘other’ psychologists operate at yet a still higher level. In describing this positioning Rose is trying to reduce the impact of the ‘EP as expert’ identity allowing her to inoculate against the possibility that others might construct the identity as conceited. Here then, Rose reveals her stake; she agrees with the construction of EPs as having the expert identity but is concerned with how this might appear to others, particularly other psychologists outside of the immediate EP profession. Rose’s comments regarding higher levels of ‘thinking’ as EPs lead to the exchange in Extract 8.

**Extract 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1170</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Hmm so I suppose there’s a couple of things there the first is that our job essentially: (.) because of the nature of it: (.) is fundamentally changes: (.) our perspectives: (.) on issues like bullying&lt; because of the knowledge that we have: (.) because of the experience that we have: (..) and &gt;the other thing that I’m picking up there is that there’s&lt; (.) there’s also a personal element here: (.) in terms of we as people: (.) not as educational psychologists but we as people: (.) develop and change as: (.) and perhaps what our original thinking was can: (.) be changed [by our] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1178</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1179</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>(.) job: (.) and that: (.) in in some ways is a barrier to us: (.) helping: (.) other people because as: (.) as you say we’re: (.) we are at a different level of thinking but in another way: (.) it’s very: (.) very helpful to people: (.) because: (.) we can facilitate their thought processes and get them: (.) perhaps: (.) thinking &gt;of things in a different way: (.) is that a fair comment: (laughs) (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1184</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>I I think that’s central to our role =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1185</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1186</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>(.) in in: (.) whatever is being presented to us: (.) is: (.) to: (.) I mean there’s that old adage: (.) um &gt;“there’s five psychologists in a room you ask a question and get ten different opinions”&lt; =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1189</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1190</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>(.).&lt; because we’re able to say well “It could be” or “it might be” or “it maybe”&lt; an =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1192</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Hmm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1193</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>(.). and “how about” um =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I start this extract by providing an agreement to the comments raised by Rose in relation to the development of our self-positioned ‘expert’ status (i.e. noting that the job ‘fundamentally changes our perspectives’; lines 1171 – 1172).
also make a distinction here between us as EPs and us as individual people suggesting that our constructions as the former might be changed by our personal knowledge and experience and vice versa. This links with the previously identified contrast structure between EPs as professionals and those outside as amateurs. More specifically, we hold both structures within the same identity; we are professionals but we are also amateurs when we are not at work and one influences the other.

Having provided agreement with Rose’s comments, I then acknowledge that the changes we go through can be a ‘barrier’ to helping others address bullying (line 1179) because we think differently. Although I raise this as a possible barrier, I then say that this difference is what we use to facilitate the thinking of others (lines 1181 – 1183). Here then we go back to the identity of the EP as facilitator with the ‘expert’ knowledge behind this position. This links back once more to the contrast structure of EPs as professionals and those outside as amateurs where we use our status as a means to enlighten them.

Exploring this discourse against the definition from Edley on how identities are built, the construction of the numerous EP identities continually evolves throughout the discussion and we draw upon our professional and amateur histories to influence this.

**Barriers to the application of our skills**

This discourse initially emerged as being combined with the discourse *EP identity* where we also raise possibilities about why others might not be aware of us. The first instance of this comes at the end of Extract 6 where, following on from Mia’s comments, I put forward the possibility that we are not involved in the development of guidelines because there is a limited awareness of what we do. Extract 9 follows on directly from this suggestion where specific lines have been omitted for ease of analysis (and can be seen in the original transcript in Appendix 4).
Extract 9

261 Rose  Err (.) I think that that’s the case in relation to: a range of our skills and abilities [that:]
262 U  [Hmm]
264 Rose  =  (. ) um (. ) there can be: um (. ) a perception of EPs as being individual
265 casework focused< um (. ) assessment foc'used and however much you
266 work Jon trying to (. ) to change that perception and to enable people to
267 understand that that (. ) the breadth and the scope of being able to apply
268 psychology in educational contexts is far broader (. ) =
269 U  Hmm
270 Rose  =  err I think we’ve moved some way in that (. ) but probably not as much
271 (. ) as one would actually (. ) =
272 U  Hmm
273 Rose  =  hope (. ) err and I think that’s a little bit around critical mass: um (. ) in that
274 (. ) in nationally it’s not a profession that’s huge? (. ) =
275 U  Hmm
276 Rose  =  it’s not err there’s never been (cough) a strong national agenda (. ) to really
277 (. ) um (. ) recruit (. ) sizeable and train sizeable numbers of educational
278 psychologists it’s always been to any recruitment drive in my experience has
279 been linked to (. ) um some statutory legislation around special educational
280 needs (. ) =
281 U  Hmm
282 Rose  =  err rather than (. ) err (. ) at a governmental level seeing that educational
283 psychology per say has much: greater ability to um support (. ) capacity
284 building ‘than perhaps’ is perceived (. ) =
285 U  Hmm
286 (lines 287 – 299 omitted)
300 Rose  = >[but I think] that’s constraining< I don’t I I you know I think it’s important
301 that we continue to try to promote that (. ) but I think that’s why a lot of
302 people don’t come [ >and] =
303 U  [Hmm]
304 Rose  =  it’s also I think there’s a perception that< they don’t come because (laughs)
305 we’re always so (most of us) so busy [and we] =
306 Mia  [Yeah]
307 Rose  =  haven’t got the time [that] =
308 U  [Hmm]
309 Rose  =  in a sense someone else fills the gap [for] =
310 U  [Hmm]
311 Rose  =  it [all the] =
312 Mia  [Exactly yeah]
313 Rose  =  time (. )

Reflection Box 2.8

Considering the link between this and discourse EP Identity, it is possible to conclude that the barrier is of our own making. If we construct the EP identity as being any of a number of possibilities (i.e. manager, intermediary, facilitator or a combination of these), then how are others supposed to understand what we do?

This discourse links with EP identity where we talk about a limited awareness of what we do as being a barrier to our work and one which we construct
ourselves. Within Extract 9, Rose puts forward the suggestion that the barrier we are talking of arises from other people’s perceptions of us (lines 264 – 265). Rose intimates that despite anything we may do to try and change people’s perceptions of us, this is an impossible task. Alongside this, she provides justifications as to why there is a need to change these perceptions; rather than being individual casework and assessment focused, we also have the ability to apply psychology in educational contexts in a much ‘broader’ way.

While Rose positions EPs as being powerless to change the perceptions held about us by others, she goes on to suggest reasons as to why this is the case. For example, Rose identifies the issue of ‘critical mass’ (line 273). Here, she gives specific reasons as to why the profession is small on a national scale namely that ‘there has never been a strong national agenda to rally recruit and train sizeable numbers of educational psychologists’ (lines 276 – 278), recruitment drives have always been linked to the introduction of new legislation related to special educational needs (lines 277 – 280) and there is a lack of awareness at the governmental level that EPs are able to support and develop the skills of others (lines 282 – 284). These take the form of a three part list; something that has already been utilised on various occasions throughout the discussion. In their exploration into women’s talk of motherhood, Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig (2007) identified examples where discussants used three-part lists to offer comprehensive justification for the actions they performed in their talk. One such instance is where a participant, P, gives three reasons for returning to work from maternity leave. Sims-Schouten, et al identified how P used a three-part list as working:

“... to support female employment from three separate angles, giving her a strong case to speak out in favour of work, and providing a strong warrant for vivid factual accuracy ...,” (p. 114).

When examining Rose’s three-part list, she is using this rhetorical device in the same way; as a means to provide a strong, factual case in favour of her argument that the EP profession is a small one and the reason we are unable to effect a preferred change in perception of us. These points are then
repeated later in the extract where Rose states that people see us as ‘so busy’ (line 305) because we are few in number, they do not think we have the capacity to help and so do not ask. Rose’s talk then continually constructs EPs as desiring but being powerless to effect a change in other people’s perceptions of the profession.

Extract 10 gives another example of Rose putting forward a potential barrier to us being able to apply our skills which highlights the involvement of our professional union (part a) and governmental actions (part b).

**Extract 10a**

346 Rose “I think there is an element (...) where the AEP perhaps hasn’t ever been err
terribly good [at the] =
348 U [Hmm]
349 Rose = PR side of educational psychology [(. um) um] =
350 U [Hmm]
352 Rose = (.I think as well if you look at err many of these initiatives they’re not (.)
353 they’re not quite knee jerk but they’re almost [же knee jerk] =
355 U [Hmm]
357 Rose = an and they like to be portrayed (. um with specificity and in response to
358 a full media concern .h =
359 U Hmm
362 Rose = and it’s all about well (. you know (. we will have another (. >I think they
364 one of the last one’s< ‘was wasn’t it one we were going to have” [after] =
366 U [Ye:s]
367 Rose = Tanya Byron said [“oh we’re] =
368 U [Ye:s]
369 Rose = gonna have all these people offering um parent support etc. h err when
370 there’s anti-bullying” >it’s not actually< looking at what service:s and skills
372 and abilities are there in the current workforce (. =
374 U Hmm
376 Rose = and (laughs) how that can be built upon >’cause that doesn’t< look like a
good new political initiative to tackle something (. um um =

The start of Rose’s speech sees her position the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) as being responsible for a lack of public promotion for the profession and thus a barrier to us being able to apply our skills. This is in line with the earlier suggestion by Rose identified from Extract 9 in relation to the lack of numbers of EPs where we position ourselves as powerless to effect changes in people’s opinions.

Also, Rose asserts that the way in which initiatives designed to address bullying are introduced by the government is another barrier to us being able to apply our skills. Rose describes them as being ‘not quite knee jerk but
they’re almost knee jerk’ (line 352) meaning that she does not commit to either possibility. Instead, Rose performs a disclaimer saying they are ‘not quite’ immediately prior to ‘they’re almost knee jerk’ with the discourse marker ‘but’ in the middle. Using the disclaimer of ‘not quite’ provides Rose with the means to reduce the potential severity of her construction that government initiatives are ‘knee jerk’ reactions. The disclaimer also enables Rose to inoculate herself against the possibility that the rest of us might challenge or disagree with her positioning.

Having stated that government initiatives are ‘almost knee jerk’ reactions, Rose seeks to clarify the context under which these take place to explain why she uses the term. We see Rose say that they are ‘portrayed with specificity’ (line 354) and ‘in response to a full media concern’ (lines 354 – 355). The use of this ECF (i.e. a ‘full media concern’) implies that without this, the government would not introduce any initiatives. Rose’s explanation then continues to position the introduction of government initiatives as being a barrier to our work (i.e. through being ‘knee jerk’ rather than planned and only as a response to a ‘full’ media concern).

Later in the extract, Rose uses a three-part list to support her construction of the introduction of government initiatives as only being in response to a ‘full media concern’.

Extract 10b

368 Alex Looking at what’s already there
369 Rose = yeah yeah and I do think that that is often (.) reflected from a national
370 U Hmm
371 Rose = if you have a new initiative it comes out in a flagship way↓ [and (.)] =
372 U [Hmm]
373 Rose = and ‘it’s got where you were talking about labels: you know it’s much more
374 headline grabbing to say um “anti-bullying initiative” than it is to say “we’re
375 going to expand the Educational Psychology Service to promote positive
376 behaviour”[ um (.)] =
377 Alex (laughs)
378 Rose = [you know] =
379 Alex [(laughs) it’s true yeah no it’s true]
380 Rose = [it’s much] more eye catching um and and then (.) it it can in some respects
381 be a box that we tick >”yes we’ve got an anti-bullying service”< it’s not that
382 “we have an Educational Psychology Service .h and part of their remit is to (.)
383 =
Here, Rose states that when there is a ‘new initiative’ which ‘comes out in a flagship way’ (line 372) it is then ‘headline grabbing’ (line 375) and ‘much more eye catching (line 381). These are three very plausible reasons for why the government would consider a ‘knee jerk’ introduction of a new initiative as appropriate. Rose then gives yet another three-part list to further explain why government initiatives are a barrier to our work. Rose states that the introduction of new initiatives is politically better than exploring and utilising the skills that reside within the ‘current work force’ (lines 363 – 364), increasing the size of the EP profession (lines 375 – 376) or noting that part of the work of EPs is to address bullying (line 383).

Rose further identifies the possibility that language might prove to be a barrier to us being able to apply our skills. Rose links terminologies with the introduction of new initiatives where she states that introducing an ‘anti-bullying initiative’ (line 375), highlighting an ‘anti-bullying service’ (line 382) and referencing a ‘dedicated service’ (line 386) are more effective than suggesting that there is already a group of professionals who can help.

**Reflection Box 2.9**
There is so much happening in this extract that I found keeping track of the analysis rather challenging. For example, not only is there a need to identify how Rose is constructing the barriers to our work but also the devices she employs to achieve this. Also (and as previously noted in Reflection Box 3.5) the interconnected nature of Rose’s constructs needs unpicking and can make it feel like I am going around in circles with the analysis.

In Extract 11, we see Susan introduce another construction regarding barriers to the application of our skills.

**Extract 11**

519  **Susan**  [That’s] probably why they’re not coming to EPs ‘cause we’re directing [them]
520
521  **Mia**  = [yeah yeah we’re]
522  **Susan**  = [elsewhere (laughs)]
Rather than a barrier to our work being put in place by others such as the government, Susan suggests that we construct the barriers ourselves. Susan says that people do not come to us because we are ‘directing them elsewhere’ (line 519 – 522) which produces a string of agreements from myself and Mia and a question from me about why we tend to do this (line 524) to which Susan replies ‘because we just don’t have the time Alex’ (line 525). Unlike the use of the word ‘just’ employed by Rose in Extract 3, the use of the same word here by Susan seems to serve a different purpose. It is as though by inserting the word ‘just’ into a sentence that could have merely been stating a fact (i.e. ‘because we don’t have the time’) the meaning changes from factual to conveying a desire to help but an inability to do so. This meaning is given further credence later in the extract when Susan says that she would have liked to offer more time to a discussion held with those outside of the profession (lines 539) but did not have the ‘capacity’ to do so (line 542). The extract then finishes with Susan giving justification for her original statement relating to pointing people in a direction other than asking EPs. Susan suggests that the reason we advise people to contact other services is because
issues such as bullying need ‘addressing properly’ (line 547) implying that because of a lack of time and capacity we are unable to achieve this. In saying this, Susan inoculates herself against the possibility that the rest of us might challenge / disagree with her points by positioning others (although unspecified) as being more able to help because they have a greater capacity and more time to input. This inoculation also creates a contrast structure where EPs have a desire to help but are unable to do so (because of time and capacity constraints that are outside of our control) while unspecified others are willing and able to help (with the time and capacity required to achieve this).

Extract 12 offers yet another possible barrier to the application of our skills. In addition, the extract suggests ways the barrier might be overcome by drawing a parallel with another psychological topic. The extract immediately follows a discussion lead by myself about the absence of psychology (which will be explored as part of the discourse *The absence of psychology*) and has been divided for ease of analysis:

**Extract 12a**

692 Susan Well I think in terms of parenting which is obviously an area I have an
interest in (.) I don’t think we would be where we are today without Tanya

694 Byron ↓ having: (.) =

695 U Hmm

696 Susan = got to the point where she was known: [as >being] =

697 U [Hmm]

698 Susan = somebody who had something< to say [and then] =

699 U [Hmm]

700 Susan = asked to say something (.) =

701 U Hmm

702 Susan = it would be interesting to e-mail the people who wrote those articles and
ask them .h =

703 U Hmm

705 Susan = whether they do have a voice nationally [and] =

706 U [Hmm]

707 Susan = what (.) what’s [going on with that]°

Susan begins this extract by drawing on the impact of the work of the psychologist Tanya Byron on building parenting skills as seen in lines 693 – 694 (i.e. through mediums such as the BBC television programmes ‘Little Angels’ and ‘The House of Tiny Tearaways’). Susan uses this as a parallel to offer a means to address the barrier previously suggested regarding limited
exposure of the EP profession (as demonstrated in Extracts 9 and 10). Also, in offering the parallel Susan inherently agrees with the previous suggestions from Rose that the EP profession has limited exposure. Susan suggests that Tanya Byron has been able to increase the exposure of the link between psychology and parenting skills due to being known as ‘somebody who had something to say and then asked to say something’ (lines 696 – 700). Within this statement Susan intimates that not only was Tanya Byron known but she was invited to share her knowledge. Here, Susan suggests that the barrier previously identified is not just about increasing the exposure of the profession. Susan posits that to address this barrier we are dependent upon others not only being aware of EPs but interested in asking us to share our knowledge. Here then Susan positions us as being powerless to effect change which in turn introduces a contrast structure where unknown others have control over knowledge of our profession and we do not. This barrier and the positioning it offers is something that is returned to later in the discussion where Susan’s comments are reinforced by Rose (Appendix 7).

As previously stated, the comments from Susan come in response to a comment from myself about the absence of psychology. This comment was made in reference to the existence of research that would be useful to consider when identifying methods of addressing bullying (see Extract 16). Although I will go into further detail about the comments made by myself within the analysis of the discourse The absence of psychology, they bear relevance to the continuing comments from Susan in the current extract. In lines 702 - 707, Susan suggests that it would be ‘interesting’ to make contact with the people responsible for the research I mention to ascertain whether they feel that their information is acknowledged at a national level which is something I question. Rose does however take this suggestion forward as can be seen in the second half of Extract 12.

Extract 12b

708 Rose [That would have been my:] I I mean because som:etimes: (coughs) people in aca academia (. ) =
709 U Hmm
711 Rose = do it [because] =
This then leads to Rose putting forward further information about the additional barrier raised by Susan but with a slightly different take. Rather than the barrier being dependency on others to ask us for information, the barrier is dependent on us being able and willing to share information. This construction is put forward by Rose drawing on a parallel in the same way as Susan does. However, Rose’s parallel is with psychologists working in academia. Rose constructs psychologists working in this arena as doing so because of the nature of the work and because they do not have the skills to put their knowledge forward. On reading this, there is an underlying suggestion that EPs might be in a similar position. That it is our own limited abilities in sharing our knowledge with others which becomes a barrier to achieving greater levels of exposure for the profession (lines 708 – 715). This suggestion receives support from Mia (line 716) and leads to Rose talking again about the government as a barrier to the application of EP skills. She says that the government can be ‘selective’ (line 717 - 718) about who they link with and that it is this selection which poses a barrier to our work. Rose’s comments in one way agree with Susan’s contrast structure of us having no control while un-named others do. They also put forward an additional contrast structure where we neither have control nor the ability required to promote the profession. This positions us as needing the help of others with a greater ability at promotion to achieve acknowledgement of our role. Rose then gives the example of the development of two educational documents (lines 720 - 721) where she says the government failed to draw on the knowledge of people with ‘an understanding of child development’. In this way, Rose moves from talking about barriers in terms of difficulties in putting
ourselves forward, to others (i.e. the government) not seeking our involvement when developing guidance for topics such as bullying.

Throughout the discussion, we put forward and co-construct a number of barriers to the application of our skills. These constructions present an interesting dichotomy where we position others as being responsible for our difficulties in applying our skills while also taking some of the responsibility ourselves.

Reflection Box 2.10
I have been talking a lot about points raised by discussants as being repeated by and between individuals. In doing so, I feel like I have been repeating myself as well which gives an indication of having reached saturation point with the discourse. I am beginning to see why there is no real ‘recipe’ for this type of analysis in the same way there is for the more traditional positivist framework. It is more about knowing your data inside and out. I must also confess that the element of repetition within the analysis can become wearing and lead me to try and rush through it to get it completed. It also leads me in some ways to become irritated with my data and feel that it somehow should be neat and easily finished. I realise that this is the old positivist in me talking and that I should be wary of this!

The absence of psychology

This discourse initially emerges from a comment made by myself in Extract 6 relating to where the knowledge used in governmental guidance on bullying given to schools comes from. As the discussion progresses we talk further about the absence of psychology in different sources of information about bullying as seen in Extract 13.

Extract 13

326  Alex  I’m just thinking about (. ) um (. ) well if you if you have like media for example
327         ( . ) you have a media . h um splurge as it were on on bullying and there’s you
328         know there’s a big story in the news and the gov it says that there’s another
329         new government initiative looking at anti-bullying and tackling bullying . hh and
330         it creates lots of different feelings in different people (. ) and I’m just
331         wondering about (. ) whether or not the terminologies instigate certain (. ) =
332  Susan  Ye:s
333  Alex  = ??feelings or certain ?actions within some people . h like you were saying you
334         know the parent had one view and wanted to [[you know get to the the]] =
335  Susan  [So it’s the context of what bullying] =
336  Alex  = hmm (. ) yeah (. ) and the way the media the portrays it ??as well I find =
In the beginning of the extract I am responding to a question from Susan which followed a comment I made relating to whether terminologies used in bullying are important. Susan’s question asks for me to give a context to the question raised which leads me to mention government initiatives and how these are portrayed in the media. In talking about this, I employ a number of ECFs as a way to add emphasis including ‘a media splurge’ (line 327), ‘there’s a big story in the news’ (line 328), ‘there’s another new government initiative’ (lines 328 – 329) and ‘it’s always done in a very serious news section’ (line 338) where the way in which the presenters speak is ‘very grave and very serious’ (line 340). As I have previously noted, the use of ECFs allows speakers to oppose any challenges to their claims by other discussants. In this instance, I would describe the use of the ECFs as a means of giving emphasis to the way in which I am talking about the media. This indicates my construction of the media as portraying bullying in a particular and exaggerated way. This use of the rhetorical device was also noted by Orthaber and Marquez-Reiter (2011) where they explored the constructions of complaints to a transport company in Slovenia. Through their analysis of exchanges they reported the complainer as using ECFs to emphasise that what is being discussed is worthy of attention. I then put forward the suggestion that this has a direct influence on the feelings and actions of those in receipt of the information (lines 330 – 333). Although I start talking about the way in which a section on bullying is discussed and the manner of the presenters, I then mention that I have never ‘actually seen a psychologist EP or otherwise on the news talking about it’ (lines 341 – 342). I go on to mention the organisations who I have seen represented but again note that within this there is ‘nothing psychological’ (line 345). This then relates particularly to the absence of psychology in the public domain, a point I refer to later in the
discussion with further evidence provided (Appendix 8). I also comment on the absence of psychology in other contexts as seen in Extract 14 (where some lines have been omitted and can be seen in Appendix 4).

Extract 14

548  Alex  Yeah and >it was about to say because< again you know you’re talking about
549  healthy schools and (. ) no disrespect to our colleagues in healthy schools but
550  .h where do they get their information from (2.0) that helps them to: tackle
551  the ‘bullying issue’ as it were?
552  Rose  I: say I don’t know that we have that information [but
553     um] =
554  U  [Hmm]
555  Rose  = in a more generalised way I do think one of the things (. hh) that that does
556  happen i:s that there ṭis a lot of research and there ṭis a lot of evidence ba:se
557  that has been undertaken by: psychologists (. ) =
558  U  Hmm
559  Rose  = that then other people make use of (. ) so they may not be psychologists
560  themselves [but] =
561  U  [Hmm]
562  Rose  = [I ] =
563  U  [Hmm]
564  Rose  = (. ) if you look at a whole ṭraft of things that happen (. ) if you look at all the:
565  (. ) the things no:w around dyslexia .h =
566  U  Hmm
567  Rose  = if you ṭlook at SEAL [if you] =
568  U  [Hmm]
569  Rose  = look a:t um things like err (. ) Jump Ahead (. ) in in COUNTY NAME (. ) um (. )
570  what what you’ve ṭactually got i:s psy ṭchology (. ) um (. ) being implemented
571  by people who are now ṭnot psychologists (. ) =
572  Mia  Yeah
573  Rose  = in a sense that we’ve sold [psychology] =
574  Mia  [‘It’s very readily] available isn’t it`

(lines 575 – 593 omitted)

594  Rose  = (coughs) you know uh do we see do we still ṭsee ourselves and ṭkeep
595  ourselves ṭh as the experts (. ) and we’re the only ones that can do it (2.0
596  coughs) =
597  U  Hmm
598  Rose  = or do we take the (. ) views that >I mean I< listen to some comments now
599  when people say .h “oh that’s just common sense” (. ) =
600  U  Hmm
601  Rose  = and ṭactually if ṭI look look ṭhistorically that was cutting edge psychology
602  thirty years ago .h =
603  U  Hmm
604  Rose  = but now people ṭsee as common sense ↓ (. ) =
605  U  Hmm
606  Rose  = and ma:ybe: one of the (. ) ma:rk:s of (. ) the influence of psychologists and
607  psychology ↓ is (. ) when people say ‘that’s common sense’ (. ) ‘in the modern
608  world’ .
At the start I am responding to a narrative by Susan where she talks about re-directing those seeking support for addressing bullying to representatives from the healthy schools service in the county as detailed in Extract 11. I question how those working in the healthy schools service get the information to be able to support people seeking help to address bullying. Inherent within this is the suggestion that they perhaps do not have the same level of knowledge that EPs do and as a result, there is an absence of psychology. This links once more with the construction of the EP identity and the contrast structure of EPs as professionals and others as being amateurs. In talking about this, I orientate myself to the construction that psychology is important to address bullying. This also intimates a need to ensure that professionals supporting those seeking help to address bullying have appropriate psychological knowledge and skills such as those possessed by EPs.

Rose takes up this point but explores it in a different way. She suggests that other people make use of the psychological knowledge that has been developed by psychologists when they are not actually psychologists themselves (lines 557 – 559). Rose goes on to detail a three part list of examples where this has happened namely dyslexia (line 565), SEAL (the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning curriculum as developed by the government in 2005; line 567) and Jump Ahead (an initiative to develop motor skills as developed within the LA where we work; line 569). Rose specifies these examples as being instances of psychology being applied but not by psychologists. Rose describes this as having ‘sold psychology’ (line 573). In using the word ‘sold’ Rose constructs psychological knowledge as being available for purchase but that it is given away as nothing is received in exchange. This construction by Rose implies that where I identify an ‘absence’ of psychological knowledge in domains such as the media and other services, it is more an absence of professional psychologists rather than psychology. Instead, psychology is there but it is ‘filtered’ and employed by people from other professions. Rose constructs this filtering as acceptable because part of the role of professional psychologists such as EPs is to increase the knowledge of others (lines 579 – 581). This follows her previous comment that professional psychologists have a choice about whether they keep psychology
to themselves or whether they share their knowledge to build the skills of others. Rose later returns to this but with a twist. She suggests that we have a choice about whether we maintain an expert identity (lines 594 – 595) and as such are ‘the only ones who can do it’ (line 595) or whether we choose to build the skills of others. Both this and the suggestion that psychology can be sold positions EPs and other professional psychologists as having control over and an influence on whether psychology is absent or visible within domains such as the media. Rose also links her comments with a previously identified barrier to EPs applying their skills namely limitations on our time and capacity (line 590). In doing so, she provides a ‘get out clause’ as it were for why EPs and other psychologists might choose to ‘sell’ psychology and train others.

Immediately prior to the opening comments from Mia in the next extract, I note what I feel is a limited acknowledgment of the work of Peter Smith (specifically the Sheffield Bullying Project in the associated guidance *Bullying: Don’t suffer in silence*, 1994). I then question whether he feels his work is valued resulting in the exchange in Extract 15 (split for ease of analysis).

**Extract 15a**

786 Mia [Is it that the] actual: (.) I mean I don’t ‘know enough about it” but is it that
787 the <actual government research itself> that they’re ‘doing or not research
788 but the publications” have they <not got> any of these things in them (.) are
789 you saying that’s it’s not right the stuff that they’re saying (.) have you got (.)
790 are you questioning [what they’re] =
791 U [Hmm]
792 Mia = <actually doing> and I suppose [is that] =
793 U [Hmm]
794 Mia = why you’re saying that there needs to be (.) the research in it (.) are they
795 completely going off on the <wrong angle> and the research >is saying that
796 they should be doing it another way but they’re not doing it I suppose is what I
797 (.)<
798 Susan Well I’m quite ?surprised because I think they do =
799 Mia [Yeah that’s why I was asking]
800 Susan = [they do they have specific people] to do literature reviews [(.) don’t they]
801 Mia [Yeah that’s what I was thinking yeah]

At the start Mia asks whether I am suggesting that the documents are incorrect in some way; that they ‘haven’t got the right stuff’ (line 789) or that they might be ‘completely going off on the wrong angle’ (line 765). In raising these suggestions it is as though Mia is unveiling my construction of the
governmental documents; that they are ‘wrong’ although I have not actually said this myself.

The comments by Mia provoke an interesting reaction from Susan when she says ‘well I’m quite surprised because I think they do have specific people to do literature reviews’ (lines 798 – 800) which in turn brings agreement from Mia (line 799). This is not a direct counter construction to that from my speech as Susan does not state that the governmental documents are correct. Instead, Susan constructs the way in which the government obtain their information as being correct; that they follow an appropriate process of gathering evidence to inform guidelines.

**Reflection Box 2.11**

I am pausing here to reflect quickly as, in talking about Susan’s response to my comments I can feel myself wanting to do so at an emotional level – I do not want to ‘agree’ with Susan and see that if I mention her constructions in my analysis this is in some way achieving agreement. This process is truly a challenging experience.

Looking further at both constructs, it is not so much an absence of psychology that I am suggesting and Susan is countering but rather an absence of the ‘right’ sort of psychology. This is a slight twist on the title of the overall discourse and one that is based on repeated comments from myself about the documents containing either outdated or limited information from psychological research. In contrast, the construct Susan suggests implies that there is psychology and it is the ‘right sort’ because there are ‘specific people to do literature reviews’ (line 800) and that through this evidence gathering the government do use appropriate psychology.

**Extract 15b**

802 Alex  [I think it’s] it’s two things really (.) um from again you know (.) ’cause I’ve
803       read through all the government policies (.) for my sins .h and on bullying or
804     ‘anti-bullying’ (speech sounding like quoting) and (. ) one of the things that
805     comes across is the fact that psychology is not (.) <mention:ed specifically> .h
806     =
807   U  Hmm
808 Alex  = in terms of any research that literature reviews might have taken into
809    account (.) so that’s one thing (.) and then I’m thinking well if they’re not
810         acknowledging it are they actually using it (.) =
811 Mia  [ ‘Yeah that’s what I was’]
Susan’s comments lead me to provide what I would describe as being further justification for my construct. I start off by saying that within the government documentation psychology is not ‘mentioned specifically’ (line 805) and this then leads me to consider whether they are actually using the available research if they are not mentioning it, or if it is being used it is not done properly (lines 809 – 812). This leads to yet another construct from myself about the effects of limited or outdated psychological research within governmental documents. I suggest that this makes addressing bullying difficult as we cannot ‘make anything effective’ (line 815) because we are not ‘looking at the development of it, the understanding of it – the term bullying’ (lines 815 – 817). In this way, I construct addressing bullying effectively as requiring the employment of available psychological research to look at how it develops and how others understand the term.

Within this discourse, the constructions discussed evolve from the initial absence of psychology to the wrong or right sort of psychology and selling psychology. These changes occur as the discussion progresses and are counter-constructions from my colleagues to that which I put forward.

**Re-constructing existing stakeholder constructions**

This discourse stems from a part of the discussion where the talk turns to how constructions of bullying might be changed. However, alongside this, there are questions over whether this is possible and if it is, whether it is needed.

This discourse has already been partially eluded to within Extract 4 (and other preceding extracts) through the references in Rose’s speech to the difficulties affecting change at the societal level (i.e. the size of the task and the resistance to change). Extract 16 picks up the discussion from the end of
Extract 4 where I start talking about making changes to existing constructions as being difficult on a large scale. The extract has been split into three parts due to its length and each will be explored in turn.

I raise the question here about what brings people to have the kinds of attitudes to topics such as bullying talked about in Extract 4 by Rose. The question posed gains an immediate, one word response from Susan of ‘society’ (line 985) with agreement from Mia (line 986) thus constructing society as being responsible for the constructions of the people within it. Mia also adds the word ‘generation’ as a further influence on the constructions people hold which allows me to offer the opportunity to discussants to explore this in more detail. Mia then expands on the use of the word ‘generation’ with a three part list to describe what is meant by this; namely family beliefs (line 988), family values (line 990) or ‘whatever’ (line 990) describing these as existing and then being ‘carried on down’ (line 992) through generations. I take this further by describing the points raised by Mia as being a ‘barrier’ to changing people’s constructions in the same way that Rose raises the size of society as a barrier in Extract 4. This implies two things; that there is a need to change people’s constructions and that there are barriers to achieving this. Following on, I construct the ‘immediate family culture’ (line 994) and their ‘immediate experiences are of bullying’ (lines 994 – 995) as influencing the constructions
held by future generations. Here then, family culture and history are positioned as being responsible for constructions of bullying.

Extract 16b

999  Rose  And I think it’s also around um >you know< an individual who may want to change [who:] =
1000  U    Hmm
1002  Rose  = (.) um: (.) doesn’t see it that way um (3.0) runs the risk of alienation in not actually having an identity with either group (.) =
1004  Mia   Yeah
1005  Rose  = um: because if you divorce yourself from [your] =
1006  U    [Hmm]
1007  Rose  = (.) um: family and and community views: (.) then you’re you’re living in there and you’re somewhat of err: an isolationist [and] =
1009  U    Hmm
1010  Rose  = actually you could then (.) sadly end up becoming a victim (laughing slightly while speaking) because you have differing views] =
1012  U    Hmm
1013  Rose  = from [your reference] =
1014  U    Hmm
1015  Rose  = group (.) err and I think it takes quite a strong individual to be able .h =
1016  U    Hmm
1017  Rose  = to to to be [able to:] =
1018  Mia   [Yeah]
1019  Rose  = (.) in a sense alienate themselves [from] =
1020  U    [Hmm]
1021  Rose  = what is (.) err their ‘their sort of reference grouping =
1022  U    Hmm
1023  Rose  = (.) I think that’s quite hard to do°

Further into the extract, Rose uses the constructions created through the exchange between myself and Mia as a platform to discuss these from a different angle. Rose suggests that while individuals within families might want to change and move away from the accepted family culture, this may not be possible. Rose then provides an explanation as to why this is the case introducing the idea of identity. More specifically, that the individual chooses not to change because they do not wish to potentially alienate themselves from their family group or the community (lines 999 – 1003). Rose then constructs an identity resulting in the individual becoming an ‘isolationist’ (line 1008) and potentially ‘a victim’ (line 1010). Here, Rose constructs the individual as having a choice; to either agree with the immediate family culture regarding how bullying is constructed and thereby prevent the possibility of becoming a victim or risk this by moving away.
As I approach the end of my analysis I am finding it more challenging whereas I thought that it would be easier because I would be working on the back of exploring earlier extracts. While I feel more confident, at the same time this in itself makes the process more difficult as some of the examples for later discourses are contained within earlier ones. I did not include earlier extracts as examples of later discourses because the extracts noted in relation to earlier discourses are more relevant there than to later discourses.

This extract provides an example of a pattern in Rose’s speech present throughout the discussion. Rose will share a construction and then repeat this using different terms twice more almost in the same way as a three part list. Indeed, I would describe Rose’s way of justifying her initial points as an extended three part list. In using this extension of the rhetorical device, Rose is able to utilise three opportunities which follow on from one another and provide additional evidence for and thus strengthening her construction and her position within the group as senior EP. It also enables her to inoculate herself against the possibility that we might question her constructions which could be seen as a direct challenge to her authority.

This discourse illustrates our positioning of other stakeholders as requiring a change to their constructions of bullying. It also highlights the way in which we construct barriers to achieving this including questioning whether a change is possible or even appropriate.

**Discussion**

The five discourses that have been identified demonstrate that on the occasion of this discussion, we talked more about our profession than about bullying as a concept from the initial question of “How can we as EPs support schools in addressing the bullying issue?”. I completed the analysis by drawing on two aspects of the DA tradition. Within each discourse, there are a variety of discursive practices including a number of rhetorical devices used by the discussants as a means to express and make adjustments to their constructions. The practices employed also provide emphasis and justification for the constructions shared as well as prevent challenges to them. It is
arguable that employing practices such as stake inoculation was a means for the discussants to address elements of power-play. Throughout the conversation, there were a number of examples of this between the discussants where, as has been noted, there was a range of experience as practicing EPs (including a member of staff who is the senior EP and another who is a trainee). In particular, the trainee EP tended to employ the rhetorical device of stake inoculation as a means to prevent the rest of us, her more experienced colleagues, from challenging her constructions. In addition, Rose tended to employ the same device for a number of reasons; to soften her constructions as the senior EP and therefore the figure of authority within the group, to invite others to agree with her comments and to emphasise her senior status. Finally, there were occasions within the discussion where it was arguable that I had a position of authority as the member of the team who introduced the topic. However, as my colleagues did question and challenge the points I put forward, any power I had within the discussion was minimal in terms of emphasis and duration.

Chapter 1 discussed the differences in language used by researchers and participants to talk about and define bullying and the data presented here gives a similar picture. Specifically, and as illustrated in the discourse *Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies*, we discussed bullying in terms of positive social behaviours, context dependent actions and as related to feedback from others about actions in contexts. However, as noted in Chapter 1, my review of the previous research bullying noted the individualistic stance (e.g. Gini, 2006; Thornberg, 2010). The discussion thus reflects the noted variations of language used to discuss bullying and here, how it is co-constructed through group conversation and social exchange. In addition, the conversation explored here was influenced by the personal histories, cultures and experiences brought to the conversation by each individual and the fluidity of language use according to these and the feedback from others in the group dynamic. The discussion also reflects a construction by the group regarding victims as being victims due to their characteristics and noted within the discourse *Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies*. However, this construction emerged as part of the discussion
related to bullying as being context dependent actions. Within this, we (as a group of EPs) position victims as being part of the context and the context as being responsible for how particular characteristics are drawn upon by those present to construct victims. This is a contrast to the individualistic discussions of bullying within previous research where victims were victims as a result of the characteristics with which they were born (e.g. Mahdavi & Smith, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Smith et al, 2004).

The context dependent construction of the individuals involved in instances of bullying emerging within the conversation analysed here contrasts with the individualistic stance within previous positivist research. Specifically, positivist research defines bullying through assuming that the beliefs held by individuals can be generalised to similar instances. Here, the discussion constructs bullying as fluid and changeable according to the context in which an incident occurs. In addition, there is a contrast with the identified construction of individuals being deviant from the social norm as a discourse within previous qualitative research (Dixon, Smith & Jenks, 2004; Harmarus & Kaikkonem, 2008). Specifically, the context is positioned by us as a group of EPs as influencing the categorization of people as victims because of particular characteristics rather than the characteristics bringing forth an incident of bullying.

The discourse *Re-constructing existing stakeholder constructions* reflects how we position those outside the EP profession as having an incorrect construction of bullying with us best placed to correct them because we are correct. This positioning contrasts with the aforementioned variety of constructions we built about bullying. The inconsistencies reflected here in how we as an EP group constructed bullying hold implications for the future as to how we support pupils. More specifically, as EPs we should be aware of the context in which the pupil has experienced an incident and the ‘belief’ they hold about bullying when exploring what has occurred and next steps. We should also be aware of the context in which we and the pupil discuss the incident and the shared construction we build as we talk. The variety of constructions also suggests that further exploration into how EPs discuss bullying would be beneficial.
Those noted here are relevant to the individuals and context of the meeting held and another group of EPs could produce a different set of data not necessarily reflecting the same variety as the context would be different and they would bring different histories, cultures, etc. to the discussion.

Exploring the data using CDP highlighted the variety of constructions about the EP identity including the tendency towards category bound activities. These identity constructions also serve to position us as powerless of effect change regarding how others interact with our profession. The EP identity discourse also positions us as experts with the ability to facilitate the constructions of others. In addition, the discourse Barriers to the application of our skills suggests that others are not aware of the profession. Within both of these discourses, those outside of the profession including teachers are positioned as having an interest in engaging with us to discuss bullying. This raises questions about the constructions of teachers on the topic of bullying. For example, do they see their constructions as needing to be changed / developed by others with greater expertise? Furthermore, the discourse The absence of psychology suggests that the information given to schools by the government is outdated but is this actually the case? Taking these points into account, perhaps the next steps for my research would be to explore the constructions of teachers and the content of governmental documents relating to bullying.

On a final note and as reported during Chapter 1, the inclusion of reflection boxes during the analysis has enabled me to acknowledge the subjectivity inherent in the research. It is however possible that the placement of these personal reflections in the format employed could lead the reader to conclude they are not relevant to the analysis. However, the information contained in the reflection boxes is representative of the action-orientated constructions built by myself as I entered into the role of researcher and analyst. It provides evidence as to the discourses I constructed during the analytical process. For example, the information contained within reflection boxes 2.3 and 2.4 illustrates the discourses and rhetorical devices inherent in producing these in my role as ethnographic analyst. Exploring 2.3 initially, the information
reflects an identity construction. More specifically, it reflects a conflicting identity where I construct myself as being a positivist researcher and a social constructionist researcher. I talk about the distancing employed as part of the discussion analysed and how, in using this rhetorical device, I construct the aforementioned conflicting identity. I would also add that the same device is used in the reflection box itself where I seek to create a distance between myself as the here and now analyst’ and myself as the ‘past ethnographic researcher’. The identity construction continues to be reflected in box 2.4. Once again I explore my use of distancing in the discussion data as being due to a conflicting identity. On the one hand I am a researcher interested in asking questions about something I construct as traditional and widely accepted. On the other hand, I am an EP participant interested in maintaining my position with my peers. It is therefore essential for the reader to consider the information in the reflection boxes as being part of the analysis and of the same status as the surrounding writing.

**Reflection Box 2.13**

A reflection box about the analysis of the reflection boxes ... in the same way as looking into a mirror with a mirror behind you the same image can be continually reproduced infinitely, the analysis of the analysis of the reflection boxes could continue exponentially. For now, it is suffice to say that they are an integral part of the design of the analytical process.
Chapter 3

School staff meeting discussions on bullying:  
Issues of consensus and power
In Chapter 2, the analysis discussed how a group of EPs constructed five discourses (i.e. Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies, EP identity, Barriers to the application of our skills, The absence of psychology and Reconstructing existing stakeholder constructions) during a discussion on bullying. Within the discussion teachers were constructed as having an incorrect construction of bullying and EPs were positioned as being best placed to give them the correct construction where this was implied as being achievable. Furthermore, the information contained in governmental documents provided to schools on bullying was constructed as being inappropriate in both age and context. The exploration of the talk of teachers on bullying thus presented itself as the next logical step in my research. Teachers have already been identified (Chapter 1) as a key stakeholder group with the potential to draw children’s attention to particular discourses relating to bullying be able to support pupils by preventing / addressing bullying. In addition (and as noted throughout previous chapters) language has been acknowledged as an important source of information. In relation to bullying, language is a vehicle to share and build joint constructions of what constitutes bullying and impart these to others, including children.

The exploration of teacher constructions on bullying has been the focus of research in the past. For example, Hepburn (2000) explored the constructions of secondary school teachers on bullying in schools using a semi-structured interview approach. This followed a period in which Hepburn completed participant observations within two specific classes. From the evidence collected through the teacher interviews, Hepburn identified three key discourses about the constructions of bullying. In the first, Subjectivity construction, it was noted that when confronted with the notion of an accusation of teacher bullying, participants constructed a variety of "... mental states and personality characteristics ...," (p. 622) in response. Hepburn subsequently constructed teachers as having an internal administrator that, where possible, observes actions and provides a moral guide to help them try and act appropriately. This then means that they construct themselves as
having moral accountability even when their actions have been perceived as bullying by the pupils they teach. In the second theme, *Normalizing techniques*, Hepburn noted that the teachers sought to construct their actions as normal by categorising the pupils they talked about. They referred to pupils as ‘someone’ / ‘person’ / ‘teenager’ in the context of a perceived conflict between them and the teachers. Pupils were referred to as ‘child’ / ‘youngster’ / ‘pupil’ in less conflict based contexts. The third theme was that of *Figuration* where Hepburn noted that the teachers interviewed constructed a fine line between bullying and control of their classrooms. In this way they were able to construct pupils’ accusations of teacher bullying as their misunderstanding of acceptable behaviour management.

**Reflection Box 3.1**
I have already acknowledged (Chapter 1) that the discourses I have identified are my interpretation of the data and as such are subject to the personal constructions I bring to the analytical process. As such, someone else reading my data / discourses may interpret the information in a different way due to their own personal constructions. The same could therefore be said of other qualitative analyses such as that presented here by Hepburn. I would, for example, discuss the discourses of the teachers in terms of action justification where excuses are given which position pupils as being at fault in some way. Following this, the teachers are then able to legitimise their responses to particular pupil behaviours; they are correcting or even educating to address a fault. Furthermore, the discourses could be discussed in terms of authority and power. Specifically, the teachers are in a position of power over pupils where their actions are justified as the implementation of authority to achieve management in the classroom.

This example from Hepburn demonstrates the diversity with which teachers can construct bullying in their talk. Although the study employed a social constructionist epistemology the collection of the data itself took the form of semi-structured interviews between the researcher and the interviewee. My research aims to increase social element of the data collection process by exploring the talk of teachers through a group context occurring as part of a regular discussion opportunity within usual school work. Through this I would aim to collect data that is more reflective of the way in which constructions about bullying are jointly created between teachers.
Method

Within the first study, there was an element of personal and professional interest as I am a practicing EP. Although I am a qualified teacher with teaching experience this is no longer my full time occupation. Despite this, the personal element present in the first study is also apparent here if to a lesser extent. Specifically, in my work as an EP I meet with teachers to discuss a wide range of issues and it is through these (and as part of my own teaching experience) that the variability with which teachers talk about bullying was brought to my attention. As noted by Yardley (2000), this sensitivity to context is an important element in qualitative research.

Participants and staff meetings

Staff meetings were identified as a group discussion opportunity that would enable the collection of data that was naturally occurring and reflective of the way in which teachers jointly create constructions about bullying (e.g. Holmes, Schnurr and Marra, 2007). These usually take place on a weekly basis lasting approximately one and a half hours. For the discussion to reflect that of a standard staff meeting, the topic would need to be identified by and be relevant to the staff involved. Staff meetings are usually chaired by the senior member of staff present and are an opportunity to reflect on policies, curriculums, practices and other topics relevant to education. Those present are able to share and reflect their own experiences with the group during the discussion as and when they choose. To obtain the data I would not necessarily need to be present during the discussion and as such, the teachers involved would be operating the recording equipment on my behalf. In this way, my physical presence would not be an influence on the talk. However, knowledge that I would be analysing the discussion and the presence of the recording equipment may have had an impact and this will be explored in the review of the chapter.

To recruit participants, I initially sent out letters / e-mails to specific schools within the geographical area local to my home and the university. These were
then followed up with telephone calls after one week to ascertain whether head teachers were interested in participating. The schools identified were one form entry primary schools (i.e. one class per year group meaning a maximum of seven classes). This was to ensure the teachers present during the discussion would encounter pupils from four years to eleven years of age (i.e. Infant and Junior Stages of education). Gaining information from the talk of teachers at the Infant and Junior stages would be beneficial as it is during the formative years that individuals are more likely to be exposed to discourses constructed by influential adults. These then have the potential to become the dominant discourses subsequently having an impact on children’s constructions of bullying. Approaching smaller schools also ensured that there would be a maximum of eight teachers present (seven staff plus the head teacher) to enable me to distinguish between the voices heard when transcribing the discussion (see section Data collection process, transcription and analysis).

During the follow up calls to schools an appointment was made with the head teacher which in one school was the head teacher of the junior section of the overall establishment. As part of this discussion, I outlined the context of the study that I had already conducted and gave information as to the nature of my research drawn from the recruitment letter that would be given to staff to gain their interest in participating (Appendix 9a); a copy of this was also shown to the head teacher during the meeting. I talked through what would be expected including the distribution of informed consent forms on the day of the meeting (Appendix 9b) and a de-briefing note after the meeting (Appendix 9c). By presenting the recruitment letter prior to the consent form time was provided for teachers to withdraw from the process. Anonymity (of participants and schools) and confidentiality throughout the process were assured. In addition, an emphasis was placed on the topic being introduced as part of a staff meeting agenda (i.e. one item for discussion among others) in a manner that fitted their school. I also emphasised that they could use whatever language they chose (i.e. that they did not have to use the term bullying but employ another phrase / term that was relevant to their setting) and that it would be important for the discussion to be of use to the school.
Three of the schools noted an interest in linking participation to a review of their anti-bullying policies. The fourth school wished to review how they informed children about bullying. This context thus provided a more naturalistic environment than that which a focus group or interview might provide. Although the study and topic for discussion were introduced by the senior staff member for the setting and thus the person in a position of authority, all were able to withdraw from the study at any time. Consequently, participation was voluntary.

The staff involved in the discussions from the schools recruited were a variety of ages, had various levels of experience and were a mixture of male and female teachers as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 1</strong></td>
<td>A mixed gender primary school with one class per year group (making a total of seven classes) with 7 members of staff present during the discussion all of whom were female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 2</strong></td>
<td>A mixed gender primary school with a total of four classes (with a mix of year groups in each) with six members of staff present during the discussion, two of whom were male and the rest female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 3</strong></td>
<td>A mixed gender primary school with a total of four classes (with a mix of year groups in each) with five members of staff present during the discussion all of whom were female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School 4</strong></td>
<td>A mixed gender primary, secondary and sixth form school where the four members of the senior management team (all with teaching responsibilities) participated in the discussion, one of whom was female and the rest male.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The length of each discussion within the staff meetings varied. The discussions in Schools 1 and 3 lasted approximately 10 minutes, that in School 2 approximately 30 minutes and approximately 20 minutes in School 4. In the first school, the topic was introduced by the head teacher Rachel. Introducing the topic for the second school was the head teacher Daniel and for the third school, the head teacher Stacey. In the fourth school, the junior school head teacher Terry introduced the discussion topic.
Data collection process, transcription and analysis

During transcription all identifying names used in the discussion were changed (e.g. if the name of the school was mentioned this was replaced with the words SCHOOL NAME). In addition, all participants were given a pseudonym where it should be noted that the first person to speak in each meeting was the senior staff member present. The transcription followed the code set down by Gail Jefferson (Appendix 3) as employed in Chapter 2. However, unlike the EP data, rather than employing all of the elements from this code, I focused on instances when talk between speakers overlapped and when there were pauses / breath intakes within speech. This adjustment was appropriate as during the analysis of the EP data, I noted that the pauses and over-lapping speech showing the flow of the conversation and natural breaks were the elements relevant to the analysis. Once the transcription process was complete, each participant was given a copy of their school’s transcript (Appendices 10a, b, c and d) to review individually where changes could be made anonymously. With the exception of a typing error identified on the first page of the transcript from School 2, no changes were noted by the participants.

Two branches of the DA tradition were employed to analyse the discussions from the staff meetings. As was the case with the talk of EPs, the analysis of discursive practices was drawn upon to identify at the micro-level the rhetorical devices utilised during the discussion. In addition, the analysis of discursive resources, in particular the relationships between the staff were explored through Foucauldian Analysis. This examines the textuality (i.e. functions, uses and ability to wield power) and the socio-cultural tectonics (i.e. the production, maintenance and promotion of discourses as well as how they vie against and impinge on one another) within sections of talk. One of the key principles is the relationship between power and knowledge. The most notable theorist in this area is Michael Foucault and it is from his writings that we obtain the term used to explore power in discourses; Foucauldian Analysis. Hepburn (1997) described Foucauldian Analysis as initially being a desire to explore how the accepted norms and practices within society are organised
discursively resulting in the adherence to these over time by individuals. Hepburn (1997) further stated that in respect of the relationship between power and knowledge:

“Our common sense understanding of power is that it implies domination and constraint. Foucault highlights a more positive sense of power as constituting subjects and identities, even though the forms of subjectivity themselves may be undesirable. It is this more positive sense of power that relates to the process of subjectification, and it relates to the way we become tied to particular ways of being drawing upon particular discursive constructions ...,” (p. 30 - 31).

Specifically, Foucauldian Analysis is a means to explore how individuals accept and adhere to the discourses around them. More specifically, the more powerful the discourse around the individual, the more likely the individual is to adhere to that discourse. According to Foucauldian Analysis then, discourses play against each other for dominance in a situation. Those discourses which are dominant will change at different times and in different places and settings. Given that the topic for discussion in each staff meeting was introduced by the senior staff member present and thus the person holding the position of authority in the hierarchical structure of the team, employing Foucauldian Analysis to explore this particular aspect of the meetings was appropriate.

Foucauldian Analysis has been employed by other researchers to explore bullying. In 2011, Ryan and Morgan noted that bullying could be theoretically interpreted as an example of how power operates inside schools. They suggested that there are particular discourses functioning within our modern day society in relation to education that are so powerful they are accepted as ‘common sense’ and have become everyday knowledge. Ryan and Morgan further explained that such discourses become powerful as a result of promoting the accepted knowledge on bullying where alternative constructions are marginalised. As a consequence of this, the most powerful discourse on bullying puts associated constructions forward as both acceptable and reasonable while possible alternatives are discredited. From this, I would suggest that any discourses put forward by the head teachers during the introduction of the topic at the start of the discussions are likely to be
considered as dominant because they originate from a person in a position of authority.

**Data analysis**

Although several dominant discourses were found within the staff meeting discussions, one over-arching discourse, *Constructing consensus*, was evident in the discussions from all four of the schools involved. As previously stated, the purpose of a staff meeting is to provide attendees with an opportunity to share reflections and practice related to the topic of discussion. The consensus constructed was subsequently developed through the course of the discussions. Even when questions were raised and information shared that did not on the surface provide agreement with preceding comments, consensus was reached. The presence of this discourse will be explored in more depth within the analysis of the additional discourses identified. I must however take a moment here to be clear as to what consensus I am referring to with this discourse. I am not, for example, proposing that there is a consensus across all of the schools involved. This would not be achievable as the schools operate within different local authorities and no school would have exactly the same context as another. Furthermore, no school would have the same staff as another and, as per social constructionism, each set of staff would bring with them to the discussion their own personal histories, cultures and experiences. As such, the consensus discourse I am referring to is that within each school where the common theme for each set of staff is the achievement of a consensus.

It is also important to acknowledge at the outset of the analysis that throughout all of the discussions, there is a power dynamic at play. As previously stated, in all of the schools the topic for discussion was introduced by the senior member of staff present. This raises a question about where the discourse *Constructing consensus* stems from; does it reflect a desire to agree with the constructions expressed by the senior member of staff? The relationship between the senior staff member and the other discussants is something that will be explored as the analysis progresses.
The discourses are presented in the order in which they were identified. The analysis begins with an exploration of the discourse *Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructions* then continues with investigating the discourse *Constructing bullying as a category of behaviour*. The analysis concludes with exploring the discourse *Constructions of cyberbullying*. I would also state that, as was the case in Chapter 2, for ease of analysis, some of the extracts have been split into sections.

**Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructions**

**Reflection Box 3.2**

This was initially entitled *Confirmation and reinforcement of personal beliefs*. On discussing this with my supervisory team the positivist nature of the word ‘beliefs’ was noted and the change made. Although not intended, the use of the word ‘beliefs’ was perhaps a reflection of my old positivist research stance.

This discourse relates to the way in which the staff continue to reinforce their personal constructions in relation to bullying through the discussions. It is through this that we see a link with the *Constructing consensus* discourse.

**Constructing features of bullying**

On exploring the data there emerged two clear sub-themes. This sub-theme relates to discussions about what the participants considered bullying to be. In the first extract the head teacher, Rachel, introduces the topic for conversation. It is important to reiterate that the way in which the head teacher introduced the discussion was her choice. In addition and of equal importance to reiterate, one of the reasons the head teacher agreed to participate in the research was because it fitted with something that the school needed to achieve; in this case a review of the way in which they impart information about bullying to the children. Through the initial speech by the head teacher, we see the start of a discussion that constructs teachers as having a correct definition of the features of bullying. This in turn allows the discussants to reinforce their personal constructions about bullying through
sharing experiences that are either accepted or dismissed by others, subsequently constructing a consensus.

**Extract 1 (School 1)**

3 Rachel: Testing (. ) no it is ‘cause it’s got numbers coming on okay if I start off 
4 and say that we’ve done the assembly for three weeks (. ) and I was 
5 saying to children that I thought bullying was when one person c 
6 constantly or a group of people constantly pick on another child (. ) 
7 however (. ) I know the children in the school have come back saying 
8 that they think bullying . h is not necessarily repetition . h but how (. ) 
9 severe the incident is (. ) so one child (. ) a one off (. ) who might kick 
10 them (. ) or punch them (. ) to them that is bullying even if it only 
11 occurs once (3.0)

12 Seren: I agree with what you’re saying that the ch I believe that children um 
13 are being bullied if it’s consist (. ) consistently happening with the same 
14 child over and over again not over again ‘cause you’d stop it to try and 
15 nip it in the bud but . h that’s what I think bullying is . hh (3.0)

16 Simone: And parents are quick to (. ) accuse people of bullying aren’t they because parents will come in after one incident of a hit (. hh) and 
17 they’ll say (. ) they’ll say “oh my child’s being bullied” and it like y like 
18 you just said it might just be one incident that happened in the 
19 playground and they they (. ) are quick to use that b word bullying 
20 (4.0)

21 Esme: Um I actually had an incident yesterday (. ) with that problem that erm 
22 there was an argument between two boys (. ) um and I was speaking 
23 to the boy who’d actually pushed another one and um and he said “oh 
24 I was bullying but the first boy was just annoying me” and I had to 
25 explain that it wasn’t he wasn’t bullying just ‘cause he pushed him 
26 once he’d probably done the worst thing probably but it didn’t make it 
27 bullying so they they’d got the confusion there (. ) as an incident (1.0)

Rachel’s introduction allows her to start the discussion by openly stating her construct regarding a key feature of bullying as being ‘when one person or a group of people constantly pick on another child’ (lines 5 – 6). In making this declaration, Rachel provides the other staff members present with the opportunity to discuss and either accept or dismiss what she has said. We see very quickly that Seren (lines 12 – 15), Simone (lines 16 – 21) and Esme (lines 22 – 28) all agree with Rachel’s suggestion that bullying is constant. Given that Rachel is the head teacher, there is an element here of power play where Seren, Simone and Esme are working within an ethos she creates. This is an interesting dynamic to explore and something which other authors have highlighted as being important. For example, Holmes, Schnurr and Marra (2007) described how the culture within a workplace is influenced by the leader. Holmes et al further noted that the way in which the position of the leader is constructed is subject to constraints imposed by the culture within
the context. Applying this to the discussion in Extract 1, Rachel’s declaration influences the culture of the school in relation to how it considers bullying. This is reinforced by the other staff adhering to the culture. In return, the adherence influences Rachel in terms of continuing with the same culture because it is successful (i.e. there is agreement). Consequently, the agreement with the head teacher’s declaration constructs a cultural consensus in the school.

Reflection Box 3.3
Applying the construction from Holmes et al was relatively simple in respect of exploring how Rachel’s declaration influences the culture of the school. Discussing the reverse was more challenging and I would suggest that the construction from Holmes et al is more complex in this context. Specifically, rather than a simple reversal of influence, it is the agreement of the staff with the culture constructed by the head teacher that places constraints on the leadership; disagreement could, for example, force the head teacher to change the culture to maintain a consensus. This positions the head teacher as being dependent on agreement from the other staff to create and maintain a particular culture. This is quite a reversal of power where I initially discussed the agreement of the staff in terms of adhering to Rachel’s declaration because it was made from a position of authority as head teacher. This discussion reflects that the data can be interpreted in a variety of ways even by the same researcher!

Also within Extract 1, Rachel positions the children in the school as having a differing construction to that which she and the other staff construct; that bullying does not have to be constant (lines 7 – 11). The development of positioning theory as outlined by Harre et al has previously been reported in Chapter 2 where instances of this rhetorical device were also noted. In relation to Rachel’s speech, by positioning children as having a differing construction, she posits that hers is correct while that of the pupils is incorrect. This then provides the other discussants with the opportunity to agree or disagree with the positioning suggested. As with the agreement given for Rachel’s declaration, the staff in the extract provide agreement for the positioning she puts forward and this is achieved in varying ways. Esme describes an incident between two pupils in her class culminating with the words ‘they’d got the confusion there’ (line 28). Here, the children in the incident described are positioned as having an incorrect construction while that from Rachel is correct. The wider implication of this agreement sees a return to the construction of the school culture influenced by the head teacher and
reinforced by the other staff. In this case, the culture where the staff position themselves as needing to re-educate the pupils as to the features of bullying. Furthermore, to achieve this re-education, agreement must be sought and achieved as without this, the pupils could not be taught the correct features of bullying. The agreement of this positioning serves to achieve a cultural consensus where a joint construction between staff of the features if bullying will enable the development of a policy that is enforceable. In turn, this arguably also illustrates the previous contrasting power based relationships discussed in Reflection Box 3.3. The positioning of children as having an incorrect construction of the features of bullying emerges within the discussions of others schools (Appendix 11a).

Reflection Box 3.4
I will acknowledge that perhaps the consensus discourse is in part a reflection of how I observe school settings as a former teacher and practicing EP. Particularly in the latter role, there can be a ‘them and us’ discourse with the school presenting a ‘united front’ as issues are discussed.

During Extract 1, Simone constructs parents as being incorrect where she says they are ‘wrong’ in the same way that the children are ‘wrong’ (lines 16 – 20); incorrectly constructing bullying as being single incidents rather than constant. The next comment from Esme does not take this further nor does she provide agreement / disagreement. However, within the discussion from School 3, staff discuss constructions involving parents to a greater extent.

Reflection Box 3.5
Although in the scope of this as a thesis chapter I am not exploring differences between the data sets, I find the way School 3 discusses parents to a greater degree that School 1 rather interesting. Is should be acknowledged that individual and contextual differences will lead to differing conversations as per social constructionism. I would also argue that perhaps the differences also reflect the way in which the schools interact with the parents of their pupils. Unpicking this further is perhaps a study in itself and therefore be a potential direction for further research.

Throughout the next extract parents are positioned by Stacey, the head teacher, as having an incorrect construction of features of bullying as a result of their own childhood experiences.
Stacey constructs children as having an incorrect construction of bullying because the incorrect constructions of their parents are ‘imposed’ (line 63) on them. This positions children as not having a choice about the way in which they construct bullying. This suggestion receives repeated agreements from Hayley who also reiterates the word ‘impose’ indicating that she too positions children as having limited choice about their constructions of features of bullying. By positioning parents and children as they do, the staff are able to confirm that they are correct thus reinforcing their own personal constructions. Examples of this positioning of parents being incorrect and the reason behind this as being from personal experiences are present in the discussions from other schools (Appendix 11a).
Rachel uses this opportunity as a means to deconstruct her own construction of bullying as something that is ‘annoying’ (line 197) describing this term as ‘wrong’ (line 197) and ‘too light a word’ (line 198; repeated line 201). Rachel’s deconstruction here carries two particular implications. Firstly, an alternative word / phrase is required when talking about bullying instead of the word itself. Secondly, the replacement word / phrase needs to have the same level of gravitas that she would construct ‘bullying’ as having. Following the declaration of her stake regarding the use of the word ‘unknown’, Rachel asks the other staff members present for agreement (lines 203 – 204) about her plan to describe bullying to the children as being ‘when a person or group of people are consistently coming back to you’ (lines 204 – 205). Rather than giving explicit agreement to this, Kelly adds to it by saying ‘mentally and physically’ (line 206) which receives immediate agreement from Rachel (line 207) and another unknown speaker (line 208). The unspoken agreement by the staff to Rachel’s plan gives an example of how the staff construct a consensus which in this instance is to regard bullying as consistent rather than a single occurrence. It could also be argued as an illustration as to the influence of the head teacher on the constructions of the other staff members. Alternatively, the illustration could be of the way in which staff agreement gives power to the head teacher’s authority.
Reflection Box 3.7

I find the use of the word ‘probably’ by Rachel (lines 198 and 201) interesting and at the same time challenging to interpret. On the one hand, Rachel’s use of the word could be argued as being an example of stake inoculation; she is attempting to soften the change of wording proposed against the possibility that her colleagues may not agree with her. Furthermore, by ensuring cohesion Rachel also ensures colleague support for her authority as head teacher. An alternative interpretation is that Rachel’s use of the word ‘probably’ is a reflection of her own hesitancy in proposing that to describe bullying, a stronger word is required. However, as she receives agreement for the proposal by two unknown speakers (lines 199 and 200), the hesitancy decreases where, in line 201, Rachel initially says ‘probably’ then changes this to ‘maybe not’. In this, Rachel is reinforcing her construction of bullying requiring a stronger word to describe it than ‘annoying’ following colleague agreement. I would also suggest a third interpretation; that the decrease in hesitancy is to achieve agreement with her colleagues as without this, Rachel’s authority as head teacher could be vulnerable. This illustrates the many different ways in which an extract of data could be interpreted. While I would subscribe to the use of the word as an example of stake inoculation used in the interests of achieving a consensus, other analysts may subscribe to one of the alternatives proposed here or indeed introduce others of equal value. Here I am perhaps declaring my stake following my time as a teacher; that consensus is important in the school context and that stake inoculation as a means to achieve this is my preferred way of being managed (i.e. I appreciate the authority of the head teacher but I also appreciate being able to share my constructions).

Looking further at Kelly’s comments, while agreement with Rachel’s consistent construction and subsequent plan are implied, she also shares her constructions of the features of bullying (line 206). The agreement received from both Rachel and the unknown speaker (lines 207 – 208) provides confirmation and reinforcement for Kelly’s constructions in addition to their own. The affirmation further allows Kelly to provide her own reinforcement (line 210) for her original statement (line 206) and in doing so she positions children once again as being incorrect in their constructions of the features of bullying; that many children consider bullying is just physical when, according to her construction, it can be both physical and mental. Furthermore, at the end of her comment Kelly uses the phrase ‘don’t they’ which allows her to declare her stake and reduce the likelihood of challenge from her colleagues by implying agreement will be given. Agreement is then given by Rachel with a three-part list where she says ‘that’s true’, ‘that’s a good one to say’ and ‘it’s not always physical at all by any means’ (lines 211 – 212). Three-part lists are a known rhetorical device that discussants employ during conversation to provide justification for and add emphasis to their constructions (e.g. Riley, 2002; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). In this instance, the use of the
three-part list enables Rachel to emphasise her agreement with the positioning of children’s understanding of bullying put forward by Kelly. This in turn allows the group to continue to confirm and reinforce their own constructions. It also gives a further illustration of the way staff co-construct themselves as being correct.

Reflection Box 3.8
Throughout the extracts explored so far not only do the staff position themselves as being correct in their constructions of the features of bullying, there is also an implicit assumption that the pupils are incorrect and in some ways ignorant of this therefore requiring education. At no point however do the staff suggest that they might in fact ask the pupils for their constructions. I would argue that the staff are remiss in their duties by not suggesting that asking the pupils about bullying would be beneficial. The same could also be said about my research as I am not gaining an example of the constructions from pupils. However, I have already argued that adults from the stakeholder groups identified in this research have the potential to influence the constructions of pupils hence the focus on EPs, teachers, government guidelines and parents. This is not to say that the constructions of pupils are not worthy of further research and indeed, following the studies presented here, an appropriate way forward could be to do just this!

The next extract derives from the start of the staff meeting in the second school and sees the head teacher, Daniel, introduce the topic for discussion. As part of this introduction, Daniel asks the staff what they ‘think’ (line 36) of the definition he reads aloud from the anti-bullying policy (lines 28 – 36).

Extract 4 (School 2)

1  Daniel:  h. right what we’re (.) gonna talk about first (1.0) is (.) erm (2.0) just
2  a a general discussion about (.) bullying (.) one of the things (.) that
3  the governors are gonna be doing tomorrow (.) at the full governors
4  meeting (1.0) is looking at this statement of behaviour (1.0) it’s a
5  fairly new thing that (1.0) that governors have to (.) sign and share
6  with parents hh. (1.0) erm (2.0) what I’ve got here is a (2.0)
7  statement that has been produced by the local authority (1.0) as one
8  of those model statements (2.0) and if you have a look (.) at that third
9  bullet point down (1.0) talking about principles (1.0) (so) it’s about the
10  school being inclusive (2.0) but it also says hh. “to this end school has
11  a clear and comprehensive anti-bullying policy (.) that is known and
12  understood by all (.) consistently applied and monitored for its
13  effectiveness” (2.0) hh. (2.0) we have had (.) an anti-bullying policy in
14  place (.) for a while (2.0) it was (1.0) brought in at the same time as
15  we brought in our (.) behaviour policy (2.0) hh. but that (1.0) thing
16  about being monitored for its’ effectiveness and even consistently
17  applied (.) I’m not sure has ever been done (1.0) because (1.0) we
18  don’t really have that many incidents of (.) bullying within school (2.0)
19  hh. (2.0) if you have a look at that (1.0) bullying (.) policy sorry anti-
20  bullying policy (1.0) you’ll see that the third part down talks about
21  “what is bullying” (4.0) and I thought maybe a good starting point
would be (.) to see whether that fits with what we all agree (.) bullying (.) is (1.0) erm (1.0) this policy has been to governors and they have (.) erm (.) edited and changed aspects of it (.) and really I think we're at the stage now where it comes back to us to see what we think (.) bullying is (.) so if (.) if we were to come up with a (.) a definition of bullying (.) what would we (1.0) what would we want to include (.) in that (7.0) at the moment the policy says (1.0) "bullying is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious h. or insulting behaviour (1.0) hh. it is an abuse of power which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated, angry or vulnerable (1.0) it undermines self-confidence and may cause suffering, distress and a sense of injustice (2.0) bullying can be physical or emotional and may include racist taunting of a sexual, homophobic, religious or racist nature (.) it may take the form of verbal name calling or it may take place through electronic medium" (3.0) h. what do we think of that (2.0)

Perry: My understanding was that it had to be done on (1.0) more than one occasion but it doesn't actually mention that there at all (.) =

Emma: [Yeah] =

Natalie: [No]

Emma: = [no that’s what I thought I thought it was not a one off it was (.)]

Perry: = [so you kind of one instance] =

Natalie: = [it's consistent]

Perry: = [consistent (.) yeah (.) can one instance of someone (.)] =

Emma: = [continuous or persistent]

On introducing the topic, Daniel states that the governors of the school are due to review a 'statement of behaviour' (line 4) document which they 'have to sign and share with parents' (line 5 – 6). Daniel also reads a statement which he describes as having 'been produced by the local authority as one of those model statements' (lines 7 – 8). Daniel then identifies the specific element of the statement relating to the staff meeting discussion on bullying (i.e. a school is required to have a 'clear and comprehensive anti-bullying policy'; line 11). As well as giving an outline to the discussion, these comments by Daniel allow him to distance himself from the information that he shares. The act of distancing has been identified by other researchers as occurring in talk (e.g. Breit, 2014; Jingree & Finlay, 2008) and also occurred within the talk of EPs as analysed in Chapter 2. Distancing enables Daniel to reduce the potential for the staff to perceive his introduction of the statement as being something he is enforcing on them in his position as head teacher. By clarifying that the statement is from the local authority, Daniel is able to soften the information he is about to share thereby achieving consensus.
Reflection Box 3.9

It could be asked of the information; why would Daniel want to soften his comments to achieve consensus? The response here could be for example, that Daniel constructs his colleagues as having limited respect for or disagreements with the local authority and as such, being seen to agree with the statement shared would decrease the possibility of achieving a consensus. There is however no evidence for this making such a statement an assumption about the relationship between the school staff and the local authority.

Although my construction discusses Daniel’s comments as a means to achieve distancing, an alternative could suggest that by drawing on the information from the local authority, Daniel is reinforcing his position of head teacher against the possibility others might challenge him. These interpretations are perhaps contrasting against themselves; one constructs Daniel as seeking to soften the authority of his role as head teacher while the other as trying to reinforce it.

A further element of interest within Daniel’s speech is the reasoning he gives (lines 13 – 18) for the lack of consistent application and monitoring of the anti-bullying policy that is a requirement from the local authority (lines 10 – 13). In stating that they ‘don’t really have that many incidents of bullying within the school’ (line 18), it could be argued that Daniel constructs the guidelines from the local authority as either being irrelevant or difficult to implement because of infrequent occurrences of bullying. Both of these constructions are plausible and both enable Daniel to excuse the lack of policy implementation and monitoring. Daniel’s comment also constructs the school as being a place where there are relatively few incidents of bullying. This implies a contrast structure of inside school versus outside school; bullying occurs but not really in their school context. There are instances of this contrast structure occurring in the talk of discussants from other schools (Appendix 11b) suggesting that this is a particularly powerful construct within these particular settings.

Within this introductory speech by Daniel, he invites the other staff to consider the statement of bullying within the school’s anti-bullying policy (and drawn from the local authority’s recommendations) to ‘see whether that fits with what we all agree bullying is’ (lines 22 – 23). Both the reactions to the statement and the way it is shared are worthy of exploration. Taking the latter first, Daniel repeatedly uses the pronoun ‘we’ throughout the introduction to the meeting. Employment of this pronoun has been noted elsewhere as a means to achieve alignment between speakers in a particular group (e.g.
Uzum; 2013). In this instance, use of the pronoun enables Daniel to align himself with his colleagues as a teacher rather than as a head teacher talking with his staff. The statement itself (lines 28 – 36) constructs bullying as having a number of precursors to actions, actions and subsequent results which together make the features of bullying. I must be very clear at this point and state that I am not analysing the statement itself which was produced prior to the conversation being explored in this study and therefore not part of the immediate context. I am however interested in the reactions to the statement shared by Daniel where he follows it with an invitation for the other staff to comment (line 36). Although responses are given, none challenge the information thus implying agreement with the list. I would discuss this implicit agreement as being a means to achieve cohesion for three reasons. Firstly, the features shared have been included in the anti-bullying policy historically (i.e. prior to the immediate conversation) and to disagree with them would mean disagreeing with their own previous constructions. Secondly, disagreement would suggest a challenge to the construction of the head teacher both in the present context and historically (as the head teacher would have compiled the final version of the policy referred to previously). Finally, disagreement would challenge the local authority. As such, by implying agreement the discussants achieve consensus and preserve their own status as a member of the group through alignment with the constructions of others.

In response to the statement the other staff share additional features of bullying that they construct as important to include in the already wide ranging list. Specifically, Perry suggests that something could be considered bullying if it is done on more than one occasion (lines 37 – 38). Perry precedes this with the phrase ‘my understanding was’ (line 37) and follows it with the discourse marker ‘but’ (line 38). The structure of Perry’s comment allows him to perform several actions. The preceding phrase is a stake inoculation against two things; the possibility that his comment might be seen as confrontational / challenging towards the information the head teacher has shared and the possibility that the other discussants might challenge the comment itself. The use of the discourse marker enables Perry to highlight the absence of the element of repetition in the definition given while at the same time soften this
query by pairing it with stake inoculation. The feature of consistency then is something which Perry constructs as important and worthy of inclusion in the statement shared. Perry’s comments also receive agreement from Emma in the form of a three-part list (lines 39, 41 and 45) and Natalie (lines 40 and 43) followed by further supportive comments by Perry himself (lines 42 and 44). This allows the three speakers to validate their individual constructions on bullying and through this, provide reinforcement for each other and subsequently achieve a consensus. This issue of consistency as an element of what constitutes bullying is something that other staff provide agreement for during the staff meeting discussion of School 2 and the meetings from other schools (Appendix 11c).

Reflection Box 3.10
As I progress through the analysis of this second study it occurs to me that the way in which a piece of data could be interpreted is almost infinitesimal. Positivist data collection and analysis is very neat in terms of the interpretation is based on what statistics reveal. In contrast, as with the language used in the conversations being explored, the language used in the interpretation is open to the influence of the analyst’s own culture, history and experience. I have already acknowledged that I may interpret my data in a different way to another analyst but even within my own writing I am noting alternatives to the analysis given. I would also acknowledge that to note all possible interpretations would not be possible as I can only note those I can identify. I would therefore say that analysis if data following the social constructionist tradition is about coming off the fence as it were and declaring one’s own stake while acknowledging alternatives identified and that others may be available according to the constructions of other analysts.

The inclusion of different elements to the initial features given by the head teacher during the discussion from School 2 is something that occurs in the meetings from other schools. The next extract, from School 3, sees two discussants introduce specific elements following an invitation from the head teacher, Stacey.

Extract 6 (School 3)

93  Stacey: = erm (1.0) so can we (.) is it okay if we just (.) maybe just (.) go round the table and kind of (1.0) and if somebody says what you were going to say anyway that’s fine (.) =
94
95  U:     = Hmm
96  Stacey: = I won’t make you say it again but hh. but just sort of to get a (.) a shared consensus so I can see where we’re all coming from in terms of what (.) people would consider to be (.) =
98
99  U:     = Hmm
Stacey puts forward the opportunity for the staff to share their constructions regarding bullying ‘to get a shared consensus’ (lines 97 – 98). This open and immediate declaration of need for a consensus allows Stacey to share her stake in the discussion, acknowledging the possibility that there may be differences but that an agreement must be reached. As such, from early on in the discussion, the staff present are aware of the preference from Stacey to achieve a consensus thus reinforcing her position of authority as head teacher. Having put forward her stake in the conversation and indicating her position of authority as head teacher, Stacey attempts to soften her comments through the use of particular words and phrases. Initially, she asks her colleagues ‘is it okay if we just’ (line 93) following this with ‘maybe just’ (line 93) and ‘kind of’ (line 94). Later, Stacey says ‘I won’t make you say it again’ (line 97) and ‘but just sort of’ (line 97). These phrases indicate an attempt by Stacey to prevent others from seeing her as asserting her authority as head teacher to make them adopt her constructions. This use of stake inoculation by Stacey as a head teacher speaking with her colleagues is something that has been seen previously in data sets from both of the other schools analysed thus far. Such a pattern indicates that within these schools there is an unspoken acknowledgement of the power held by the individuals in the role of head teacher by all present. This acknowledgement leads to the employment of stake inoculation by all parties as a means of managing this.
Reflection Box 3.11
While I have discussed Stacey’s language in terms of stake inoculation against her colleagues constructing her comments as an assertion of authority, an alternative interpretation could be the opposite. Specifically, in stating that she would not make her colleagues say something someone else has already said, Stacey is making the other discussants aware that she does have the authority to do this. I am rather uncomfortable with this interpretation however as I construct Stacey’s comment as a means of injecting humour into the discussion to make the others feel comfortable and thus softening her position. This could be a reflection of my own preference for management styles where humour is employed to reduce possible tensions.

Having had the invitation to comment, three of the staff members take up the opportunity. Between them, Jodie and Anna construct a three-part list where bullying is described as ‘repeated’ (line 102), ‘a verbal or a physical something’ (line 106) that happens ‘over a period of time’ (line 107). The co-construction of a three-part list is something that speakers enter into when one discussant wishes to add to a list started by another (Jefferson, 1990). In this instance, the addition allows Anna to share her own construction by adding to the list started by Jodie. This enables both discussants to lend support for each other and reinforce their own personal constructions. Dana also adds the element of bullying being something that is ‘targeted’ (line 109) towards ‘specific children’ (lines 111 and 113) ‘or group of children’ (line 115); an element also identified by staff in the second school (Appendix 11c). Dana’s comments further provide reinforcement and conformation for the comments made by her colleagues. Through this exchange, Dana, Jodie and Anna reach a consensus about the features they agree to be bullying which is given support from Stacey (line 114). The support she gives could be constructed as providing agreement with her colleagues or as giving head teacher assent to the suggestions put forward. Either way, a consensus is achieved through the co-construction and subsequent agreement between the speakers.

The next extract follows on immediately from Extract 6 as the discussion in School 3 continues and other elements of what should be included as features of bullying are put forward. At the start the head teacher employs the term ‘okay’ (line 116) as a means to acknowledge what has been said previously by Anna, Jodie and Dana. The use of this word also serves as a discourse marker to indicate the beginning of a new section of speech which allows Stacey to
introduce a further question for consideration; whether the people who are engaging in the bullying behaviours towards others are the same people all the time when the behaviours are repeated (lines 116 – 119).

**Extract 7 (School 3)**

116 Stacey: [okay (.)] and what about in terms of (.) so you (.) so targeted to a
117 specific child or children hh. does the (.) the the (.) perpetrators
118 whatever the word would be h. the people that are doing (.) the anti-
119 social behaviours (.) does it have to be the same people all the time
120 (1.0)
121 Anna: I think they could (.). it could be the same behaviour and it could be
122 copied by other people who’ve [seen] =
123 Stacey: [Hmm]
124 Anna: = it instigated by somebody else
125 Stacey: Okay (2.0) so it can u end up with the situation where children are
126 being bullied by (.) =
127 Anna: [A group]
128 Stacey: = [a group] [not] =
129 U: [Hmm]
130 Stacey: = necessarily [collectively (.).] =
131 U: [Hmm]
132 Stacey: = so it could be at different [times hh.] =
133 U: [Hmm] (2.0)
134 Stacey: Okay (.). so (.) [repeated] =
135 Dana: [It’s a power thing isn’t it]
136 Anna: Yeah (.)
137 Stacey: Yeah (.)
138 Hayley: Intimidation
139 Dana: Intimidation (.) yeah
140 Stacey: Yeah (2.0) and I think (1.0) a lot of our issues that we’ve had here has
141 been more (.). verbal and mind games (.). =
142 U: [Hmm]
143 Stacey: = [I think] =
144 U: Hmm
145 Stacey: = with children rather than actual physical (1.0)

Stacey initially uses the term ‘perpetrators’ (line 117) but follows this with the phrase ‘whatever the word would be’ (line 118). This change of terminology indicates that Stacey is uncertain of the word ‘perpetrators’ and tries to dismiss what she has said with a query over what might be used instead to describe ‘the people that are doing the anti-social behaviours’ (lines 118 – 119). There is also an invitation to the other discussants to make a suggestion that could be used as an alternative. In querying the terminology she employs, Stacey positions herself as being a head teacher who can be questioned thus making her vulnerable to potential challenges from the other staff about her constructions. In addition, the uncertainty illustrates to the other staff that particular elements associated with bullying can be negotiated.
The rest of the extract sees a number of rhetorical devices employed for a variety of purposes. On the surface, the extract sees several elements put forward for inclusion in a definition of bullying (namely repetition, power, intimidation, physical behaviours, verbal behaviours and mind games). Digging a little deeper however reveals several different actions that culminate in the co-construction of bullying as including all of the elements aforementioned. This is achieved through the staff revealing their constructions, providing emphasis for them and giving agreement to those shared by their colleagues. An example of this comes following the suggestion from Dana that bullying is ‘a power thing’ (line 135) followed with an invitation to agree with her (i.e. ‘isn’t it’; line 135) resulting in agreement from both Anna and Stacey (lines 136 and 137). This pattern is then repeated when Hayley introduces the term ‘intimidation’ (lines 138 – 140). This is an example of how, through acts of sharing and corroboration, the speakers construct bullying as including the elements noted while at the same time provide confirmation for their own constructions.

Extract 8 is the final extract to be explored under the first sub-theme from the discourse Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructs. In this exchange between Anna and the head teacher Stacey, ‘organisation’ (line 236) and ‘premeditation’ (line 243) are discussed as features of bullying.

Extract 8 (School 3)

Anna: And it almost (.) there almost seemed to be an element of organisation to it (.)
U: Hmm
Anna: = in that they know each of them was going on (.) and they were making the comments and they were having a discussion (.) at a certain time weren't they
Stacey: Hmm (1.0) yeah there was a degree of (.) kind of (.) erm (1.0) yeah
Anna: Premeditation
Stacey: [Yeah (.) it was (.) yes]
Anna: [It does happen doesn't it]
U: [generally yeah] (2.0)

Anna positions children involved in a particular incident of bullying as having developed a strategy for how the act would be carried out (lines 239 – 241) seeking agreement from her colleagues to this construction (i.e. ‘weren’t they’; line 241). Agreement is then given by Stacey although preceded with
the phrase ‘there was a degree of’ (line 242). This response to Anna’s suggestion from the head teacher takes the form of a stake inoculation which serves two purposes. Firstly, Stacey inoculates herself against the possibility that the staff members present might challenge the agreement with Anna. Secondly, it inoculates her against the other staff seeing her as the head teacher favouring the construction from Anna by providing agreement. This pattern of Stacey providing agreement to Anna’s constructions is repeated when she introduces the term ‘premeditation’ (line 243 – 244). However, rather than Anna and Stacey constructing the elements of ‘organisation’ and ‘premeditation’ as being features of bullying, they relate them to a specific incident only. This is also the case for the agreement by an unknown contributor (line 246) who performs a stake inoculation by using the term ‘generally’. The repeated use of stake inoculation by the discussants suggests that although they would agree with premeditation as a construction that is appropriate to the incident mentioned, they would not necessarily apply the same construction elsewhere. This illustrates once again that there are elements related to bullying to be negotiated.

Reflection Box 3.12

I am pausing here to reflect on why the discussants might be hesitant about the possibility of all acts of bullying being premeditated / organised. It could be, for example, that the staff are hesitant not about the premeditation / organisation, but rather the possibility that the pupils are capable of such planned acts. I would however suggest that I am perhaps going beyond the language they use and in doing so, revealing my own discourse; that it is I who is uncomfortable about pupils planning acts of bullying.

Throughout the extracts presented in this sub-theme, a variety of features are presented by the discussants for inclusion in constructions of bullying. The negotiation of these features reflects elements of power dynamics within the schools as well as individual constructions. Furthermore, they reflect the way in which the staff in the schools achieve a consensus although this is not without challenges.
Constructing possible reactions to bullying

In this sub-theme, the discussants constructed bullying as something to be addressed often including suggested methods of achieving this. The first extract provides an example of teachers in the first school talking about how bullying should be addressed. This follows the head teacher, Rachel, introducing a suggestion from a magazine article read.

**Extract 9 (School 1)**

49. Rachel: I read (.) in a head teacher magazine last week (.) and I’m not sure who the author is (.) has (.) written about (.) ways of dealing with bullying and saying to children to be assertive (.) in that they say something back to the bully like “why are you picking on me” um she also said humour can work .h in the sense of like .hh um laughing (.) or (.) belittling the bully and she said she (.) I don’t agree or disagree but she thinks there’s a place where (.) children get taught how to deal with bullying

56. Esme: I think sometimes though you it can have (.) children can have the opposite effect ‘cause when they rise to it (.) and they give it a reaction that’s when it can sometimes it’s [entertainment] =

60. Rachel: [Yeah]

61. Esme: = for the bullies isn’t it (.) so they’ll do it again it’s sometimes you get the wrong sort of things that a child might say back you [you] =

63. Seren: [Yeah]

64. Esme: = might think of children in the past that have really risen to it and that’s made it worse in a way

Rachel initially positions herself as an intermediary; someone sharing the information with the other staff where this is reinforced with the phrase ‘I don’t agree or disagree’ (lines 54 – 55). Here, Rachel constructs herself as being at the same level as her colleagues (i.e. looking at information and deciding what to do with it) rather than as a head teacher speaking to her subordinates (i.e. giving information that is correct and should be adopted).

**Reflection Box 3.13**

Although I would construct Rachel’s language using positioning theory, the use of the phrase in (lines 54 – 55) could also be interpreted as stake inoculation. Specifically, Rachel is trying to reduce the possibility of the staff constructing the introduction of the magazine as being an assertion of authority by the head teacher. Questions may also be raised about why Rachel says ‘I read in a head teacher magazine’ (line 49). This could simply be Rachel letting the other staff know the source of the information she is sharing. It could be an example of Rachel reminding the other staff of the authority inherent in her role as head teacher. A further interpretation could be that as head teacher Rachel has access to information that the other staff do not and in sharing this with them, she is seeking discussion with an implication that the source will invoke agreement.
According to Rachel the article suggests that children should be taught to be ‘assertive’ towards bullies (lines 51 – 54). However, Esme constructs the suggested assertiveness as being ‘entertainment for bullies’ (lines 59 – 61) and thus as being a ‘wrong’ reaction to give for two reasons; because of the response it might elicit by the bullies (lines 61 – 65) and because the children being assertive might say ‘the wrong sort of thing’ (line 62). Esme peppers her construction with words and phrases to inoculate herself against challenges by her colleagues where she is, in turn, challenging the comments from the head teacher magazine (e.g. ‘I think’ in line 57; three uses of the word ‘sometimes’ in lines 57, 59 and 61; an invitation to agreement in line 57 through the phrase ‘isn’t it’). She also employs the personal pronoun ‘you’ (lines 57, 61 and 62) thus positioning her construction as being experienced by the other discussants. Both Rachel (line 60) and Seren (line 63) provide agreement to Esme’s construction and in doing so, they achieve a consensus of reaction to the information shared from the magazine article. This in turn enables the discussants to confirm their own personal constructions about the potential reactions to bullying. More specifically, the construction that children should not be taught to be assertive because this carries potential risks.

The next extract (which has been split for ease of analysis) is a discussion resulting from a direct question from Daniel, the head teacher of School 2. The query asks what should be done if an incident of bullying were to occur. This follows on from Daniel reiterating the contrast structure of inside versus outside school when he states ‘given that we’ve said that there are very few incidents (of bullying) within school’ (lines 338 – 339). Daniel’s comment here reiterates his previous statement in Extract 4 (lines 17 – 18) and assumes agreement from the other staff by employing the pronoun ‘we’.

**Extract 10a (School 2)**

| 338 | Daniel: | Hm (4.0) so how (. ) how do we deal with bullying (. ) on a daily basis (. ) given that we’ve said that there are very few (. ) incidents within school (7.0) |
| 339 | Perry: | Well I think you just (. ) you are aware aren’t you that (. ) if you get as we said earlier if you get a report (. ) erm on two or three occasions about the same person or the same (. ) two children (1.0) then you start to er your awareness is heightened isn’t it (1.0) = |
| 340 |  |
| 341 | Daniel: | Yeah |
Perry: I don’t think there’s anything proactive that we’re doing apart from just watching and listening (2.0)

The response from Perry to the question from Daniel positions teachers as being dependent on information from elsewhere; in this case reports from children / parents, to achieve a ‘heightened awareness’ (line 344). The notion of one group being dependent on information from another is also something that was seen in Chapter 2 where EPs positioned themselves as requiring awareness from others about the role to be able to apply skills. Perry subsequently seeks agreement with the phrase ‘you are aware aren’t you’ (line 341) which is given by Daniel and, as he is the head teacher, the affirmation given encourages Perry to share a further point. In this case, an additional construction positioning the staff as not doing ‘anything proactive’ (line 346). Here Perry provides reinforcement for his own previously shared construction that positioned teachers as being dependent on others for information. Perry does however soften both of these statements through the use of stake inoculation; namely the phrases ‘I don’t think’ (line 346) and ‘I think you’ (line 341). We have seen during the analysis of the previous sub-theme how Perry uses stake inoculation to put forward a challenge to something that has been noted by the head teacher Daniel. This continued pattern is an example of Perry’s management of the power play inherent in the conversation having directly challenged something shared by the head teacher. The discussion continues in the next extract with Daniel once again reiterating the inside school versus outside of school contrast structure.

Extract 10b (School 2)

348 Daniel: I’m not I’d like to think because of the conversations that we have within assembly (.) I often say “there is one thing I won’t stand for” and the children will all chorus “it’s bullying” (1.0) so I think we (.) we don’t have that culture (.) =
349 U: Hm
350 Daniel: = we don’t have a bullying culture [within school] (.)
351 U: Hm
352 Daniel: = but even this afternoon we’ve talked about (.) certain things that [that have gone on] (1.0) =
353 U: Hm
354 Daniel: = how do we deal with those (.) as (.) as we come up with (.) as they come to us (2.0)
355 Natalie: We deal with it on an individual basis don’t we (.) we deal with it (.) that child (.) and if necessary the victim (.) spoken to separately / together (.)
Daniel discusses the school as not being a place where bullying occurs constructs this as being due to the absence of a bullying culture (lines 351 and 353). Daniel does not however elaborate on how he would define that culture. What Daniel does discuss is the response of the children when he says ‘there is one thing I won’t stand for’ (line 349). Specifically, Daniel discusses how the children ‘all chorus “it’s bullying” ’ (line 350) constructing this as a unified response which the pupils all agree with and buy into. However, an alternative interpretation would be that the pupils are merely responding to the head teacher because of the position he holds rather than actually agreeing with bullying as something that should not be stood for. A further interpretation would be that the pupils are giving this response because they have learned that this is required in the context of an assembly when the head teacher states ‘there is one thing I won’t stand for’. I would construct Daniel’s use of the word culture as being a description of the unity he discusses as being represented by the chorusing of the pupils.

Following the aforementioned repetition of the construction that bullying occurs but not in the school (lines 350 – 351), Daniel employs the discourse marker ‘but’ (line 355) to acknowledge that examples of incidents which contradict this have been discussed during the course of the meeting. Daniel then invites the other staff to comment on how to address any incidents such as those mentioned in the conversation thus far (lines 358 – 359). Through this, Daniel can manage potential challenges to the contrast structure inherent in the sharing of incidents as examples of bullying while at the same time validate the information shared by the other staff. This subsequently allows Daniel to manage the potential effects of his position as head teacher.
Following the invitation to comment from Daniel, Natalie gives an example of what they do to address bullying (lines 360 – 362). This directly contradicts Daniel’s construction of the school as a place where instances of bullying are rare. Natalie’s comment also invites her colleagues to agree with her when she says ‘don’t we’ (line 362) where Daniel (line 364), Lisa (line 369) and Emma (line 365) all then provide affirmation and elaboration. In providing this agreement, Natalie’s colleagues enter into the construction of bullying as being something that occurs and needs to be addressed and as Daniel is one of them, he contradicts his own previous statement. In addition, they give reinforcement to the positioning inherent within Natalie’s description of some children being ‘victims’ (line 361). Exploring this further, Natalie’s construction of the way bullying should be addressed does not include the word bully alongside the word victim. Instead, Natalie says ‘that child’ (line 36) and it is only when Daniel reiterates her suggestion of talking to the individuals involved that the term ‘bully’ (line 367) is introduced. What follows is a string of agreements from several members of staff with the points raised previously. This co-construction discusses bullying as being something which needs to be addressed in some way. Furthermore, the discussants provide reinforcement or their own and each other’s discourses. As Daniel enters into the co-construction and contradicts himself, he constructs achieving unity between himself and the other staff as more important than his own constructions.

The next extract comes from the staff meeting held in the third school and links with Extract 2. Here we see the staff continue with the discussion regarding the imposition of parental constructions of bullying based on their own experiences when at school. Specifically, the staff in School 3 position parents as considering the school to not be addressing bullying because when they were children this was in fact the case.

Extract 11 (School 3)

72 Hayley: And nothing was ever done about it so their perception again is that (.)
73           we won’t do anything about [it] =
74      Stacey: Hmm
75    Hayley: = yeah
114

Stacey: Yeah and a (.) and also that (. ) what we do do about it is (. ) too (. )
77
soft or (. ) =
78
Hayley: Yeah
79
Stacey: = isn’t effective (. ) I think just from the experience that I’ve had (. ) the
two of the times when I have had (. ) you know (. ) more serious
80
incidents’ that have happened at school hh. =
81
U: Yeah
82
Stacey: = that (. ) that often (. ) how we’ve chosen to deal with it (. ) is viewed
83
as (. ) =
84
Hayley: Yeah =
85
Stacey: = [you know they want (. ) they want punish (. )] =
86
Hayley: = [they want a bit more action]
87
Stacey: = yeah and they want punishment for the (. ) [the child to]
88
Hayley: [yeah for that child to be removed (. ) yeah]
89
Stacey: = be excluded (. ) or they want that child to be (. ) I don’t know what
90
they want really but (. ) =
91
Hayley: Hmm
92

Hayley initially positions parents as saying that the school ‘won’t do anything’ about
instances of bullying (lines 72 – 73) subsequently positioning them as constructing the
school to be deliberately choosing not to do anything about an instance of bullying. Stacey
provides agreement (line 76) and they co-construct a ‘them and us’ stance between the parents and the school staff.

**Reflection Box 3.14**

I would argue that the ‘them and us’ stance enables Hayley and Stacey to work
114

Stacey continues the extract by positioning the parents as constructing actions taken by the school as being ‘too soft’ (lines 76 – 77) or ‘not effective’ (line 79). Stacey thus implies that the school do put strategies in place to address bullying subsequently discrediting the construction of the parents seeing the school as unresponsive. Although Stacey does not specify what it is that has been done to address instances of bullying, throughout the remainder of the extract she continues with this thread. Exploring this further, Stacey employs a three-part list as a means to put forward methods of addressing bullying that she considers parents would like the school to use. The formation of this list sees Stacey suggest that parents want ‘punishment’ (line 88) and

114
exclusion (line 90) and finishes with Stacey saying ‘I don’t know what they want really’ (lines 91 – 92).

**Reflection Box 3.15**

This final element of the three-part list could be interpreted in a number of ways. For example, by saying ‘I don’t know what they want really’ she positions herself as being uncertain about what parents want her and the other staff to do that is more than what is already done (although this is an unknown to e as an analyst). It could also reflect Stacey’s uncertainty about how to please the parents. As such, addressing bullying becomes more about appeasing parents than helping the pupils.

In Extract 12 (which has been split for ease of analysis) the staff in School 4 review their anti-bullying policy. As part of this, Terry (the head teacher) lists a number of organisations that are included for children to contact should they wish (lines 232 – 234). Although the example from Terry takes the form of a three-part list, in this case the use of this rhetorical device is more to give a number of illustrations than to achieve a particular action. However, the inclusion of the example of Childline (line 233) sparks a series of comments from Derek.

**Extract 12a (School 4)**

226  Terry: The erm (hh) the back of the policy there’s a whole list of supportive agencies (.) that (. ) children can turn to (.) so we’ve got the anti-
227    bullying hot line (.) =
228  Clive: Hmm
229  Terry: = you’ve got however many other (.) there are a whole range of (.)
230  places that they can go to telephone numbers websites (.) is that
231  something we should make them aware of (.) you’ve got the child for
232  example Childline bullying line you’ve got kidscape national bullying
233  helpline (.) [bullying UK]
234  Derek: [I actually think one] one of the worst things they did is let children
235  know (.) that they (.) the number for Childline because you’ve got so
236  many children that are abusing it (.) here I’d expect that if they (.)
237  they thought they were being bullied (.) they’d have the
238  conscience to come and see us
239  Terry: You don’t think they (.) you’d rather they [that it was]
240  Derek: [I’d rather it was in school]
241  Terry: = [done in school]
242  Derek: [Yep]
243  Terry: = [than they went and turned round to]
244  Derek: [Yep]
245  Terry: = and they went and turned round to a helpline and we don’t know
246  anything about it
247
Initially, Derek employs a stake inoculation to precede what he is about to say (i.e. ‘I actually think’; line 235) where his comments directly challenge those from Terry; it allows Derek to both state his construction while managing the challenge inherent. On examining Derek’s language, it is possible to see another reason for the use of the stake inoculation. Specifically, Derek states ‘one of the worst things’ (line 235) employing an ECF in the word ‘worst’ which enables him to place emphasis on his comments. Derek then justifies his construction of including Childline as being ‘one of the worst things’ by stating ‘so many children that are abusing it’ (lines 236 – 237).

The exchange at the end of the extract between Terry and Derek subsequently constructs a difference between in-house support for pupils and external advice. This contrast structure emphasises the construct from Derek that pupils talking to staff at the school (i.e. in-house support) is his preferred method of addressing bullying. In contrast, Derek constructs seeking external advice (e.g. through Childline) as being inappropriate for two reasons; pupils ‘abuse’ the service (lines 235 – 237) and because the school is then ignorant of what is going on (lines 246 – 247). Within this, the school is positioned as requiring control over bullying and what is done about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derek:</th>
<th>Clive:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>248</td>
<td>I’d think we’d have failed if (. .) they turned to a helpline before they came to us (. .) I don’t think they (. .) that if we had a good rapport with our (. .) pupils (. .) I’d expect them to come to us (. .) [rather than]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249</td>
<td>[Yeah]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This construction of the school being absent of knowledge and therefore out of control in relation to addressing bullying continues in the next section of the extract.
Carole: [We may well have failed but at least you have still (.) you are still
giving [that option as well]
Derek: [Yeah]
Terry: I mean you said that point about Childline (.) but [for every hundred
people in the UK that use it (.)]
Derek: [Yeah of course yeah]
Carole: [Yeah]
Terry: = but about the one [that (.) takes]
Derek: [Yeah]
Carole: [Yeah]
Terry: = all the courage in their hands and picks up the telephone and rings it
and it (.) saves a life (.) =
Carole: Because they couldn’t go to the school [for whatever reason]

Here, Derek uses the word ‘failed’ (line 248) to illustrate what he sees as the
result of a child from the school seeking support about bullying from an
external agency.

Reflection Box 3.17
Here the pupils are positioned as responsible or the failure Derek speaks about;
it is not up to the school to change how they do things but the pupils to make the
right choice in seeking help from the school. However, Derek also mentions the
need to have a ‘good rapport’ (line 249) with the pupils to prevent them seeking
advice elsewhere. Derek’s construction of this is situated in the past tense (e.g.
‘if we had’; line 249) indicating that it is now not in place. Derek’s speech does
not however suggest either why it has been lost or what could be done to
prevent it.

Carole (line 252 - 253) initially gives agreement to Derek’s construction
echoing his use of the word ‘failed’. However, Carole then follows this with the
discourse marker ‘but’ to indicate that she is about to put forward a counter
construction; that it is important to her for children to have the option of
contacting an external organisation if they choose. Terry then builds on
Carole’s challenge to Derek’s construction where he shares a statistic to
provide justification for the inclusion of the number for Childline and other
organisations in the anti-bullying policy. Following the statistic, Carole and
Terry continue to agree with and expand on the counter construction. This
then positions Derek’s construction as incorrect and serves to defend and
justify the inclusion of contact details for external organisations within the
anti-bullying policy. The strength of this co-construction sees Derek adjust his
original construction where he says ‘yeah of course yeah’ (line 257). Given
that Terry is the senior member of staff present and his constructions have
been supported by Carole, this adjustment from Derek is an example of the
power play inherent within the conversation. It is also an example of the way in which staff members will change their stake during a discussion based on the constructions of others to achieve a consensus; in this case, the provision of external organisation contact details to pupils as a means to address bullying. Despite this challenge and counter-challenge exchange, what is unanimous amongst the constructions of the speakers is that bullying occurs and requires a reaction.

**Constructing bullying as a category of behaviour**

This discourse relates to the way in which staff construct bullying as a type of behaviour by comparing it to others. When the comparable behaviours are discussed, this is in terms of their categories rather than specific examples.

It is important to note that some elements of this discourse have already been seen within extracts presented in relation to the previous discourses (e.g. Extract 5). It is also important to state that throughout the analysis of the following extracts, there are elements which demonstrate continued examples of the previously analysed discourse *Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructions*. However, these elements will not be analysed in detail as the focus here is the exploration of the discourse *Constructing bullying as a category of behaviour*. Where elements reflect the underlying discourse of the *Constructing consensus*, these will be acknowledged as they were within the previous analysis.

Within Extract 13 the staff from the first school seek to categorise bullying as a type of behaviour through comparing it with a variety of others.

**Extract 13 (School 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Simone:</th>
<th>Seren:</th>
<th>Simone:</th>
<th>Simone:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>213</td>
<td>It can be annoying and or upsetting can’t it</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
<td>because if they’re happy it might be upsetting once but that’s [not bullying]</td>
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<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>[No]</td>
<td>But it’s not annoying [either]</td>
<td>If someone hits [you obviously that’s]</td>
<td></td>
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<td>216</td>
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Simone initially introduces the categories of ‘annoying’ and ‘upsetting’ (line 213) to describe behaviours that occur within the school but which she would not categorise as bullying. She also seeks agreement from her colleagues with the phrase ‘can’t it’ (line 213) and this is given by Seren (line 214). Simone then clarifies why she would categorise the behaviours she is referring to (although these are not reported) as annoying or upsetting rather than bullying. Simone constructs the emotional state of the pupil at the time of the occurrence as a basis for categorisation (i.e. if the pupil is ‘happy’, line 215, the incident is annoying or upsetting). Simone also constructs the frequency of occurrence as a basis for categorising an incident as bullying (i.e. a single instances would be categorised as annoying or upsetting, lines 215 and 218). This construction receives further agreement from Seren (lines 217 and 219).

Reflection Box 3.18
The difficulty with this construction I that the emotional state of the pupils is a subjective interpretation by the adult; what Simone discusses as ‘happy’ the pupil may call something else or perhaps say that it was a ‘front’ / it was bravado to give the impression that he / she was okay. In addition, the frequency is dependent on whether instances are identified by staff and / or reported by pupils. Furthermore, the reports and / or identification would also be dependent on whether the constructions of staff and pupils regarding bullying are the same. The evidence here would suggest that this is not the case.

Simone then introduces another category of behaviour to describe those she would not describe as bullying only this time, a specific example is given. Simone categorises hitting (line 220) as ‘not acceptable’ (line 222) and this receives agreement from the head teacher, Rachel (lines 221 and 223). This is
an interesting change of direction as previously in the conversation physical acts such as that noted here were constructed as a feature of bullying. The context there though does not talk about the other elements the staff constructed to be features of bullying (i.e. Extract 3). For these discussants then, all of the features they have noted need to be present for them to categorise an incident as bullying.

Seren adds to the construction from Simone describing the pupils as having to learn that hitting is ‘unacceptable’ (lines 224 – 225). Here, Seren provides reinforcement for Simone and Rachel’s construction and positions pupils as engaging in hitting because they have not yet learnt that this is unacceptable. Seren does not however say where or how they are to learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. She does however construct this as ‘something they’ve just go to learn’ (lines 224 – 225). The use of the word ‘just’ enables Seren to position the pupils as not having a choice; the learning must be achieved.

The use of the category acceptable (and arguably unacceptable) leads the staff to discuss whether this is a more appropriate categorisation that annoying for behaviours they would not class as bullying. Simone begins this with her comment that acceptable is ‘probably a better word than annoying’ (lines 226 and 228). Rachel, Seren and an unknown speaker all then provide agreement for this acknowledgement (lines 227, 229 and 231). Between them the discussants co-construct bullying as being a different category to unacceptable where the behaviours exhibited by pupils can be placed in either. The placement is however dependent on the interpretation by the adults as to whether the behaviour is something acceptable and if not, is it simply unacceptable or is it ‘the next stage’ (line 232) and should be classed as bullying.

The following extract comes from the second school’s staff meeting where the head teacher, Daniel introduces the category of ‘manipulative frightening behaviour’ (line 125).
Daniel gives the example of pupils ‘whose demeanour is one of putting the frighteners on other children’ (lines 121 – 122) as a type of ‘manipulative frightening behaviour’. Here, Daniel constructs the categorization of the behaviour as being dependent on the ‘demeanour’ of the child. This is, however, based on an adult’s interpretation and labelling of a child’s actions. In addition, the behaviour given as an example of those which could be categorised as manipulative and frightening is also dependent on the adult’s interpretation. Unlike the example of hitting from School 1 in Extract 13, the terms employed by Daniel are arbitrary and as such, open for interpretation and subsequently negotiation from the other staff. Daniel’s categorisation does however change during the extract. He moves from discussing the ‘demeanour’ of ‘putting the frighteners on’ someone as being ‘manipulative and frightening’ to ‘bullying’ (line 126) even though it only occurs once (a contrast to the previously agreed feature of bullying being consistent (Extract 4). Daniel justifies this change of construction by describing the aforementioned demeanour as being a precursor to ‘greater intimidating behaviour’ (lines 128 – 129). Here Daniel is constructing bullying as a category of behaviour that is based on intimidation achieved through ‘putting the frighteners on’ someone. This is however again based on the interpretation of the action by the adult where the children involved may not agree with this.
Reflection Box 3.19
I would reflect whether, if this construction were shared with Daniel and the other staff, they would justify their comments as being required to protect children. Would they, for example, construct the pupils as requiring modelling of and teaching to recognise when someone is trying to intimidate them? This is however again based on the interpretation of an adult and how they position the pupils in the school. Ultimately as school is a place for education and the adults in the discussion the educators, the ‘teaching and learning’ discourse implied within this extract is understandable. I would further suggest that if I were to analyse this data set again perhaps using CDA, this discourse could be deconstructed in more detail. Indeed, it is perhaps this that influences the overarching discourse Constructing consensus given that each teacher positions themselves in the same way; there to educate.

Although specific challenges are not put forward by any of the other staff, neither are agreements. Daniel then seeks to justify his comments by referring to what he would consider as example of pupils that the staff have encountered where their actions have been intimidating through ‘putting the frighteners on’ someone (lines 129 – 130, 132 and 135). Agreement is given regarding the examples noted which implies agreement also with the construction that the behaviours of the pupils in question could be categorised as manipulative and frightening leading to intimidation and finally bullying.

Reflection Box 3.20
As Daniel is the head teacher I would question why he included examples of known pupils to support his construction. For instance, they could have been included to increase the likelihood that the other staff would agree with his construction following the presentation of evidence. In addition, the examples shared could have been a means to reduce the possibility of challenge by sharing ‘facts’. In both of these cases Daniel’s response indicates a concern that his authority as head teacher is open to challenge. I would discuss this as prompted by the lack of immediate agreement by the other staff.

Within the next extract, taken from the staff meeting of the fourth school, Clive introduces the category of ‘flashpoints’ (line 161).

Extract 15 (School 4)

161 Clive: Yeah I mean we often get flashpoints [where say] =
162 Derek: [Yeah]
163 Clive: = there’s a football match [or something] =
164 Derek: [Yeah]
165 Clive: = or there’s a a a disagreement (.) we’ve had a lot of [disagreements
166 (hh)]
167 Carole: [Hmm]
Clive: and then you can deal with that there and then (. it’s not a bullying issue they’re just (. flashpoints (. and because we’ve got a very calm and relaxed system where we can just discuss these things and we can reinforce the rules it doesn’t really go any further than that (. [rarely it does]

Here, Clive constructs behaviours that are ‘disagreements’ (line 165) occurring in the context of a ‘football match’ (line 163) as being examples of flashpoints. Clive then further states that ‘it’s not a bullying issue’ (lines 168 – 169) thereby comparing one category with the other. The way in which Clive compares the categories is interesting where, having said the disagreements are not bullying, he describes them as ‘just flashpoints’ (line 169). The use of the word ‘just’ serves to dismiss the disagreements constructing them as behaviours that are not perhaps as severe as others and that it is the severity of the actions that warrants categorisation as bullying. Indeed, Clive’s construction of flashpoints as being a less severe category than that of bullying emerges when he says ‘it doesn’t really go any further than that’ (line 172). This constructs the behaviours he categorises as flashpoints as having the potential to be re-categorised as bullying. In building this aspect of the construction, Clive shares his reasoning for why the flashpoints do not ‘really’ go into bullying. specifically, Clive employs a three part list to construct the school context as preventing flashpoints from becoming bullying; there is a ‘very calm and relaxed system’ which enables the staff to ‘just discuss these things’ (presumably with the pupils although this is not specified) where they can ‘reinforce the rules’ (lines 170 – 171). Here then Clive implies that if these elements of the context were not present then flashpoints would become bullying. There is however a contrast inherent in Clive’s comments where he describes a calm and relaxed system alongside the occurrence of flashpoints. It could be argued that the presence of a calm and relaxed system should in itself prevent flashpoints let alone bullying. Furthermore, what Clive categorises as flashpoints may not be classified as such by the pupils involved. For example, the ‘victims’ may say they were being bullied while those acting towards them may say it was all part of the usual football match antics.
Throughout this discourse the staff introduce a variety of categories which allow them to justify their reactions to incidents based on what category they assign. The categorizations are however arbitrary and while the staff provide agreement for each other and thus create a consensus, I would argue that this is not necessarily shared by the pupils involved in the incidents themselves.

**Constructions of cyberbullying**

This discourse illustrates the way staff construct cyberbullying as having specific features, some of which are similar to those previously discussed in relation to the discourse *Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructions*. The first extract illustrates how the staff in School 3 discuss the use of websites and technology by children to engage in particular behaviours.

**Extract 16 (School 3)**

 Dana: What about the erm sort of internet comments on websites and so on

 (. that we have (.)

 Stacey: Hmm (.) but that see that’s a whole other dimension to the bullying

 [and] =

 Dana: Websites

 Anna: Hmm websites

 Stacey: = that’s the focus actually of the anti-bullying week in November

 coming (.) =

 U: Hmm

 Stacey: = is erm (.) it’s a focus on erm (.) that kind of [thing] =

 U: [Hmm]

 Stacey: = about (.) I can’t remember the tagline it’s got some (.) you know

 tagline for the week but basically [the focus] =

 U: Hmm

 Stacey: = is on (.) on allowing children to use new technology to hh. to

 communicate and enjoy in the way that it should be and not (.) [to] =

 U: [Hmm]

 Stacey: = use it for bullying (.) =

 U: That’s it (1.0)
Dana puts forward a question regarding comments made on websites employing a stake inoculation with her preceding phrase of ‘the erm sort of’ (line 210). Although this rhetorical device is associated with a need to reduce the possibility of others challenging the comments made, in this instance, I would propose that the device illustrates a hesitancy from Dana in discussing websites as technology has not been raised previously in the staff meeting in conjunction with bullying. The response from the head teacher Stacey also indicates a hesitancy when she employs the discourse marker ‘but’ (line 212). In addition, Stacey acknowledges Dana’s comment about there being something to consider over the issue of websites. This is however achieved by positioning this form of technology as a feature of bullying when she says ‘that’s a whole other dimension to the bullying’ (lines 212 – 213). Stacey’s comments towards the end of the extract reveal the possible reason behind the hesitancy in the exchange when she states ‘that is an issue and that hadn’t really I’ve never had that before in my teaching career’ (lines 229 – 232). The use of the ECFs ‘really’ and ‘never’ provide emphasis for Stacey’s hesitancy. Her comments also receive agreement from an unknown speaker indicating that there are three members of staff with the same stake; a desire to acknowledge the involvement of technology in bullying but a hesitancy about doing so.

Following on from declaring her stake, Stacey notes that she ‘would class that as bullying’ (lines 232 – 233). Anna adds to the comments from Stacey and they co-construct their justifications for why the use of websites should be classed as a feature of bullying. In doing this, they start to draw on the
features already discussed in the staff meeting. Specifically, they mention an ‘element of organisation’ (line 236) and ‘premeditation’ (line 243). In this way, the use of websites becomes positioned as both a feature of bullying and as something that stands as bullying on its own having specific elements.

Having declared that she has never encountered the use of websites as a means of bullying, Stacey affirms the example given by Anna (lines 239 – 242) about an incident where a group of pupils were engaging in the behaviours being discussed. This contradicts the comments made previously about having not encountered the like before and the classification of such incidents as bullying; if they have never encountered anything that involves the use of technology to engage in bullying behaviours, the example given cannot be an example of cyberbullying. This is a complicated and confusing construction from the participants and suggests that the discussants remain hesitant and uncertain about their own classifications. What this confusion does illustrate is the construction of a consensus between the staff; not only do they agree with the stakes put forward, they also agree with the examples shared and the contradictions made.

The next extract is from the fourth school; the first part (lines 307 and 316) sets the scene for the section that will be analysed in detail (lines 317 – 335).

### Extract 17 (School 4)

307 Terry: And in turn (.) the area we struggle with the most as we go up through the school (.) we don't get it much in the junior school (.) as far as I'm aware although we have had it since it’s been about had a lot with the senior school and is cyber bullying (.) =

311 Derek: Yeah

312 Terry: = and this is an area that concerns me (.) =

313 Clive: Hmm

314 Terry: = what line are we going to take with this because although we don’t have a huge amount of it at the moment the amount of internet use with our children (.) is increasing (.) rapidly (.)

317 Derek: Well while I was reading this I looked at this erm (.) these chat-lines erm (.) our children go on chat-lines so therefore (.) this [should never be]

318 Terry: [I know they shouldn't be]

319 Derek: [Yeah]

322 Terry: = but they shouldn’t be on facebook

323 Carole: [It’s text messaging as well though isn’t it]

324 Derek: [Facebook it’s facebook I meant yeah]

325 Carole: It’s not just limited to the internet [It’s phone often as well]
The head teacher Terry introduces a contrast where cyberbullying occurs more in the senior school than the junior school (lines 308 – 310). Terry goes on to request suggestions from the other staff regarding responses to occurrences of cyberbullying (line 314). Terry constructs a response as being requested due to the use of the internet ‘increasing rapidly’ (line 316) by the pupils in the school. This positions pupils as being more advanced in their use of technology placing teachers in contrast as needing to catch up and do so quickly.

Reflection Box 3.22
This positioning by Terry leads me to construct his comments as having a sense of urgency to them (i.e. the pupils are further ahead and we’d better get up to speed quickly). Furthermore, Terry’s use of the phrase ‘concern me’ (line 312) indicates that he is uncertain about cyberbullying and perhaps his request for ideas places his authority in a potentially vulnerable position. It signals to the other staff that they have an opportunity to at the least, negotiate with the possibility of controlling completely how the school reacts to cyberbullying.

Rather than giving suggestions to the question raised by Terry, the other staff respond by sharing their constructions regarding the mediums through which cyberbullying occurs. In doing so, the staff give an implicit agreement of the use of the word cyberbullying by Terry and also the occurrence of such incidents. Furthermore, by sharing their constructions regarding the mediums of cyberbullying the staff illustrate their own uncertainty and present an opportunity for negotiation about cyberbullying.

The staff mention the use of internet based chat lines (lines 317, 318 and 324) as well as text messaging on mobile phones (lines 323 and 325) as examples of mediums through which cyberbullying occurs. In discussing these examples, both Terry and Derek state that the children should not be using internet based chat lines such as ‘facebook’ (lines 318 – 319, 320 and 322) accessed through computers and mobile devices. Derek constructs parents as being responsible for the access of their children to these devices and subsequently chat lines (lines 326 – 328) thereby assigning blame to them for cyberbullying. This construction also implies that by removing the access
cyberbullying would stop. Furthermore, by blaming parents the staff position themselves as being absolved of responsibility for device and chat line access and subsequently, occurrences of cyberbullying. The positioning of parents as being responsible for internet usage and thus continued incidents of bullying is returned to later in the discussion from the fourth school (Appendix 12).

Having positioned parents as being responsible for the use of the internet by the children, the staff in the fourth school enter into a discussion about what should be done if cyberbullying occurs. In the next extract, the head teacher Terry again requests ideas from the other staff about how to respond to an incident of cyberbullying.

**Extract 18 (School 4)**

371 Terry: [If it happens out of school] do we just wash our hands of it as we have done in the past when we’ve said well "so and so came round my house and called my son a this a that and the other" and we’ve said "well (hh) we’re very support the children but (.) this happened out of school” (.) are we still able to do that in the [age of the internet]

376 Derek: [I think if this was a pupil of mine (.) in my] class (.) was being bullied (..) by text message (..) I’d say something to the people who’d done it because I don’t want (..) my pupil (..) to be (..) [you know]

379 Clive: [Yeah]

380 Derek: = to be put [in that]

381 Clive: [Yeah]

382 Derek: = situation where it might prevent them from progressing (..) and making them unhappy (.)

384 Terry: [So we should deal with] =

385 Derek: [I (.) yeah]

386 Terry: = we’ve got to [deal with it] =

387 Derek: [Yeah]

388 Terry: = if it comes

389 Clive: We have to be as a supportive role don’t we (.) I think we need to be in a supportive role to parents (.) and that child (.)

391 Terry: Hmm

392 Carole: I think on the (whole part) you should put (.) in some strategies (.) of education on it (..) [you know]

394 Clive: [Yeah]

395 Carole: = if you’re talking to the children [a bit as well]

Despite previously positioning parents as being responsible for access to chat lines and technological devices leading to occurrences of bullying, in this extract the staff position themselves as having a responsibility to react. Initially, Derek posits that he would speak with the individuals involved (lines 376 – 378) and agreement is given by Clive (line 379) for this course of action. Within this, Derek positions himself as having ownership of the pupil on
the receiving end of bullying via text message when he states that ‘if this was a pupil of mine in my class’ (line 376) and ‘I don’t want my pupil to...’ (line 378). Derek also provides justification for why he would speak with the pupils in question suggesting that the pupil on the receiving end would be made to feel ‘unhappy’ (line 383) and might be prevented from making progress (line 382). Clive, Terry and Carole all provide agreement (lines 384, 389 and 392) that action should be taken by the school to support pupils who have been on the receiving end of cyberbullying. However, rather than just action to support the children, Clive positions the parents as requiring support (line 390) and subsequently the staff as being the ones best placed to provide that support.

Reflection Box 3.23
In Reflection Box 3.19 I noted that in analysing the preceding extract (14) a previously unidentified discourse was emerging (i.e. ‘teaching and learning’). The way in which the staff in School 4 justify why they position themselves as having a responsibility to react to instances of cyberbullying also gives evidence for a ‘teaching and learning’ discourse. They should react by teaching both the pupils and the parents what to do to prevent bullying and if an incident should occur. Furthermore, Derek’s comments in particular position a reaction as being required to ensure continued educational progress which he constructs as being affected if a pupil experiences cyberbullying.

Discussion
In Chapter 2 the discussion reflected the constructions emerging from the talk between myself and my EP colleagues about bullying. The discussion analysed here reflects the constructions built through the exchanges between teachers in the social context of a staff meeting. Although the staff in each school enter into debates about specific features of bullying, each school team builds a shared construction of bullying reflecting the continued underlying discourse of Constructing consensus. Within each school, the consensus reached about how each team constructs bullying employs different language. This variation in language use reflects that noted across positivist research such as Bosacki, Marini and Dane (2006) and Nguy and Hunt (2004) and as explored in Chapter 1. While it can be argued that the constructions are different because the individuals involved and the contexts of the staff meetings were different, the elements of bullying discussed in each meeting came from a definition that
would have been developed from the same governmental guidance. The variations thus reflect the social construction of the phenomenon where each staff team discussed bullying in a different context and where each individual aired their own specific ‘beliefs’ about the features of bullying they considered to be important.

In the same manner as the EP discussion, each staff team positions itself as having the correct construction of bullying while those outside of the school context are incorrect. Specifically, parents and pupils of these schools are positioned as requiring education to correct their incorrect constructions. This positioning is reflected throughout the discourses analysed and suggests that further exploration into how teachers from other schools construct bullying would be beneficial. The variation also has implications for how teachers support pupils who construct themselves as being bullied. For instance, if each school employs a method of support that stems from / links to their particular construction of bullying, the subsequent reports discussing the effectiveness of an intervention will be unique to that situation. Consequently, how can it be possible to generalise the effectiveness of an intervention across schools in the manner of the positivist research explored in Chapter 1?

Within the discussions of the teachers the conversations involved use of the words ‘victims’ and ‘bullies’ as well as alternatives such as ‘perpetrators’. The employment of these terms was as part of the constructions regarding the elements of bullying. Within this, the positioning of individuals in the role of victim or bully is not constructed as being a result of, for example, their characteristics; something noted in Chapter 1 as being present in previous positivist research such as the work of Black and Jackson (2007) and Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor and Chauchan (2004). Nor is the positioning constructed as a result of deviance from social norms as per previous qualitative research including Dixon, Smith and Jenks (2004) and Harmarus and Kaikkonen (2008) discussed in Chapter 1. Instead, the positioning of an individual in the role of victim or bully is constructed as something normalised within the definition of bullying agreed on by the staff.
At the start of this chapter I acknowledged the need for exploring the constructions of teachers in relation to bullying following questions raised from the analysis of the data in chapter 2; namely, whether teachers constructed themselves as needing to change their constructions of bullying and if so, whether they felt they needed help to achieve this. Analysis of the data collected for this chapter indicates that the teachers do not construct themselves in this way. Instead, they position children and parents as having an incorrect construction of bullying and themselves as being the best placed people to change this.

The repetition of the inside school versus outside of school contrast structure leads to a construction where talk about bullying happening in the schools is prohibited. This allows the staff to reinforce their personal constructions about bullying as occurring external to their settings despite evidence shared to the contrary. The staff of the schools involved employ various rhetorical devices in the discussions to confirm and reinforce their personal constructions regarding bullying including the aforementioned contrast structure. As the nature of these devices enables the speaker to substantiate their constructions and prevent others from challenging them, the question is raised as to why the discussants felt the need to employ them. I would draw attention at this point to the power play inherent throughout all of the discussions. The senior member of staff present in the discussions is the one who introduces the topic and ultimately draws together all of the information shared and thus has the ‘final’ say. As such, they attempt to soften their constructions while still holding the position of authority. In return, when challenges / questions are posed by the other members of staff present, these are also softened thereby acknowledging the position held by the senior staff member. The rhetorical devices employed provide an ideal method for putting forward challenges / questions against the power at play in the conversations. Furthermore, by acknowledging the power present, the participants are subsequently able to achieve a consensus of construction; something that is driven by the way in which the senior staff members draw the information together to form a conclusion to the discussion.
Throughout the extracts the staff continue to construct a consensus through the sharing of examples and provision of agreements to the comments made by each other. However, as previously stated, when a consensus is reached this is within the staff meeting of each school individually rather than across the schools. Indeed, the constructions within the staff meeting from one school will be different from those of another as the context and individuals involved are different bringing their own histories, experiences and cultures to the discussion. As such, a direct comparison between staff meetings would not have been appropriate or possible. Furthermore, although the staff in each school construct a consensus, their comments indicate conflicts between them and parents/pupils culminating in a ‘them and us’ construction. Indeed, the way in which the head teachers introduced the topic for discussion demonstrates the wide variation of constructions of bullying within the schools involved despite being in receipt of the same governmental guidelines. This also applies to cyberbullying where it is constructed as something that occurs with both similar and different features to those already discussed about bullying. The discourses then arising from the discussions analysed above (and those explored within the data collected for Chapter 2) indicate that further exploration of the government guidelines given to schools in relation to bullying is a logical next step for my research.
Chapter 4

Discourses from the position of a ‘critical friend’:
A Critical Discourse Analysis of governmental guidance
to schools on preventing and tackling bullying
Introduction

The previous chapters have explored the discourses within discussions between EPs in the context of a peer support session and teachers as part of staff meetings. In both studies the discussants make references to education policies and guidelines provided by the government on addressing bullying in schools. In particular, as part of the teacher staff meetings the discussion was introduced by the senior staff member which in three schools involved requesting a review of the schools’ anti-bullying policies. Such policies are a requirement for schools from the government as is the availability of these for reading by parents, staff and members of school governing bodies (and indeed, any member of the public who makes a request to the school to view such policies). The references to the policies and the related government guidelines from which they stem draws attention to the influence of these on the development of anti-bullying policies in schools. Taking this into account, questions are raised about the constructions within the wider government guidelines and the potential influence of these on the constructions of those reading such documents. As such, the aim of this chapter is to explore constructions in the wider education policy guidance and the potential influence these may have on the constructions of other stakeholders.

Method

Data context

On 17th March 2014, the Department for Education under the previous coalition government published the latest guidance on bullying. The document (which can be viewed in full in Appendix 13), entitled Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies is 12 pages long and, after the contents page (p.2), follows the structure of summarising the advice (p.3), explaining the law (p.4 - 5), defining bullying (p.6) and suggesting methods of preventing and addressing bullying (p.7 - 8). The guidance concludes by listing frequently asked questions (p. 10) and listing
additional sources of information (p.10 – 11). The guidance also has three associated documents entitled Support children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools, Cyber-bullying: advice for head teachers and school staff and Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying.

The document Preventing and tackling bullying has been chosen as the focus for this study. It will be referred to by schools going forward from the completion of my research as they develop and review their anti-bullying policies and thus it is the most relevant to readers. Therefore, the potential influence of the constructions within this on constructions in future school policy development (and vice-versa) are important to explore at this juncture. Furthermore, this document has been prioritised over the three that are associated as it is here that the guidance outlines the definition for bullying where high levels of variation in constructions of this have been observed elsewhere giving rise to the present research.

I must however acknowledge the time lag between collecting the data from teachers and EPs and the guidance being explored in this study. Specifically, the guidance that teachers and EPs would have referred to during the discussions analysed in Chapters 2 and 3 would have been that produced in 2007 by the then Labour government as these studies were conducted prior to the publication of the 2014 document. This poses an interesting dilemma as to the direction of this chapter. One might, for example, question whether it is more appropriate to explore the constructions within the guidance mentioned as part of the teacher and EP discussions rather than the latest version. One might also ask whether the focus should be both the new and the previous guidance. Clearly this is but one chapter within a thesis and a focus needs to be sought. While I would advise that all of the potential foci are relevant potential directions, exploring the constructions within the latest guidance remains the most appropriate for the reasons aforementioned.
At this point, I would note that the document referred to is available to the public via the department for education’s website\(^1\). The guidance itself states that the reader “... may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v2.0 ...,” (p.12). In addition, the historical guidance referred to is available via alternative organisations\(^2\). However, I obtained copies while they were still available from the then Department for Children, Schools and Families as part of my work as an EP.

**Preceding anti-bullying guidance**

Prior to the development of the most recent guidance under the then coalition government, the previous Labour government produced a number of documents to guide schools on how to prevent and address bullying as mentioned in Chapter 1. As this study explores a specific government document in detail, it is appropriate to provide the historical context which has led to the identification of the document in question.

In 1994 the then Conservative government produced a document entitled *Bullying: Don’t suffer in silence* and drew upon research from psychologists Peter Smith and Sonia Sharp\(^3\) which explored different approaches in use to address and prevent bullying. This guidance was re-published in 2000 under Labour following the change of party in government at the 1997 general election. The guidance comprised 66 pages and focused on encouraging schools to gather information on bullying in their settings and implement certain strategies designed to prevent and address bullying such as a whole school policy.

Further guidance was published by the Labour Government in 2007 following their re-election in 2005. The guidance was split into three separate

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\(^1\) Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

\(^2\) For example: http://the-classroom.org.uk

\(^3\) School bullying: Insights and perspectives (1994)
documents; *Safe to learn* (61 pages), *Cyberbullying* (54 pages) and *Homophobic bullying* (135 pages) all with the subtitle of *Safe to learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*. These documents all contain an executive summary at the start for approximately 4 pages then set out in detail definitions of bullying, methods of addressing bullying and resources that could be used to support them. As part of the documents, information about bullying in the context of the law was noted at the start.

The introduction of these preceding documents came after the political parties in question had been in government for approximately two years. Although anti-bullying was not mentioned in any of the party manifestos for the general elections, each government has introduced either an update or a renewed set of guidance for schools on addressing bullying. The introduction of the most recent document follows the same pattern. The 2014 guidance also follows the same format as previously described. There is however also a noticeable difference between this and the preceding guidance in relation to the length of the documents where the most recent is twelve pages as opposed to fifty plus.

*Constructions of positioning and contrasts in the preceding guidance*

There are a number of similarities between the documents in terms of structure and content and they were all written for the same purpose; as a guide for schools in the development of their anti-bullying policies. This purpose positions the reader, in this case the staff and governing body of a school, as requiring the guidance and in turn, positions the author, in this case the government as being best placed to give that guidance. Such positioning is suggestive of a contrast structure that has previously been identified within the talk of EPs (Chapter 2). During our discussion, we positioned ourselves as the experts and those outside of the profession as amateurs requiring support to develop their understanding of what bullying is and how to prevent and address it. A similar contrast structure is occurring within the government guidance; the author (the government) is positioning itself as being the expert and best placed to develop the knowledge and understanding of the reader.
(school staff and governing bodies) in their understanding of what bullying is and how to prevent and tackle it.

Following on from this, by providing a definition of bullying within the context of the aforementioned construction, the author is positioned as having the correct construction of bullying. In contrast, the reader is positioned as being incorrect thereby requiring the information in the guidance to achieve the correct construction. This construction was also present within the teacher staff meeting discussions (Chapter 3) where they positioned themselves as having the correct construction of bullying and as being best placed to correct those of parents and pupils. There is then a conflict of positioning between the author of the most recent guidance and the reader where both position themselves as having the correct construction of bullying. This indicates the potential influence that the government guidance is trying to assert over the reader. They also raised questions over the relationship between the author and the reader and potential issues of power. More specifically, whether the document influences the constructions of the reader and, if the influence is accepted, whether this is an agreement with the guidance or merely following the direction of the government.

**Analytical procedure**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be employed to explore the language used in the government guidance. Fairclough, Mulderigg and Wodak (2011) specified CDA as exploring discourses in terms of the way they are both shaped by as well as contributing to the shaping of the social. Specifically, CDA explores what the talk or text is constructing from two directions; how these constructions are influencing the social world and vice-versa. Fairclough et al also noted that as CDA draws on data collected from ordinary life, the two are inextricably linked where they influence each other. They further highlight that there are several branches to CDA each with a specific purpose while sharing the commonality of positioning itself as supporting groups in society that are dominated over or oppressed by others. By exploring the
wider societal context that both influences and is influenced by the constructions within talk or text, CDA is able to highlight the way in which dominating constructions oppress others.

CDA then is a relevant standpoint from which to explore the most recent government guidance to schools on preventing and tackling bullying, particularly as the document is produced by those governing the country and therefore in a position of power over schools and their governing bodies. Furthermore, employing CDA will enable analysis of the guidance in terms of exploring the purpose of the document and what it is seeking to achieve.

CDA has been employed by other researchers to explore wider constructions within textual documents and the influence of these on constructions of readers and vice-versa. The type of text explored is varied from media based data such as newspaper websites (e.g. O’Halloran, 2005) and political press conferences (e.g. Bhatia, 2006; Van Dijk, 2006) to education policy in England and Wales (e.g. Mulderigg, 2011), Scotland (e.g. Arnott & Ozga, 2010) and Australia (e.g. Taylor, 2004) and language policy in America (e.g. Cassels-Johnson, 2011). At this juncture it is important to highlight the work of De Wet and Jacobs (2013) and Side and Johnson (2014).

Taking the research by De Wet and Jacobs (2013), although they do not explore government policy, they do draw upon CDA to explore textual data in relation to bullying. Specifically, De Wet and Jacobs explored the responses of primary school teachers in South Africa to questionnaires using the branch of CDA developed by Van Dijk (1988) based on identifying themes within data. The questionnaires contained open ended queries about perpetrators, victims and bystanders, the characteristics associated with each and accounts of participants’ own school experiences relating to bullying. Through employing CDA to explore the questionnaire responses, De Wet and Jacobs identified several discourses. In the discourse Bullying as physical violence, De Wet and Jacobs noted the respondents as constructing bullying to be incidents of physical acts directed from one person to another. The discourse Vilification of
the bullies was identified by De Wet and Jacobs as the educators constructing those classed as bullies to be ‘cowards’, ‘criminals’ and ‘spiteful’ (p.341) as well as responsible for the decline in moral standards observed in their peers. De Wet and Jacobs discuss this discourse as culminating in the construction of bullies as having ‘psychological problems’ (p.341). Judgmental discourse: Blaming the victim was identified by the authors as constructing the victims to be responsible for what they were experiencing. Finally, De Wet and Jacobs reported Discourses of otherness where educators constructed victims as having characteristics which made them different to their peers (e.g. physically weaker, bragging over skills or possessions and non-conformist through attributes rather than choice). Through their analysis, De Wet and Jacobs concluded:

"Educators have a legal and moral obligation to intervene in incidences of bullying and to become part of anti-bullying programmes. They are in a position of power in relation to learners who bully and those who are bullied ...," (p.342).

De Wet and Jacobs also noted that by ignoring non-physical representations of bullying, constructing bullies as ‘defective’ (p.342) and blaming victims, the respondents construct bullying as being individualistic and thus put a distance between bullying and themselves as educators. Following this, De Wet and Jacobs advise that further exploration of the way in which educators construct bullying would be beneficial but emphasise that this should take into account the ‘wider social context’ (p.342). They justify this as important where the individualised constructions from the respondents in their study reflect their ‘beliefs’ (p.342). De Wet and Jacobs discuss these beliefs as permeating through to others thus continuing the individualised construction of bullying. This is clearly a valuable piece of research which indicates the benefits of employing CDA to explore textual data. However, rather than explore individual responses to questionnaires, I will be exploring the relationship between the author (the government) and the reader (head teachers, school staff and governing bodies) of the document Preventing and tackling bullying and the potential influence they each may have on the other.
While CDA was not employed as the analytical approach, Side and Johnson (2014) conducted a "... two-year qualitative study ...” which "... explored the meanings eight teenagers gave to bullying they had experienced and related this to an analysis of previous research and school policies about bullying ..." (p.217). Through the employment of Foucauldian Analysis, Side and Johnson concluded that:

"... important discourses about bullying, from young people who experience it, in terms of how it felt to be positioned as different, and how deeply they were affected by the experience, need to contribute to how bullying is constituted ...,” (p.229).

Essentially, the authors advocate the inclusion of pupil views in the development of school anti-bullying policies within the Australian education system. This work draws attention to the way in which stakeholder constructions can influence each other. Through analysis of the most recent guidance to schools, this potential will be further explored using CDA.

The benefits of employing CDA over other DA approaches to explore discourses within education related policies have been noted by Taylor (2004). In her article, Taylor reviewed examples of existing research highlighting that exploring discourses within policies can yield informative data regarding the tactical employment of language by policy writers to emphasise particular objectives. However, Taylor reported that these previous research examples do not offer the strength of analysis that CDA can provide as they do not combine the social and the linguistic (i.e. how language is employed within policies to achieve influence over the social and vice-versa). Taylor concluded that CDA is a beneficial approach for exploring policies as it combines the analysis of both the social and the linguistic.

As already noted earlier in the chapter, the aim of the present research is to explore the constructions within the most recent government guidance to schools on preventing and tackling bullying and in turn, how these may influence the reader. As such, employing CDA will enable an analysis of the language employed and the way in which this might persuade the reader to
orientate towards a particular construction through the assertion of power. As Fairclough (1989) advised, employing CDA means that the exploration shifts between analysing the discourses within the text presented and those which the writer(s) have referred to in the course of compiling the text. To achieve this analysis, the document in question will be explored using the branch of CDA developed by Van Dijk in the same manner as De Wet and Jacobs. Specifically, the discourses within the text as a whole will be explored thus providing an analysis of what Van Dijk discusses as the ‘global dimensions’ (p.170) of data. In addition, what Van Dijk refers to as ‘local level’ (p.170) analysis will explore the use of language in the text to share presumptions about the topic with a reader. Excerpts will be provided for illustrative purposes and selected due to their relevance to the constructions discussed after Van Dijk (2001). Where excerpts are noted, these will be presented in the manner they appear in the document but with line numbers added for clarity in the analysis.

It is important to note that during the analysis, the term ‘authors’ refers to the previous coalition government from where the policy originates as the names of those who contributed to the development of the policy are not specified in the document. The words ‘a school based reader’ refer to the intended audience of the document (i.e. school staff and governing bodies). Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that each of these potential readers will have a different interpretation of the document as it will be read with the influence of the histories / cultures / experiences related to that group. Finally, although the analysis here is concerned with the school based readers aforementioned, the guidance is available publically where parents and other educational professionals (i.e. EPs) may choose to read the information.

**Data analysis**

Reading of the document yielded four main themes that will be explored beginning with the discourse *Constructing the context* where the authors set the scene for the structure of the document. Analysis of the discourse
Constructing actions by school staff as required in a legal framework is then discussed followed by that of Regulated autonomy and culminating with the discourse A school based reader as both educator and learner.

It is important to note here that the authors highlight on page three under the subheading Who is this advice for? that the document is intended for ‘School leaders and school staff in all schools in England’. The emphasis placed here on the word ‘all’ highlights that every member of school personnel should have access to the guidance. In addition, emphasis on the word ‘all’ implies that there are no exceptions to this; everyone in the intended groups should read the information. Furthermore, the phraseology of the subheading as a question implies an attempt by the authors to present a relationship between them and a school based reader as one of the former answering queries from the latter in the role of a critical friend. I would discuss this position of critical friend as a means by which the authors can provide support and encouragement to a school based reader. More specifically, the position allows the authors to encourage a school based reader to consider particular information that will enable the achievement of desired outcomes. In the case of this document, the desired outcome would be the prevention and tackling of bullying in schools and the information given a means by which the authors can help the intended reader achieve this.

**Constructing the context**

The overall construction of the policy discusses bullying as being something that exits with the potential to occur at any time and within any school. Specifically, use of the word ‘preventing’ in the title of the document establishes this construction. The document also constructs bullying as requiring action to be taken when it does occur first observed through the use of the word ‘tackling’ in the title. These in turn construct the reader as being in a position to a) prevent bullying and b) tackle it should an incident occur. Within the analysis of the teacher talk in Chapter 3, the discourses identified reflected the staff as indeed constructing themselves as being in a position to
'tackle' bullying. This implies the stance of critical friend as a means by which the authors are seeking to empower a school based reader. However, the relationship could also be constructed as one where the guidance reflects what is already going on in schools and provides reinforcement that this is an appropriate course of action. In both instances, the relationship is one where the authors sanction continued action by a school based reader.

The inclusion of the word 'advice' within the title is also worthy of discussion. It positions a school based reader as having a choice about whether they employ the suggestions in the guidance. Indeed, as Mulderigg (2011) noted, the purpose of a policy is to encourage the reader to engage in particular actions. As such, the document is a piece of persuasive writing compiled by the government in the position of leadership over the schools reading the guidance. Mulderigg (2011) further describes the use of persuasive writing as an example of 'soft power' (p.45) where a more dominant social group asserts leadership over another through encouragement to follow the discourses presented rather than coercion to do so. In the case of the guidance being explored here, the government would take the role of the more dominant social group in a position of leadership over the school staff and governing bodies. In positioning the reader as having a choice about whether to follow the information in the guidance, the authors are attempting to shape the constructions of a school based reader in relation to bullying. This is evident within the opening paragraph of the document located in the Summary section under the sub-heading About this advice.

Excerpt 1 (p.3)

This document has been produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy. It outlines, in one place, the Government’s approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face.

The authors are encouraging a school based reader to peruse the document without the need to seek additional guidance; the document is described as
detailing ‘in one place’ (line 2) the required information. Furthermore, the authors position themselves as being supportive of a school based reader describing the guidance as having ‘been produced to help schools’ (line 1). The summary shown in this excerpt also reinforces the word ‘advice’ in the title with the phrase ‘the Government’s approach to bullying’ (lines 2 – 3); the contents is constructed as something to consider. However, the implied choice about following the advice is reduced when the authors reference anti-bullying strategies. More specifically, the advice is constructed as including ‘the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools’ (lines 3 – 4). Consequently, if a school based reader were to ignore the advice they would decrease the effectiveness of any anti-bullying strategy employed.

**Reflection Box 4.1**
The underlying assumption here is that a school based reader would hold an interest in having the most effective anti-bullying strategies possible in place. Indeed, in my work with schools they do seek advice on how to improve the effectiveness of, for example, their behaviour or anti-bullying policies. I would therefore agree with this assumption but would question why the interest is present. It could be that it reflects an ongoing desire to do the best for the pupils in their care and certainly, this would be my preferred interpretation because that was why I became a teacher and an EP. It could also reflect a desire to meet the standards set by the government and thus fulfil the implied discourse about what it means to be a good school. It could further reflect the school’s own discourse to meet expectations, be a better school than others and thus construct those who choose not to follow the advice as being ‘worse’ than them.

The context presented here by the authors at the beginning of the document seeks to establish a relationship of support and encouragement with the intended reader. This relationship is constructed through persuasion and empowerment positioning a school based reader as having a choice about whether to follow the advice presented.

**Reflection Box 4.2**
As I write this a sense of circularity is developing where the government seek to shape the discourses of school based practitioners who in turn influence the constructions of pupils which are then carried into adulthood and fed back into society. This implies a constant revisiting and stagnation of the same discourses. While I would agree that there is a connection between society, individuals and institutions (e.g. schools, the government), I would argue that the discourses on bullying are ever evolving as new information is shared.
Constructing actions by school staff as required in a legal framework

As previously stated, the policy discusses a school based reader as being in a position to both prevent and tackle bullying. However, these constructions are much stronger than these two elements imply. Specifically, the way these actions are presented constructs them as being required by various legislative and parliamentary acts and relates back to the ‘legal obligations’ noted in the summary paragraph at the start of the document (line 3; Excerpt 1). This orientation has been observed previously within government guidance (e.g. Taylor; 2004) and is a means by which the authors offer encouragement to a school based reader to adopt the advice. However, the implied choice is reduced by constructing the advice as a legal requirement; that to choose not to follow the advice would be to operate outside of the law. This follows the same pattern as acknowledged in the analysis of Excerpt 1.

The legal framework of the document follows immediately after the summary and is therefore given a position of importance within the structure of the document. Even the title of the section draws the attention of the reader to their legal obligations: What does the law say and what do I have to do? (p.4 – 5). Furthermore, in using the first person the title is written as though a question has been put forward seeking answers from the authors and thus help from a critical friend. The information is constructed as being a suggestion about what to do to meet the legal requirements of the laws and acts mentioned. However, under the aforementioned main heading, the authors state that ‘Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying’ (p.4). The inclusion of the word ‘must’ here implies that even if a school based reader chose not to follow the advice in the guidance, they will still need to ensure they implement strategies to achieve the desired outcome.

By referencing legal requirements, the authors suggest that a school based reader consider whether acts of bullying are potentially criminal as reflected in the following excerpt.
Excerpt 2 (p.5)

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

This is presented under the subheading Criminal law and discusses types of behaviour (line 2) against specific legislation relating to criminal acts (lines 3 – 5). Initially the authors emphasise that ‘bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence’ (line 1) thus constructing the former as being separate from the latter. The authors then draw the attention of a school based reader to ‘some types of harassing or threatening behaviour’ (line 2) as having the potential to be considered criminal. This statement reflects two implications; that bullying behaviours can be considered as harassing or threatening (and vice-versa) and following this, that some bullying behaviours could be considered criminal. In alerting a school based reader to consider bullying as having the potential to be a criminal act, the authors are advising that abiding by the laws and acts mentioned will enable the achievement of the aforementioned outcomes. Conversely, the legal discourse here positions those school based readers who choose not to employ the advice given as operating outside of the legal framework and as such, less likely to meet the outcomes of preventing and tackling bullying.

The wording of the guidance however is vague and although it encourages the reader to consider that ‘some types of harassing or threatening behaviour … could be considered a criminal offense’ (lines 2 – 3), these are not specified. This means that the application of the law to address such behaviours is open to different interpretations and thus an unequal devolvement of the guidance where one school may discuss a behaviour in the context of a criminal act while another might discuss the same behaviour as being an example of bullying.
Reflection Box 4.3

It is necessary at this point to come off the fence as it were and make a declaration about how I would construct the inclusion of the legal framework within the document. I would position this discourse as a means by which the government can reinforce their position of authority over the intended readers. This does not mean that the advice given is correct. Indeed, in Chapter 2 the discourse *The absence of psychology* originated from my construction that government guidance does not include any reference to psychological research, particularly anything beyond the work of Olweus. Having made this statement, I must reflect upon my own clear discourse here which implies a level of irritation with the government guidance, historical and current, as I move through analysing the rest of the document.

Following on from Excerpt 2, the guidance gives further information as to what the reader should do if a behaviour is considered as a criminal act. In the next excerpt, the authors continue to discuss the legal requirements a school based reader should consider, specifically whether behaviours are bullying or criminal acts.

**Excerpt 3 (p. 5)**

1. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Here, the authors continue the stance of critical friend by giving a school based reader suggestions as to how they can proceed if a behaviour is considered as criminal. The excerpt initially sees the authors construct a school based reader as having the ability to identify whether an offence has occurred. The inclusion of the word ‘feel’ (line 1) is important to discuss where it implies that a school based reader will interpret an act based on his / her emotional reaction at the time. Furthermore, what will produce a particular type of emotional reaction in one person will not necessarily be the same for another. Consequently, the use of the word ‘feel’ is arbitrary and places the responsibility of categorizing an act as criminal with a school based reader. The use of categories as a means to compare bullying behaviours with others was noted in Chapter 3 as a discourse from the teacher talk. In this instance, the authors compare the category of bullying with a legal based category.
deciding whether a behaviour is criminal. The categorization of the behaviour remains arbitrary; dependent on the interpretation of a school based reader in the same manner as noted following the analysis presented in Chapter 3.

Although whether an act is to be categorised as criminal is arbitrary, the authors do give some examples within this excerpt (lines 2 – 6) where those listed relate to behaviours acted through technology. This illustrates an underlying construction from the authors to draw the attention of a school based reader to such behaviours as requiring action within a legal framework. I would argue that this reflects the increase in focus on cyber-bullying at a societal level following the emergence of internet sites such as ‘Facebook’ and ‘Twitter’ as well as mobile technologies such as phones with cameras and recording equipment. Indeed, the staff meeting discussions explored in Chapter 3 and the preceding as well as the current guidance referenced here have sections dedicated to cyberbullying. Consequently, the authors are encouraging a school based reader to prioritise the consideration of these types of behaviours as being criminal over others.

Given that the sections of teacher talk from School 3 (Chapter 3) reflected a hesitancy about the topic of cyberbullying, the prioritisation posited in the guidance is arguably necessary. The authors here as the critical friend are assisting a school based reader to be firm about cyberbullying and thus be able to prevent and tackle it. Furthermore, by drawing the attention of a school based reader to prioritisation of cyberbullying, the authors are able to address instances of positioning others as responsible for preventing and tackling it; something which occurred in the talk of staff from School 4 (Chapter 3) where parents were deemed responsible.

Reflection Box 4.4
The conflicting constructions regarding technology based bullying observed in the school staff meeting discussions illustrates the requirement of a policy such as this to give guidance. It could also be argued that the implication of adhering to the advice as a requirement is necessary to avoid absolution of responsibility to other stakeholders, namely parents.
With the listing of these examples, the authors discuss the ‘intent’ (line 3), content and truth (lines 5 – 6) associated with the acts. This achieves the construction of the behaviours listed as occurring for a reason as well as emphasising to a school based reader that these should be considered when deciding whether an act is criminal. Yet, as the guidance does not mention, for example, a definition of intent in this context nor how it should be determined, the categorisation of a behaviour as criminal remains arbitrary.

Although generally the authors maintain the implied choice within the excerpt, they do give a clear direction to a school based reader of what to do if they ‘feel’ a criminal act as occurred; they ‘should seek assistance from the police’ (lines 1 – 2). It is the word ‘should’ which gives the direction here and by involving the police, a school based reader can pass responsibility for the decision about the act. In addition, by involving the police the act becomes contextualised in the law rather than the school. Furthermore, the inclusion of this reference to the police positions the reader as having limited power to address certain behaviours requiring the assistance of the law.

Given the arbitrary nature of the guidance in respect of whether something is criminal and whether the police should be contacted, a question is raised over the inclusion of these references in the document. I would suggest that by putting these references in the guidance and at the start of the document, the authors encourage a school based reader to adopt the advice presented by introducing an element of fear. More specifically, fear of failing to meet legal requirements and thus breaking the law. Furthermore, by writing from the stance of critical friend, the authors imply that a school based reader has a choice about what parts of the guidance to follow seeking to achieve compliance through talking about the actions as being law abiding. This continues as the authors discuss the power teachers have to address incidents of cyberbullying specifically as presented in the next excerpt.
The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

This excerpt occurs under the subheading Cyberbullying although rather than being discussed as part of the section on the law, this excerpt is found under the main heading What is bullying? following the legal section. The first person language employed in this title aids the authors in maintaining the critical friend stance. Furthermore, by giving the topic a specific section the authors construct cyberbullying as being something to prioritise. Within the excerpt, the authors specify actions that a school based reader can take against cyberbullying emphasising the appropriateness of these against the relevant parliamentary act (line 1). Discussing these actions within this legal framework enables the authors to legitimize the actions and orientate a school based reader towards considering them a responsibility and duty as part of their role in schools.

The legal framework here also reflects a discourse of surveillance from a school based reader on the technologies used by pupils. Specifically, a school based reader can, within the law, ‘search’ (line 2) within a pupil’s property for items of technology and then within these for examples of inappropriate documents deleting them if necessary. Under this discourse, all pupils are positioned as potentially having inappropriate materials contained on their mobile phones, for example. Furthermore, all school based readers are positioned as being a part of this surveillance through the use of the word ‘teachers’ (line 1) to describe any action taken as ‘collective’. However, I would argue that the implementation of the legal powers identified is again arbitrary and based on the interpretation of a school based reader.

The surveillance discourse occurs elsewhere in the document where the authors discuss methods by which a school based reader can prevent bullying and what to do if bullying occurs outside of the immediate school context. For example, under the subheading Bullying outside school premises in the legal
section, the authors discuss how a school based reader should ‘investigate’ (p.5) instances of bullying reported to them. Furthermore, under the subheading *Prevention* in the section entitled *Dealing with bullying*, the authors state that the ‘best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence’ (p.7). The authors subsequently construct a school based reader that adopts the surveillance discourse as being one of the ‘best schools’ drawing on the assumed desire to meet certain standards. Whether these standards are law related or whether they stem from another source is not clear but one could conclude that the ‘best schools’ would seek to be law abiding.

There is an assumption by the authors that the powers mentioned are required and have been / will be employed by a school based reader. The language used here constructs a school based reader as having already made a decision to employ the powers given when they deem necessary according to the guidance provided by the document. This in turn constructs the reader as awaiting permission from the author via the document to make this choice. The presentation of this permission within a legal framework allows the authors to legitimise the choice of a school based reader as well as inform the reader of the requirement of the choice in the first instance; permission to make the choice of employing the powers given and choosing to employ them is a legal requirement for the authors and school based readers.

**Regulated autonomy**

Within her analysis of New Labour policy discourse, Mulderigg (2011) draws attention to the way in which issues of power and dominance can be managed by those in the position of power. She highlights the construction of ‘responsible autonomy’ (which she noted was postulated by Fairtlough, 2007) where those in the position of power encourage others to assume ownership of their own actions and the ‘power’ is given back to them. Applying this to the context of education policies, if schools were given responsible autonomy they would have ownership over actions taken in reference to bullying. However,
Mulderigg also notes the work of Dale (1989) who postulates the term ‘regulatory autonomy’ as being more appropriate to education policies rather than responsible autonomy. Dale put forward the construction of regulatory autonomy due to the way in which close monitoring of conduct is accomplished; through these continued checks, the element of trust required for responsible autonomy is removed. In relation to the current document, the guidance makes reference to the inspection process where the presence and employment of an anti-bullying policy are elements to be checked. This has already been highlighted as part of the summary given at the start of the document and shown in Excerpt 1. Specifically, the advised implementation of the guidance presented to achieve an effective anti-bullying policy. Through encouragement to achieve this, the guidance positions schools as having some autonomy over how they develop and apply their anti-bullying policies but within the context of continued monitoring by the schools themselves and the inspectorate system. In this regulated autonomy context, the references to the inspection system enable the authors to encourage a school based reader to follow the guidance through creating an element of fear (i.e. that this will fail an inspection if the guidance is not taken forward). Once again, as with the construction of certain elements of bullying as having the potential to be considered as a criminal act, the authors assert power over a school based reader by implying choice in the context of promoting adherence to meet inspectorate standards. Here the authors maintain the role of critical friend by encouraging a school based reader to consider the information against the standards required by the regulatory authority. The following excerpt illustrates this with the reference to and placement under the sub-heading Education and Inspections Act 2006 in the legal section presented at the start of the document.

**Excerpt 5 (p.4)**

1. Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should all be part of the school’s behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.
With an emphasis on what schools ‘must’ (lines 2 and 4) be doing the authors construct a school based reader as having a legal requirement to meet. In this case, the requirement is two-fold; having ‘measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils’ (line 2 – 3) and to communicate these measures ‘to all pupils, school staff and parents’ (line 4) through a behaviour policy (line 3). This figured significantly in the talk from Schools 2, 3 and 4 (Chapter 3) where the head teachers introduced a review of the anti-bullying policies as the topic for discussion. These discussions reflect the desire of the staff to have an effective policy although named anti-bullying rather than behaviour. This indicates that the authors would construct bullying as a behaviour and would advocate discussing this in the context of an overall behaviour policy. In contrast, the schools seek to link but construct bullying as requiring a separate policy. What both the authors and a school based reader agree on is the need for a policy.

Within the first requirement, the author constructs bullying as something that is preventable by encouraging good behaviour. Bullying is subsequently also something that is understood through a comparison of this type of behaviour against other ‘good’ behaviours. This reflects the authors’ preferred construction of bullying as a bad behaviour which is preventable by encouraging good behaviour. By including this within the guidance, the authors are attempting to encourage a school based reader to adopt this dominant construction. Furthermore, the act of encouragement is achieved in the context of the reader meeting inspectorate standards implying a failure to meet said standards if the advice is not followed. In addition, the language used advises a school based reader of what they ‘must’ do but not how to achieve this leaving the advice open to interpretation. It is a reflection of the regulated autonomy; the regulator will inspect the measures to encourage good behaviour and the communications to those listed but the reader is given autonomy as to how to achieve these. This places the authors as always being in a position of dominance and power over a school based reader while the reader is constructed as being both powerless and powerful at the same time.
Specifically, powerless to change what the regulator will look for but powerful in being able to decide how to achieve it.

Within the second requirement, the authors construct the groups mentioned as having need of the information to be shared and a school based reader as needing a reminder to share the information. Taking this construction further, in specifying these groups the authors draw the attention of a school based reader to those who should be involved in the promotion of the good behaviour to prevent bullying. Here, the authors imply rather than assume the involvement of the groups identified. Furthermore, by discussing this within the framework of a legal requirement, the authors are able to emphasise to a school based reader a preferred course of action (i.e. the involvement of the groups mentioned). Once again the author takes the critical friend stance seeking to encourage adoption of the advice. However, in talking about this through the context of the inspections act, the authors alert a school based reader to potential inspection failure should the guidance not be followed.

**Reflection Box 4.5**
While I have discussed the construction of good behaviour in the policy as something to encourage to prevent bullying, another interpretation could be that bullying is incompatible with good behaviour. As such, although I construct a contrast of good behaviour with bullying as ‘bad behaviour’, another analyst may discuss bullying as something that does not align with good behaviours. In both instances, bullying remains something to be prevented and tackled.

In addition to the aforementioned act, the authors make reference to the organisation responsible for inspection as the reader is encouraged to follow the guidance. In the next excerpt, located under the subheading *School’s accountability* (p.8) in the section *Dealing with bullying* the authors draw the attention of the school based reader to the ‘revised Ofsted framework’ (line 2).
Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) is a governmental department responsible for the inspection and regulation of "... services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages ... our goal is to achieve excellence in education and skills of all ages, and in the care of children and young people ...,". Including this within the document allows the authors to encourage a school based reader to follow the actions advised implying a choice to do so while at the same time introducing the element of fear that not adopting the suggestions would mean a failure to meet Ofsted standards. In this way, Ofsted are positioned as the surveillance body of the government on the actions of schools. As with the discourse previously noted in relation to Excerpt 4 where teachers were positioned in surveillance of the pupils, here schools are assumed to have the potential to fail to meet Ofsted standards. This is implied with the advice of the authors to a school based reader to gather evidence that will allow them to ‘demonstrate’ (line 4) the application and subsequent effectiveness of any policy.

**Reflection Box 4.6**

In Chapter 3 the teacher talk reflected a contrast structure of inside school versus outside school where they constructed bullying as occurring but generally not in their contexts. If the guidance advises demonstration of how they prevent and tackle bullying but the schools consider bullying to occur only rarely, how can they supply evidence of the effectiveness of the policy? Furthermore, if evidence cannot be produced how can the schools meet the standards of Ofsted?

In addition, the authors construct bullying as being understood through consideration of whether the Ofsted standards relating to ‘behaviour and safety’ (line 3) are being met. Within this construction, bullying is set outside of what constitutes being able to successfully meet standards of behaviour and safety. This implies that bullying is an unsafe behaviour and as such, action should be taken. Subsequently, taking action against bullying meets the legal requirements within the Ofsted framework and failure to meet the requirements will result in a failed inspection. Here, not only do the authors

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4 Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/Ofsted/about
draw on the assumed desire of a school based reader to meet Ofsted standards, they also assume that all school based readers will want to present pupils and parents alike with a ‘safe’ environment. If a school based reader does not follow the advice their school could be deemed ‘unsafe’. Indeed, the safety of pupils is a discourse introduced within the legal section of the guidance under the subheading Safeguarding children and young people (p.4 – 5). Here, instances of bullying are constructed as having the potential to be considered as causing suffering or harm linked to the ‘Children Act 1989’ (p.4). Consequently, the assumption of the authors that a school based reader will seek to ensure their setting is a safe environment is reinforced through discussing it in a legal context.

Reflection Box 4.7
As I write about the authors playing on the fears of a school based reader regarding operating outside the law and not meeting Ofsted standards I am realising how uncomfortable this construction makes me feel. I would discuss this as manipulation of a school based reader and wonder why the authors do not just say ‘follow the advice or you will fail your Ofsted inspection and be working outside the law’. I would suppose such honesty could be considered as manipulating through threat. This poses a difficulty for the authors where no matter how the advice is phrased, it could be interpreted as manipulative. I guess that you can’t please all the people all the time and I just need to be aware of my own discourse here.

Following the introduction of the aforementioned inspections act and Ofsted framework, the document subsequently makes continued references to what makes a successful school (p.7 – 8). The guidance also makes repeated references to the construction that bullying is a bad behaviour which requires prevention and correction (p. 7 – 8). Such constant reminders act as a means of emphasising to a school based reader the authors’ preferred course of action thus encouraging them to follow the advice and be a successful school. They also encourage a school based reader to orientate to the authors’ preferred construction of bullying as being a bad behaviour which they must address and prevent where possible. In addition, by discussing this against the back drop of the inspection act and Ofsted framework, the encouragement draws on fear-mongering of failure to meet appropriate standards if the guidance is not put into action.
A school based reader as both educator and learner

As has previously been stated, throughout the preceding guidance to that being explored here particular issues of contrast and positioning are present. The current guidance is no exception where throughout, the authors position a school based reader as being in need of education from the authors regarding preventing and tackling bullying. This positioning immediately emphasises the authors as being in a position of authority over a school based reader due to superior knowledge about preventing and tackling bullying. On page 6 of the document, the author gives a two paragraph definition of bullying under the heading What is bullying? and presented here in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7 (p. 6)

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school’s first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgments about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

By giving this definition within the guidance the authors assume that a school based reader requires this level of education about bullying. It also reinforces the position of the authors as that of dominant over a school based reader where the former shares this superior knowledge with the latter. This in turn allows the authors to continue in the role of critical friend towards a school based reader where the information is provided in the context of answering an assumed question in the same manner as noted about the heading in the legal section. However, the contents of Excerpt 7 are open to interpretation as are other aspects of the document. For example, how would a school based reader discuss intention (line 1), the ‘many forms’ bullying can take (line 2) or the
‘actual’ or ‘perceived’ differences between children (line 6)? Furthermore, how would a school based reader determine whether there is ‘an imbalance of power’ (line 11), ‘control’ (line 12) or an ‘intellectual imbalance’ (line 15)? The authors do provide an answer to these queries with the statement ‘teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case’ (lines 8 – 9). Consequently, while aiding a school based reader in their learning about what bullying is, the authors also leave decisions about specifics up to them to determine and subsequently inform others thus taking on the role of educator. While encouraging the reader to orientate to the dominant construction presented about what constitutes bullying, the authors also devolve responsibility for fleshing out the definition to the reader with their own details. As such, although all school staff and governing bodies reading the document will be exposed to the same dominant construction from the author, the interpretation of this will be different according to the details which each reader will insert to address the arbitrary elements. Perhaps it is this which accounts for the variation in constructions of bullying across educational settings? Specifically, although the dominant construction is known and the reader encouraged to follow it, the details are open to many different interpretations.

I would argue that the arbitrary language employed here not only enables the authors to devolve responsibility to a school based reader for some decisions, it also reflects a hesitancy about how the authors themselves construct bullying. The lists provided in the first paragraph (lines 1 – 9) suggest that the authors are uncertain and by putting in this many items enables them to inoculate against the possibility that a school based reader might challenge the information. A further interpretation could however be that the authors construct a school based reader as being hesitant about how they discuss bullying and the listing of the items is a means to ensure that nothing is missed; that a school based reader will not have an excuse to ignore an incident of bullying because they have all the information required to identify them. Whether it is the authors themselves who are uncertain or the intended
readers, the former constructs the latter as requiring the information given to be able to prevent and tackle bullying.

**Reflection Box 4.8**
The hesitancy here could also be interpreted as a reflection of the ongoing challenge inherent in defining bullying by the stakeholder groups. Although each group desires to define bullying, how this is achieved is dependent on the histories, cultures and experiences behind the interpretation. Furthermore, the desire itself reflects an underlying interest for the individuals in the group to make sense of what they observe occurring between pupils; a means by which a label can be assigned and the occurrence defined.

The lists given by the authors relating to the forms bullying can take places an emphasis on ‘cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet’ (line 3). We have already seen through the analysis of Excerpts 3 and 4 a discourse from the authors to encourage a school based reader to prioritise addressing cyber-bullying over other instances of bullying. By stating that ‘bullying can take many forms’ (line 2) followed by specific reference to technology based behaviours, the authors reinforce the previous discourse of prioritising cyberbullying. I would also argue that the reassertion of this discourse reflects again the rise in societal concerns about the use of technology in instances of bullying as previously identified.

**Discussion**

Throughout this chapter the authors have employed the role of critical friend to encourage a school based reader to adopt the advice given thus achieving the outcomes of preventing and tackling bullying. Furthermore, this role has enabled the authors to imply that a school based reader has a choice of whether to adopt the advice. However, by referencing legal and parliamentary acts, the authors reduce the level of choice by positioning a school based reader as working outside of the law if they do not adopt the advice. Furthermore, by referencing Ofsted, the choice is reduced yet again as to ignore the advice would position a school based reader as failing to meet the requirements of the framework. By presenting this information in the legal,
parliamentary and Ofsted contexts from the stance of a critical friend, the authors inoculate themselves against challenge from a school based reader. In addition, the authors seek to empower a school based reader while at the same time achieve adoption of their dominant constructions regarding methods of preventing and tackling bullying. In this way, the authors assert their position of authority over a school based reader but in a subtle manner achieving the soft power approach to governance through regulated autonomy.

In the preceding chapters the research reviewed and the data analysed reflected a variety in constructions about bullying from the stakeholders involved. These constructions, developed within different contexts, were built following social exchange between participants. They were also reflective of the different cultures, histories and experiences brought to the discussions by those involved. As such, the constructions are tied to the context in which they were built. The governmental guidance analysed here sets out a definition of what bullying should be considered to be and presented to the reader from the stance of a critical friend. Given the present guidance (and its preceding documents) provides a definition of bullying which is available nationally to all school staff and governing bodies, why are the constructions explored here varied? If the guidance encourages the reader to adopt the information given because not doing so will mean operating outside the law, why is it not followed exactly? It could be argued that each reader of the guidance will interpret the information according to their own history, culture and experience and this would lead to variation in constructions. It could also be argued that, where schools are concerned, the head teacher will share information with his / her staff and seek a response in the manner illustrated in the meetings analysed in Chapter 3 (i.e. building a consensus of definition). Consequently, the way in which the governmental guidance is discussed between the head teacher and his / her staff will have a bearing on how the information is employed and account for the variation in constructions; the schools construct a definition they own and is applicable to them and their context. In this way, they are able to follow and operate in the legal
framework given by the guidance while also interpreting the information in their own way. What is interesting here is that rather than providing additional examples of the variation with which bullying is constructed, the analysis of the governmental guidance gives rise to further questions about the occurrence of variation. Following on from this and from the possibilities discussed regarding the interpretation of the guidance by the schools, there are implications for how pupils are supported. If each school interprets the governmental data in a different way, each school will also subsequently interpret the information from pupils in a different way and the response will subsequently be variable. Following on from this, I would argue that by taking the stance of a critical friend, the governmental guidance positions itself as encouraging a unified definition of and response to bullying while at the same time enabling variations in interpretation.

Throughout the guidance explored here victims and bullies are constructed as being a part of instances of bullying in the same way as the teacher discussions. Individuals are also constructed as being in the role of victim by virtue of their characteristics in the same manner as the previous positivist research noted in Chapter 1 (e.g. Mahdavi & Smith, 2007). There is also an element of the governmental constructions perpetuating the role of victims as being a result of them being deviant from the norm in some way as per previous social constructionist research explored in the first Chapter (e.g. Thornberg, 2010).

The differing positions of the role of victim within the governmental guidance reflect the theme of bullying as an individualised phenomenon noted within my review of previous research into bullying discussed in Chapter 1. It would therefore be interesting to review the accompanying documentation to that explored here and whether the theme of bullying as an individualised phenomenon continues across all related guidance. In addition, an historical analysis of the documentation published prior to that explored here would enable research exploring how the language used by the governmental
guidance has been employed over time to give information on what bullying and methods to address it.

During the analysis of the guidance references have been made to the discourses identified within the staff meeting discussions explored in Chapter 3. It is not surprising perhaps that some links can be made between the data sets where, for example, the government guidance positions teachers as being able to prevent and tackle bullying and the staff meeting conversations also reflected this positioning. In addition, both the staff meeting discussions and the government guidance employ categories as a means to compare bullying and decide where to place particular behaviours. Furthermore, both data sets construct policy development as being important as a means to prevent and tackle bullying however schools implement one for anti-bullying and a separate one for behaviour whereas the guidance advocates that bullying should be addressed through an overall behaviour policy. I would however argue that while having a policy can be beneficial as it provides guidance for school staff on how to achieve the outcomes of preventing and tackling bullying, if it is not implemented how can it be effective? I would also argue that if the language used in policies and indeed, within the government guidance itself is arbitrary, how can it be effective? The difficulty here is that while agreement of interpretation is desired, it is challenging to achieve because those doing the interpreting will do so with their own histories, cultures and experiences. Finally, the direction given to a school based reader by the authors regarding cyber-bullying is arguably required to address hesitancy and absolution of responsibility reflected in the talk of some schools.

At the start of this chapter I noted the application of CDA by De Wet and Jacobs to explore the talk of South African educators on bullying. I would agree with their conclusion that teachers have an obligation to protect the pupils in their care and this is certainly reflected in the government guidance explored here. Furthermore, the way in which the guidance explored here encourages the adoption of the governmental constructions relating to methods of preventing and tackling bullying illustrates the permeation of
dominant discourses through to other groups. This was also noted by De Wet and Jacobs as being the case with the constructions of the teachers permeating through to the pupils. The employment of CDA to explore the guidance here, specifically the branch developed by Van Dijk, has enabled the identification of discourses which reflect how the authors seek to achieve permeation of their constructions. Furthermore, while the data set from the staff meeting discussions reflects a certain amount of permeation, there continue to be differences in the way bullying is constructed between different stakeholder groups.

Reflection Box 4.9
On a final note, I have already mentioned in Reflection Box 4.3 that the discourse The absence of psychology noted in Chapter 2 stemmed from my own constructions regarding the lack of up-to-date psychological research to inform government guidelines. As the document reviewed here does not mention where the information provide has been drawn from nor who the authors were, I am left with an unanswered question; did the guidance here use what I consider to be important information from recent psychological research to inform it?
Chapter 5

A discussion on bullying from parents:
A response to data feedback
Introduction

Throughout the analysis in Chapter 4 of the government guidance to schools on preventing and tackling bullying, references were made to the importance of schools sharing information with parents. In addition, the document discussed parents as requiring such information to enable them to support schools in preventing bullying by encouraging good behaviour. The involvement of parents was also mentioned in the discussions of both teachers (Chapter 3) and Educational Psychologists (Chapter 2). However, rather than discussing the sharing of information with parents as per the government document, these groups positioned parents as having an incorrect construction of bullying. Exploring the talk of parents on bullying therefore presented itself as the final set of data to collect in my research. Parents were previously identified (Chapter 1) as a key stakeholder group with the potential to draw children’s attention to particular discourses relating to bullying. In addition (and as noted throughout my previous chapters) language has been acknowledged as an important source of information regarding the discourses people construct in relation to bullying.

As has already been discussed (Chapter 1), previous research into bullying in schools employing the positivist tradition has included information gleaned from parents. Post-modernist explorations of the language parents use to talk about bullying in schools are few and far between. Clarke, Kitzinger and Potter (2004) is however one example of this. Clarke et al explored data on the talk of lesbian and gay parents regarding homophobic bullying in schools. This is a study that has been referred to in Chapter 2 as an example of the use of the word ‘just’. Here, it is the overall message from the study that is of interest. The data explored was obtained from parental accounts of homophobic bullying through televised documentaries and research interviews subsequently analysed using Discursive Psychology. As part of their analysis, Clarke et al highlighted the benefits of using this element of the Discourse Analytic tradition where it allows the exploration of how participants construct realities through their talk on particular topics. Through this, Clarke et al
identified the parents involved as either constructing bullying as normal (i.e. something that always happens in schools) or as not occurring. The focus of this research was very specific as were the parents involved. In addition, the data collected came from interviews between the parents involved and a facilitator. I am looking to expand on this by increasing the social element of the discussion and seeking parental responses to the information I have collected thus far in my research. Through this discussion on data feedback, it is possible that the parent responses will reflect their discourses on bullying and within this, whether they share experiences and if so, how they construct these (i.e. will they also construct instances of bullying as normal).

Although not exploring the talk of parents, the work of Herne (2014) reviewed how parents are represented within existing research on bullying in schools by employing Foucauldian Analysis. Herne noted that the aim was to encourage a wider consideration of parents in research about school bullying; to extend this beyond the dominant construction of assigning blame to them. Through her review, Herne concluded that further research is required to explore the way in which parents are positioned by the institutions where school bullying occurs. Herne identified that such exploration would yield greater and more beneficial communications between parents and schools. What is interesting about this review is the construction of assigning blame to parents for occurrences of bullying within the existing research. As the data I am collecting will be the direct talk of parents, I am intrigued as to whether they will discuss issues of blame and responsibility and if they do, where these constructions are located.

Finally, Harcourt, Asperse and Green (2014) also reviewed existing research on bullying but with a focus on information from parents themselves. Having identified dominant themes from the review of thirteen studies where parental information was explored, Harcourt et al concluded that parents are keen to have access to specific guidance that will enable them to respond to instances of bullying. In addition, Harcourt et al advised that parents themselves require support to increase their comprehension of bullying. Harcourt et al also
position parents as needing to take responsibility for occurrences of bullying alongside schools and to also work with schools more to address instances. This conclusion by the researchers themselves assigns blame to parents for incidents of bullying in the same way as the data reviewed by Herne. Again, through the conversation in this study I would aim to identify how the parents construct bullying and whether they discuss issues of blame and responsibility and if so, where these are located.

**Method**

**Participants**

To recruit participants, I contacted a parent forum to explore possible interest in my attendance at one of their regular meetings to share information from my other studies in the form of an information leaflet as a discussion point (Appendix 14a) and obtain feedback. The leaflet contained an overview of the discourses identified from the data obtained from the talk of EPs (Chapter 2) and teachers (Chapter 3) as well as the exploration of the government guidance (Chapter 4). The identification of a parent forum was essential in achieving a naturally occurring context as per the conventions of social constructionism. However, I would acknowledge that my presence and the recording of the discussion were both likely to have an impact on the conversation. The particular parent forum approached held planning meetings once every half term with a maximum of eight attendees. The purpose of the forum is to provide information on various topics (e.g. government guidance and available support from organisations) to parents of pupils with special educational needs. The forum is run by such parents and they link with the local authority. The planning meetings are for the forum committee members to discuss forthcoming events, information updates and other concerns. The forum also organises coffee mornings and information updates for parents from across the local authority. The organiser of the forum was my contact and she explored initial interest in participation on my behalf from the other members of the planning meeting. Four expressed an interest and a date was
arranged for me to present my data. On the day of the meeting, one participant was unfortunately unwell and as such, three members of the forum were present for the discussion alongside myself. All were female of varying ages with children who have special educational needs and in education.

Data collection process and transcription

The discussion was audio-taped and prior to the meeting, the participants were given an information letter (Appendix 14b) for review of the process. On the day of the meeting, which took place in the building where the forum is based, the participants signed a consent form (Appendix 14c) and were presented with the aforementioned information leaflet (Appendix 14a). Before beginning the recording, the participants read through the leaflet. I then began the conversation and the recording of the discussion by talking through the leaflet. I did not talk from a script but rather used the leaflet as a prompt and the feedback and the subsequent discussion flowed freely. The discussion lasted approximately one hour and ten minutes.

Once the discussion was complete, the participants were given a de-briefing sheet (Appendix 14d) and I transcribed the conversation. During transcription all identifying names used in the discussion were changed (e.g. if the name of a child was mentioned this was replaced with a pseudonym). In addition, all participants were given a pseudonym with the exception of myself. The transcription followed the code set down by Gail Jefferson (Appendix 3) which has previously been acknowledged (Chapters 2 and 3) as a recognised effective process as employed by previous researchers. As with the discussions from the staff meetings in Chapter 3, during the transcription process I focused on instances where talk between speakers overlapped and when there were pauses / breath intakes within speech. Once the transcription process was complete, the participants were given a copy to review (Appendix 15) and no changes were identified.
Analytical procedure

The analysis employed two branches of the Discourse Analytical tradition where the transcript was initially read through by myself a number of times to familiarise myself with the data. Following this, examples of discursive practices were identified to achieve a micro-level exploration of rhetorical devices utilised during the discussion. In addition, the principles of Discursive Psychology and the Discursive Action Model (DAM) were employed. Edwards and Potter (1992) noted the DAM as focusing on the actions of people in talk where the language used when speaking about specific issues becomes a report about what they remember, what they attribute their talk to and what can be inferred from the talk. Furthermore, talk is analysed in terms of connections between constructions from speakers via sequences of speech. According to Edwards and Potter, the language people use to give reports constructs them as factual. In addition, reports are structured in such a way that any alternatives given by others are discredited. Essentially, the DAM is interested in both the construction and function of features in talk. Given that the parents would be responding to the discourses identified from other sources, use of the DAM would enable the identification of whether the parents report recollections and if these are then used to discredit the discourses from elsewhere. Use of the DAM to explore the talk of participants has been employed by previous researchers. O’Reilly (2014) explored the talk of parents and therapists in family therapy sessions. Through her analysis O’Reilly identified three discourses emerging from the talk. In the first discourse, the parents placed blame for requiring family therapy on the children involved. Secondly, O’Reilly identified the parents as seeking to reinforce the truthfulness of the information they shared. Finally, the therapists involved were identified by O’Reilly as reframing the information shared by parents to reflect a more family orientated stance. O’Reilly noted within her article that the DAM was appropriate due its focus on the way in which participants seek to reinforce their constructions of specific realities within talk based on sharing recollections. The examples from O’Reilly and Clarke et al indicate the
effectiveness of employing Discursive Psychology and the DAM to explore the talk of parents on the topic of bullying in schools.

**Researcher as participant**

During Chapter 2 where I was both researcher and participant, I acknowledged the process as drawing on elements of ethnography (i.e. Brewer; 2000) and the same applies in this study. Specifically, as both researcher and discussion participant, I have an intimate knowledge of the information to be shared regarding my research. However, in contrast to the process conducted within Chapter 2, on this occasion I was not already a part of the group participating in the discussion but rather, a guest speaker. To address the subjectivity inherent, as well as continued employment of Reflection Boxes, I will be exploring my dual role as part of the discussion.

Finally, as my research will involve the sharing of information with parents, the data will be shared to the wider community as well as my academic and practitioner peers. I would however acknowledge that when sharing my research with parents, I need to be aware of what Yardley describes as treating the responses of participants as an ‘authoritative judgment’ on the value of the work.

**Data analysis**

It is important to note that the order in which the discourses are presented is related to the order in which they were identified. The analysis begins with an exploration of the discourses *Constructions of blame and excuse* and *Constructions of responses to bullying*. The analysis continues with exploring the discourse *Constructing schools as in denial* concluding with the discourse *Constructions of an unheard voice*. 
Constructions of blame and excuse

On exploring the data sets in relation to this discourse, there emerged two clear sub-themes. The sub-theme *Parental constructions of teacher blame and excuses* relates to discussants construction of teachers as assigning blame to and excuses for occurrences of bullying towards the children of the discussants and the discussants themselves. In the sub-theme, *Parental constructions of blame and excuses*, the discussants talked about why they thought bullying occurred.

*Parental constructions of teacher blame and excuses*

This first extract illustrates the way in which the parent concerned, Bridget, constructs the teachers in her son’s school as excusing the behaviour of one child towards her son.

**Extract 1**

124 Bridget: I think that that continuum of of that’s an interesting (.).
125 Alex: Hm
126 Bridget: = concept (.).
127 Alex: Hm
128 Bridget: = and I think I think (. ) bullying is viewed (. ) differently by different
129 people (. ) what I consider bullying might not be seen as bullying by
130 somebody else despite all the discussions we’ve had around (. ) um (1)
131 just as an example my son was bully bullied at school (h) er coming
132 home with bruises (.). 
133 Alex: Hm
134 Bridget: Um but because the other child had special needs it wasn’t really
135 bullying because he did not understand despite the fact that it was
136 repetitive (. ) he was the target (.).
137 Alex: Hm
138 Bridget: and and it wouldn’t stop um so (. ) that was I thought that was an
139 interesting you know the the well not an excuse and I did understand
140 that the other child [had] =
141 Alex: [Hm]
142 Bridget: = special needs and that’s fair enough (. ) but that’s not an excuse to
143 do nothing (. ) and (. ) yes that’s and so I viewed it as bullying (. ) they
144 didn’t (. ) =

Bridget states clearly that in relation to the incident recollected, she discussed her constructions of bullying as being different to that offered by the school her son attended at the time (lines 128 – 130). Within this, Bridget intimates
that this is even with ‘discussions’ (line 130) between her and the school; the language used constructs the discussions as an opportunity for an agreement to be reached about what bullying is. Furthermore, this assumes that an agreement can be reached. The language used by Bridget also constructs the school as needing to change their definition of bullying to align with hers (i.e. she is correct). Further into the extract, Bridget employs a three-part list to illustrate why she considered her son to be bullied when she says that ‘it was repetitive’ (lines 135 – 136), ‘he was the target’ (line 136) and ‘it wouldn’t stop’ (line 138). Bridget is here constructing the school as disagreeing with what she considers to be bullying. She is also discrediting the response of the school through her recollection by constructing it as based on an incorrect construction of bullying.

Alongside this, Bridget talks about the teachers excusing the recollected behaviours of another pupil towards her son (lines 131 – 132) as being a result of that child having ‘special needs’ (line 134) and because of this ‘he did not understand’ (line 135). These excuses then are hierarchical where the special needs is primary and leading to the secondary element of the child not understanding. Furthermore, it is not the child conducting the behaviours that is a concern to Bridget, it is the excuses for this given by the school. Bridget also constructs the excuses for the other child’s behaviour as being an excuse for the school ‘to do nothing’ (lines 142 – 143). In discussing this, Bridget employs a stake inoculation where she states initially that ‘I did understand that the other child had special needs and that’s fair enough’ (lines 139 – 142). In saying this, Bridget seeks to agree with the school that the other child did have something which affected his understanding thus achieving sympathy with the pupil in question. By then following this statement with ‘but that’s not excuse to do nothing’ (lines 142 – 143), Bridget employs the discourse marker ‘but’ to construct the special needs as an excuse by the school for not taking action. This is another example of the way in which Bridget discredits the response of the school to her son’s situation during her recollection. Positioning the school as excusing the behaviours of the other
child because of his special needs is something that Bridget returns to as the discussion progresses following that shown in this extract (Appendix 16).

**Reflection Box 5.1**
Bridget’s recollection here focuses on the special educational needs of the child bullying her son where she discusses the teachers in the school as using this as an excuse for what was occurring. However, as her son also has special educational needs, I wonder why the aforementioned excuse was given? It is hard to answer this from the information given as it is Bridget’s recollection of the experiences and I would not want to assume what the school were trying to achieve at the time without their talk as a reference point. Perhaps a further direction from this research would be to seek information from the school in question.

The next extract continues the narrative from Bridget. However, rather than discussing the school as using the special needs of the other child to excuse his behaviour towards her son, here Bridget constructs the school as blaming her son for the circumstances.

**Extract 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Bridget:</th>
<th>Alex:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>And when I persued the fact um (.) that my son as coming home with you know and and hand you know finger marks (.) =</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>[grabbed]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>there (visual demonstration given) and and and I was told that my son bruises easily (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Right okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>So again you see that that and that’s that and when that last statement was made I thought ’well actually I’m going [to] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>you’re clearly not listening to me’ (.) so (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>you know ’he’s not going to attend this particular activity (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>= and we’ll leave it as that’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>Um but yep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bridget initially continues her narrative with a recollection of the bruises seen on her son’s arm which she discusses as being a result of the other child having ‘grabbed’ it (lines 194 – 199). Bridget then states ‘I was told that my son bruises easily’ (lines 199 – 200). In this Bridget is constructing the school as blaming her son for the bruises. This blame construction serves to discredit
the response of the school (i.e. saying that her son bruises easily). Furthermore, Bridget follows this with a plea for the other discussants, including myself, to agree with her when she says ‘so again you see’ (line 202). Bridget also seeks to strengthen her construction when she describes the school as not having listened to her (line 205). This language enables her to construct the school as reacting inappropriately to the situation while at the same time discuss herself as being someone who should be listened to in the role of advocate for her son.

Although the construction proffered by Bridget is not agreed to specifically, following the narrative recollected I asked whether the other discussants had had a similar experience (Appendix 15; lines 212 – 225). The next extract illustrates a narrative shared by Denise in response to my question:

**Extract 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>Denise: Hm well the school that my son attended it was a junior school (.) and he’d been picked on since he was at infant school (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>Alex: Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>Denise: = (hh) um (1) because of his circumstances (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>Alex: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>Denise: = erm (.) and (1) the school kept telling me there was nothing going on (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Alex: Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>Denise: = erm (.) we were having nightmares (.) [and] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Alex: [Right]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>Denise: = I was making it up (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>Alex: Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>Denise: = um we had the single child syndrome (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>Alex: Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>Denise: = you know ‘he’s your only child and you’re o you’re an overprotective mum’ (.) and (.) the fact that he was coming home with like yours marks (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>Alex: Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>Denise: = where he shouldn’t have marks (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>Alex: Hm Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>Denise: = just falling over and hurting his knee he had bruises on his bottom (hh) under his arms under here (with visual demonstration) (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>Alex: Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>Denise: = and it got (.) it got so bad that he (.) wasn’t even getting out of school (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>Alex: Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>Denise: = getting out of bed to go to school [in the morning]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>Alex: [Yeah yeah]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248</td>
<td>Denise: =hm but I was making it all up and I was making it worse apparently (.) =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During this narrative Denise initially constructs the school her son attended as blaming him for the situations described during her recollection. Specifically, Denise discusses the school as blaming ‘his circumstances’ (line 229) and his being an only child (line 238). In between these examples and following them, Denise also constructs the school as blaming her where she says ‘I was making it up’ (line 236), ‘he’s your only child and you’re an over-protective mum’ (lines 240 – 241) and ‘I was making it worse apparently’ (line 255). By discussing the school as placing blame on her and her son, Denise is drawing the attention of the other discussants to her construction of the dismissive response from the school to her concerns as a means to discredit this reaction by the school. Constructions of blame for experiences being attributed to those on the receiving end of acts from others has been reported elsewhere. Tileaga (2005) explored constructions within the talk of professionals with a Romany background regarding prejudice towards people of this descent. Tileaga noted that one particular discussant, Carla, assigned blame for prejudice with the Romanies themselves. This construction is present in the recollections of Nicole as well as Denise and Bridget and illustrated in the next extract.

**Reflection Box 5.2**
The recollections by Denise and Bridget both involve their children receiving physical injuries following the actions of other pupils towards them. Also in both recollections the schools are discussed as excusing the experiences while the parents construct them as bullying. This difference of classification for the experiences recollected illustrates the variety of responses to the same incident and the conflict inherent between stakeholders’ classifications.

**Extract 4**

| 301 | Nicole: | Yeah my daughter’s got special needs [um] = |
| 302 | Alex:  | [Hm] |
| 303 | Nicole: | = and because of her communication difficulty she’s in mainstream school (hh) = |
| 304 | Alex:  | Hm Hm |
| 306 | Nicole: | = and she appears from the outside to be perfectly (.)) normal (.)) = |
| 307 | Alex:  | Hm Hm |
| 308 | Nicole: | = and erm to understand everything that’s said to her and to understand other people’s body language and how (.)) interpret (.)) |
| 310 | Alex:  | Hm |
| 311 | Alex:  | Hm |
Nicole: = what they mean and what they say (hh) and (hh) she was getting bullied on a daily basis and I was told that it was her (.) she didn't understand (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = it’s her misunderstanding erm let’s give her some more ELSA (h) she doesn’t understand other people’s behaviour she doesn’t understand their intentions (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = she’s over the top (h) she’s misinterpreting it erm (.) you’re feeding into this her not wanting to get out of bed every day (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = not eating (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = erm not having any enjoyment out of anything not even at home because her anxiety about going to school (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = was so fierce (.) =

Alex: Yeah

Nicole: = that it affected her whole life (.) =

Alex: Okay

Nicole: = that by me even acknowledging that let alone bringing it up at school was feeding into her (.) =

Alex: Okay

Nicole: = letting her never taking any accountability for the child or children who were instigating the bullying

I will initially note that lines 301 – 310 are relevant as a background to the construction from Nicole. They do however also represent the way in which the discussant herself constructs an excuse for her child and as such, will be explored in more detail as part of the next sub-discourse Parental constructions of blame and excuse. It should also be noted that where Nicole refers to an ELSA (line 316), this is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant working in the school to assist her daughter.

During this extract, Nicole introduces her construction of the school blaming her daughter for the bullying (line 313) in the same manner as Bridget and Denise. Initially, Nicole states that she was ‘told that she (her daughter) didn’t understand’ (lines 313 – 314). This is then followed by a number of other examples; ‘it’s her misunderstanding’ (line 316), ‘she doesn’t understand other people’s behaviour / intentions’ (lines 317 – 318), ‘she’s over the top’ (line 320) and ‘she’s misinterpreting it’ (line 320). Once again we see the discussant Nicole discredit the recalled response of the school by constructing it as dismissive of the concerns raised by her about her daughter’s circumstances. This construction is emphasised by Nicole’s discussion of her
child’s reaction at the time where she describes the anxiety about school as being ‘so fierce’ (line 326). Here, the language used builds an ECF which is emphasised through the preceding examples shared of her daughter’s behaviours where she is recalled as ‘not wanting to get out of bed every day’ (line 321), ‘not eating’ (line 323) and ‘not having any enjoyment out of anything’ (line 325). By peppering her account with these ECFs Nicole is emphasising the discrediting of the school’s recalled response as well as negating the possibility that others might challenge her construction. However, given the context of the discussion I would suggest that the language employed here by Nicole also serves to strengthen the constructions of the other parents following their previously shared accounts. Furthermore, the construction of the school blaming her for the experiences of her daughter is something returned to by Nicole later in the discussion (Appendix 16).

**Reflection Box 5.3**
As I write this I am taken back to the discussion itself and can recall the passion with which these parents spoke about the experiences of their children. On reflection I wonder if at the time (and possibly even now) I was caught by their narratives and consequently had difficulty in separating my researcher role from my participant role. I would however argue that it would not have been possible to avoid getting caught by the narratives and the impassioned delivery.

During the next extract Denise discusses the reaction recalled from a secondary school on visiting the setting when she shared her concerns about bullying.

**Extract 6**

```
1054  Denise: [I remember going around and looking at secondary schools (h) um (.)]
1055  when it was time for him to go to secondary school and you can go
1056  round and look at [secondary schools (hh)] =
1057  Alex:  Hm
1058  Denise: = and you go and speak to the SENCo because he's got his special
1059  needs and everything else and (hh) you'd say sort of like 'he's also
1060  been you know very badly bullied (.). =
1061  Alex:  Hm
1062  Denise: = so emotionally he's (.), his self-esteem is very low' (.), =
1063  Alex:  Hm
1064  Denise: = and (h) 'well if he comes here if he was bullied before he came here
1065  he'll be bullied when he's here' (h)
```
Here Denise constructs the school as blaming her son for any future situations he might encounter if she moved to the school. Specifically, Denise recounts the response from the school on airing her concerns as discussing her son as bringing the bullying with him (lines 1064 – 1065). This construction serves to discredit the response of the school and also illustrates a secondary construction; that to the school in question bullying is something that exists and that is brought into the environment by the child who is the victim. This positions the child as being responsible for incidents and reinforces the construction from Denise that the school were blaming her son for the bullying experienced.

The present discourse follows a pattern where the parents construct the schools as placing blame on them and their children as well as raising excuses regarding the bullying their children have experienced. This pattern has not been reported in previous literature and therefore presents as a relatively new construction in this area. In contrast, construction of one group blaming another for their circumstances / experiences has been observed elsewhere. In 2005 Sneijder and Te Molder explored the way constructions of blame were presented during online discussions regarding veganism. As part of this research Sneijder and Te Molder discussed blame as being constructed through discussants providing narratives which they considered to be factual descriptions of the world rather than specific accounts placing blame. The continued use of narratives in the extracts explored here follow this pattern where the parents recollect experiences and it is through these they achieve the construction of blame discussed. Sneijder and Te Molder also discussed the manner in which the participants in their research constructed blame by sharing advice to assist others in achieving a vegan diet. Sneijder and Te Molder noted that in giving advice following queries about how to address issues which prevent achieving a vegan diet, those providing the advice ‘blame’ those seeking it as not making the ‘right’ choices. Other studies exploring constructions of blame also note that one set of individuals will ‘blame’ another for their circumstances (e.g. Bowleg, Heckert, Brown & Massie, 2015). In addition, MacMillan and Edwards (1999) noted the British
press as employing narratives to place blame for the death of Princess Diana on the actions of reporters from particular newspapers. The next sub-theme certainly follows this pattern where the discourse explores the way parents place blame and raise excuses.

**Parental constructions of blame and excuses**

As previously stated, the start of Extract 4 illustrates the way in which Nicole discusses her daughter’s special needs (line 301) as an excuse for the bullying she recalls. Nicole makes specific reference to her daughter’s ‘communication difficulty’ (line 303) and states that ‘she appears from the outside to be perfectly normal’ (line 306). Here then the communication difficulty is constructed as an excuse for issues her daughter has experienced. In addition, Nicole constructs her daughter as having a ‘normal’ appearance with the counter construction of being ‘abnormal’ in other ways implied within. Such a construction enables Nicole to take ownership of the blame otherwise given by schools discussing these elements as excuses. In this manner Nicole discredits the blame given by schools and constructs the alternative explanation of abnormality as responsible for bullying.

**Reflection Box 5.4**

Nicole’s construction of her daughter’s appearance as ‘normal’ suggests that to her, traits which can be seen and are different from others lead to some individuals being bullied. I would question how difference is constructed and would further suggest this as a future piece of research; asking stakeholders about how they would discuss differences.

In the next extract, Denise discusses a number of excuses for the experiences of her son at the secondary level of education. What is particularly interesting is that these are discussed as being reasons for him having a more positive experience at secondary school in comparison to primary.

**Extract 8**

574 Denise: His secondary school’s better (,) =
575 Bridget: Yes
Denise positions her son as being unknown to the other people at the secondary school he attended and constructs this as being the reason for the positive experience. Specifically, Denise describes her son as being ‘alien’ (line 579) to the other people at the school. In saying this Denise constructs the difficulties experienced by her son previously as being a result of others having knowledge of him that positioned him as weak. In contrast, by not knowing anything about him, her son is constructed as being in a position of strength in the secondary setting. The way in which Denise constructs excuses for the experiences she is recollecting is repeated at later points in the discussion (Appendix 16) although in these parts of the discussion she is referring to the experiences at primary school.

Having described her son’s secondary school as being ‘better’ (line 574), Denise goes on to recall an incident between him and another pupil on starting at the school (lines 587 – 589). Denise constructs the incident as a ‘fight’ (line 588) but notes that neither she nor the parent of the other child involved considered the incident to be bullying. Instead, they discussed it as ‘normal boy behaviour’ (line 589).
Reflection Box 5.5
There is no evidence here as to why this act would be different to previous experiences. However, I wonder whether, if the instigator were her son, this might have led to the change from Denise? Another possibility is that as it was co-constructed as a fight, introducing the word bullying may have been considered inappropriate and potentially damaging to her son’s future at the school. A further potential reasoning would be that the incident was a single occurrence and therefore did not have the continuous element her previous recollections have included to classify experiences as bullying. Finally, if the ‘fight’ was verbal and not physical, this may have led to the change of construction. These speculations illustrate not only the variety of influences on whether a behaviour is classed as bullying but also the alternative categorizations that may be proffered.

As previously stated, the way in which parents construct the placement of blame as being with others (in this case schools) for the bullying experienced by their children follows the same pattern as that found in previous research (e.g. Bowleg et al, 2005). In addition, the placement of blame with the children themselves is similar to the way in which Tileaga (2005) noted blame for prejudice towards Romanies as being placed with them. I would further argue that as well as enabling the parents to take ownership of the blame they construct as placed upon their children by schools, discussants are defending their children.

Constructions of responses to bullying

On exploring the data sets in relation to this discourse, there emerged three clear sub-themes. The sub-theme Parental responses relates to the way in which the discussants constructed their reactions at times when their children experienced instances of bullying. In the sub-theme Parental constructions of known school actions, the discussants positioned schools as not taking any action, taking inappropriate action or not taking enough action depending on the age group involved or the nature of the event. Through the sub-theme Parental constructions of appropriate school actions, the participants discussed what they constructed as responses that schools should give to bullying.
Parental responses

This sub-theme has already been touched upon in Extract 2 where Bridget notes her choice to remove her son from a particularly activity (line 207) to avoid the possibility of further bullying in that context. In the next extract Denise recounts an incident that occurred outside of the school context but involving her son and another child from the same school:

Extract 9

271 Denise: = one of the acts was round our local park and I ended up getting the
272 police involved (=)
273 Alex: Hm [so you had to take] =
274 Denise: = ['cause the school weren’t doing (. ) had] to take further action [by]
275 =
276 Alex: [Yeah]
277 Denise: = getting the police involved
278 Alex: Right (. ) again that’s quite (. ) significant isn’t it the fact that you’ve
279 had to go that far (. ) [okay]
280 Denise: Well they hurt him and damaged his bike (. ) so (. ) you [know] =
281 Alex: [Hm]
282 Denise: = I thought ’no I’ve had enough now it’s [you know] =
283 Alex: [Yeah]
284 Denise: = they’re hurting him they’re [damaging property’] =
285 Alex: [Yeah it’s too much]
286 Denise: = so the police went and saw them (. ) =
287 Alex: Yeah
288 Denise: = and after that it did calm down a bit (. ) =
289 Alex: Okay
290 Denise: = but the school’s reaction was that I shouldn’t have done it (=)

It is important to initially acknowledge that although the incident occurred outside of school, Denise constructs the school as being the responsible for taking action (line 274). Although she does not specify why she positions the school as responsible, I would postulate that as the other child went to the same school as her son, Denise is constructing the incident as originating from the school context. In addition, this may also be a reflection of Denise constructing earlier intervention from the school as likely to have prevented the incident she is recalling. Furthermore, Denise constructs herself as being forced to take action in response to the incident because the school were not (line 274) thus discrediting the lack of response by the school.
The action taken by Denise, to call the police (lines 272 and 277) is justified by Denise when she mentions the other children as hurting her son and damaging his bike (line 280). This justification comes after a query from myself (lines 278 – 279) which constructs the action of seeking police involvement as being ‘significant’ and where agreement for this is sought from Denise when I ask ‘isn’t it’ (line 278). The justification is then repeated by Denise (line 284) where I then agree with this and reinforce my previous construct by saying ‘yeah it’s too much’ (line 285). These features illustrate the way in which Denise and I co-construct the action taken as being significant and necessary. In addition, the co-construction serves to further discredit the lack of response from the school. Indeed, at the end of the extract Denise recalls the school as saying she should not have called the police (line 290). This recollection enables Denise to construct her actions as being correct having already discredited the school’s lack of response and positioned their reactions as being incorrect. The construction from Denise regarding the school as being responsible for addressing incidents outside of the setting continues later in the discussion (Appendix 17).

Reflection Box 5.6
Another interpretation of the school’s response to Denise involving the police could be that they construct such involvement as resulting in the actions of the pupil in damaging the bike being classified as criminal. Consequently, avoidance of police involvement would be their preferred course of action. This is contrary to the guidance from the government explored in Chapter 4 where the advice specifically states that police involvement should be considered if the school feel that a criminal act has occurred.

The next extract continues with Denise constructing herself as having to take action due to her son being called a liar. However, rather than the incident occurring outside of the educational setting, the narrative describes an ongoing issue inside the school. In addition, rather than the school being constructed as not taking any action and thus the reason for Denise reacting, the school are positioned as being a part of the incident described.
Extract 10

Denise: = um(.) my son was called a liar my son’s actually adopted(.) =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = and he has(.) birth siblings(.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = but we don’t have the siblings we only have him(.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = um so(.) in his world he has got a family and he has got brothers
Alex: and a sister(.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = and for(.) and I could I can see it from the kids’ point of view [they]
Alex: =
Alex: [Hm Hm]
Denise: = don’t understand it he’s got brothers and a sister(.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = ’cause they would only see me and Ronnie and my husband(.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = um(.) whereas(.) they live with their brothers and sisters so they
Alex: constantly called him a liar(.) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = um and even the teacher(.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = I mean his class teacher’s actually called him a liar(.) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = until I went up there with the photographs and letters and said
Alex: ‘excuse me(.) now you apologise to him(.) =
Alex: Right [and he]
Denise: = [for calling] him a liar and you tell the rest [of the] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = class [he’s not] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = a liar (hh) you’ve seen pictures of his family (h) [he’s not] =
Alex: [Hm and]
Denise: = lying’

Within this extract, rather than discrediting the school, Denise’s recollection serves to discredit her son’s teacher specifically where she describes this person as ‘actually calling him a liar’ (line 371). Here, the teacher is constructed as being a part of the incident described. In addition, the language Denise employs to recall this discusses it as an extremity when she uses the word ‘actually’ (line 371). Furthermore, the phrase ‘even the teacher’ (line 369) allows Denise to construct the person’s actions as being unexpected. This in turn constructs the actions of the pupils calling her son a liar as being expected / usual. The subsequent actions taken by Denise (line 373 – 382) are recalled as being necessary to address the behaviours of both the other children and the teacher towards her son. In addition, the actions are constructed as being evidence based (by showing photographs and letters;
line 373) where the use of this is required to reveal the truth (i.e. verbal confirmation is not enough).

**Reflection Box 5.7**

I have interpreted Denise’s language as constructing the involvement of the teacher in calling her son a liar as unexpected. However, it could be argued that perhaps Denise should have anticipated the teacher’s participation where the classroom is an environment with its own culture and the teacher the leader of that culture. Consequently, in disbelieving her son, the teacher can reinforce the culture of her classroom and in this case, the construction of Denise’s son as a liar.

I must admit that I would align with Denise’s reaction of the teacher’s involvement as unexpected. The suggestion that a teacher would be so insensitive to the personal circumstances of a pupil sits uncomfortably with me and is not something I would anticipate occurring. I would like to argue that this stems from my experiences as a teacher and EP where school staff I have met are respectful towards the children in their care. However, perhaps this is idealistic and there are exceptions to my personal construction of how a teacher should behave.

Further on in the discussion, Denise recalls an incident where the action she took was to reward her son for an incident that occurred in the school context.

**Extract 11**

848 Denise: = my son always [said] =  
849 Alex: [Hm]  
850 Denise: = he wouldn’t do anything at school (hh) because he would get into trouble (.) =  
851 Alex: Okay he was [worried]  
852 Denise: = [he was worried] from the point of view that he [would] =  
853 Alex: [Yeah]  
854 Denise: = get into trouble at school and he didn’t want to get into trouble at school (hh) =  
855 Alex: Okay  
856 Denise: = um (1) but one day I think it was in year six (.) I think I think he =  
857 Alex: [Yep]  
858 Denise: just I think it was just that was it [he] =  
859 Bridget:  
860 Alex: [Hm]  
861 Denise: = he’s really had enough by then (hh) and he did turn round and =  
862 punch one and gave him a black eye (quiet giggle) (.) so when they =  
863 phoned up and told me that he’d hit somebody I said ‘oh that’s great =  
864 I’ll take him to MacDonald’s tonight then’ [(quiet laugh)]  
865 Alex: [(Quiet laugh)] did they do anything [about it (.) given] =  
866 Denise: They said ‘that’s not the attitude Mrs Jones’ (.) and I said ‘but I’ve =  
867 been telling you the last four years that that boy has been hurting my =  
868 son (hh) =  
869 Alex: Yeah  
870 Denise: = and the one time he turns round and hits him you’re phoning me up =  
871 and having a go (.) don’t think so (.) [so we’re going to MacDonald’s] =  
872
This extract illustrates a number of different constructions which serve to discredit the school’s reactions to the incident. Denise constructs her son’s actions as being acceptable initially by saying that he had ‘really had enough by then’ (line 862) indicating that whatever was causing him to feel this had been occurring for some time. Denise then reinforces this at the end of the extract when she states ‘he’s actually stood up for himself’ (line 874). Furthermore, Denise implies that this action occurred in the absence of action by the school when she declares ‘but I’ve been telling you the last four years that that boy has been hurting my son’ (lines 867 – 868). In addition, Denise discusses how her son ‘always said he wouldn’t do anything at school because he would get into trouble’ (lines 850 – 851). This constructs the action of her son as not only being acceptable but unexpected and a contrast to his own previously declared position. The aforementioned constructs are then reinforced when Denise discusses the school as positioning her support of her son (in the form of taking him to MacDonald’s; lines 865 and 872) as incorrect (line 867). Throughout this narrative Denise’s constructions discredit the school where they have not acted and have responded to her support for her son inappropriately.

This next extract details a section of speech from Nicole which discusses parental actions as being the pre-teaching of particular skills.

**Extract 12**

1481  Nicole:  The thing that drives me mad is the (h) but she ‘but she’s perfectly fine in class why does she’ (.) =
1482  Bridget:  Hm
1483  Nicole:  = my daughter holds it together for eight hours a day [sitting] =
1484  Bridget:  [Yeah]
1485  Alex:  = there and [then]
1486  Alex:  [And then she comes home]
1487  Nicole:  = she explodes when she [goes into] =
1488  Denise:  [Yeah my son did]
1489  Nicole:  = yeah and I’ll say ‘she’s gonna come and tell me she doesn’t feel safe she can’t come and tell you’ (.) =
1490  Unknown:  Hm
Nicole: = and yes we do teach them how to stand up for themselves and we do teach them what’s right and what’s wrong which obviously (...) helps them to understand what they should be doing [but] =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = doesn’t make any sense as to why other people aren’t held accountable for their actions (...) =

Nicole’s recollection here positions her daughter as presenting with contrasting behaviours in the home and school environments where in the latter she ‘holds it together’ (line 1484) while in the former she ‘explodes’ (line 1488). Nicole then constructs the way in which the school responds to this contrast (i.e. by describing her daughter as being ‘fine’ in class; lines 1481 – 1482) as being inappropriate (i.e. it ‘drives me mad’; line 1481). These comments are subsequently met with agreement from Denise (line 1489) thus providing reinforcement to Nicole’s constructions. The recollection here from Nicole serves as a platform for her to discuss her actions in response to her daughter’s presentation at home. Specifically, Nicole discusses teaching her daughter to stand up for herself (line 1493), know ‘what’s right / wrong’ (line 1494) and know what she ‘should be doing’ (line 1495). This three-part list details what Nicole is doing and subsequently constructs the school as not teaching these things. Furthermore, Nicole’s use of the personal pronouns ‘we’ (line 1493) and ‘them’ (line 1495) assume that her action of teaching her daughter these things is a collective action; that the other parents present also engage in the pre-teaching of these skills. The construction of the parents as taking action once again discredits the absence of action from the schools. This is further highlighted through the closing comment of the extract where Nicole positions others as engaging in inappropriate actions but that they are ‘not held accountable’ for them (lines 1497 – 1498).

**Reflection Box 5.8**
Looking again at the use of the personal pronouns employed by Nicole, they are suggestive of a ‘them and us’ stance; parents versus teachers. This was a construction also noted in Chapter 3 following the analysis of the staff meeting discussions where the teachers positioned themselves as being against the parents. Taking this into account alongside the positioning by EPs of both parents and teachers requiring support to achieve the correct construction of bullying, the ‘them and us’ stance illustrates the conflicting discourses of bullying between stakeholders.
Throughout these extracts the constructions of the parents position themselves as having to take action because the schools have not thus serving to discredit the schools through the recollections which are spoken as fact. Furthermore, the actions taken in some instances have been constructed as extreme such as the removal of the child from activities and seeking police involvement.

**Parental constructions of known school actions**

The way in which the parents construct the response of a school as being dependent on the age of the children has already been referred to in Extract 8. Here, Denise described her son’s secondary school as being ‘better’ (line 574) before recollecting an incident which she recalled as being ‘dealt with by the school’ (line 585). In the next extract Bridget explores this age based response construction further:

**Extract 13**

546  Bridget: And I think it also depends on the kids age as well [because] =
547   Alex: [Okay okay]
548  Bridget: = because they seem to view that the younger they are oh kids will (.)
549   oh they’re kids (.)=
550  Alex: Hm
551  Bridget: = um on the plus side (. ) my sons now at college and we had an
552   incident a couple of years ago when he was pushed quite violently (. ) =
553  Alex: Hm
554  Bridget: = by another pupil (hh) um and he ended up head butting the kid that
555   was standing in front of him (. ) so I was called by college saying (.)
556  Alex: = um (.) we’ve spoken to the child
557  Bridget: = do you want him to apologise to your son (. ) [do you
558   know] =
559  Alex: = [Hm]
560  Bridget: = and and this on the day and it was a completely different because
561   they are adults (. ) =
562  Alex: Hm
563  Bridget: = you know they are over eighteen (. ) and they seemed to be much
564   more you know we cannot tolerate this (. ) but at school when they’re
565  Alex: = Hm
566  Bridget: = so it doesn’t seem to be the same level of concern when it’s a
567   [physical] =
568  Alex: [Hm]
569  Bridget: = [when they’re] =
570  Alex: [Right]
571  Bridget: = kids compared to when [they’re over eighteen]
Bridget initially positions schools (referred to as ‘they’; line 548) as excusing the behaviours of younger children as ‘kids will oh they’re kids’ (lines 548 – 549). Bridget then constructs those in the college setting as taking immediate action (lines 555 and 560) which she positions as being a result of those involved being ‘adults’ (line 561) and ‘over eighteen’ (lines 563 and 572). Consequently, Bridget constructs these different responses as being a result of the way in which the adults ‘view’ (line 548) the pupils in their settings. This places the responsibility for action with the adults involved. It also constructs the potential actions as being linked to the ‘level of concern’ (line 567) which is in turn dependent on the age of the pupils and the type of incident occurring. In making these comments, Bridget discredits the actions taken when issues arise with younger children. At the same time, she constructs the actions taken when those involved are considered adults as being acceptable and even desired (i.e. an immediate response with same day contact with parents). Interestingly, Bridget continues discussing the differences in responses between younger children and secondary / college levels later in the conversation. However, Bridget’s further comments construct these responses as being a result of the information contained within their anti-bullying policies; specifically, greater detail in policies at the secondary / college levels means more effective responses (Appendix 17).

Reflection Box 5.9
The reference here to the policies constructs those in secondary schools and colleges as being more effective because they hold greater detail. The effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy was noted in Chapter 4 as being measured through demonstration of its employment according to the government guidance. As such, it could be argued that it was not the policies themselves that made the responses of the secondary school / college more appealing to Bridget but the fact that they were implemented in the first place.

This next extract illustrates the way the talk constructs the actions of the schools as being dependent on the event as opposed to the age range of the pupils involved. It follows a recollection from Nicole where the school was constructed as blaming her for her daughter’s experiences (Appendix 16; Extract A16.2). My opening question here follows a reference from Nicole to
the school only telling parents that something has occurred when it is ‘a really big thing’ (lines 663 – 664).

**Extract 14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Alex:</th>
<th>Nicole:</th>
<th>Alex:</th>
<th>Nicole:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>670</td>
<td>Okay so when what what are what do they see as an incident that they</td>
<td>Something that they would probably get suspended for (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>671</td>
<td>would do something about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>672</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>Okay [so so something] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>673</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[That big]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>674</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>= more physical [like] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>675</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>[Yeah]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>676</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>= the sorts of things that you guys were describing [with the hands]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>677</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>There are there are physical things going on every day (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>678</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>679</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= um and they’re not being (.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>680</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Okay so things like um I don’t know pushing in a line [or] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>681</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>[Yeah]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>682</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>= and that’s happening on a daily basis but that sort of thing isn’t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>683</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>being (.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>684</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>No and things like erm psychological stuff like taking lunches (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>685</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= kicking things over spilling things (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>686</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>687</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= um putting things in people’s hair (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>688</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>689</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= putting their possessions down a toilet (.) [erm] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>690</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>691</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= things that would (.) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>692</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>693</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= would cause great upset [and anxiety] =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This extract illustrates a co-construction between myself and Nicole where the school is positioned as reacting to incidents only under particular circumstances. These circumstances are constructed in the form of a three part list that is started by Nicole and completed by myself. Specifically, Nicole constructs the circumstances as likely to result in a suspension for the child enacting the behaviour (line 672) and where the behaviour is ‘that big’ (line 674). I then complete the list by commenting on the behaviour as being ‘more physical’ (line 675) following this with examples drawn from recollections of the other discussants (line 677) and in between this, agreement is given from Nicole (line 676). In Chapter 3 the co-construction of participants in the form of a three-part list was noted as a way for the discussants to reinforce their own constructions as well as strengthen that which they are building during the talk. The three-part list here serves the same purpose for the co-
construction regarding the reactions of the school as occurring in certain circumstances. However, the list and the subsequent co-construction also enable myself and Nicole to discredit the reactions of the school. Essentially we are arguing that only responding to specific instances is inappropriate and ineffective. This is achieved through the list of other behaviours constructed by Nicole with agreement from myself (lines 685 – 695). Within this list, there are two specific elements of behaviours that we construct as warranting a reaction from the school; physical acts that occur on a daily basis (lines 678 and 683) and what Nicole labels as ‘psychological stuff’ (line 685). The latter is then followed by examples (lines 685 – 691) which are then constructed by Nicole as behaviours that would ‘cause great upset and anxiety’ (line 695). The construction here positions such ‘psychological stuff’ as being as inappropriate as the previously mentioned ‘physical acts’ where each warrants the same level of reaction from the school.

**Reflection Box 5.10**

As I noted using the Reflection Boxes in Chapter 2, the analysis of one’s own speech is a rather disconcerting experience. My involvement in the construction started by Nicole is perhaps a reflection of my own discourse about features of bullying; that bullying can be acts that are physical and / or psychological. I would also suggest that joining in with the construction also illustrates my desire to reinforce Nicole’s comments as one parent supporting another. In this case, a construction that the school is incorrect in only focusing on physical acts as acts of bullying.

**Parental constructions of appropriate school actions**

At later points in the discussion the parents make suggestions as to the actions they construct as being appropriate for schools to consider in responding to bullying. The following three extracts illustrate the three main actions the parents constructed as those schools should consider. Within Extract 15, Bridget introduces co-production with parents following an invitation to share ideas from myself.
Extract 15

1697 Alex: but have you got anything else that you might like to see of or just
1698 in general any other ideas for me that I can take away from today
1699 Bridget: Well I was wondering is there any good practice out there
1700 where a school =
1701 Unknown: Him
1702 Bridget: = has been successful in working with parents in establishing [a
1703 counter] =
1704 Alex: [Okay]
1705 Bridget: = bullying [policy] =
1706 Alex: [Okay]
1707 Bridget: = and the actions they’ve taken and it would be interesting to I
1708 don’t know how easy that’s (laugh)
1709 Alex: So going back to what you were saying earlier about coproduction =
1710 Bridget: Yeah [and for it to work]
1711 Alex: = [and working together]
1712 Nicole: And schools realising that that is the best way
1713 Bridget: It is it is and it makes sense [doesn’t it]
1714 Denise: [Yeah]
1715 Nicole: [Why always be] at war with each other
1716 Alex: [Yeah]
1717 Bridget: [Yeah working] together instead

Bridget here introduces the notion of ‘good practice’ (line 1699) and constructs this as being when schools work with parents to establish an anti-bullying policy (lines 1699 – 1705) and identify actions to take (line 1707). The construction of schools and parents working together to establish good practice is subsequently referred to throughout the rest of the extract by myself and Bridget (lines 1709, 1711 and 1717) following the format of a co-construction where we reinforce both the original construction and our own personal constructions. Furthermore, the agreement the other discussants provide (line 1712 and 1714) strengthens the construction and creates a consensus which is also referred to later in the discussion (Appendix 17). However, it should be acknowledged that the initial introduction of this construction was from Bridget, the organiser of the group and myself, both researcher and participant. It is therefore possible that the agreement given by Nicole and Denise stems from a desire to follow the construction set by those within the group with power and influence. However the consensus is constructed, the implication is that the schools referred to in the narratives do not work effectively with parents. This discredits the school’s lack of collaboration with parents and gives a clear message about how this group of discussants would like to work in the future.
Within the next extract, Denise introduces having a key person for the parents to discuss issues with as being an appropriate action for schools to consider.

**Extract 16**

1781  Denise:  And maybe (.) um (.) having a support person at the school (.) that you can talk to (.) ’cause I know sometimes you can get someone that you can actually talk to that knows that (h) =
1782  Alex:  Yeah
1783  Denise:  = there is that because you get your pastoral carers that work with the children um (.) =
1784  Alex:  Hm
1785  Denise:  = um (.) but you’ve got no-one for you (.) [you’ve got your] =
1786  Bridget:  [That’s right sure]
1787  Denise:  = partner (h) =
1788  Alex:  Yeah
1789  Denise:  = but it’s not the same (.) because he’s at work all day (.) and then by the time he comes home (h) [you’ve stewed on it all day]

Denise introduces a contrast of positioning here where children are discussed as having someone specific within schools to work with them (lines 785 – 786) whereas parents do not (line 1788). Furthermore, Denise constructs having a particular person from school to work with parents as being beneficial because they 'know' (line 1783) implying the knowledge here as being that of the pupil, the situation and the history. In contrast again, Denise positions talking to someone in the family as not as effective by comparison due to a time lag between hearing about an incident and when there is an opportunity to talk about it at home (lines 1792  1793). This once again serves to discredit the current child centred reactions of schools as well as constructing schools as ignoring the potential for parents to require support.

In the final extract in this sub-theme Nicole discusses several actions directed towards pupils themselves as being appropriate for schools to consider.

**Extract 17**

1817  Nicole:  [And I think] involve the children (h) um if you make (.) if pe if children see good examples and they see that good examples are rewarded and that (.) that bad behaviour (h) and unacceptable behaviour (h) um is dealt with (.) then they will (.) you know (.) you’re letting this happen in school you’re not doing anything about it and so (. ) it might come into school but it’s getting out of control in school you know at home we control (h) um (. ) we take of children don’t we (.)
you know (.) we don’t let them you know you wouldn’t send them off
to a park at nine o’clock at night with a bunch of teenagers where they
could get bullied but (.) it’s okay to send them into school with three
hundred other kids and them get bullied but (.) [why] =

Bridget:  Yep
Nicole:  = is that any different (.) but um (.) say if you had like (.) one child in
each class (.) or two (.) you know try and make it so it’s not one
particular child who stands out but two or three children maybe (h)
who were (.) like the (.) buddies of that group or then that year group
and then so when it’s in the playground at lunchtime it’s not one poor
child who then gets bullied because they’re trying to stand up for all
the other children (h) =

This section of speech from Nicole is quite complex in its content which begins
with the immediate introduction of a good behaviour / bad behaviour contrast
structure (lines 1818 – 1819). Although no specific examples are shared as to
what Nicole would consider to be good / bad behaviour, they are contrasted as
being acceptable / unacceptable (lines 1819 – 1820). Nicole also constructs
the different responses to be considered for exhibitions by pupils of good / bad
behaviour. Specifically, Nicole constructs good behaviour as requiring the
response of a ‘reward’ (line 1819) while bad and unacceptable behaviour is
‘dealt with’ (line 1820). It is through these constructions that schools are
discredited by implying that they do not currently employ the actions
suggested.

Reflection Box 5.11
The good / bad behaviour contrast presented here by Nicole was also reported as
being present in the language employed in the government guidance (Chapter 4)
and the teacher talk (Chapter 3). More specifically, within these contexts bullying
is constructed as being the ‘bad’ behaviour and one that can be reduced by
promoting ‘good behaviour’.

Nicole then positions these comments within the construct of control. This is
again introduced in the form of a contrast structure where schools do not have
control (line 1822) while homes do (line 1823). Nicole takes this further by
introducing a secondary contrast structure of responsive and non-responsive
where schools are ‘not doing anything about it’ (line 1821) while at home
control is the action (1826). These contrast structures are discussed within the
construct of children requiring adults to control them although the type of
control is not specified. In addition, this control is constructed as being the
action that should be taken in response to particular behaviours. The schools are discredited here as not having any control over the pupils and as such, incidents such as those experienced by the children of the discussants occur.

Within this extract Nicole likens the school context to that of a park late in the evening where she discusses both as being potential situations where bullying might occur (lines 1823 – 1827). This comparison enables Nicole to position herself and other parents as exerting control over their children by refraining from allowing them to enter a context where they might be bullied. Nicole contrasts this with the school context where they have no control and the children then experience bullying. The comments here by Nicole discuss the school environment as being more dangerous than the park situation thus discrediting the former where children are more likely to experience bullying. To address this, Nicole suggests that children such as her daughter and those of the other discussants should not be the only ones in their year / class requiring support as this means that they stand out (lines 1829 – 1831). The implication here is that when they stand out this results in bullying so increasing numbers of these types of children will reduce the possibility of others noticing and subsequently bullying them. This positions the children who stand out as having something different about them which makes bullying more likely. There is also an implication that the children who are different in some way require the presence of similar others to reduce the likelihood of being bullied. This action is reliant on increasing numbers of pupils with differences rather than schools implementing any particular strategy and as such, discredits schools; it is the presence of more children rather than the actions of adults which will prevent bullying. However, the end of the extract gives a confusing picture as to what Nicole is discussing. In lines 1833 – 1835 Nicole positions one child as being bullied because ‘they’re trying to stand up for all the other children’. Here then the reason Nicole constructs for children being bullied is because they are trying to help protect others rather than because they stand out from those others in some way. In addition, the presence of larger number of peers is constructed as protecting the child who is trying to protect others rather than reducing the likelihood of standing out
and thus being bullied. This continues to discredit schools and position the adults within as being less effective than having additional pupils present.

**Constructing schools as in denial**

This discourse relates to the positioning of schools by the discussants as not taking action to prevent or address instances of bullying because they prefer to think that bullying does not occur in their establishments according to their construction of bullying. The first extract is a short exchange between Denise and Nicole where they co-construct a three-part list positioning schools as making a choice about whether bullying is acknowledged.

**Extract 18**

294  Denise:  [The school] don’t want to see it as (.) they’d like to say there’s no
295  bullying going on
296  Nicole:  They don’t even like the word do they

This positioning also discusses schools as having a dislike of the word ‘bullying’ where they do not consider the parents to be using the term correctly (i.e. it does not fit with how they construct bullying). As the list is co-constructed, Denise and Nicole are able to provide reinforcement for each other’s comments as well as strengthen the construction of ignorance. Furthermore, by constructing schools as having a choice about whether they acknowledge bullying, Denise and Nicole discredit them; rather than acknowledging bullying and responding to incidents schools consider it not to happen. This suggestion of acknowledgement rather than denial continues later on in the discussion as illustrated in the following extract.

**Extract 19**

419  Nicole:  I think acknowledgement in the first place
420  Alex:  [Acknowledgement okay]
421  Nicole:  [Acknowledgement first] =
422  Alex:  Yeah
423  Nicole:  = because they will brush it under the carpet (.) =
424  Alex:  Hm
Initially this extract furthers the positioning from the parents of schools requiring a move towards acknowledgement of bullying rather than choosing to ignore it (lines 419 – 423) where I provide clarification of, then agreement to, the comments by Nicole. Furthermore, Nicole suggests that even when schools seek advice from specific individuals these people support the ignorance towards bullying. Nicole particularly mentions SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) and EPs (line 429) positioning them as being part of the school when she describes the process of involving them as being ‘in house’ (lines 429 – 430). Here then Nicole includes members of my profession as assisting schools in maintaining an ignorance towards bullying. Following on from this, Nicole contrasts this in house operation with involvement from external agencies although this latter involvement comes as a result of parental requests rather than schools seeking this. Nicole constructs the involvement of outside agencies as being something which parents need to do so that schools feel ‘uncomfortable’ (line 427) and subsequently ‘leap into action’ (line 437). This positions schools as only acknowledging and addressing bullying due to the influence of these external agencies. The construction here discredits schools where they are positioned as needing to be forced into acknowledging bullying and taking action against it by parents involving outside agencies. As the discussion progresses, references to school acknowledgement rather than deliberate ignorance are made frequently (Appendix 18) establishing these contrasting positions as being a particularly powerful discourse constructed by the discussants.
Reflection Box 5.12
Although the analysis here is of the talk from the parents, the construction of schools seeking to deny that bullying occurs in their settings raises questions as to why this is the case. Furthermore, the denial here reflects the contrast structure reported from the staff meeting discussions (Chapter 3) where the teachers discussed bullying as occurring but only rarely if at all in their settings. I would argue, drawing on the government guidance discussed in Chapter 4, that by denying that bullying occurs in their settings teachers can portray their schools as being ‘safe’ places for the pupils thus meeting Ofsted standards and legal requirements. Another interpretation could be that schools deny that bullying occurs in their settings because they construct the incidents being recalled by the parents as part of growing up / something that pupils will experience as they navigate through new social experiences. I would have to acknowledge my own bias here and declare my preferred interpretation as being that of the schools choosing to deny bullying occurs in order to preserve their safe image. I would further acknowledge that this reflects my personal discourse of considering that no pupil should ‘have’ to experience the types of abuses being recalled here; a desire to prevent this was one of the reasons I became an EP!

Constructions of an unheard voice

Within this discourse, the participants position schools as preventing them / their children from sharing their concerns regarding both instances of bullying and the way in which these were addressed by schools. In the first extract Denise positions schools as restricting both herself and her son from having contact with representatives from Ofsted and therefore not able to discuss concerns.

Extract 20

455 Denise: [There there is] and I think as well wh when we had Ofsted inspections
456 (. .) as a parent I was never chosen to speak to Ofsted or do a report
457 [for Ofsted] =
458 Alex: [Hm okay]
459 Denise: = um and (. .) my son and a couple of others when they were doing
460 Ofsted inspection were taken off for a special [class] =
461 Bridget: [Yes] yes that happened [to me too]
462 Alex: [Okay]
463 Bridget: [Yes]
464 Alex: [Okay] so [we’re talking]
465 Denise: [So they never heard about] the Ofsted people would never hear about
466 the bullying (. .) =
467 Alex: Right
468 Denise: = because (. .) they would just go to the (. .) you know good parents
469 (quiet laugh) (. .) =
Within this extract then Denise initially constructs the school as preventing her from speaking with or compiling a report for Ofsted (lines 456 – 457) by not choosing her. This discredits the school by placing them in the position of controlling her access to Ofsted and deliberately barring it. Furthermore, Denise constructs the school as having control over her actions. Denise further introduces a contrasting construction of the school choosing ‘good parents’ (line 468) to give information to Ofsted while ignoring the ‘bad parents’ such as herself who would have information on bullying to share but which the school did not want acknowledged. This not only reinforces the construction of the school as deliberately ignoring bullying but also discredits the school’s choice of parental involvement during Ofsted.

As well as constructing herself as not having a choice about speaking to Ofsted, Denise constructs the school as deliberately removing her son from the classroom context (lines 459 – 460). This is constructed as being an action by the school designed to prevent members of Ofsted seeing and speaking with her son. Both this construction and that aforementioned regarding parental involvement position the school as being in control of and a barrier to the sharing of information. Such a construction implies that the sharing of information with Ofsted would be beneficial for parents and pupils but detrimental to schools hence the prevention of contact with particular individuals. The comments from Denise receive agreement from Bridget when she states that she also experienced the removal of her son from classes during Ofsted visits thus reinforcing the account shared by Denise.

Later in the discussion the reference to Ofsted and the prevention of information sharing by schools is discussed again (Appendix 19) where parents and children are constructed as having something to say but as being unable to share it. Extract 21 discusses the absence of voice in terms of the development of an anti-bullying policy. During previous discourses the discussants constructed the co-production of an anti-bullying policy as being a preferable course of action for schools but one which was not occurring at the time of the conversation.
Extract 21

Bridget: Hm and I think having that the the anti-bullying policy (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = serves no purpose (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = when someone’s saying you’re describing something to them (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = and they’re clearly not listening to what you are saying (h) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = and they say well no that’s not what’s happening here so (. ) so (. )
you know (. ) it’s it’s completely dis (. ) [they’re] =
Nicole: [Yeah]
Bridget: = dismissing what you’re saying to them (. ) =

Here Bridget constructs co-production as being absent due to schools ‘not listening’ (line 791) and ‘dismissing’ (line 796) the information being given by parents. This construction again positions schools as having a choice about what information they take on board and as actively ignoring the information parents have to share. Bridget employs extremes to reinforce her construction of the absent voice when she states that the school is ‘clearly’ (line 791) not listening and that it is ‘completely’ (line 794) dismissive of information given and in between, agreement is given by Nicole (line 795). The constructions here discredit the anti-bullying policies compiled by schools because they do not contain the information from parents and thereby ‘serve no purpose’ (line 787). This is something that is referred to again later in the conversation (Appendix 19) and the dismissal of the anti-bullying policies produced by schools is clearly an area of concern for the discussants.

Reflection Box 5.13
The construction here from the parents positioning the schools as not listening to them could also be a reflection of the conflicting discourses between parents and teachers about what constitutes bullying. It is possible that the teachers are choosing not to work collaboratively with parents because they consider parents to use the word bullying inappropriately to describe incidents that are simply ordinary social experiences. A further possible interpretation is that schools choose not to listen because if they do, they risk a potential increase in reported incidents which would, in turn, decrease the safe image of the school. I would argue that asking the schools about working with parents in light of this construction would be a beneficial avenue for further research.
Discussion

It is essential to acknowledge here the differences between the discourses shared with the parents in the leaflet and subsequent discussion in comparison to the analyses presented in the previous chapters. At the time of this data collection, the titles of the discourses shared with the participants were those detailed in the analyses. However, since collecting the data and as part of a review of the analyses as per the revision element of the thesis writing process, changes were made to the titles as illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2: Discourse titles

Where (S) is shown this denotes a subtheme to the immediately preceding discourse title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Chapter</th>
<th>Information leaflet discourse title</th>
<th>Final analysis discourse title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bullying by any other name...</td>
<td>Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EP identity</td>
<td>EP identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barriers to the application of our skills</td>
<td>Barriers to the application of our skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The absence of psychology</td>
<td>The absence of psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If it ain’t broke don’t fix it</td>
<td>Reconstructing existing stakeholder constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The need for consensus</td>
<td>Constructing consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmation and reinforcement of beliefs</td>
<td>Confirmation and reinforcement of personal constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What constitutes bullying? (S)</td>
<td>Constructing features of bullying (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A means to an end (S)</td>
<td>Constructing possible reactions to bullying (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bullying as part of a continuum or a hierarchy?</td>
<td>Constructing bullying as a category of behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cyberbullying as a separate entity</td>
<td>Constructions of cyberbullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Authority by positioning</td>
<td>Constructing the context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The letter of the law</td>
<td>Constraining actions by school staff as required in a legal framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bullying as part of a continuum or a hierarchy?</td>
<td>Regulated autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cyberbullying as a separate entity</td>
<td>A school based reader as both educator and learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bullying as a within child problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rather than abandoning the data or reorganising the collection processes, the analysis of the parental responses went ahead as planned. The social constructionist nature of the research undertaken here means that it is ever evolving.

The discourses identified within the data set analysed present as similar to those noted by O’Reilly (2014). For instance, the parents here constructed a discourse around blame in the same manner as the parents in O’Reilly’s data. Specifically, the parents here discussed schools as blaming either them or their children for instances of bullying. Furthermore, O’Reilly noted that the parents in her research sought to reinforce the truthfulness of the information they shared through recollections. This was also employed during the conversation explored here where the parents repeatedly used accounts of experiences they had encountered to reinforce their own and each-others’ recollections as factual. In addition, the narratives shared constructed a consensus between the discussants regarding the discrediting of schools. The implication here is that the participants co-construct schools as ineffective in preventing and tackling bullying.

The discourses within the discussion, particularly those which refer to blame, illustrate a positioning of their children as victims and as deviant from the social norm because of their characteristics. This reflects the individualistic representation of bullying in the previous research explored in Chapter 1 (e.g. Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Sutton, Smith & Swettenham, 1999) as well as the continued use of individualistic language seen throughout the previous chapters. Both this individualistic construction and that of blame suggest that parents and schools should work in partnership to support pupils who discuss themselves as having been bullied. This would be more effective than assigning blame and constructing a ‘them and us’ positioning such as that noted in Chapter 3.

The discourses discussed here suggest further exploration of the constructions of parents would be beneficial. For example, would other sets of parents
construct the data from the other sources in the same way as those here (i.e. constructing excuses and reasons for blame regarding their children’s experiences)? Furthermore, would other parents position their children as victims due to their individual characteristics in the same manner as those here and in the previous positivist and qualitative research?

Throughout the extracts schools are discussed as a collective with occasional references from the discussants to the specific contexts associated with their children. By grouping schools in this way the discussants construct all educational settings as responding inappropriately to bullying or not responding at all as well as deliberately ignoring what is occurring in their establishments. Furthermore, with each agreement and co-construction, the recollections shared by the parents are reinforced as factual accounts and continually serve to discredit the schools referenced in them.

The recollections shared by the parents’ position their children as needing someone to defend and speak for them. Consequently, the parents position themselves as being in the role of spokesperson to fulfil these requirements. In contrast, schools are positioned as making a choice about ignoring what is happening and whether they take action and it is this deliberate ignorance which parents construct as resulting in them having to address issues on behalf of their children.

**Participant / researcher dichotomy**

On reading through the transcript I was initially confident in identifying potential discourses. On reflection I became concerned that rather than these emerging from the discussion as it progressed, they were my imposition on the data. More specifically, in reflecting back the issues raised to the parents in the same manner I use during my work as an EP I was constructing the constructions for them from their narratives. However, the premise of social constructionism is that constructions evolve as talk continues and new information is shared. In addition, as both researcher and participant I would
not have been able to separate my talk in one role from that in the other. As such, I have embraced the duality of my presence and identified the discourses from the discussion as being just that; a jointly constructed discourse emerging through talk in a social context.

Having said this, I acknowledge that it is important to explore aspects of the discussion where my speech reflects perhaps elements of personal constructions identified during analysis of the conversation (Appendix 20). In addition, although the discourses identified and explored above have emerged from the jointly constructed conversation I was part of, there are aspects of my speech where I introduce the titles of these to the other discussants as I reflect back the information they have shared in their stories. For example there are specific moments early on in the talk where I say ‘I don’t want to put words into your mouth but’ (e.g. line 190). Here, I employ the discourse marker ‘but’ as a means to soften the potential influence my next comment might have on the subsequent speech of the other participants. In other words, by using the word ‘but’ following my statement I am seeking to downplay the potential power asserted over the parents in my position as both researcher and discussant. At the point in the discussion where I follow the discourse marker with the words ‘they were making excuses for’ (line 191), Bridget does in fact agree with this construction (line 192). Furthermore, the construction was taken up and repeated in subsequent stories where it became a strong discourse. Although the pattern of softening comments made to reduce possible influence continues throughout the conversation, at the time the intention was to merely reflect back and summarise in the way I do when at work as an EP. Furthermore, agreement with the construction in my speech is not always given by the other discussants. For example, during the beginning of the conversation, I construct the information in the stories shared by the parents as describing a ‘battle’ (e.g. line 291) between them and the schools they refer to. However, this is not taken forward by the other discussants.
Throughout the discussion I make frequent references to the government document analysed as part of Chapter 4 following an account shared by the parents. I have already acknowledged that the titles of the discourses shared with the parents through the leaflet given at the start of the discussion are different from those presented in the final write up following ongoing adjustment and evolution of the analysis. Having said this, on looking through the data to identify the discourses presented above, I observed that at several points in the discussion I talk about the way in which the government document discusses bullying. On reviewing these moments I would acknowledge that perhaps the comments made are a reflection of my own personal discourses relating to the government. This relates to what I have constructed from the titles initially identified rather than a reflection of the discourses themselves presented in Chapter 4.

On reflecting back the stories the parents have shared, there are frequent occurrences of my speech constructing elements of the accounts given as extreme. For example, following recollections from the parents of physical actions towards their children by the parents, I reflect back that these are ‘significant’ (e.g. line 267). This is also employed to reflect the actions the parents have taken as a result of issues experienced by their children such as police involvement (e.g. line 278). By reflecting back specific elements of the accounts as being ‘significant’, I provide reinforcement for the recollections shared. Such responses also indicate an acceptance of the accounts shared as factual and subsequently, agree with the discrediting of school actions. I also provide reinforcement to the parents’ narratives in other ways by interjecting their speech with agreeable words and phrases peppered throughout the conversation.

Exploring the introduction specifically, the language I employ presents on reflection as being positivist in certain elements. For example, rather than talking about ‘constructions’ found in the previous studies, I discuss ‘views’. As previously stated, the introduction did not follow a set script but was free-flow using the leaflet as a prompt. I would construct my choice of words as a
means to engage with the parents who are bringing to the conversation a different position of research history. Perhaps it could be argued that taking time prior to the discussion to share with the parents more in depth information regarding the epistemology and ontology of the research would have been beneficial.

Throughout the discussion I make references to a single definition of bullying and traditional terminologies. This is particularly noticeable at the end of the conversation where I specifically ask the parents if they would agree with the definition I gave at the start of the discussion. However, following the aforementioned evolution of the thesis, these are no longer a focus for the research.
Chapter 6

Process and personal reflections
Introduction

The research discussed in the preceding chapters represents an innovative contribution to the field of psychological research into bullying that both compliments and expands the existing information.

The aim of my research was to discuss the discourses from EPs, teachers, government guidance and parents as stakeholders in terms of how they are constructed including the influence of the context. This was formed following an acknowledgement of the importance of considering language as a source of information regarding the constructions of stakeholders about bullying. Specifically, stakeholders including myself with the potential to influence the way in which pupils talk about bullying and be in a position to address and prevent bullying. Throughout the process, I have acknowledged my personal involvement through the roles I hold as researcher, practicing EP, parent and former teacher. It is the ethnographic nature of my research that enhances the innovative contribution to the field. The purpose of my research was two-fold. The first was to discuss the differences between constructions following those noted in positivist research. The second was to discuss implications for future explorations into bullying and mechanisms for stakeholder groups to support pupils. What follows is a discussion of the outcomes from my research against the aforementioned aims, a review of the ethnographic nature of the studies, a comment on possible future directions for further exploration in this area and a discussion of how this might influence support to pupils from the stakeholder groups involved.

The variability of constructions

The variety of constructions about bullying in the data analysed here reflects the basis for my research; an acknowledgement of variability in previous positivist studies through my own review and as acknowledged by others such as Smith and Monks (2008) as well as my own experiences as an EP and former teacher. Following social constructionism, the variety reflects the
different contexts in which the participants discussed the topic as well as the personal histories, experiences and cultures brought to the conversation by the discussants. Furthermore, where the data was collected from group discussion, the comments made during the conversation will also have influenced the social construction of the topic at hand. In addition, the repeated discussions and attempts to reach an agreed construction of bullying reflect a desire by the stakeholder groups involved here to, as Hepburn (2000) noted, make sense of the interactions observed between pupils. The agreements reached will undoubtedly be a reflection of the histories, cultures and experiences brought to the discussion by the individuals and their choice of language following comments from others within the social context of a group discussion. The discussions analysed culminate in a wide variety of constructions regarding bullying. This variation in the language employed to construct bullying here reflects that noted as present in the review of previous research (e.g. Gini, 2006; Phillips, 2007) explored in the first Chapter.

**Role constructions**

As noted in Chapter 1, previous positivist research constructed individuals as having particular roles within instances of bullying such as victim or bully because of their characteristics (e.g. Mahdavi & Smith, 2007; Olweus, 1993). Also as reported in the first Chapter, previous qualitative research constructed individuals as having the aforementioned roles due to being deviant in some way from the social norm (e.g. Thornberg, 2010). This was particularly relevant when the research discussed the role of victim. The data collected and presented in the preceding chapters gives further evidence concerning these constructions. For example, in Chapter 2 my colleagues and I discussed victims as being positioned in this role due to the context. This was noted to contrast with the individualistic construction from the positivist research and that of social deviance from previous qualitative literature. Within Chapter 3, the positioning of individuals as victims or bullies was noted to be constructed as normalised; a part of the definition of bullying agreed on by the teachers involved in the discussions. This was also noted in Chapter 4 as being how the
governmental guidance discussed individuals in the roles of victim or bully. Finally, within Chapter 5 the parents constructed their children as being in the role of victim because of their characteristics in the same manner as previous positivist research (e.g. Black & Jackson, 2007; Smith & Smith, 2004). The parents were also noted to discuss these characteristics as positioning their children as deviant from the social norm akin to the previous qualitative research (e.g. Harmarus & Kaikkonen, 2008). Upon review, the evidence presented here to a certain extent reflects the constructions noted within previous research, both qualitative and positivist alike, as to roles within bullying. However, the preceding analyses also provide information that illustrates the breadth with which the roles, in particular that of victim, are constructed by different groups of stakeholders. Furthermore, the evidence given illustrates the potential for constructions regarding roles to be mirrored between different groups of stakeholders. Such breadth of construction and potential for mirroring have implications for the way in which the stakeholder groups support pupils who discuss themselves as being bullied as will be explored later in this chapter.

**Constructions of positioning**

Each stakeholder group positions itself as having the correct construction of bullying. This was also reflected in the teacher staff meeting discussions where, although the data collected was from four different schools, each set of staff positioned themselves as being correct in their construction of bullying. In addition, each group positions the others as needing to have their constructions changed with themselves as being able to achieve this. The disparity of constructions here reinforces the variability already noted in how people construct bullying. I would subsequently argue that the disparity reinforces the requirement for addressing situations on a context by context basis and by addressing this rather than debating whether something is bullying. After all, how can an agreement on the construction of bullying be reached when each group prioritises its’ own construction and positions others as requiring correction?
I have previously commented on the history of positioning theory given by Harre et al (2009). They describe the pattern of agreements and disagreements between individuals within a discussion following statements of position as contributing to social constructions. I would argue that as the discussants in each group of stakeholders agree with each other regarding the aforementioned positioning, the consensus achieved serves to complete a co-construction of those outside of the group requiring correction of their constructions of bullying. This in-group / out-group contrast is something that occurs with regard to group constructions of bullying but is also present elsewhere in other forms. For example, as EPs we constructed ourselves as experts while those outside of the profession require education. In addition, teachers constructed bullying as something that happens but rarely in their schools only outside of them. Furthermore, the parents provided agreement with each other’s narratives which jointly served to discredit the out-group of schools and reinforce the actions of their in-group to defend their children. This is clearly a powerful construct based on group cohesion and consensus and which is particularly noticeable in the teacher staff meetings. However, such group cohesion also serves to isolate each group from others with whom they could work to address children’s experiences which they construct as bullying as per the government guidelines. To achieve co-production, I would advise stakeholders to acknowledge in-group constructions but not at the expense of isolating themselves from other groups with whom they could work to achieve improved outcomes for children.

**Power dynamics**

Throughout the analyses there are continued examples of power-play within the data sets as well as extending from them towards other groups. As such, within the data agreements are reached regarding discourses developed through the constructions of more powerful individuals or groups. This suggests that when groups seek to discuss particular issues to achieve a resolution to a concern as might be the case with bullying, individuals are
more likely to seek a consensus than contest constructions they disagree with. I would construct this process as individuals prioritising a resolution for the child or children about which the discussion centres over asserting their own discourses. I would also advise this power-play as reinforcing the in-group / out-group positioning discussed above where agreement with more dominant discourses during group conversations achieves a consensus. It could be argued that a consensus is required to reach a successful conclusion and therefore outcome for children experiencing bullying. However, individual discourses that are put aside to make room for those which are dominant may be returned to at later points should the dominant discourse be constructed as less effective than previously considered.

Innovative and complimentary research

The data from previous explorations of bullying adopting the social constructionist epistemology has been valuable in exploring the way in which stakeholders construct bullying (e.g. Hepburn, 1997; Clarke, Kitzinger & Potter, 2004; Holmes, Schnurr & Marra, 2007; De Wet & Jacobs, 2013; Side & Johnson, 2014). My research has provided further information to compliment and extend that which has gone before. Specifically, the data collected from the EPs and the teachers represented a group discussion and thus a joint construction of the discourses identified. It is this social construction of discourses that I discussed as being an element missing from the traditional positivist explorations in bullying (e.g. Fingleton & Grandison, 2007). The group discussion element presented here also extends the examples of social constructionist based research into bullying already conducted where there was a focus on individual interviews with members of the stakeholder groups (e.g. Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Furthermore, the group discussion from the parents was a response to feedback from the data collected in my previous studies. What makes this study unique is that the feedback was given to a different stakeholder group from those where the data was gathered. In addition, the response to the feedback itself has been analysed to identify discourses. Finally, although other researchers have
explored educational guidance using a social constructionist framework (e.g. Taylor, 2004; Arnott & Ozga, 2010; Mulderigg, 2011), the guidance explored here is specific to bullying following references to this by the teachers and EPs involved in the research. Consequently, there is a fundamental connection between the data collected from each of the stakeholder groups participating in the research.

**Application of the Discourse Analytic tradition**

By analysing the discursive practices employed by group members alongside application of CDP, the DAM and Foucauldian analysis, a micro and macro exploration of the language used by the EP, teacher and parent participants was achieved. The combination of these elements of the Discourse Analytic tradition has been employed effectively in previous research (e.g. Jingree & Finlay, 2008; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007; Hepburn, 2000). The application to the research presented here is no exception where the effectiveness has enabled the aforementioned expansion of the existing studies in the field of psychology and bullying in schools. For instance, applying the analysis of discursive practices alongside CDP to explore the talk between me and my EP colleagues was effective in identifying the devices we employed to construct our professional identity. In addition, particular use of ECFs reflected a desire by the speakers (myself included) to justify constructions. Combining discursive practice analysis and Foucauldian Analysis to explore the teacher talk reflected the use of rhetorical devices to address the power dynamic inherent. Specifically, frequent employment of stake inoculation by speakers was an effective device in asserting / negating / challenging the authority of the senior staff member present. Employing the DAM alongside discursive practice analysis to explore the talk of the parents reflected their construction of narratives as fact. This enabled the discussants to discredit the actions of the schools in their recollections. The exploration of the government guidance has already been noted as contributing to the underlying and important connection between the data presented in the preceding chapters. Employing CDA to explore the document enabled a
specific analysis of the connection where the guidance is written from the stance of a ‘critical friend’. Through this, the guidance encourages the intended readers (i.e. head teachers, governing bodies and teachers) to follow the advice implying choice. The choice is however reduced by presenting the advice in the context of meeting legal and regulatory standards. Although these contexts have been noted elsewhere in relation to government guidance (e.g. Mulderigg, 2011), the stance of ‘critical friend’ is a construction appertaining to the document analysed here. Finally, during the discussions, the employment of particular discursive practices was noted to reflect an alternative application to examples of the same in previous research. For instance, the use of the word ‘just’ has previously been noted by Jefferies and Grogan (2012) as employed to position the speaker as being outside of a particular discourse. However, in Chapter 2, one participant, Rose, was noted to employ the word ‘just’ to convey a dismissal. Furthermore, another participant, Susan, employed the word ‘just’ to express a desire to help but an inability to do so. Traditionally, ECFs have been presented in the form of one or two word comments to strengthen and reinforce constructions (e.g. Lamerichs & Te Molder, 2005; Pomerantz, 1986). In contrast, the aforementioned EP participant Rose, employed ECFs in the form of analogies and descriptions to achieve justification and reinforcement of her constructions.

Ethnography

Previous work adopting social constructionism alongside elements of the Discourse Analytical tradition has been completed with the author(s) taking on the role of researcher. This process however was more than research into bullying in schools; it was a personal journey. I entered into this process acknowledging the vested interest I had into exploring the constructions of the stakeholders identified as a researcher, EP, parent and former teacher. It was therefore impossible for me to remain detached and dispassionate about the data and subsequent analysis. In particular, the studies discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 report my direct involvement in the data collection process as both
Researcher and participant. Consequently, I consider the data I have collected to be innovative beyond the already discussed elements which I have acknowledged as complimenting and expanding existing social constructionist research on the topic. It is also unique as I am deconstructing my own constructions throughout the analytical process. With particular reference to Chapter 5, as the discussion reported was a response to the data shared from my other studies, this research could not, to my knowledge, be replicated as the same data cannot be collected.

To acknowledge the potential for bias due to the ethnographic nature the research, I employed the use of reflection boxes throughout the analysis and in Chapter 5, a specific exploration of my own constructions. These elements of the process enabled me to separate the analysis from my personal constructions even though the data itself was personal in terms of both direct involvement (Chapters 2 and 5) and vested interests from the roles I hold. Through these processes, I was able to achieve both the acknowledgement of my construction and ownership of the analysis highlighted as important in qualitative research by Yardley (2000). In addition, I was able to avoid some of the pitfalls noted by Antaki et al (2003) as common to those new to the field of DA. Although analysing my own speech as part of the EP data for the first study was challenging, it was necessary. I started this investigation because I am a practicing EP with an interest in how people construct bullying based on discussions in my work with teachers, parents and other professionals consequently, it was important to start here. However, my personal knowledge of the participants in this study meant that I initially found it difficult to separate this from what was being said. The reflection boxes however assisted a great deal in achieving the analysis presented.

**A personal journey**

I have already highlighted that adopting social constructionism as an epistemology was new to me, coming as I did from a background of researching topics from the traditional positivist stance. The process however
of studying at the doctoral level is to challenge oneself and contribute something innovative to the chosen field. As such, moving to adopt the epistemology of social constructionism was a necessary step to achieve both the challenge and unique contribution. The information subsequently presented here reflects a very personal journey in respect of both the aforementioned vested interests as an EP, parent and former teacher but also as a researcher. I have achieved a significant shift and subsequent progression in my skills as a researcher from positivist to post-modern philosophies. Although this has inevitably contained challenges, I should like to continue exploring the topic of bullying in the light of social constructionism. This will enable me to continue developing my research skills as well as contributing to the field of information regarding bullying. The process has also inevitably produced implications for my professional practice as an EP. For example, I would acknowledge that the process of reflecting back comments made by those with whom I am in conversation during my work can also be a reflection of my own discourses regarding the topic of discussion; this was particularly noticeable during the analysis of the parent data presented in Chapter 5. I would also acknowledge the benefits of following my own advice and take presentations of bullying on a context by context basis. Rather than asking ‘what makes you use that terminology?’ when teachers or parents say a child is being bullied, I should discuss what is happening, explore the constructions and jointly build a response to support the pupils which is, after all, why I became an EP.

**Opportunities for further exploration**

The constructions identified in the discussions from the school staff meetings pose some interesting opportunities for further research. For example, exploring the discourses within the talk of individuals contacting organisations such as Childline could be beneficial where children accessing this support is constructed as being due to a failure of the school to support them in-house.
I noted in Chapter 1 that the topic of bullying, as well as one of interest to those in the field of research, has also been the subject of press releases and the basis for websites aimed at supporting parents and children. Given the impact that both of these media sources can have on society (e.g. MacMillan & Edwards, 1999; Fairclough, 2001) I would envisage an exploration of the constructions within information produced from them would be beneficial. For example, would the information shared by different websites construct bullying in the same manner or would there be a wide range of variation where the writers of each would bring their own histories, experiences and cultures to the discussion as information is shared? The social constructionist approach alongside CDA has previously been employed to explore the discourses within newspaper articles and website information (e.g. O'Halloran, 2005) on other topics and would be well placed to explore those relating to bullying where these sources are in a position to dominate society and thus draw attention to particular constructions. It may well be, for example, that the constructions within media sources are written in such a way as to seek to influence the reader to adopt the same constructions.

The exploration of the government document in Chapter 4 yielded a wealth of information regarding the constructions of the authors and the potential influence on a school based reader. I would therefore argue that exploring the constructions within the guidelines accompanying that analysed in this research would be a beneficial direction to take in further research. Employing CDA to achieve this would provide further information as to whether these additional government documents construct their information to influence a school based reader in the same way as the main guidance explored here.

During the analysis of the teacher talk in Chapter 3, I noted that possible exploration of the same data using CDA could be beneficial to further explore the power dynamic inherent. CDA was applied by De Wet and Jacobs (2013) toanalyse the responses of teachers to a questionnaire and could therefore be applied to the data presented in Chapter 3.
Within the discussion from the parents I noted that they talked about a construction of differences between pupils resulting in victimization. I suggested that obtaining data from stakeholder groups regarding differences could be a potential direction for further research. This would enable further data to be collected regarding the discourse posited by the parents in terms of whether other groups also construct differences in this way.

Also in relation to the data from the parents, the discussion positioned the schools involved as responding inappropriately to the experiences of their children. Consequently, seeking a response from schools to the discourses in the analyses in the same way as the parents responded to data feedback could be a further research direction.

The data analysed in Chapter 2 from the EPs could be reanalysed using CA. This would enable an exploration of the pauses and overlapping comments in the talk which would add to the discourses already explored. The same could also be achieved for the data from the teachers and parents.

I have already explained my choice of foci for the research where the stakeholder groups involved have the potential to influence the way in which pupils talk about bullying and be in a position to address and prevent bullying. An appropriate next step from this research would be to explore the constructions of pupils in schools about bullying. Previous positivist research has noted the way in which different age groups construct bullying. Drawing on the social constructionist epistemology to explore the constructions within the talk of pupils within different stages of schooling would yield further information as to whether each builds different discourses on the topic. In turn, researching bullying from the social constructionist epistemology would provide information on how the topic is discussed and discourses built within social conversations.

As I have made clear in Chapter 1, I sought to explore the topic of bullying in schools from the different angle of social constructionism and thus add to that
research which has gone before. Following my research, I would consider that both epistemologies have their place when exploring bullying and indeed, that the information yielded from one can inform the other. For instance, the way in which participants report bullying during positivist research studies can provide valuable information as to the level of discussion regarding bullying in schools by key stakeholders. Consequently, continued exploration using either positivist or post-modernist philosophies would be beneficial but with caution regarding the way in which bullying is constructed.

**Implications for supporting pupils**

Reflecting on the analyses presented in the preceding chapters as researcher, EP, parent and former teacher, I would ask what this means on a day to day basis when a child is experiencing the types of difficulties discussed throughout this research. I would respond by saying that there is no definitive answer to the question “what is bullying?” and would encourage people to discuss bullying on a context by context basis instead. Furthermore, I would acknowledge that when any child finds themselves in a situation where they construct themselves as being bullied, it is real to them and should be considered as such; rather than debating whether it is bullying the presenting situation should be addressed.
Conclusion

The data presented here discusses the variation in language used within existing research to describe bullying schools. It also highlights considerations stakeholders should give to supporting pupils who describe themselves as being bullied. Given the evidence, research into bullying in schools will continue to important as a dominant theme and ‘hot topic’ for discussion within society and schools. There will also continue to be value in employing post-modernist philosophies when exploring the topic to both compliment and extend existing research.

Reflection Box 6.1
I am proud of the research I have presented here and hope that readers will appreciate the journey I have been on as a researcher and the personal nature of the process which makes it unique.
References


Berger, R., (2013). Now I see it, now I don’t: Researcher’s position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 15* (2), 219 – 234.


Harcourt, S., Jasperse, M., Green, V. A., (2014). “We were sad and we were angry”: A systematic review of parents’ perspectives on bullying. *Child and Youth Care Forum, 43* (3), 373 – 391.


Tables

Table 1: School details          Chapter 3          p. 88

Table 2: Discourse titles        Chapter 5          p. 201
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCSF</td>
<td>Department for Children, Schools and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPS</td>
<td>British Psychological Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFBT</td>
<td>Solution Focused Brief Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>Critical Discursive Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECF</td>
<td>Extreme Case Formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAL</td>
<td>Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAM</td>
<td>Discursive Action Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELSA</td>
<td>Emotional Literacy Support Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCos</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendixes
Appendix 1 ~ Chapter 1

Similarities between CA and CDA

The following lists the ways in which CA and CDA are similar in the foundations of their approach to the analysis of talk or text from van Dijk (1999):

- Each has a particular interest in naturally occurring data
- They both acknowledge the importance of context and the dependency of discourse on this
- Each recognises the interactional nature of language as being relevant
- The turn-by-turn nature of speech is attended to by both
- Both explore the order and organisation of ‘expression, meaning and action’ within their analysis
- Each provides a ‘detailed and sophisticated analysis’ of data
- Both explore the social situation of interactions as well as wider societal structures
Appendix 2a ~ Chapter 2

EP Recruitment Letter

I am writing to ask whether you could help with a research project that I am conducting.

The purpose of this project is to examine the nature of people’s views on bullying. This is a very important area of research especially given the current stance of the government on addressing this issue and the media attention given to the topic. I would use this topic for a peer support session, which I would also like to audiotape. I anticipate that this session will probably last no more than an hour and a half at most. There will be an initial open-ended question to begin discussions and I will also be participating in the process. This question will be “How can we as EPs support schools in addressing ‘the bullying issue’?”.

The discussion will take place in Centenary House on (?) at (?). I would like to reassure you that all the information given will be treated in the strictest confidence and your reply slips will be destroyed after the discussion has taken place.

If you feel able to help with the project I would be grateful if you could complete your details on the reply slip below and return it to me in the envelope provided placing it in my in-tray.

Please do not feel under any obligation to take part in this study especially if you feel it would make you uncomfortable in any way. If you have any queries or would like further information about the study before deciding whether or not to participate please feel free to get in touch by e-mail (alex.boys@port.ac.uk) or using the envelope provided.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.
Alexandra Boys
Appendix 2b ~ Chapter 2

EP Informed Consent Form

Title of research
- Perspectives on bullying: A discourse analysis

Investigator
- Alexandra Boys

Supervisors
- Maggie Linnell, Treena Jingree and Sherria Hoskins

Purpose of research
- To examine the nature of people’s views on bullying

Description of procedures
- I propose to audio tape a peer support session centred around the question “How can we as EPs support schools an addressing ‘the bullying issue’?”
- The session will last approximately one and a half hours
- As usual this is an ‘opt in’ session, so if you do not wish to take part in the study you are not required to attend

To be completed by the participant:

- I understand that I will be discussing my views on bullying as part of a peer support session with EP colleagues including the investigator

- I am happy for this group discussion to be audio-taped providing the tape and the transcript are kept in the University’s secure holding facility

- I understand that the audio-tape of the discussion will only be heard by the investigator (named above) and the supervisors if needed (named above)
I understand that the transcript of the group discussion will only be seen by the investigator (named above) and the supervisors if needed (named above)

I understand that the investigator is a fully qualified and chartered educational psychologist and will be participating in the interview as a colleague

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time and for any reason

I understand that although my participation in this study will not be completely anonymous my name will not be used in connection with results in any way

I understand that I have the right to obtain information about the findings of the study and about how they will be used after the study is complete

I consent to my data being used for research purposes in connection to the above study

Signature of participant: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

(Please note that this sheet will be kept separately to the interview transcript)
Appendix 2c ~ Chapter 2

EP De-briefing Notes

Thank you for taking part in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore different discourses about bullying that people hold. Research has typically neglected the fact that bullying is a social process which people come to with their own experiences and views. In addition, bullying tends to be regarded as the same thing in all studies without question. Consequently, researchers have tended to focus on what the process might look like and the results of the research, rather than exploring how discourses related to bullying are part of a wider social system. The reason behind the current study was to gain an understanding of EP discourses associated with bullying before exploring discourses associated with other parties such as teachers, parents and the children themselves. I hope that by conducting this research I can encourage a more flexible view of bullying and a greater understanding of its nature from the perspective of the parties involved. Once I have transcribed the group discussion I will send you copies for your approval to enable you to check that they are an accurate reflection of the conversation. The transcripts will be made anonymous so that no one other than those involved will be able to recognise the discussant. Please get in touch with me if any of the details are incorrect or if there is anything you would like to change or amend. If, upon reflection, you are uncomfortable with having on record any part of your contribution to the discussion, the transcript could be amended to reflect this. I would ask that you return the transcript to me once read in the envelope provided and that you do not take any copies.

If you have further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. My e-mail address is alex.boys@port.ac.uk. Alternatively, you could contact my supervisor, Maggie Linnell, and her e-mail address is maggie.linnell@port.ac.uk.

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in this study.
Alexandra Boys
Appendix 3 ~ Chapter 2

Transcription Code

The transcription code used in my analysis as designed by Gail Jefferson as used and referenced by Wiggins, Potter and Wildsmith (2001):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>A pause less than 2/10 of a second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>An extension of the preceding vowel sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(the more shown the greater extent of stretching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(())</td>
<td>Double brackets around words refer to the transcriber’s comments on features of the talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hh</td>
<td>Full stop before 1 or more h’s indicates a speaker in breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salmon</td>
<td>A stress or emphasis in the speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>Pauses in tenths of a second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mine’s)</td>
<td>Transcriber’s best effort to estimate unclear speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Beginning and end of overlapping talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Continuous talk between speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦</td>
<td>Degree signs enclose talk which is lower in volume relative to the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑↓</td>
<td>A marked rising or falling in speech intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; &lt;</td>
<td>Enclose speech which is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>Enclose speech which is noticeably slower than the surrounding talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 ~ Chapter 2

Educational Psychologist Peer Support Meeting

Alex  Okay it’s working (laughs) that’s always a good sign (.) um so I I wanted to come today with the question (.) “how can we as EPs (.h) support schools in addressing (.) the bullying issue?” (.h) and one of the reasons I was thinking about that question (.h) was because more and more often in casework (.) um both at primary and secondary level (.) many schools and parents come with the phrases (.h) “my child is being bullied” (.h) um “I’m (.h) experiencing bullying” or (.h) “you know “my child is the victim” (.h) and I just wanted to explore how we could perhaps support schools in (.h) addressing those questions and kind of (.h) see what your (.h) what your ideas and what your thoughts were about that particular issue (2.0)

Lily  I think the first thing to kind of come to my mind but (laughs) I’m not really sure if it’s right is um (.h) kind of helping them to develop a (.h) strong bullying policy (.h) so that the whole staff knows (2.0) what to do (.) =  

U  Hmm

Lily  = you know and as an EP helping them to develop that so that it’s got clear guide lines (2.0) =

U  Hmm

Lily  = so that everybody knows what happens when somebody is being bullied and the procedure to follow (2.0)

U  Hmm

Alex  Do schools ask you about bullying policies ‘cause that’s I have to say that’s not something I’ve ever (.h) come across (.)

Mia  They ask me about anti-bullying policies (laughs)

Alex  Do you think that’s an important turn of phrase? (.h)

Mia  (‘Possibly yeah’) (2.0)

Alex  How about any anybody else? (5.0)

U  Hmm

Rose  I think they: y um: sometimes incorporate it in to: ways in which they they take a look at behaviour management within their (.h) the school setting as a whole (.h) and a that a strand of that is around “how do we reduce or (.h) umm (.h) promote positive (.h) err peer relationships?”=

U  Hmm

Rose  = so (.h) in in a sense if you look at it positively and helping young people to: learn how to interact with each other more constructively by default (.h) you you don’t get bullying (.h) =

U  Hmm

Rose  = and and so sometimes it’s about trying to (.h) talk with staff err (.h) about engendering a positive behaviour and a positive peer approach (.h) umm rather than (2.0) seeing it as a separate issue (2.0) =

U  Hmm

Rose  = so that I would I would like to see something like that (.h) >I agree with you< I think there has to be (.h) in essence I think all schools have to have (.h) what would be described as an anti-bullying (?policy (.h) but I think it needs to be set into (.h) um a total framework of the ethos of the school which is around promoting positive interactions with peers and adults (3.0)

U  Hmm

Rose  = So what’s (.h) just thinking about how we could (.h) encourage schools to be thinking along those lines (.h) particularly if they co:me (.h) to us and ask for support but (.h) the: ethos within the school (.h) isn’t quite necessarily geared towards that (.h) at the time =

Susan  ‘Ye:s’ (.h) I have had involvement in (.h) anti-bullying policy development ‘but’ what’s interesting is that (3.0) I’ve still had (.h) reports of bullying ‘from parents (.h) other agencies and (.h) in (.h) discussion around a child in PARM or a student (.h) but one of the things that the schools (.h) say to me quite often is ‘they think they’re being bullied (.h) but they’re actually not being bullied’ (.h)

=  

U  Hmm
Susan = and that their perception is "and we've investigated it and it's not happening". hh =
U Hmm
Susan = and that's been quite an interesting one because err (.) I think schools generally do have anti-bullying policies [and] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = I think one of the things that (2.0) has been really good about COUNTY NAME is developing the kind of anti-bullying strategy and schools being supported in these these measures . hh the perception of what bullying is (.) or isn't (.) is an interesting one (.) =
U Hmm
Susan = and I think quite often schools are at that stage where they would perceive bullying to be one thing and a parent [or] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = and that's been quite an interesting one because err (.) I think schools generally do have anti-bullying policies [and] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = [Our work (.) runs] =
Susan = [our work (.) runs]
Susan = = [right] =
Susan = = [Hmm]
Alex = So do (. ) do you think that part of it is about (. ) drawing those perspectives together (. ) [or is it] =
Susan = [Yes it's] =
Alex = = yeah (. ) [so kind of] =
Susan = = [and that's where] =
Alex = = [attempting to] =
Susan = = [our work (.) runs]
Alex = = [right] =
Susan = = [Hmm]
Alex = = Have you ever been (. ) asked [to] =
Susan = = [Yes]
Alex = = do that?
Susan = = Do you want me to say (. ) =
Alex = = Yeah
Susan = = what happened and [how]?
Alex = = [Yeah]
Rose = = I think we need to go a few steps] further back about actually (. ) acknowledging in the first place that there can be different perspectives [before] =
Susan = = [Yes]
Rose = = we can >draw them together< [because quite often]=
Susan = = [Yeah yes]
Rose = = (. ) that that's (. ) something else [is that] =
Susan = = [Yes]
Rose = = they've (. ) they've got polar view points =
Susan = = Very much
Rose = = um and it's just about an [acknowledgement] =
Susan = = [Yes]
Rose = = that there may be those polar [viewpoints]
Susan = = [And sometimes] =
Rose = = our work is about en enabling people to have their voice and to hear each other (. ) and almost to see: where they might meet in the middle (. ) and it's mediation >isn't it really< [and] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = = err do you want me to say (. ) =
Alex = = Hmm
Susan = = the case that's very strongly in my mind that took up most of my year last year (laughs) and it wasn't it wasn't a COUNTY NAME school it was actually another school (. ) an out county school (. ) and a parent (. ) err another professional rang me and said "this: child is being bullied (. ) and the parent is very concerned about it and the school are consistently (. ) saying it's not happening" (. ) so: (. ) I sort of thought "well (. ) what's that got to do with me (laughs) (of all people)" "thank you for letting me know" (. ) and "I'll think
about how I I move forward on this" and I did think "well (.h) what would my role be on in this" (2.0) =

Susan = but (.h) the steps that I took were to say to that professional (.h) "i in a way the first step is for you to talk to the school about it because "you're the person who's had that complaint" (.h) she did so then she felt that she still was getting this feedback from the school [that] =

Susan = the (.h) the child was >making it up< (.h) or misconstruing activities of others (.h) so then she came >back to me but not only did she come back to me (.h) she then told the parent that she'd told me and told the parent to ring me as "well (.h) so I had two people including the parent (.h) =

Susan = so (.h) I said to the parent (2.0) "we do have this strategy in COUNTY NAME the >anti-bullying strategy< and one of the (.h) things that (.h) that involves is this help line where a parent can directly ring (.h) this anti-bullying help line and get advice" and I said "in a way I think the first call for you is to do that (.h) that is one of things that you can do" (.h) =

Susan = and I think that was really helpful because (.h) that enable her to talk about her concerns to someone who was a specialist in that area (.h) who was set up (.h) in COUNTY NAME to look at those issues (.h) and I checked out with them first of all how they stood in terms of out county schools and they >said "well if it's a COUNTY NAME child< it's still (.h) an area that we would be interested in" (.h) they assigned an anti-bullying officer (.h) to this family (.h) which was great because they almost did a lot of the groundwork (.h) so (.h) I said (.h) um (.h) that I would (.h) discuss >it with the school< but (.h) um I would attend the annual review and that (.h) would be (.h) a way (.h) of managing the whole thing (.h) >I liaised with the special needs section and I said "(in) when's the annual review?" (.h) they said "it's this time" (.h) so I said "well through >the annual review we can talk about it" it was quite imminent (.h) the anti-bullying officer went into the school (.h) and talked to all the parties and just gathered information and talked to everyone about (.h) perception etc. so (.h) the lovely thing was was that (.h) she did that mediation really (.h) =

Susan = on the on the ground and had the time to do that (.h) and (.h) that really helped the mother because she felt she was being taken seriously (.h) it helped the student because he was involved in the process and he felt he was being taken seriously >and the school: (.) =

Susan = felt that they had some vehicle beyond this (.h) conversation between them and the mother which was helping (.h) to move things forward (.h) when I went in >at the annual review< it was: sti:ll (.h) an isssue: but >not to the extent it had been< but there was still this sense (.h) that a (2.0) "he feels that he's being bullied a:nd (.h) we've put all these things in place inclu:ding talking to the anti-bullying officer (.h) and we've done >all of this stuff and it's still something the mother is concerned about" (.h) so (.h) >in the meeting we could talk about the things that had happened (.h) we could talk about what the anti-bullying officer had found out (.h) and (.h) how they had kind of tea:sed out the difficulties around language and the confusion um around kind of peer interactions etc. (.h) on the basis of that (.h) we had an informed discussion about (.h) what could be done next (.h) really just to (.h) improve the communication between the parent (.h) the student (.h) and the school and what was happening was the parent was saying (.h) the student was going home and saying (.h) "I'm being bullied it's still the same (.h) this is happening this is happening" (.h) the parent would ring the school (.h) they were saying "well actually we've sorted this out we've worked with the anti-bullying officer and this shouldn't be an issue" and one of things that came up in the action plan was the student should be telling the school not his mum (.h) (2.0) so we were able to to talk around that" (and] =

U [Hmm]
Susan = the school then decided they would assign one particular person who the child trusted and it wasn't rocket science who the child trusted that he would be able to felt he was able to talk to =

[183]

U = Hmm

Susan = the pa:rent then said (.) "well if he comes home and tells me (.) what do I do" so it was agreed (.) she would liaise with this key person (.) =

[185]

U = Hmm

Susan = she wouldn't just be talking to the secretary (.) this chap would be giving time over (.) if he he had a phone in his classroom he would be able to talk to her (.) so .hhh I didn't do much of the work and >what I thought was great< is that we >have got< practitioners in COUNTY NAME who < can do that kind of [on] =

[188]

U = Hmm

Susan = the ground evidence gathering (.) unti un teasing things out .h but but on the basis that I was able to go in and have a conversation around (.) what still needed to be ironed out really .h =

[189]

U = Hmm

Alex = and the other thing that [strikes me is] =

Susan = [I forgot to say he had an ASC so (laughs)]

Alex = [oh right yeah the would do it (laughs)] = um the other thing that strikes me is um (.) is the anti-bullying officer .h what that person's background was =

[190]

U = Hmm

Susan = does that help? (.)

Alex = Hmm yeah I'm just just I suppose there's just a couple of things really the first one would be .h I wonder why it was that the pupil kept going to his mum to say "I'm being bullied" =

[192]

Susan = Hmm

Alex = = and the other thing that [strikes me is] =

Susan = [I forgot to say he had an ASC so (laughs)]

Alex = [oh right yeah the would do it (laughs)] = um the other thing that strikes me is um (.) is the anti-bullying officer .h what that person's background was =

[193]

U = Hmm

Alex = &their understanding of bullying is .h and also the COUNTY NAME guidelines .h =

[194]

U = Hmm

Alex = = and the other thing that [strikes me is] =

Susan = [Oh the resilience stuff]

Alex = = because (.) again I was reading through them and one of things that struck me was the the lack of mention of the EPS (.) and there was a very brief: (.)

[196]

U = Hmm

Susan = = and I was (.) I went back to all the DfE documents as well .h that are given to schools and teachers and what the teachers have access to and again =

[197]

U = Hmm

Alex = = again what strikes me is the lack of reference to anything (.) newer than Olweus which was (.) in the (.) eighties (.) and again I'm thinking "you've got a range of professionals on the ground (.) like ourselves (.) why aren't they asking us?" (.) [so it was just] =

[198]

U = Hmm

Susan = [What (.) about] =

Alex = = [it's just] =

Susan = [asking us about] =

Alex = = about our =

Susan = informing the policy =

Alex = = yeah um (.) informing policy (.) um (.) how to to move things forward .h various things really and I'm just thinking of of us ourselves .h you know there's wealth of research out there conducted by EPS .h and other psychologists (.) that we have access to and again I'm thinking (.) "well ?how does that (.) =

[200]

U = Hmm

Alex = = get to the people who need it to be gotten to?" (.) as it were that was a terrible turn of phrase (laughs) [but] =

Susan = [Well it's] quite a new team so I'm sure they would be open to (.) I think it's overseen by community safety isn't it =

Alex = [Oh right]
Susan = [that’s who] I’ve talked to about it (.) and I think they are open to ideas (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Susan = it’s >just having those conversations isn’t it< (.) but (.) as you’re saying it’s not it shouldn’t have to come down to that (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Susan = you meet someone in (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Susan = it’s >just having those conversations isn’t it< (.) but (.) as you’re saying it’s not it shouldn’t have to come down to that (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Mia  It’s about them as well isn’t it (.) what we could offer (.) it’s like Susan says having that (.) informal chat (.) can then lead to more understanding of what a person does

=  

Alex  Hmm (.) hhm so do you think that’s part of it is the lack of awareness: [of our role? (4.0)]

=  

U  [Hmm]  

Rose  Err (.) I think that that’s the case in relation to: a range of our skills and abilities [that:]=

=  

U  [Hmm]  

Rose  = (.) um (.) there can be: um (.) a perception of EPs as being >individual casework focused< um (.) assessment focUSED and .h however much you work on trying to (.) to change that perception and to to enable people to understand that (.) the breadth and the scope of being able to apply psychology in educational contexts is far broader (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = err I think we’ve moved some way in that (.) but probably not( .) as much (.) as one would actually (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = hope (.) err and I think that’s a little bit around critical mass: um (.) in that (.) in nationally it’s not a profession that’s huge (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = it’s not err there’s never been (cough) a strong national agenda (.) to really (.) um (.) recruit (.) sizeable and train sizeable numbers of educational psychologists it’s always been to any recruitment drive in my experience has been linked to (.) um some statutory legislation around special educational needs (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = err rather than (.) err (.) at a governamental level seeing that educational psychology per say has: much: greater ability to um support (.) capacity building ‘than perhaps’ is perceived (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = and as a consequence you’ve only got a small profession (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = um (.) since the time I became an EP ‘till now we have not grown in numbers (.)

=  

U  (laughs)  

Rose  = in the way that you would have anticipated (.) it’s still (.) relatively speaking (.)

=  

U  Hmm  

Rose  = err a a very small profession [and]=

=  

U  ‘Yeah’  

Rose  = and it’s growth has been (.) um (.) mainly linked to SEN developments rather than (.) other government initiatives um (3.0)=

=  

U  Hmm  

Alex  Do you [sorry]  

Rose  = >[but I think] that’s constraining< I don’t I I you know I think it’s important that we continue to try to promote that (.) but I think that’s why a lot of people don’t come [>&and]=

=  

U  [Hmm]  

Rose  = it’s also I think there’s a perception that< they don’t come because (laughs) we’re always so (most of us) so busy[and we]=

=  

Mia  [Yeah]  

Rose  = haven’t got the time [that]=
Rose = in a sense someone else fills the gap [for] =

[Hmm]

Rose = it [all the]=

Mia = [Exactly yeah]

Rose = time (.)

Lily = I just think alongside that as well as going maybe not being aware of our role as much (.) if they see somebody called an anti-bullying office:r (.) =

[Hmm]

Lily = then they’re probably gonna be much more likely to go to them (.) for ‘help aren’t they° (.) =

[Hmm]

Lily = you know they probably think it’s in their remit not the EP’s because it’s in their title ‘kind of thing’ (.) =

U

Hmm

Lily = then they’re probably gonna be much more likely to go to them (.) for help aren’t they° (.) =

A

U

Hmm

Mia = Exactly yeah

Rose = time (.)

Lily = I just think alongside that as well as going maybe not being aware of our role as much (.) if they see somebody called an anti-bullying office:r (.) =

[Hmm]

Lily = then they’re probably gonna be much more likely to go to them (.) for ‘help aren’t they° (.) =

[Hmm]

Lily = you know they probably think it’s in their remit not the EP’s because it’s in their title ‘kind of thing’ (.) =

A

Do you think that titles are important (.) in that sense and that that terminology .h bullying bully victim anti-bullying? (5.0)

[Hmm]

A

Susan In what sense are (you thinking about it)?

A

I’m just thinking about (.) um (.) well if you if you have like media for example (.) you have a media .h um splurge as it were on on bullying and there’s you know there’s a big story in the news and the gov it says that there’s another new government initiative looking at anti-bullying and tackling bullying .hh and it creates lots of different feelings in different people (.) and I’m just wondering about (.) whether or not the terminologies instigate certain (.) =

[Hmm]

A

Susan Ye:s

A

= ?fee:lings or certain ?actions within some people .h like you were saying you know the parent had one view and wanted to [(you know get to the the)] =

[So it’s the context of what bullying] =

A

Susan [So it’s the context of what bullying] =

A

[Hmm (.) yeah (.) and the way the media the portrays it ?as well I find =

[Hmm]

A

= fascinating because .h it’s it’s always done in a very serious news section and it’s (.) the the tone of voice that the presenters u:se is I >find very interesting< because it’s very grave and very serious and (.) they (.) I don’t think I’ve ever actually see:n a psychologist (.) EP or otherwise (.) on the news talking about it (.) =

[Hmm]

A

= I see lots of people from parental organisations and internet organisations .h places like Kidscape Childline on there but nothing (.) psychological (.)

R

I think there is an element (.) where the AEP perhaps hasn’t ever been err terribly good [at the] =

[Hmm]

R

= PR side of educational ?psychology [(.) um] =

[Hmm]

R

= (.I think as well if you look at err many of these initiatives they’re not (.). they’re not quite ?knee jerk but they’re almost [knee jerk] =

[Hmm]

R

= an and they like to be portra:yed (.) um with specificity a:nd in response to a full media concern .h =

[Hmm]

R

= and it’s all about well (.I you know (.I we will have another (.) >I think they one of the last one’s< ‘was wasn’t it one we were going to ha:ve° [after] =

[Ye:s]

R

= Tanya Byron said ["oh we’re] =

[Ye:s]

R

= gonna have all these people offering um parent support etc. .h err when there’s anti-bullying” >it’s not actually< looking at what se:rvice:s↓ and skills and abilities are there in the current workforce (.) =

[Hmm]

R

= and (laughs) how that can be built upon >’cause ‘that doesn’t< look like a good new political initiative to tackle something (.) um =

A

Looking at what’s already there

R

= yeah yeah and I I do think that that is often (.I reflected from a national perspective to a local perspective .h =
Alex (laughs)  
Rose = [you know] =  
Alex [(laughs) it’s true yeah no it’s true]  
Rose = [it’s much] more eye catching um and then and then (.) it can in some respects  
be a box that we tick >”yes we’ve got an anti-bullying service”< it’s not that  
"we have an Educational Psychology Service .h and part of their remit is to (.)  
=  
U Hmm  
Rose = um (2.0) I think ‘sometimes” (.).  
Alex So I when I hear the the term >since doing the the research< and kind of  
thinking about (.) my own views on bullying (.) I’ve I’ve started to look at  
those questions that “parents and” schools raise in a “different way (.”) so if  
they say to me “my child’s being bullied” my usual response now is (.) “what  
makes you use that terminology?” (.). so I can try and to get the rub [of what]  
=  
U Hmm  
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those questions that “parents and” schools raise in a “different way (.”) so if  
they say to me “my child’s being bullied” my usual response now is (.) “what  
makes you use that terminology?” (.). so I can try and to get the rub [of what]  
=  
U Hmm
Rose = boundaries (.), and where you (.), step, across the boundary in. one
context [and (.)] =
U [Yeah]
Rose = you. don't in. another and yes everybody can make a faux-pas. (.). um (.).
but (.), if it >happened within a friendship group you'd probably get feedback<
and in another context (.), you you might not get and people would go away.
fee:ling (.), =
U [Hmm]
Rose = very differently about (.), =
U Hmm
Rose = the nature of the comment that it was under. mining or it was (.), um
belittling or whatever um and I think that that it's all those shades of social
behaviour really [um (.)]. =
U [Hmm]
Rose = but >I think think there are certain types of< behaviour >which as I say< I
think everybody< would say you know that is not appropriate in any context
(.), =
U Hmm
Rose = but there are others [that it's] =
U [Hmm.]
Rose = perhaps where the perceptions are (.), are sort of shifting sands in a sense
Susan I had a really interesting experience with my EBD school. .h where they have
very strong anti-bullying (.), err procedures and it's it's works very well and
they're one of the safer schools (.), award schools and it's all fan. tastic. .h but
(.), though discussions about individual students a lot <of times> >they were
saying to me "oh and he< gets really angry when people call him gay" or (.)
"he's really worried that he's gay all the time and he keeps saying "you're gay
you're gay" and all this kind of (.), language and I said "we'll: to be honest
(.) you know (.) I'm just wondering whether we think (.), we might have sort of
any: homophobic bullying? or any bullying around <those kind of issues in
school> (.), and it was really interesting <cause they said "no Susan when
you've got an all boy culture like we have you know [that's just] =
U [(laughs)]
Susan = the way it is you know they use those kinds of terms all the time they don't
mean gay gay” and I said “well (.), he's obviously understanding it as gay
gay because [now he's] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = terrified that he's gay“ .h =
U Hmm
Susan = and (.), it was um over. time >that we had those conversations< and
actually <shifted> in terms of what >was acceptable and what wasn't
acceptable< .hh and again (.), I'm feeling really guilty now Alex that I >didn't
go in there [and do all] =
Alex [(laughs)]
Susan = the EP research stuff that I said “talk to someone in healthy schools”<
[(laughs)] =
Alex [(laughs)]
Mia [Ahh]
Susan = who does the anti-bullying gay homophobic stuff (.), so um (.), yeah so they
came in and they they've moved quite significantly on< that and you know
explore with the students what's acceptable and why one might be saying
those kinds of things and that (.), but it's just interesting [in terms] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = of (.), what (.), might be culturally acceptable [and do] =
U [Hmm]
Susan = we accept it
Mia Yeah
Alex And it's interesting the (.), the adults were the one's who defined the culture as
being acceptable (.), =
Susan Yes
Alex = not necessarily [the students] =
Susan [Yeah yes]
Alex = so have any of you =
Susan: [That's really key]
Alex: [come across that] in other schools =
Susan: Yeah
Alex: = where it's the adults =
Susan: [They do it a lot]
Alex: [kind of setting the culture] particularly I I'm wondering about secondary
because obviously .h the one that we (directed to Mia) shared (. ) for a while
they had (. ) well (. ) that's a different issue but (laugh) =
Mia: I've never really discussed ›bullying or ♥anti-bullying with them (. ) =
U: Hmm
Mia: = or any of the secondary schools really (. ) I think they sort of see it as part of
their ♥SEAL (. ) =
U: Hmm
Mia: = and that's something else separate (. ) so if it comes up in the individual
cases then normally (. ) I will like Susan direct them elsewhere (. ) =
Alex: Yeah yeah
Mia: = [way] =
Susan: [That's] probably why they're not coming to EPs 'cause we're directing [them]
= =
Mia: = [yeah yeah we're]
Susan: = [elsewhere (laughs)]
Mia: = [sort of directing them elsewhere (laughs)]
Alex: But ^why do we ❄do that?
Susan: Because we ^just don't have↓ the time Alex ↓ =
Mia: Yeah
Susan: = [and if there are teams] =
Alex: [It's what you were earlier isn't it Mia]
Mia: [Who are there to do it yeah]
Susan: = we could (. ) you know the anti-bullying strategy [and] =
U: Hmm
Susan: = I'm feeling terrible again because they came and asked me about (. ) =
U: Hmm
Susan: = resilience and we had I think about a morning talking about resilience [and]
= =
U: [Hmm]
Susan: = things [and I don't] =
Alex: [And it got shortened to a paragraph]
Susan: = ☞oh I didn't mind ↓ (. ) but I don't I I feel bad now that I didn't say (. ) "oh
^yes you know we can offer a whole lot ♥more" (. ) =
U: Hmm
Susan: = but it is it's capacity isn't it]
Alex: [Yeah] but it's not (. ) again (. ) you know I I'm you know I feel the ↓same
^way it's .h you end up looking for other routes because you know [you] =
U: [Hmm]
Susan: = haven't got the ↑time to address it in that in that way =
Susan: And it needs addressing 'properly doesn't it' =
Alex: Yeah and =>it was about to say because< again you know you're talking about
healthy schools and (. ) no disrespect to our colleagues in healthy schools but
. h where do they get their information from (2.0) that helps them to: tackle
the 'bullying issue' as it were?
Rose: I: say I don't know that we have that information [but
um] =
U: [Hmm]
Rose: = in a more generalised way I do think one of the things (.hh) that that does
happen is: that there ☞is a lot of research and there ☞is a lot of evidence ba:se
that has been undertaken by: psychologists (. ) =
U: Hmm
Rose = that then other people make use of (.) so they may not be psychologists themselves [but] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = [I] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = (.) if you look at a whole raft of things that happen (.) if you look at all the: (. the things now around dyslexia .h =
U Hmm
Rose = if you look at SEAL [if you] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = look at um things like err (.) Jump Ahead (.) in COUNTY NAME (.) um (.)
(Mia) Yeah
Rose = in a sense that we've sold [psychology] =
Mia [It's very readily] available isn't it=
Rose = it is and I think there is um (.) there is a debate about (.) do you >>> keep it to yourselves [as practitioners (.)] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = or at the end of the day (.) do you: um: (2.0) do you see (.) do you as a psychologist see: that part of your role is about influencing the development
[of other] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = people .h so that they become u:m much more competent to do things and that part of our role is always looking at the "cutting edge" and the next step in being innovative [in thinking (.)] =
Mia [Yeah]
Rose = at what at what next level (.) um that in a sense we inform um a lot of development although at the end of the day somebody else ends up doing it .h =
U Hmm
Rose = because we can't do it all .h in any of those areas (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = and I think it's a big debate .h =
U Hmm
Rose = (coughs) you know uh do we see do we still see ourselves and keep ourselves .hh as the experts (.). and we're the only ones that can do it (2.0)
coughs) =
U Hmm
Rose = or do we take the (.) views that >I mean I< listen to some comments now when people say .h "oh that's just common sense" (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = and actually if I look back historically that was cutting edge psychology thirty years ago .h =
U Hmm
Rose = but now people see as common sense (.). =
U Hmm
Rose = and may:be: one of the (. ) marks of (. ) the influence of psychologists and psychology is (. ) when people say 'that's common sense' (. ) 'in the modern world'.
All Hmm
Alex I suppose I find it interesting because (2.0) as I said one of the things that jumps out at myself is (. ) having looked at more recent research .h from psychologists >and as I said< EPs and otherwise .hh that research isn't being used by the government as far as I can tell .h i:it's going back to Olweus which was (. ) as I said you know Norway in the 1980's .hh it doesn't seem to be drawing on (. ) other more newer research newer initiatives .h but even the research itself .h uses terminologies such as (. ) the um "victim" and .h "passive aggressive victim" and: "passive victim" and: (. ) "aggressive bully" .h =
U Hmm
Alex = I just find it interesting (. ) you know (. ) are we setting ourselves up (. ) in a way to (2.0) to not to fail but (2.0) are we: encouraging those perspectives to continue =

Susan = What nationally you mean?

Alex = = hmmm

Susan = Interestingly (. ) when I did some work up at the DCFS (. ) I was on this working party with this chap who was the (. h) lead (. ) for (. ) national for um (. ) ?anti-bullying =

U = Hmm

Susan = >I'm sitting there thinking about it now actually < . hh and he wasn't a psychologist > I don't know what he was actually < [but he] =

U = [Hmm ]

Susan = = had a very interesting viewpoint on (. ) the way things were =

U = Hmm

Susan = = but it was < more about pro procedure: um and getting everyone . h um (3.0) more about how we move the whole kind of country > forward on bullying [and< things ] =

U = [Hmm ]

Susan = = like text bullying [an:d] =

All = [Hmm yeah ]

Susan = = cyber and that kind of thing (. h) I don't remember him using any psychology (. ) if I could remember his name >you could e-mail him Alex and ask him all these [things]< =

Alex = [(laughs) ]

Susan = = [that's what] I do ?e-mail them and say "I'm really interested in this . h =

U = Yeah

Susan = = I read your policy what do you think" (. ) 'cause "they're not (. ) the whole thing on a local and 'a national level is < (. ) nobody's going to come knocking on our door [unless we ] =

U = [Hmm ]

Susan = = go and find them are they (. laughs ) =

All = [Hmm yeah ]

Susan = = that's my sense I don't know (. ) maybe (. ) I know Rose has got an amazing reputation on ASC and does get asked things but . h I just think (. ) =

All = [(laughs)]

Susan = = you know (. ) quite often ?nobody knows [what an EP] =

Mia = ['No you're right it's going back to what we said earlier' ]

Susan = = [is does what we do] =

Alex = I mean again um you know um you look at the British Journal of (. ) um (. ) Educational Psychology >and a lot< (. ) of those (. hh) people or a lot of those research articles are quite (. ) =

U = Yeah

Alex = = ?heavy going . h you know (. ) I mean (. ) I struggle to read them (. ) 'cause I'm sitting there thinking "jesus this is seriously wordy" . hhh so: (. ) how does that translate to (. ) to the government or to the ground level (. ) to to teachers etc. . hhh unless it's (. ) heavily filtered (. ) =

Susan = Yeah

Alex = = by people who <don't actually know [what]> Susan = [So ?In] your research and the kinds of things you've been doing (. ) have you come across any psychologists who are 'working on this nationally' (. ) =

Alex = Yeah there's [a] =

Susan = = [right] so it is there

Alex = = well it's there but it's not being access by: (. ) [the front line]

Susan = = [But I mean in] terms of national agenda (. ) not sort of research (. ) but are they working with (. )

Alex = = Not as far as I can tell with the [government particularly (. )] =

Susan = [Right]

Alex = = but (. ) it they are there and they're in the forefront and . hh in terms of psy?cology they're in the forefront [ >you know] =

U = [Hmm ]

Alex = = the research is out there< and really interesting significant articles are coming out . hh but (. ) >as I said as< far as I can tell they're not actually (. ) being accessed by: (. ) >and it just made me question< well . hh why is it that
that research isn’t being used is it because the people don’t know who to... who to ask... or is it because... we’re not pushing ourselves forward... as psychologists... not just as EPs but... as a group of professionals... =

Alex = or is it a little bit of both? I just find... it interesting are... are the government so stuck in their ways that... we have to address the bullying issue... that... they can’t think outside the immediate issues... they as you said earlier Rose that... <knee jerk> reaction to... what whatever the media are going on about at the time... =

Susan = Well I think in terms of parenting which is... obviously an area I have an interest in... I don’t think we would be where we are today without Tanya... =

Byron = having:... =

Susan = it would be interesting to e-mail the people who wrote those articles and ask them... =

Mia = Yeah that’s what I was going to say... =

Rose = I do think there’s a bit about um (2.0) governments... being selective around who they choose to do... =

Mia = Yeah...

Rose = err: I mean any government that can produce a national curriculum... and early years... materials without involving people who have an understanding of child development... =

U = (laugh)

Rose = is... fishing but it happens... =

Susan = And also we’re... on who’s around that table... =

Mia = ‘Yeah definitely’

Susan = [when they’re having that strategic discussion]... and then everybody says “oh we’d better talk to the partners about it” who are the partners... =

Susan = to follow up [what these people would say]... =

Rose = I think it would be fascinating to see... whether they... =

Mia = Yeah[(2.0)]

Rose = does seem to be the case in... situations:... that >as I say< what is innovating cutting edge now... um and very academic in it’s conceptualization... over time gets translated into one common parlou:rs: and then [err that] =

U = [Hmm]

255
Rose = in in effect you see it emerging (. ) >I mean if I was able< to look at back at this conversation in fifteen years (. h) to find out whether those people (. ) were now (. ) and their viewpoints [were] =
U [Hm]
Rose = now (. ) um coming into being [much mor:e] =
U [Hm]
Rose = err: particularly (. ) =
U Hmm
Rose = I think you know that (. ) that quite often it's (. ) it [takes that] =
U [Hm]
Rose = much time to perculate (. ) =
U Hmm
Rose = um through through into people's sort of general thinking
U Hmm
Susan = And it's which journal you write for isn't it
Mia = Yeah
Alex = who did the work on: (. ) you you would have heard of hi:s um the (. ) >I can't remember what it's called now it's upstairs in the office (. ) I should know it really< . h is the anti-bullying thing that came out in ninety: (. ) ninety-one I think . h that was the government and there's there's about two pages where they acknowledge Peter Smith's wo:rk . h [and that] =
U [Hm]
Alex = in Sheffield it's the Sheffield Bullying Project . h =
Susan = Right-
Alex = and it it came from the Sheffield EPS . h =
Susan = Oh okay yeah
Alex = and it's based on their work and >as I said< it's about two (laughs) pages I think where he's acknowledged . h and that's it and there's nothing (sounds disgusted) (. ) again like Olweus there's been nothing since (sounds disgusted) . h yet he's produced hundreds of articles >I know because I think I've< got most of them at home (laughs) . h on that on that actual issue but they've never gone back to him
Susan = So why hasn't he gone to them that's the question
Mia = [Yeah]
Lily = [Yeah]
Alex = [And you] (. ) you know is that because (. ) perhaps (. ) >I mean does< he feel that his work is >valued (. )
Susan = [Probably not]
Mia = [Is it that the] actual: (. ) I mean I don't 'know enough about it" but is it that the <actual government research itself> that they're 'doing or not research but the publications' have they <not got> any of these things in them (. ) are you saying that's it's not right the stuff that they're saying (. ) have you got (. ) are you questioning [what they're] =
U [Hm]
Mia = <actually doing> and I suppose [is that] =
U [Hm]
Mia = why you're saying that there needs to be (. ) the research in it (. ) are they completely going off on the <wrong angle> and the research >is saying that they should be doing it another way but they're not doing it I suppose is what I (. )<
Susan = Well I'm quite >surprised because I think they do =
Mia = [Yeah that's why I was asking]
Susan = [they do they have specific people] to do literature reviews [(.) don't they]
Mia = [Yeah that's what I was thinking yeah]
Alex = [I think it's] it's two things really (. ) um from again you know (. ) 'cause I've read through all the government policies (. ) for my sins . h and on bullying or ‘anti-bullying’ (speech sounding like quoting) and (. ) one of the things that comes across is the fact that psychology is not (. ) <mention:ed specifically>. h
= 
U Hmm
Alex = in terms of any research that literature reviews might have taken into account (.) so that's one thing (.) and then I'm thinking well if they're not acknowledging it are they actually using it (.) =
Mia ["Yeah that's what I was"]
Alex = [are they using it properly] =
Mia [Yeah yeah]
Alex = [or] what I would call properly [not using it (.) properly how can we possibly make anything effective (.) if we're not actually looking at (.) the development of it (.) the understanding of it (2.0) and if I mean (.) you know that term bullying
Susan See what would be great (.) Alex 'just thinking on a local level' (.) is all the information that you [have] =
Mia [Yeah]
Susan = would be 'fantastic to hear about (.) =
Alex Hmm
Susan = and to (.) have at our finger tips (.) and (.) just to kind [of abso:rb] =
Alex [If I wasn't going on maternity] leave I'd do something at an FSM but [laugh]
Susan = 'mind you Peter Smith might say something similar' =
Alex What that he's going on maternity leave? [(laugh)]
Susan ["If it wasn't for"] (wistful tone of voice)
Rose Err uh 'cause it's not an area that I um (.) have a lot of err sort of 'theoretical or academic knowledge about particularly' (.) but (.) i:if you talk about 'what 'Peter Smith was doing in Sheffield [at that point] =
U Hmm
Rose = in time^ .h =
U Hmm
Rose = w:ha:ts changes have ?you see::n (.) in his conceptualization and thinking? =
Alex Hmm 'I think ^over time^:e^ he's become (.) or his his re:search has (.) had (.)
Susan = a greater acknowledgement of (.) the ^wider context of bullying^:h:^ in terms of where it happens when it happens who's involved .h um (.) what those people are (.) what roles they take when they're in that (.) particular context what roles they take if they were in another context .h so as you were saying earlier the wider scope (.) of of the term ^rather than just thinking "bully" (.) ^victim" (.) that's it (.) "we have to address we have to help >one and not necessarily the other one<" .h so I think over time he (.) his research has shown that more and more (.) definitely
Susan And there's a ^spirit of that ^isn't there [in our government (.) approach]
Alex [Absolutely yeah there] is that yes it's um .hh they talk about it as you know you have to address the peers as well as the bully [and the] =
U [Hmmm]
Alex = victim (.) but what I find fascinating is that they're still saying "you have to address the 'peers' as well as the 'bully' and the 'victim'" (.) there still seems to be these two very clear terminologies .h arou:nd: (.) the ?these two people are at the centre of everything [and] =
U [Hmmm]
Alex = everyone else is ^just a bystander (.) and I I find that quite interesting (.) I mean do does there always have to be two people (questioning tone) do they always have to take those roles (questioning tone) (.) or is it more than that (.) and school that that to me is is what schools often comment on >again
Susan I don't know what you're experience< is they often say "he's the bully she's the victim:" (.) or vice versa and (.) =
U Hmm
Alex = these are the people who egg the bully on" (2.0) I just I find it interesting the use of the terminologies (4.0)
Rose No I'm still (.) I'm still reflecting on the the sort of um (.) progression and embedding over time^ (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = and I .h I'd be ^interested to: to see: (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = err (.) um you know so: there was these articles in the '70's [a:n:d] =
U [Hmmm]
Rose = (.) there was err: (.) >you know< not an aw:ful >lot of focus on doing
anything about it< [but] =
Rose = (then there) was these concerns [and then] =
Rose = .h (coughs) you say we're (.) we're see:in: g (.) the em
erge
cnce o:f: (.)
Rose = it is something (.) that in a sense that
Rose = it is there just in a sense that 
Rose = because (.) ch
Rose = just takes (.) time
Alex .h I mean what (.) when you’re coming across as you say that 
changing of
other people's >and like when you were talking about your case earlier< .h
what (.) what do you think might be the barriers to being able to achieve those 
changes (4.0)
Alex That’s got you all thinking hasn’t it (laughs)
Susan Well one is the thing that you’ve already raised which is (.) the ‘popularist (.)
views (.) =
Mia ‘Yeah”
Susan = ‘Which obviously feed us” [all and inf]
Mia ‘Hmm”
Susan = ‘Influences us all”
Alex Like the <media (.) magazines (.) inter
et (.) parent sites (.) kids’ sites> I’ve 
looked at some of the sites that are aimed at children .h and I’ve I find them 
quite ?scary ”actually to be honest and I think “gosh” you know “if that was 
my child looking at that .h I’d be worried for them” because of the (.) the 
terminology and it’s (.) it’s kind of almost scare mongering in a way (.) <so> 
(. .) and that popularist view I think is definitely a barrier to moving forward 
(3.0)
Susan And also schools (.) the broader it becomes (.) the more (.) sophisticated the 
thinking about (.) =
Alex Hmm
Susan = and the resourcing or >whatever that has to go into it< I mean: I just 
whether sometimes .h it’s (.) it’s a lot for people to have to (. .)
Alex So the actual logistics of putting things in place in terms of time needed to look 
at it (.) to analyse it to (.)
Susan Do something about it
Alex Yeah
Lily And I suppose people get stuck in their ways don't they (.) they think "why 
change( .) =
Lily = let’s carry on” (. .) you know (. .) =
Lily = with that twist to (. .) you know that ‘pattern as well”
Alex Yeah (. .) yeah yeah
Rose Well (. .) you know (. ) I think to try: and draw: ‘parallel$
s with things (. .) like 
( .) um corporal punishment (. .) and >you know< there is a popularist view: 
that: "well I got bollocked and it didn’t do me any harm (. .) =
Rose = and (. .) =
Rose = so why don’t we continue it” (. .) =
Rose = um (. .) >if you think about the fact that< we’ve had to (. .) to try and 
< impose change through legislati<on> [in quite] =
Rose = (.) uh because (laughs) (.) in a sense it's only making things: (.) um (.)
illegal (.) that means a number of people are forced not to (.) but I I still
remember the times when (.) people would say "well it's ~>all the victim's
fault (.) they're asking for it<" (.)

Rose = if you think about (.) people's understanding of >rape (.) [umm] =

Rose = err perception: is it's (.) I make the analogy: (.) that um it's like
it's like (.) an oil tanker (.) =

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =

Rose = and it's a little bit like society [and] =

Rose = (>you know< >rape< [.] we quite often have to
have legislation to impose the beginning of change ([laughs]) =

Rose = um and that the >you know the the in a sense there isn't quite that<
legislation (.) >specific legislation< [around] =

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =

U Hmm

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
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will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =

Rose = (>you know< an oil tanker has to start changing um it's direction (.) and it
will take (laughs) fifteen miles to be able to do it (.) =
Alex = [themselves]
Mia = [Exactly yeah] (.)
Rose And I think it’s also (. ) around (. ) um (. ) you know an individual (. ) who may want to change [who:] =
U Hmm
Rose = (. ) um: (. ) doesn’t see it that way (. ) um (3.0) runs the risk of alienation in not actually having an identity with either group (. ) =
Mia Yeah
Rose = um: because if you divorce yourself from [your] =
U [Hmhm]
Rose = (. ) um: ?family and and community views: (. ) then you’re you’re ?living in there and you’re somewhat of err: an ?isolationist [and] =
U Hmm
Rose = ?actually you could then (. ) sadly end up becoming a ?victim (laughing slightly while speaking) because you have [differing views] =
U Hmm
Rose = from [your reference] =
U Hmm
Rose = to to to be [able to:] =
Mia [Yeah]
Rose = (. ) in a sense ?alienate themselves [from] =
U [Hmhm]
Rose = what is (. ) err their ‘their sort of reference grouping =
U Hmm
Rose = (. ) I think that’s quite hard to do =
Alex So when we come across a case like yours err Susan earlier . h where the parent is saying to the school “my child is being bullied” . hh I suppose you’ve got an element there of is that the parents’ view that the child has then taken ?up (. ) or is it the child’s view that the parent is then (. ) reinforcing . h and what reinforces the parents’ use of that term >I mean when as you say it’s that < popularist view (. ) where did the parent get their information from =
U Hmm
Alex = (3.0) =
U Hmm
Alex = so that’s err that’s quite a difficult one I I think to: (. ) to overcome as EPs . h in the scope of our work (. ) um as to how ‘to: (. ) how to help schools (2.0) =
initially (3.0) I mean what< what would be (. ) I suppose (. ) at the risk of getting >personal what would be your views on bullying (. ) do you (. ) do you (. ) does it provoke or does it think (. ) make you think about certain . hh connotations or certain contexts when you hear the term bullying (8.0) the reason I ask that is because it used to make me think “bully victim” (2.0) and ‘that was it (. ) you know (2.0)’ so I’ve moved on [in ?my]=
U [Hmm]
Alex = own thinking (. ) I just wonder about =
Susan ‘What do you think now then” =
Alex What do I think now (laughs) I think it’s too wide an issue to pin down that far [(laughs)] =
U [Hmhm]
Alex = (. ) there’s there’s a lot that goes on and so when (. ) when . h when I hear a parent or a teacher say “oh he’s being bullied” I ask that question (. ) ”what makes you use that terminology” (2.0) >because< I find it interesting what their ‘response is and if their response is (. ) “well it’s him and. there’s another guy: and the other boy keeps hitting him (. ) and he just stands there and takes it” well then okay that’s one type (. ) and that’s one perspective but what (. ) what does the ?actual child think of it (. ) what does the school think of it when they see it going on . h and how I can I help support that (. ) so I was just wondering what your own views were (. ) or feelings were (4.0)
Lily The main experience [I’ve had was before I got on the course when I was a learning mentor: =
U Hmm
Lily = . h and I used to work with children: =
Lily = (.) that their heads of year said to me (.) “they’re being bullied” =

Lily = (.) and it was like if other children were being nasty to them .h =

Lily = and then he almost would like refer on to me .h just to like give them some one to one time to talk through it =

Lily = (.) and I would always be de >you know< working with the person who was being bullied =

Lily = and (2.0) >you know and that< 

Mia = [Did that] sorry to interrupt you did that person identify they (.) were being bullied before their head of year (.) identified them (.) does that make sense =

Lily I mean [sometimes] =

Mia = [was it] their perception they were being bullied (.) or [was it just (.)]°

Lily = [Yeah]

Mia = [Yeah] but that was >you know< a couple of years ago =

Lily = but (.) there were a couple of children bullying the victim:

Alex = So one child towards another

Lily Yeah

Alex = And there was a definite kind of (.) [“bully victim” (.)] =

Lily = [scenario]

Lily [Yeah] but that was >you know< a couple of years ago =

Lily = I think (.) perhaps the thing about (.) psychology and psychological knowledge (.) is: (.) exceptionally powerful (.0)

Rose T I I think (..) I’ve always felt that the use of language is: (..) crucial (..) and that that the message that words can deliver (..) is: exceptionally powerful (.0) and (2.0) you know when you: (.) when you use words like victim (..) um (..) then (.) it it can (..) I think sometimes (.) mean that that some people (..) will end up >feeling powerless to be able to do anything about it< or that that you know “well it’s just you you’re a victim” =

Lily = but (..) there were a couple of children bullying the victim:

Alex = Yeah and again (..) cause it’s the use of the term victim towards the child .h who perceives themselves as the victim (..) does that again reinforce (..) what they’re going through (..) does it or does it help them ?change (..) is it a barrier to change to call them a ?victim (6.0)

Rose = I think (..) that (..) perhaps the thing about (..) psychology and psychological knowledge (.) is: (.) it always ends up (..) over ?time: e um (..) I think providing us with more and more (..) sophisticated levels of understanding [or] =

Lily = but (..) there were a couple of children bullying the victim:

Rose = (..) erm “that’s the way you are you’re a victim” [and and] =

U [Hmm]

Rose = I think (..) that (..) perhaps the thing about (..) psychology and psychological knowledge (.) is: (.) it always ends up (..) over ?time: e um (..) I think providing us with more and more (..) sophisticated levels of understanding [or] =

U [Hmm]

Rose = (..) demonstrating (..) err illustrating (..) the complexities that what (..) uh >what when you pick it up looks< like something quite =

U [Hmm]

Rose = (..) straight (laughs) forward .h actually when you being to explore it (..) um gets increasingly sophisticated [and our] =

U [Hmm]
Rose = own understanding =
U Hmm
Rose = .h becomes more sophisticated and more complex =
U Hmm
Rose = .h and I think err it’s maybe what other people find frustrating in us:
(.) i:s (.) that (.) they’re still at a more fundamental >level of
understanding a more black and white or< straight forward .h and and um (.)
the psychologist coming in and saying “well: >have you thought about it this
way<” and I think that’s part of ou:r (.) job [I would] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = see that our role is about (.) perhaps challenging some of that simplicity of
thinking .h and trying to encourage people to: (.) um (.) look at things in in a
broader way =
U Hmm
Rose = just ask ‘questions differently’ (.>) >um and I think that that’s where
I’ve < [cha:nged] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = with the knowledge that we =
U Hmm
Rose = (.>) we gain in any of our areas is =
U Hmm
Rose = (.>) to (.>) begin to >realise (.>) that err human be ?haviour is just >remarkably
complex >and sophisticated [‘and there] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = are not simple explanations< =
U Hmm
Rose = however (.>) you >know we when we start [with] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = such a simple problem which was (.>) you get this person =
U Hmm
Rose = (.>) you get this person and you try to develop a bit of tolerance between
[the two]< (said with humour)=
All [laughs]
Alex [Yeah]
Rose = [and all will] be< we:ll: (.>) um (.>) but but you know that was a laudable
>aim for people’s understanding perhaps at that point< =
U Hmm
Rose = .h but but (.>) maybe: that’s why >we haven’t effected change as >much<
because we (.>) we didn’t ha:ve that =
U Hmm
Rose = (.>) that deeper understanding (.>) >other than >some of those cutting edge
thinkers =
U Hmm
Rose = (.>) I mean I think >one of things about many of our< psy (stutter)
psychologist friends is they’re >really innovative in their >thinking .h and they
>do look at things from a totally different take (.>) err (.>) which then allo:ws:
(.>) other >avenues of thinking to open up< (.>)
Alex Hmm so I >suppose there’s a couple of things there the first is that .h our (.>
our job (.>) essentially: (.>) because >of the >nature of it (.>) is fundamentally
changes (.>) our (.>) perspectives (.>) on issues like bullying< because of the
knowledge that we have (.>) because of the experience that we have .h and
>the other thing that I’m picking up there is that there’s< (.>) there’s also a
personal element here: (.>) in terms of >we as people (.>) >not as educational
psychologists but we as people< .h develop and change as >well (.>) and (.>)
perhaps what >our original thinking was can< be changed [by our] =
U [Hmm]
Alex = (.>) job (.>) and that (.>) in in >some ways is a barrier to us (.>) helping (.>
>other people because as >as you say we’re we are at a different level of
thinking but in another way< it’s very (.>) very helpful to people .h because (.>
we can facilitate their thought processes and get them (.>) perhaps (.>) thinking
>of things in a different way< (.>) is that a fair comment (laughs) (4.0)
Rose I I think that’s >central to our role =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) in in (.) ‘whatever is being presented to us’ is: (.) to: (.) I mean there’s that old adage: (.) um >“there’s five psychologists in a room you ask a question and get ten different opinions”< =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) that um >because we’re able to say well “It could be” or “it might be” or “it may be”< an =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) and “how about” um =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) and because we don’t just um (.) follow that linear (.) viewpoint: (.) that =
we actually >do have a diversity< an:d (coughs) that that’s central to the way we =
Rose = (.) develop our own [thought] =
Rose = processes [and try] =
Rose = to facilitate other ?people’s =
Rose = (.) err looking at things [‘in a different] =
Rose = (.) different way (.) I think (.) I mean what do you think o(.)
Alex So what (.) what do you think we could do from ?here then (.) um as as a group of EP:s (.) to h help our work (.) with schools some something that (.) =
Susan ‘Hear about what you’re doing’
All [(laughs)]
Alex [Apart from that] (laughs) >you know I mean I’d love to share it with everybody< but I’m just thinking on a on a practical level anything that we might be able to do as a group from here .h to perhaps (.) facilitate people (.) >not necessarily coming to us and asking us for help because you know we’ve all acknowledged< that (.) we’ve got a heavy work load (laughing) and perhaps (.) >not the capacity but .h how< we might be able to influence and to support people (.) like the anti-bullying officers (3.0)
Susan Well they’re very open (.) =
U Hmm
Susan = to: (.) >I mean I went< to speak (.) to (.) through this piece of work it was fascinating I went to speak to (.) (name) (.) of the community safety team and just sort of asked him about the anti-bullying strategy: [and] =
U Hmm
Susan = .h how it worked and (.) whether this would fit his criteria about his team (.) <and ?he was ?lovely> =
U Hmm
Susan = (.) and then I spoke to the: (.) the person >who was the officer there and she was asking what ?I thought about things< .h I mean I think they are: (.) people are generally very open aren’t they to (.) to us inputting (.)
Mia [‘Yeah’]
Alex [‘Yeah’]
Mia Yeah I would agree
Alex So perhaps it’s make (.) =
Susan It’s that team work isn’t it
Alex Yeah
Rose I ‘think we sometimes (.) give mixed messages: (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = in that err on the one hand >we say “it would be really great to be involved” [and] =
U Hmm
Rose = then somebody comes who’s ‘interested and we say< (.) =
Mia “We just ca:n’t (.)” =
Rose [Exactly]
Mia = [pick that up”]
Rose [Exactly] (.) because we’ve got so: (.) so much (.) so there’s >a little bit about< um I think ‘you’re right’ (.) Susan (.) there’s ‘so many of the (.) the
teams and the people err around would welcome EP involvement um you've brought a totally different perspective to things. um there's sometimes groups are um reticent to ask becaus: e they get told um

U Hmm

Rose = "we can't" =

U Hmm

Rose = and so you don't tend to get asked [so I] =

Mia [People then] stop asking don't they

Rose >There's a there's a catch there's a catch < (repetition in between unidentifiable comments by other speakers) twenty-two isn't it there (.) that they may start off that way (.) and we often um: (.) you know there< is also that other bit (.) that if there's a need (.) and you're not able to be responsive to that need< then somebody else fills the gap (2.0)

Susan 'cause (name) area is the homo-phobic bullying isn't it (.) =

U Hmm

Susan = and she's done a lot of work around that (.) she wrote in the Guardian didn't she (questioning tone) =

Alex [Didn't she do a book or something]

Susan = [or something anyway] she's done a lot down ?that (.) uh (.) we did hear about it didn't we: =

U Hmm

Susan = (.) a lot

Alex = So do you think it's (.) it's more actually about just starting with ourselves (.) =

Susan [Where ourselves are]=

Alex = [and share (.) sharing] that knowledge (.) having the opportunity to: (.) >well to< have discussions like this .h and to move things forward that way: (.) and once we have an opportunity to share that knowledge =

U Hmm

Alex = (.) like like any of us would >share about you know the parenting project< (directed towards Susan) (.) the (.) the soc com team and your work there (directed towards Rose) (.) and FIRST (directed towards Mia) etc. (.) if we have that opportunity to share and to know what's going on then (.) we can take it forward as a group =

Susan [Yeah]

Alex = (.) is that (.) something we would agree with (questioning tone) (.) in terms of a way forward

Susan In terms of this group

Alex = (.) just us you know as five (individuals here) (.) what could we suggest: (.) to the team to put forward (.) as a way: to: (.) facilitate our working (.) in working with schools if this issue comes up (.) and we're asked about it= (2.0)

Susan I don't think I've got enough (doubtful tone) (.) it sounds as though you've got an awful lot more knowledge than I have (.) about the anti-bullying strategy =

Mia Yeah

Susan = (.) I'd probably (.) like to know (.) that from (.) =

U Hmm

Susan = your (.) self (.)

Alex Learning with and from each other (.) initially [and then] =

Susan [Yeah]

Alex = moving it (.) into a wider context (.)

Rose I think that's: the way: many of the: (.) initiatives have happened within the service isn't it =

U Hmm

Rose = (.) that (.) =

U Hmm

Rose = that somebody: um: (.) has (.) >been interested in a particular area< and has researched it =

U Hmm
Rose = (.) done a bit of training =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) err of other people err you know (.) I I do think there is a thing about having the opportunity to hear of all the things (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = that are going on (.) but I'm aware for example (.) of when when (name) did his input [on] =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) um (.) the:: [heart rate (.) and everything] =
Alex [Heart rate yeah very interesting]
Rose = that (.) so many people are now linking in and having a look at that =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) and I and I do think it's a case that maybe on your return (.) one of the things that you might like to suggest to (name) and (name) at one of these service days (.) to have a slot on it =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) to present your (.) =
U Hmm
Rose = own findings (.) to bring us up to date in our more current thinking and then (.) what you've got (.) are: (.) err twenty five people (.) virtually =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) who've got other avenues: [and] =
U [Hmm]
Rose = links: =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) that that they can then direct =
U Hmm
Rose = (.) err (.) and and I think it's from those smaller beginnings =
Mia [Yeah]
Rose = (.) that you (.) you bring it out from there (.)
Alex Thank you very much (.)
Rose So you know we've got a role for you when you come back
Alex (laughs) just the one (laughs) no school based work (laughs) then I'll stop that there thank you everybody very much
Appendix 5 ~ Chapter 2

Recurrent points:
Constructions of bullying through changing terminologies

The following extract provides a further example of the pattern of conversation illustrated within Extract 1; the attempts by Rose to introduce alternative language to the traditional terminologies that are not taken up by the rest of us:

Extract A5.1

1099 Alex Yeah and again (.) ‘cause it’s the use of the term victim towards the child .h
1100 who perceives themselves as the victim (.) does that again reinforce (.) what
1101 they’re going through (.) does it or does it ?help them ?change (.) is it a
1102 barrier to change to call them a ?victim (6.0)
1103 Rose I I I I think (.) I’ve always felt that the use of language is: (.) crucial (.) and
1104 that that the me:ss:age that word :s: can deliver (.) i:s: exceptionally powerful
1105 (.) and (2.0) you know when you: (.) when you use words ?like victim? (.) um
1106 (.) then (.) it it can (.) I think ?sometimes (.) mean that that some people (.)
1107 will end up >feeling powerless to be able to do anything about it< or that that
1108 you know “well it’s just you you’re a victim” =
1109 U Hmm
1110 Rose = (.r) erm “that’s the way you are you’re a victim” [and and] =
1111 U [Hmm]

Also within Extract 1, the use of stake inoculation by Lily is noted as a recurrent device in her speech. The following extract illustrates how Lily once again performs a stake inoculation (lines 1056 – 1057) and how my colleagues provide agreement and reinforcement for the continued use of the traditional terminologies:

Extract A5.2

1056 Lily The main experience ?I’ve had was before I got on the course when I was a
1057 learning mento:r =
1058 U Hmm
1059 Lily = .h and I used to work with children: =
1060 U Hmm
1061 Lily = (.r) that their heads of year said to me (.r) “they’re being bullie:d” =
1062 U Hmm
1063 Lily = (.r) and it was like if other children were being nasty to them .h =
1064 U Hmm
1065 Lily = and then he almost would like refer on to me .h just to like give them some
1066 one to one time to talk through i:t =
1067 U Hmm
1068 Lily = (.r) and I would always be de >you know< working with the ↓person who
1069 was being bullied =
1070 U Hmm
1071 Lily = and (2.0) >you know and that< [that’s] =
Mia: [Did that] sorry to interrupt you did that person identify they were being bullied before their head of year identified them does that make sense.
Lily: I mean [sometimes] =
Mia: [was it] their perception they were being bullied [or was it just ]
Lily: [Yeah]
Mia: [‘the head of year’]
Lily: [normally]
Mia: [‘Right’]
Lily: = generally yeah it was the child [saying] =
Mia: = [‘yeah’]
Lily: = you know sometimes cause you know they’d all like know me
round the school =
U: Hmm
Lily: = and sometimes children would come and say to me “oh I’m being bullied:”
( that kind of thing =
U: Hmm
Lily: = then I would speak to the head of year and it was very much like
that =
Alex: So one child towards another
Lily: Yeah
Alex: And there was a definite kind of “bully victim” =
Lily: [Yeah]
Alex: = [scenario]
Lily: [Yeah] but that was >you know< a couple of years ago =
U: Yeah
Lily: = but there were a couple of children bullying the victim:
Appendix 6 ~ Chapter 2

Narrative examples

The following are additional extracts from the discussion by my colleagues and myself where Susan uses narratives in the same way as that described under the discourse EP identity:

Extract A6.1

Susan I had a really interesting experience with my EBD school. I thought they had a very strong anti-bullying (. ) err procedures and it’s sort of works very well and they’re one of the safer schools (. ) award schools and it’s all fantastic. (. ) but (. ) through discussions about individual students a lot <of times> > they were saying to me “oh and he< gets really angry when people call him gay” or (. ) “he’s really worried that he’s gay all the time and he keeps saying ‘you’re gay’ or ‘you’re gay’” and all this kind of (. ) language and I said (. ) “well to be honest you know (. ) I’m just wondering whether we think (. ) we might have sort of any: homophobic bullying or any bullying around ? those kind of issues in ?school” (. ) and it was really interesting cause they said “no Susan when you’ve got an all boy culture like we have you know [that’s just] =

U [(laughs)]

Susan = the way it is you know they use those kinds of terms all the time they don’t mean gay gay and I said “well (. ) he’s obviously understanding it as gay gay because [. ] now he’s [. ]

[U [Hm]]

Susan = terrified that he’s gay . h =

U Hmm

Susan = and (. ) it was um over > that we had those conversations< and actually <shifted> in terms of what > was acceptable and what wasn’t acceptable< . hh and again (. ) I’m feeling really guilty now Alex that I > didn’t go in there [and do all] =

Alex [(laughs)]

Susan = the EP research stuff that I said “talk to someone in healthy schools”<

[(laughs) ] =

Alex [(laughs)]

Mia [Ahh]

Susan = who does the anti-bullying gay homophobic stuff (. ) so um (. ) yeah so they came in and they they’ve moved quite significantly on” that and you know explore with the students what’s acceptable and ‘why one might be saying those kinds of things and that (. ) but it’s just interesting [in terms] =

[U [Hm]]

Susan = of . h what (. ) might be ?culturally acceptable [a:nd do ] =

U [Hm]

Susan = we accept it
Susan: Interestingly, when I did some work up at the DCFS I was on this working party with this chap who was the lead for national for anti-bullying.

Susan: I’m sitting there thinking about it now actually. And he wasn’t a psychologist. I don’t know what he was actually. But he had a very interesting viewpoint on the way things were. But it was more about procedure, um, and getting everyone interested in how we move the whole country forward on bullying and things. And cyber and that kind of thing. I don’t remember him using any psychology. If I could remember his name, you could e-mail him Alex and ask him all these things.

Alex: That’s what I do. I e-mail them and say, “I’m really interested in this.”

Susan: I read your policy what do you think? Cause they’re not the whole thing on a local and a national level is nobody’s going to come knocking on our door unless we...
Appendix 7 ~ Chapter 2

Recurrent points: 
Barriers to the application of our skills

Within the analysis of Extract 12, Susan raises the barrier of us being dependent on others being aware of EPs and asking us to share our knowledge. This then positions us as being powerless of effect change and the following extracts are further illustrations of this:

Extract A7.1

Susan And also we’re reliant on who’s around that table (.).
Mia [’Yeah definitely’]
Susan [when they’re having that strategic discussion]. h and then everybody says “oh we’d better talk to the partners about it” who are the partners .h oh and then everyone put this cobbled (scoffs at this word) list of partners together (.).

Extract A7.2

Rose [I think it would be] fascinating to see what (.h) whether they see: themself:es: ↓ [as having] =
Mia [Yeah]
Rose = a role (.h) to actively influence (.h) or: whether: (.h) what happens (.h) <as does seem to be the case in some situations:> that >as I say< what is innovating cutting edge now (.h) um and very academic in it’s conceptualization (.h) over time gets translated into one common parlous: and then [err that] =
U [Hm]
Rose = in in effect you see it emerging (.h) >I mean if I was able< to look at back at this conversation in fifteen years (.h) to find out whether those people (.h) were now (.h) and their viewpoints [were] =
U [Hm]
Rose = now (.h) um coming into being [much more] =
U [Hm]
Rose = err: particularly (.h) =
U [Hm]
Rose = I think you know that (.h) that quite often it’s (.h) it [takes that] =
U [Hm]
Rose = much time to percolate (.h) =
U [Hm]
Rose = um through through into people’s sort of general thinking
U [Hm]
Susan And it’s which journal you write for isn’t it
Mia Yeah
Appendix 8 ~ Chapter 2

Recurrent points:
The absence of psychology

Within the analysis of Extract 13, we see points raised by myself in reference to the absence of psychology in particular contexts. Later in the discussion, I give other examples of where I feel there is an absence of psychology as shown in the following additional extracts:

Extract A8.1

655  Susan = you know (. ) quite often  nobody knows [what an EP] =  
656  Mia  ['No you're right it's going back to what we said earlier' ]  
657  Susan = [is does what we do] =  
658  Alex  I mean again um you look at the British Journal of (. ) um (. )  
659  Educational Psychology >and a lot< (. ) of those (.hh) people or a lot of those  
660  research articles are quite (. ) =  
661  U Yeah  
662  Alex  = ?heavy going † .h you know (. ) I mean (. ) I struggle to read them (. ) 'cause  
663  I'm sitting there thinking "jesus this is seriously wordy" .hhh so: (. ) how does  
664  that translate to (. ) to the government or to the grou:nd level (. ) to to  
665  teachers etc. .hhh unless it's (. ) heavily filtered (. ) =  
666  Susan Yeah  
667  Alex  = by people who <don't actually know [what]>  

Extract A8.2

668  Susan [So ?In] your research and the kinds of things you've been doing † (. ) have you  
669  come across any psychologists who are ‘working on this nationally’ (. ) =  
670  Alex  Yeah there’s [a] =  
671  Susan = [right] so it is there  
672  Alex  = well it’s there but it’s not being access by: (. ) [the front line]  
673  Susan [?But I mean in] terms of national agenda † (. ) not sort of research (. ) but are  
674  they working with (. )  
675  Alex  Not as far as I can tell with the [government particularly (. )] =  
676  Susan [Right]  
677  Alex  = but (. ) it they are there and they’re in the forefront and .hh in terms of  
678  psychology they’re in the forefront † [ >you know] =  
679  U [Hmm]  
680  Alex  = the research is out there< and really interesting significant articles are  
681  coming out .hh but (. ) >as as I said as< far as I can tell they’re not actually (. )  
682  being accessed by: (. ) >and it just made me question< well .hh why is it that  
683  that research isn’t being used is it † because the people don’t know who to (. )  
684  >who to ask< .h or is it because (.h) we’re not pushing ourselves forward (. )  
685  as psychologists >not just as EPs but< as a group of professionals (. ) =  
686  U Hmm  
687  Alex  = is it a little bit of both (2.0) I just find >it interesting are< (. ) are the  
688  government so stuck in their ways that “we >have to address the bullying  
689  issue” (. ) that .h they can’t think outsid:e (. ) the immediate issues >they as  
690  you said earlier Rose that< <knee jerk> reaction to .hh what whatever the  
691  media are going on about at the time (. )
Appendix 9a ~ Chapter 3

Teacher Recruitment Letter

My name is Alexandra Boys and I am an Educational Psychologist and qualified teacher and I am writing to ask whether you could help with a research project that I am conducting.

The purpose of this project is to explore the way people talk about bullying in everyday speech. I have previously analysed the talk of a group of Educational Psychologists during a peer support meeting and would now like to explore the talk of teachers about bullying during formal meeting situations. To keep this as naturalistic as possible, I have asked the head teacher to introduce the topic in a manner that is relevant to your school’s circumstances as an item on an agenda for one of your staff meetings.

To analyse the data this aspect of the staff meeting will need to be audiotaped and the head teacher has agreed to facilitate this on my behalf. If you are able to attend the meeting to be held on (?) at (?) and are willing to participate in the specific aspect of the meeting talking about bullying that will be audiotaped, I would be grateful if you could complete your details on the reply slip below and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided by (insert date). A further consent form will be given on the day of the meeting for your signature.

I would like to reassure you that all the information given will be treated in the strictest confidence and your reply slips will be destroyed after the discussion has taken place.

Please do not feel under any obligation to take part in the study especially if you feel it would make you uncomfortable in any way.
If you have any queries or would like further information about the study before deciding whether or not to participate please feel free to get in touch by e-mail (alex.boys@port.ac.uk) or using the envelope provided.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Alexandra Boys

________________________________________________________________________

I am able to participate in the staff meeting to be held on (?) at (?).

Name:

________________________________________________________________________

Date:

________________________________________________________________________

School:

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 9b ~ Chapter 3

Teacher Informed Consent Form

Title of research
- Perspectives on bullying: A discourse analysis of discussions by teaching staff

Investigator
- Alexandra Boys

Supervisors
- Maggie Linnell, Treena Jingree and Sherria Hoskins

Purpose of research
- To examine the way teachers talk about bullying within the context of a formal staff meeting

Description of procedures
- I propose to audio tape part of a staff meeting where the head teacher will introduce the topic of bullying as an agenda item in a way that is sensitive to his / her particular school. I will not be present during the discussion / recording and the head teacher as agreed to record on my behalf.
- The discussion can last as long as is required by the participants.
- As usual this will be an ‘opt in’ session, so if you do not wish to take part in the study you are not required to attend

To be completed by the participant:

- I understand that I will be participating in a discussion on the topic of bullying as part of a staff meeting with teacher colleagues

- I am happy for this discussion to be audio-taped providing the tape and the transcript are kept in the University’s secure holding facility
• I understand that the audio-tape of the group discussion will only be heard by the investigator (named above) and the supervisors if needed (named above)

• I understand that the transcript of the group discussion will only be seen by the investigator (named above) and the supervisors if needed (named above)

• I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time and for any reason

• I understand that although my participation in this study will not be completely anonymous my name will not be used in connection with results in any way

• I understand that I have the right to obtain information about the findings of the study and about how they will be used after the study is complete

• I consent to my data being used for research purposes in connection to the above study

Signature of participant: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

(Please note that this sheet will be kept separately to the interview transcript)
Appendix 9c ~ Chapter 3

Teacher De-briefing Notes

Thank you for taking part in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of language in everyday discussions concerning bullying. Although there have been numerous studies concerning the topic of bullying, it is becoming increasingly obvious that bullying means different things to different people in different situations. The reason behind the current study was to gain an understanding of how teachers talk about bullying, the kind of language they use and how conversations centred on bullying emerge through social interaction. I have previously conducted a similar study with a group of Educational Psychologists and I hope that by conducting this research I can gather evidence demonstrating a slightly different perspective on the topic. Ultimately, I hope that my research will encourage a more flexible view of bullying and a greater understanding of its nature from the perspectives of parties linked to such social interactions in an educational context. Once I have transcribed the group discussion I will send you copies via your head teacher for your approval to enable you to check that they are an accurate reflection of the conversation. The transcripts will be made anonymous so that no one other than those involved will be able to recognise the discussant. Please get in touch with me if any of the details are incorrect or if there is anything you would like to change or amend. If, upon reflection, you are uncomfortable with having on record any part of your contribution to the discussion, the transcript could be amended to reflect this. I would ask that you return the transcript to me once read in the envelope provided and that you do not take any copies.

If you have further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. My e-mail address is alex.boys@port.ac.uk. Alternatively, you could contact my supervisor, Maggie Linnell, and her e-mail address is maggie.linnell@port.ac.uk.

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in this study.
Alexandra Boys
Appendix 10a ~ Chapter 3

School 1 Staff Meeting

Rachel: Okay (.I) I hope this is err recording for you err
Rachel: Testing (.) no it is 'cause it's got numbers coming on okay if I start off
and say that we've done the assembly for three weeks (.) and I was
saying to children that I thought bullying was when one person c
constantly or a group of people constantly pick on another child (.)
however (.) I know the children in the school have come back saying
that they think bullying .h is not necessarily repetition .h but how (.)
severe the incident is (.) so one child (.) a one off (.) who might kick
them (.) or punch them (.) to them that is bullying even if it only
occurs once (3.0)
Seren: I agree with what you're saying that the ch I believe that children um
are being bullied if it's consist (.) consistently happening with the same
child over and over again not over again 'cause you'd stop it to try and
nip it in the bud but .h that's what I think bullying is .hh (3.0)
Simone: And parents are quick to (.) accuse people of bullying aren't they
because parents will come in after one incident of a hit (.hh) and
they'll say (.) they'll say "oh my child's being bullied" and it like y like
you just said it might just be one incident that happened in the
playground and they they (.) are quick to use that b word bullying
(4.0)
Esme: Um I actually had an incident yesterday (.) with that problem that erm
there was an argument between two boys (.) um and I was speaking
to the boy who'd actually pushed another one and um and he said "oh
I was bullying but the first boy was just annoying me" and I had to
explain that it wasn't he wasn't bullying just 'cause he pushed him
once he'd probably done the worst thing probably but it didn't make it
bullying so they they'd got the confusion there (.) as an incident (1.0)
Sienna: I have a similar sort of problem in my class erm (.) with the fact that
my children find it difficult to distinguish between what is bullying and
what is just annoying behaviour so I think that the assembly that
Rachel did actually helped .h clear that up because we discussed it as a
class and it's made it a lot clearer for them .h to be able to distinguish
(.) the two
Simone: When I discussed this with the class they couldn't dist (.) they couldn't
distinguish the two but =
Sienna: They couldn't [in the beginning]
Simone: = [but there was] annoying behaviour which they they even thought
could go in the bullying =
Sienna: [Mm]
Simone: = [so] I think they [can't (.). distinguish the two]
Sienna: [They couldn't] in the beginning (.) but once we (.). spoke about it (.)
and the whole repetition is it's more likely to be bullying rather than a
one off .h then they (.). understood it better
Rachel: [I]
Esme: [Think]
Rachel: [I]
Esme: [Sorry]
Rachel: I read (.). in a head teacher magazine last week (.). and I'm not sure
who the author is (.). has (.). written about (.). ways of dealing with
bullying and saying to t children to be assertive (.). in that they say
something back to the bully like "why are you picking on me" um she
also said humour can work .h in the sense of like .hh um laughing (.).
or (.). belittling the bully and she said she (.). I don't agree or disagree
but she thinks there's a place where (.). children get taught how to deal
with bullying (2.0)
Esme: I think sometimes though you it can have (.) children can have the opposite effect 'cause when they rise to it (.) and they give it a reaction that's when it can sometimes it's [entertainment] =

Rachel: [Yeah]

Esme: = for the bullies isn't it (.) so they'll do it again it's sometimes you get the wrong sort of things that a child might say back [you] =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: = might think of children in the past that have really risen to it and that's made it worse in a way

Seren: The other thing I find is that you want children to make sure that they're being assertive but you're talking about being [assertive (.)] =

Esme: [Mm]

Seren: = with a bully but even if chi some children are just irritating so they don't realise they're doing it (.) so they they're in the line for example and just tapping someone .hh so we're trying to get the children to be confident to turn around and say to that person .hh um "could you stop doing that it's annoying me" (.) and then (.). you know when (.) they're being (.) irritating 'cause they keep on doing it but if they just don't realise they're doing it then you've given them given them an opportunity to deal with that situation

Rachel: I think in this this book book thing (.) it's only an A4 page I'll bring it in actually she it does say that um (.). when you've made you're comment like (.) well "why do you keep picking on me (.). haven't you got anything better to do" you do turn on your heel and walk away (1.0) so you don't then stay (.) you actually purposely .hh so in other words you (.) sort of rise above it (.) (and) I think if and I wonder whether .hh the type of character that could do that (.) is maybe not a type of character that's a victim of bullying (.) in [the] =

Rachel: [Yeah] =

Seren: = first place [I] =

Simone: [Yeah]

Rachel: [Yeah]

Seren: = Just wonder I wonder whether the fact that you can't do that is what =

Simone: Easy target

Rachel: = yeah maybe makes [makes them a victim]

Seren: [You you say though] some children have victim written across their forehead [sometimes]

Rachel: [Yeah unfortunately]

Seren: We um we had that incident with that and that bullying policy we read the other day didn't we =

Rachel: Mm

Seren: = that the no blame =

Rachel: Yeah

Seren: = saying that children shouldn't blamed if they you should talk to them you should h ha you should have a group of children shouldn't you [and] =

Rachel: [The spe the] spectators and the [victim] =

Seren: = [Yeah] =

Rachel: = and the bully and you should talk it through [but] =

Seren: = [it shouldn't you shou] they shouldn't there be no it didn't say anything about consequences didn't did [did it]

Rachel: [No]

Esme: If you've got that ethos where people don't get blamed that creates like the climate for bullies so that children that maybe wouldn't usually: (.) take the opportunity to be a bully .hh might think "oh I can get away with that now" so it creates a climate [for that] =

Seren: Yeah

Esme: = doesn't it if you just have that policy in [place]

Seren: [Yeah and the] they say you know it's probably because of something that's going had at home or something that you you know excuses but they can't change .hh you can't treat them differently (.) you can try
and change their behaviour (.) but they still need the consequences
don't they

Rachel: [Well we] felt that they did we felt that (.) you couldn’t necessarily
have a no blame culture if a child is bullying another child and they’re
upset =

Seren: Mm [mm]

Rachel: = [that] bully does need to be told to [stop it]

U [Mm]

Seren: [Absolutely]

U [Yeah]

Seren: [Because every] child has rights don’t they every child has a r every
child has a right to be in that classroom (.) an

U [And to feel safe]

Seren: [and to feel safe] that’s right

Kelly: See with bullying it might be learnt behaviour from home or from
another environment and if they don’t know it’s wrong they’re never
gonna [learn]

Seren: [No] so you’ve got to try and change their behaviour but they also
need to be in trouble for (.) d they’ve got to realise it’s wrong haven’t

they

Gill: But it’s finding the evidence though as well isn’t it =

Seren: Yeah

Gill: = and that’s what’s hard from our perspective on what’s bullying or not
because quite a lot of bullies are sly (.) so and it’s finding the evidence
(.) and the bully can turn around and say um I didn’t do it =

Seren: [Yeah]

Gill: = so and then you’ve got that issue as [well] =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: And quite often you’ll have other children who are maybe witnesses to
it but they’re scared of bullies =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: = [so they’ll] stick up for the bully and then =

Gill: [Yeah]

Esme: = you haven’t got the evidence =

Gill: [Yeah]

Esme: = ['cause] they’ll deny =

Gill: [Yeah]

Esme: = [seeing] it won’t =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: = [they] and that’s sometimes the problem

Seren: [And they] believe the threats =

U [Yeah]

Seren: = [however] much you say

Rachel: [I think the] way you I don’t think you I don’t think you’ll ever stop it
but I think the way you .h negate it a little bit is is (.) constantly like
with assemblies and class assemblies talking about .h the cycle of
bullying and how you have to step outside of it .h and be brave to tell
somebody because otherwise (.) um if (.) they might stop picking on
you but they’ll go and pick on somebody else or so on and I think if
you keep putting the message through (.) but (.) it it is interesting to
I’ll do it tomorrow to unwrap that what is bullying ‘cause I always do

Rachel: We we had that today at swimming (.) when um (.) someone had said
to me that two chil one child was supposed to be bullying another child
but they were sitting there having a nice old chat weren’t they =

Seren: Yes [they were]

Seren: = [but again] that was a misconception because of probably that’s the
same it’s just that they’re being unk they’ve done something unkind
and then it’s mis (.) misconstrued is that the right word
Esme: But you can have on-going arguments between children as well can’t you though where one of them feels they’re being bullied because they’re constantly arguing but the other one doesn’t and you know it’s u is it bullying then just ’cause they’re then you when the victim’s being doing stuff as well ’cause they think that’s the way it’s been going =

Seren: Oh yeah [oh that’s a good point]

Esme: = [or is one of the people in need] or is it kind of =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: = [the same on] both sides

Seren: It is like when they start play fighting but it’s always the same person who comes out with crying they always in the same one but they’ve chosen to enter into a bit of play fighting =

U Mm

Seren: = but it’s not alw it’s not because they’ve someone’s been unkind

Rachel: So if I go back to assembly tomorrow and look because I think annoying might have been the wrong word to use for bullying I think it’s probably too light a word =

U Yeah

U You’re right

Rachel: = it’s probably um oh maybe not I’ll try it tomorrow I’ll try it tomorrow afternoon and see where we get to but if we get are we happy if I can ‘cause that’s that’s a good use of this isn’t it are we happy if I continue down the road that I’d go down which is bullying is when a person or group of people are consistently coming back [to you] =

Kelly: [Mentally and] physically

Rachel: [Yeah]

U [Yeah mental and physical]

Rachel: [Mentally or physically or both]

Kelly: [’Cause a lot of children do think it’s physical don’t they]

Rachel: [Yeah that’s true that’s a good one to say it’s not always physical at all by any means]

Simone: It can be annoying and or upsetting can’t it

Seren: Yeah

Simone: because if they’re happy it might be upsetting once but that’s [not bullying]

Seren: [No]

Simone: But it’s not annoying [either]

Seren: [No]

Simone: If someone hits [you obviously that’s]

Rachel: [Yeah]

Simone: It’s not acceptable behaviour but it’s [not bullying]

Rachel: [No]

Seren: You go into that unacceptable behaviour that’s something they’ve just go [to learn]

Simone: That’s probably a better

Rachel: [That’s a better word]

Simone: [word than annoying actually]

U [Yeah]

Simone: [Acceptable towards somebody]

Seren: that is unacceptable

U Bullying is that’s the next stage

Simone: Unacceptable towards [somebody]

U [Yeah]

Rachel: Yeah that’s a good I’ll try [I’ll change it to that]

U [Yeah]

Rachel: ’cause you’ve got two lines on yours for tomorrow haven’t you

U Yeah

Seren: Also we’ve got the respect rule in our school =

U Mmm

Seren: = haven’t we that so you always go back to especially I do with the younger children treat people [how] =

U [Mm yeah]
Seren: = you want to be [treated] =
U [Yeah]
Seren: = that's a real simple one do you like people doing this to you well
then don’t =
U [I saw you doing that the other day in your class actually]
Seren: = [do it to someone else because yeah] (laughs) =
U Yeah
Seren: = And I think if you can always go back to that =
U [Mm]
Seren: = [they] they know what they like =
U [they they also]
Seren: = [because they’re egocentric] aren’t they =
Sienna: [Yeah]
Seren: = and then they just have [to apply it]
Sienna: [Yeah and] if you keep saying it then they also know what they’re
doing that they shouldn’t be doing so they know what rule they’re
breaking =
Seren: Yeah
Sienna: = and therefore because they know that they understand the rules so
they’ve got [no excuse] =
Seren: [No]
Sienna: = really to [behave] =
Seren: [No]
Sienna: = in that way =
Seren: Mm
Sienna: = they understand it =
Rachel: Shall we shall we end this one yeah?
Daniel: h. right what we’re (.) gonna talk about first (1.0) is (.) erm (2.0) just a general discussion about (.) bullying (.) one of the things (.) that the governors are gonna be doing tomorrow (.) at the full governors meeting (1.0) is looking at this statement of behaviour (1.0) it’s a fairly new thing that (1.0) that governors have to (.) sign and share with parents hh. (1.0) erm (2.0) what I’ve got here is a (2.0) statement that has been produced by the local authority (1.0) as one of those model statements (2.0) and if you have a look (.) at that third bullet point down (1.0) talking about principles (1.0) (so) it’s about the school being inclusive (2.0) but it also says hh. “to this end school has a clear and comprehensive anti-bullying policy (.) that is known and understood by all (.) consistently applied and monitored for its effectiveness” (2.0) hh. (2.0) we have had (.) an anti-bullying policy in place (.) for a while (2.0) it was (1.0) brought in at the same time as we brought in our (.) behaviour policy (2.0) hh. but that (1.0) thing about being monitored for its’ effectiveness and even consistently applied (.) I’m not sure has ever been done (1.0) because (1.0) we don’t really have that many incidents of (.) bullying within school (2.0) hh. (2.0) if you have a look at that (1.0) bullying (.) policy sorry anti-bullying policy (1.0) you’ll see that the third part down talks about “what is bullying” (4.0) and I thought maybe a good starting point would be (.) to see whether that fits with what we all agree (.) bullying (.) is (1.0) erm (1.0) this policy has been to governors and they have (.) erm (.) edited and changed aspects of it (.) and really I think we’re at the stage now where it comes back to us to see what we think (.) bullying is (.) so if (.) if we were to come up with a (.) a definition of bullying (.) what would we (1.0) what would we want to include (.) in that (7.0) at the moment the policy says (1.0) “bullying is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious h. or insulting behaviour (1.0) hh. it is an abuse of power which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated, angry or vulnerable (1.0) it undermines self-confidence and may cause suffering, distress and a sense of injustice (2.0) bullying can be physical or emotional and may include racist taunting of a sexual, homophobic, religious or racist nature (.) it may take the form of verbal name calling or it may take place through electronic medium” (3.0) h. what do we think of that (2.0) Perry: My understanding was that it had to be done on (1.0) more than one occasion but it doesn’t actually mention that there at all (.) = Emma: [Yeah] = Natalie: [No] Emma: = [no that’s what I thought I thought it was not a one off it was (.)] Perry: = [so you kind of one instance] = Natalie: = [it’s consistent] Perry: = [consistent (.) yeah (.) can one instance of someone (.)] = Emma: = [continuous or persistent] Lisa: Someone throwing a throw away comment ’cause they’re annoyed (.) = Perry: = hm hm Lisa: = is that bullying (.) because the children (.) come back with well they [say “I’m being bullied”] = June: It’s more talked to isn’t it Lisa: = because someone’s (.) because someone’s you know said “you can’t sit here” (.) ’cause [you] = June: = [hm] Lisa: = know (.) June: I thought it had to be prolonged (.) to be bullying
Daniel: So we’d want to add that word (.) prolonged (.) in whereabouts would you put that (6.0)  
Emma: Could put it at the end or [after] =  
June: [Over a p] =  
Emma: = behaviour [that takes offense]  
June: = [over a period of time (.)]  
Emma: Yeah  
Perry: [But are we right]  
June: [Could that be]  
Perry: Are we right or are we wrong to assume that it should be (.) persistent (4.0) hm where have I heard that before (1.0)  
June: Well it’s it’s not bullying if it’s a one off (.) as Lisa said (.) it’s not  
Perry: Yeah (5.0)  
Emma: Can you also put manipulative behaviour in there where they manipulate situations that other people get into trouble (3.0)  
Daniel: hh. well you’ve (2.0) having said that we don’t get (.) a lot of bullying within school which I still maintain is the fact (1.0) within (.) reception this term (.) you’ve had a couple of (.) incidents of of (.) a child doing exactly that manipulating the situation so another child gets into trouble (.)  
Natalie: Same child  
Emma: Hmm  
Daniel: Yes  
Emma: [but with the same child]  
Natalie: [both times the same child]  
Emma: [yep]  
Daniel: Is that bullying (5.0)  
Emma: I think it’s border line (2.0) it’s certainly not something that I want to continue (.) =  
Daniel: No  
Emma: = within the class [?]  
Daniel: [But should] that be part of an anti-bullying policy or is that part of a behaviour policy (2.0) [it (.) it’s]  
Emma: [If episodes are linked]  
Daniel: [Hmm]  
Lisa: I think that if this is (.) sustained and targeted and I I think that one of the [things] =  
June: [Hmm]  
Lisa: = that I’m [I’m struggling with]  
Emma: [I like that word]  
June: [Targeted yeah]  
Lisa: = is the whole idea of (.) intent (.) because you can have bad behaviour (.) =  
Emma: Yeah  
Lisa: = you can have upsetting behaviour  
Emma: Yeah  
Lisa: But (.) to me: (.) bullying is a targeted (.) erm (.)  
Daniel: No I would agree with that  
Lisa: [Expression]  
Natalie: [And both] parties know  
Lisa: Hmm (1.0)  
Perry: At this age you can just be copying something they’ve heard (.) =  
Emma: [Yeah]  
Perry: = [somewhere] else and does that (.) mean they’re intending or (3.0) causing nothing but the amount of upset that it does (3.0)  
Daniel: [Hhh.]  
June: [I think if] it’s targeted it is (.) because else why would you pick on one person (.) if you didn’t have some idea of what was going to be the outcome (.)  
Daniel: Hmm (.) so absolutely it [needs to be in there doesn’t it]  
Emma: [You knowingly upset somebody else]  
Daniel: Yep (1.0) can I just go back to what you were saying about if it’s a one off (.) it’s not necessarily bullying (2.0)
Lisa: Not necessarily
Daniel: There are (.) children in the school whose (.) whole demeanour is one
of (.) putting the frighteners on (.) other children (.) =
Lisa: Hm hm
Daniel: = and part of that (.) "you’re sitting in my chair move" (.) is part of
that sort of (1.0) erm (2.0) manipulative frightening behaviour (1.0)
so (.) sometimes (.) a one off is (.) [is bullying because] =
Lisa: Is (?)
Daniel: = because it builds to that (.) that greater (.) erm (1.0) intimidating
(.) behaviour (.) erm (.) there’s a child in the class that you’ve taught
today who’s like that (.) =
June: Hm hm
Daniel: = you had one in your class (.) =
Perry: last year
June: [Hm]
Daniel: = [last year] =
Perry: [Yeah]
Daniel: = erm (.) so how would we cover that
Perry: And the year before (.)
Daniel: Yeah (.) how would we cover that then (3.0)
June: [Depends if it became]
Lisa: [I think that goes into what] you’re saying about (.) an abuse of power
(.) isn’t it (.)
June: Hm
Lisa: that’s not just "I [don’t want you to sit here"] o:r (.) =
Daniel: [Yeah (.) no that’s right]
Lisa: = "I’m (.) I’m saving this seat for my best buddy" (.) it is (1.0) "I’ve
got the power and I’m using it (.) =
June: Hm
Lisa: = against you“
June: Hm (.)
Perry: That means that (.) erm p (.) children who you suspect (2.0) of being
that way inclined things have to be logged then (.) ’cause if it’s just
one thing that happens (.) in class (.) =
U: Hm
Perry: = you might not think anything of it apart from a bit of a squabble
(1.0) but if it turns out it’s (.) [in class]
Natalie: [Part of a pattern]
Perry: = (.) and in [the playground]
Lisa: It’s part of a pattern
Perry: = and in lunch (.) queue or wherever it is then we need to (.)
everybody needs to know don’t they
Lisa: thinking of the particular character from (1.0) your class last year (.)
and the year before =
June: Hm
Lisa: = that particular character was extremely clever and [as you say] =
Perry: Hm Hm
Lisa: = manipulative about (.) being able to say (.) "what well I just he I
just asked him to get out of the way because I wanted to go to [the
..."]
June: Hm (3.0)
Daniel: Hh. but that (1.0) that means that we’re gonna be logging the
behaviour of every child (.) [at every time]
Perry: [I know that’s impossible isn’t it] but (.) but the thing is you (1.0) you
know =
U: Hm (.)
Lisa: And also if you you have enough complaints (.) =
Perry: = which ones you need to worry about
Lisa: = there were there were a few children in particular (.) one of whom
[is still] =
U: Yes
Lisa: = in your class whose parent kept coming and saying (.) =
Perry: Hm
Lisa: “so and so is (. . .) =

Perry: Hm

Lisa: = bothering my child” if if that’s the case and that’s flagged up (. . .) which is this bullying well let’s (. . .) let’s [log it and find out]

U: Yeah

Natalie: And also you start to become aware of it (. . .) [you know] =

U: Hm hm

Natalie: = if you’re keeping an eye on the (. . .) general feeling in your class (. . .)

U: 

Natalie: = you start to think “oh (. . .) that’s somebody else upset” (. . .) [so what (. . .)]

Emma: [Boy]

Natalie: = and you start to start to (. . .) to watch it don’t you and (. . .) alright it might be (. . .) might feel like months and months to the child concerned (. . .) but probably (. . .) if you’re (. . .) you know alert enough it’s not that long (. . .) because we (. . .) the kind of school we are we hh. we like to think we keep an eye on what’s [going on in classes] =

U: Hm hm

Natalie: = you know don’t we

Daniel: Hm and I think think there is no doubt [that we do]

Emma: Hm yeah and I think we (. . .) communicate quite [effectively] =

Natalie: [Hm yes]

Emma: = if [there is something happening]

Natalie: [Yes hm]

U: [Hm]

Emma: = and we want somebody to [particularly] =

Natalie: Hm

Emma: = to keep an eye on somebody on the playground or in [the classroom]

Natalie: [Yes hm we make a real point of making sure that people]

Emma: = [then we make sure hm]

Daniel: But what we need to do is just take that (. . .) which I don’t think (. . .)

Perry: Hm but it

Natalie: But only if we think it is a real problem

Daniel: Oh yeah (. . .) [yeah]

Natalie: I you know

Emma: And often it is a problem for only a week so [then it sorts itself out]

Natalie: [Yeah]

Daniel: [But] then there is a child we know of already who (. . .) has (. . .) similar aspects to the one we’ve been describing (2.0) and we’re not logging his behaviour at the moment (. . .) maybe we should be (2.0) = [can I just go]

Perry: Are we going to add that into the policy then (. . .) or is that just something we’re doing already (2.0)

Daniel: I think it’s something that we do (. . .) that we would do whether the policy was in place or not (2.0)

U: Hm

Daniel: What I’d like to do is go back to that definition of bullying which I think is quite (2.0) tight once (. . .) once we’ve added that manipulative bit (. . .) and the fact that it’s prolonged (. . .) persistent (1.0) and could be over a period of time (1.0) but that’s not very child friendly is it (1.0) how do we get across to the children (. . .) what bullying is (1.0) I wouldn’t want to be saying (. . .) “now then children bullying is (. . .) a physical or emotional and could (. . .) include racist taunting” ‘cause that’s (. . .) you know (. . .) how do how do we get them to (. . .) understand what bullying is (1.0)

Perry: If you feel like you’re being picked on by the same person (2.0) over and [over again]

Emma: If someone keeps [hurting you] =

Natalie: And [it’s the “keeps” it’s the key over and over again]

U: Yes it is

Emma: = either (. . .) by what they say or what they do
Lisa: Last time (.) the bullying thing came up and it was discussed and I think it was done (.) in a very sensitive and child friendly way but they'd come in off the playground and because (.) someone didn't pass them the football or something "he's bullying me" (.) "he [won't let me play with the ball he's bullying me]"

Daniel: I think that's (.) that's something else we need to discuss yeah how (.) do we (.) deal with those cases when children think they're being bullied (.) but we think they're not (.) is that part of it if a child think they're being bullied is that bullying (2.0)

Natalie: But I don't think in a case like [that they do] =

Emma: [But then it's it's]

U: Yeah

Natalie: = [they're just hoping that] =

Emma: = [it's their understanding of the word]

Natalie: = by using that emotive term you will take bigger action if they just said "it was a foul and he didn't pass me the ball"

Perry: There was a (.) there was a poster that was up in the place I used to work that said erm (.) "harassment" (.) it might of even been bullying actually but "harassment is harassment whether real or perceived" (1.0) which seemed (laugh) a bit vague really (.) but I don't know if that's an official way of describing it if you feel like you're being bullied (1.0) [then]

Daniel: [Does] that mean you are (.) in which case (2.0) this whole definition of bullying needs to be so tight (.) =

Perry: Hm

Daniel: = that the the children do understand that it is that being picked on again and again =

Perry: Hm (1.0)

Daniel: = if indeed that's what we agree that bullying is (1.0)

Perry: Hh. but I think that what probably what it meant was that if somebody feels like they're being bullied it still has to be addressed (.) whether it's you know you sit down with them and say well actually (.) [you know you] =

Daniel: [Yeah] =

Perry: = let's just see

Natalie: [Yeah let's see what bullying is] hm hm (1.0)

Daniel: And if (.) again if we've got that definition (.) watertight (1.0) and it's understood by us and by the children then that should be easier to do shouldn't it (.) and we won't get the cases of children coming in (.) saying "he's kicked the ball (.) over that way therefore I'm being bullied" (2.0) do you think

June: I think it's very much the fact that it's continuous and prolonged or whichever word you want to use that "he didn't give me the ball" it's not b (.) unpleasant but it's not (.) it's not bullying (1.0) and it's also a case of how you (.) how the child involved feels isn't it because if you're being (.) (?) you will feel ineffectual (.) worthless (.) hurt (.) upset (.) any of those things whereas you know just to be a bit cross is not quite the same (.)

Daniel: [Hm]

U: [Hm] (4.0)

Emma: So could you put something like "bullying is not singular instances of unkindness" (1.0) whichever words

U: Hm (1.0)

Daniel: Hm (.) I mean they (.) the policy does go on to talk about physical (.) emotional (.) sexual (.) verbal (.) cyber (.) and aggravated (1.0) but again I'm not sure (.) that I'd want to (.) to share that (.) with children (.) =

U: Hm

Daniel: = I mean yes (.) when we talk about it (.) reported incidents increase (.) =

U: Hm (1.0)

Daniel: = I don't want to be in a position where actual incidents increase (.)
Daniel: = because we’re talking [about it and] =
Lisa: [Yes yes quite]
Emma: [(they will then) do it don’t they]
Daniel: = yeah absolutely [physical bullying is pushing or kicking or whatever]
Natalie: If you read all those things out they’ll think “oh I wonder if I say that
to him (. ) =
June: [Hm that’s right]
Daniel: [Yeah]
Natalie: = I’ll see if I can get away with it today” (1.0)
Lisa: And looking at the cyber thing we had that ( .) a few: =
U: Hm
Lisa: = years ago ( . ) =
U: Hm
Daniel: Yeah
Natalie: = I’ll see if I can get away with it today” (1.0)
June: [Hm that’s right]
Daniel: [Yeah]
Natalie: = I’ll see if I can get away with it today” (1.0)
Daniel: Yeah
U: Hm
Lisa: = with our first lot of year sixes ( .) and ( .) that hasn’t even sort of
touched the horizon ( . ) to my knowledge [since then so]
Daniel: [It’s int] it’s interesting we did that ( .) whole thing about ( .) erm ( .) for
parents of being aware of ( .) the dangers of ( .) the internet =
Lisa: Hm
Daniel: = and that talked a lot about ( .) =
Lisa: Hm
Daniel: = cyber bullying ( .) erm ( .) it ( .) it was a very poorly attended meeting
(1.0) but as far as I’m aware there haven’t been any further incidents
Perry: No (. )
Daniel: And I’m sure if there (. ) were we would have heard [about it]
Daniel: Hm (2.0)
Daniel: = so how (. ) how do we deal with bullying (. ) on a daily basis
 (. ) given that we’ve said that there are very few (. ) incidents within
school (7.0)
Perry: Well I think you just ( .) you are aware aren’t you that (. ) if you get as
we said earlier if you get a report (. ) erm on two or three occasions
about the same person or the same ( .) two children (1.0) then you
start to er your awareness is heightened isn’t it (1.0) =
Daniel: Yeah
Perry: = I don’t think there’s anything proactive that we’re doing apart from
just watching and listening (2.0)
Daniel: I’m not I’d like to think because of the conversations that we have
within assembly (. ) I often say “there is one thing I won’t stand for”
and the children will all chorus “it’s bullying” (1.0) so I think we (. ) we
don’t have that culture ( .) =
U: Hm
Daniel: = we don’t have a bullying culture [within school] ( .)
Daniel: Hm
Daniel: = but even this afternoon we’ve talked about (. ) certain things that
[that have gone on] (1.0) =
Daniel: Hm
Daniel: = how do we deal with those ( .) as (. ) as we come up with (. ) as they
come to us (2.0)
Natalie: We deal with it on an individual basis don’t we ( .) we deal with it (. )
that child (. ) and if necessary the victim (. ) spoken to separately /
together ( .)
U: Hm
Daniel: Yeah
Emma: Parents
Perry: Parents yeah (1.0)
Daniel: Would we talk to the victim ( .) and the bully together ( .)
Natalie: If we feel that would be helpful ( .) ]
Lisa: I feel it also depends on how old they are ( .) =
U: [Hm]
U: [Hm]
Daniel: [Yeah] (2.0) the case [of the] theory (3.0) part of I'm going back to what Perry said about bullying is bullying if you perceive it to be so (.) and really encouraged her to come and tell me (.) if anything happens or if anything is said to her (.) that she thinks maybe isn't very nice (.) and that doesn't really (.) I mean sh (.) she did say something today actually (1.0) erm (.) you know it's only "so and so won't let me play with those" (.) because they're four and five.

Daniel: Hmm (1.0) but it's interesting isn't it that it's (.) the parents (.) who've jumped on it as possible (1.0) [bullying] as well.

Emma: [No] and still isn't really even though I've spoken to her on her own (.) and really encouraged her to come and tell me (.) if anything happens.

Emma: It's very very (grey) (2.0) and that's the grey area that much greyer (.) I think.

Perry: Maybe I mean we should just be telling (.) the children (.) the sorts of things they don't have to put up with (3.0) =

Daniel: So how do we do that without saying (1.0) =

June: [Hm] (Laugh)

Natalie: [Yeah] (2.0) the case [of the] theory (3.0) part of I'm going back to what Perry said about bullying is bullying if you perceive it to be so (.) and really encouraged her to come and tell me (.) if anything happens or if anything is said to her (.) that she thinks maybe isn't very nice (.) and that doesn't really (.) I mean sh (.) she did say something today actually (1.0) erm (.) you know it's only "so and so won't let me play with those" (.) because they're four and five.

Daniel: Hmm (1.0) but it's interesting isn't it that it's (.) the parents (.) who've jumped on it as possible (1.0) [bullying]

Emma: [Yes] and they did [quite] =

Lisa: [Two]

Emma: = got the right (2.0) end of the stick (2.0)

Lisa: 'Cause if it's the two that I'm thinking of (1.0) actually it was the the victim (.) that I had to keep away from [the] =

Emma: [Yeah]

Lisa: = [supposed] (2.0) =

Emma: [Yeah]

Lisa: = and I'm not saying that that doesn't happen it's (.) it just makes (.) the grey area that much greyer (.) I think.

Daniel: Hmm (.) Hmm (2.0)

Emma: It's very very (grey) (2.0)

Perry: Maybe I mean we should just be telling (.) the children (.) the sorts of things they don't have to put up with (3.0) =

U: Hm (2.0)

Perry: = rather than sort of (1.0) telling people not to bully

Daniel: So how do we do that without saying (1.0) =

June: [Hm]

Perry: [Laugh]

Daniel: = [punching, kicking, hitting, (.) violence of any sort, damaging property]

U: [Laugh]

Emma: [But we (.) we say that in our class anyway]

Perry: [Nobody (1.0) nobody has the right (1.0) nobody has the right (2.0)]

Emma: [Yeah we do don't we]

Perry: Nobody has the right to make you feel (2.0) =

Natalie: Miserable [and because]

Perry: = [miserable] or sad (2.0) hm (.) yeah

Natalie: Yes I m and i and because (.) we (.) I hope have the (3.0) the kind of openness between (.) staff and pupils that h. children come to us even with the most trivial things (.) =

Lisa: [Hm]

Emma: [Yeah]

June: [Yes]

Natalie: = [that we] deal with =

U: Hm

Natalie: you know (1.0)

U: Hm

Natalie: = well it may only be (.)

U: Hm

Natalie: = "well I'll rub it better" and "I'm sure he won't do it again" and "I'm sure it was an accident" "are you going to say sorry?" (.)

Emma: Yeah

Natalie: = "yes I'm sorry" hh. =
U: Hm
Natalie: = that so that if something worse did occur (.) the child come (.) we
would like to think or hope that because we deal with it when it’s still
(.) [trivial] =
Daniel: [Yep]
Natalie: = you know that that means that there’s (.) more likelihood [I think]
U: Hm
Natalie: = of it not becoming a major issue (2.0)
Emma: And we don’t tolerate (1.0) kicking and biting and pinching (.) [you] =
U: Hm
Emma: = know that’s (1.0) =
U: Hm
Emma: = stamped on (.) quite quickly in (.) in our class as I’m sure it is (.)
Natalie: Hm
Daniel: Yeah (.) yeah (2.0)
Lisa: I think that’s very (.) not (.) stuff that is easy (.) but it’s easier (2.0)
maybe it’s a personal thing (.) you know (.) being up in (.) =
Lisa: = the top class (.)
U: [Hm]
Lisa: = [and] (.) (Perry might) I certainly did when I was (.) teaching (.)
and especially (.) looking at the kind of (prob) gender issue (1.0) the
girls (.) in particular (1.0) found very interesting ways (.) of targeting
others =
U: Hm
Lisa: = and it was so hidden (.) and so well masked (.) that (.) that to me
was (.) hard to to [put]
U: [Hm]
Lisa: = your [finger on]
U: Hm
Daniel: Is is that (.) at a time when (.) girls were in the minority (.) across the
school (2.0) =
Lisa: Erm
Daniel: = or was it just those particular girls
Lisa: Those particular girls but I could see the same kind of thing happening
(2.0) potentially (.) =
U: Hm
Lisa: = happening [with a few]
Perry: Hm
Lisa: = in your class and it (.) they’re just (1.0) small (.) little (.) comments
and you talk to them about it and you do hh. all of the kinds of things
that you do (.) all of the time anyway (.) [and] =
Perry: [And (.) and they out (.) and they make out that the victim =
Lisa: = [they find] =
Perry: = [was wrong] =
Lisa: = [yes] =
U: [Hm]
Perry: = even though they (.) may have been the one who’s instigated it
U: Hm (2.0)
Perry: Hm (.) that’s what gets reported at home isn’t it (1.0)
U: [Hm]
Natalie: [It does]
Daniel: And that goes back to that thing about (.) the manipulative behaviours

= =
U: Hm
Daniel: = and that often children are manipulating their parents (1.0) =
U: [Hm]
Daniel: = [as well] =
Emma: [Hm (.) absolutely] =
Daniel: = and certainly [that’s what’s happening (.) in reception]
Emma: = [and also (.) the ones in your class]
U: [Hm]
U: Yeah (3.0)
Daniel: If you look further into the policy under signs of bullying (2.0)
um (2.0) I think that very much sums up what we’ve just been talking
about that “children are encouraged to report incidents of bullying (.)
either of themselves or of others (.)” and again I think that’s a a
strength of the relationships that we have within the school (.) that (.)
a child will come and say “so and so is bullying so and so” =
U: Hm
Daniel: = um (3.0) there are times when children will suffer in silence out of
fear (1.0) but I think (1.0) we are aware enough and
have a good enough relationship (.) that that doesn’t happen (.) very
often (2.0) would you agree
Natalie: Alot of the things on that list (.) are much more likely to occur (.) in a
secondary school =
Daniel: [Yes I think so]
Natalie: = [you know than a (?) school] =
Daniel: Yep
Natalie: And I mean asking for money on a regular basis none of ours have
money in school (.)=
Daniel: No
Natalie: = anyway so that
(Interuption not noted)
Daniel: Looking further (.) into the policy (.) in fact (um) to the last section on
page five which is about monitoring (2.0) ”the policy is monitored on a
day to day basis by the head teacher (.) who reports to governors
about the effectiveness of the policy “ (1.0) given that this was agreed
in November eleven (1.0) I haven’t actually done that (4.0) apart from
(.) at tomorrow’s meeting (.) when this is all (.) to be discussed (.)
”the anti-bullying policy is the governors’ responsibility and they
review its’ effectiveness annually (.) they do this through reports from
the head teacher” but I’m guessing it’s going to be slightly (.) difficult
for them to monitor that (.) if I don’t give them regular reports hh. (.)
um (.) what would we think (.) the role of the governors (.) ought to
be (1.0) given that we came at this through their (.) statement of
general princ principles with regard to behaviour (3.0) do we want
them to have (.) closer involvement with (.) the day to day
management or (.) behaviour within the school
Emma: I don’t [think that’s necessary]
Daniel: I don’t think it’s [necessary because]
June: (?)
Daniel: I think (.) on a day to day basis we manage the [behaviour (.)
particularly well]
U: [Hm]
U: [Yeah]
Natalie: Surely their role um would come into play (.) if you were reporting
incidents every time they met (.)=
U: Hm
Natalie: = or even on a more frequent occurrence than (.) =
U: Yeah
U: Hm
Natalie: = than that (.) and it just became that all the time that’s the major
thing that they were being confronted with (.)
Daniel: Hm
U: Hm
Daniel: Well as it says at the bottom of the policy we are due to review this in
November (.) do you think that (.) at the moment (.) it’s a good
enough policy to (.) to deal with those (.) day to day incidents (2.0) or
does it need (.) reviewing before then (2.0)
U: [No]
Emma: [I think it’s alright]
U: [Hm]
Perry: ([Still] have it in md that the one or two small additions we were going
to make) (3.0)
Daniel: So if we put it on the agenda for (1.0) early next academic year (.) I think at the moment it (.) does a a good enough job to support (.) the children (.) should they have a a problem

Daniel: Okay is there anything that anybody wants to add before we move on (3.0)

Lisa: I think at some point it would be worth looking at (.) that institutional you know so so of c institutional um bul not necessarily bullying but (.) taunting (.) what is taunting (.) homophobic taunting or racist taunting (.) and I’m thinking particularly of um the kids calling each other gay =

Daniel: Yep

Lisa: = err (.) I’m not saying that’s bullying (.) per say (.) but I just (.) think it would be worth looking into whether that goes maybe to behaviours I don’t know but

Daniel: But it has become part of that the (.) culture of what children say to each other

Perry: At our end we do (.) all the PSHCE stuff (.) so that’s something we talk about (.) in (?) um (2.0) and the thing that I tell them is that people might may or may may or may not find acceptable (?)

Daniel: Okay (.) anything else (3.0) okay (.) thank you very much
Appendix 10c ~ Chapter 3

School 3 Staff Meeting

Stacey: So obviously ermm a few weeks ago now we had our INSET day h. and we talked ab about our behaviour policy but we didn’t really touch on (.) which I sort of think we need to just have a discussion (.) before we (.) go any further h. is we didn’t talk about the anti-bullying part (.) of the policy (.) so at the moment we’ve got h. erm anti-bullying referenced in our behaviour policy h. erm in terms of a definition of what we think bullying is and I’d quite like to sort of just revisit that and get everybody’s (.) views on (.) on that first of all hh. ‘cause I think one of the issues (h.) not necessarily here but one of the issues that could be happening in schools hh. is that if you haven’t got consensus of understanding about what things are if you’ve got (.) inconsistency then (.) that can (.) =

U: Hmm
Stacey: = possibly cause an issue hh. so erm sort of just have a look at (.) at that and (.) just get any feedback in terms of anything you want to hh. input (.) and then I’m in the process of (.h.) trying to re-draft (.) or draft a new behaviour policy based on what we discussed at the INSET day hh. =

U: Hmm
Stacey: = erm but what I would like to do (.) while I keep that reference to anti-bullying within the behaviour policy h. I still feel and I don’t know if anybody’s got any strong feelings either way but I think we still need to have as we do have now hh. erm (1.0) in sort of supported alongside it is a separate anti-bullying (.) policy hh. that is a bit more explicit and (.h.) =

U: Hmm
Stacey: = detailed than the (.h.) the information that’s just in the (1.0) general behaviour policy (.h.) =

U: Ok
Stacey: = yeah =

U: Hmm
Stacey: = so really if we just (.h.) start from (.h.) in terms of (.h.) just if anybody can if (.h.) wants to throw any comments as to (.h.) what anybody considers to be bullying or (1.0) because I know we have lots of issues (.h.) with that word being banded around (.h.) =

U: [Hmm]
Stacey: = [I feel] quite strongly about the fact hh. that parents come in and say “my child’s being bullied” “=

U: Hmm
Stacey: = erm (.h.) when actually I don’t personally perceive it as being bullying
Anna: Can we share our (.h.) our perceptions of what bullying is (.h.) =
Stacey: Yeah
Anna: = with the parents so that they understand (.h.) what we consider (.h.) and they know where our guidelines care coming from
Stacey: I think so so when the new behaviour policy (.h.) and I think (1.0) I don’t think historically the parents have had the anti-bullying policy hh. =

Anna: Hmm
Stacey: = issued to them but I think h. =
Anna: Hmm
Stacey: = it’s probably a good idea that we issue the two to the parents when they’re (.h.) =
Anna: Yeah
Stacey: = re-drafted (.h.) =
Anna: Okay
Stacey: = erm (.h.) I don’t (.h.) I don’t necessarily think that we’ll have (.h.) with (.h.) with some children (.h.) and I think (1.0) possibly that comes from (.h.) experiences h. [of the parents] =

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U:  Hmm
Stacey:  = as children (.) they kind of impose that (.) =
U:  Yeah
Stacey:  = on [their children] =
Hayley:  [Impose that on their kids]
Stacey:  = yeah (.) yeah in terms of (.) what they (.) feel bullying is (.) it can
sometimes be (.) you quite often when you talk to a [parent who’s] =
Hayley:  [Yeah]
Stacey:  = [saying] "my child’s being bullied at school” [that actually] =
Hayley:  [That that’s what happened to them (.) yeah]
Stacey:  = you find that they’ve had negative experiences (.) =
U:  Hmm
Stacey:  = at school as well
Hayley:  And nothing was ever done about it so their perception again is that (.)
we won’t do anything about [it] =
Stacey:  Hmm
Hayley:  = yeah
Stacey:  = saying "my child’s being bullied at school" [that actually] =
the couple of times when I have had (.) you know (.) more serious
incidents’ that have happened at school hh. =
U:  Yeah
Stacey:  = that (.) that often (.) how we’ve chosen to deal with it (.) is viewed
as (.) =
Hayley:  Yeah =
Stacey:  = [you know they want (.) they want punish (.)] =
Hayley:  = [they want a bit more action]
Stacey:  = yeah and they want punishment for the (.) [the child to]
Hayley:  [yeah for that child to be removed (.) yeah]
Stacey:  = be excluded (.) or they want that child to be (.) I don’t know what
they want really but (.) =
Hayley:  Hmm
Stacey:  = erm (1.0) so can we (.) is it okay if we just (.) maybe just (.) go
round the table and kind of (1.0) and if somebody says what you were
going to say anyway that’s fine (.) =
U:  Laugh
Stacey:  = I won’t make you say it again but hh. but just sort of to get a (.) a
shared consensus so I can see where we’re all coming from in terms of
what (.) people would consider to be (.) =
U:  Hmm
U:  Hmm
Jodie:  I would say (.) it (.) it has to be a repeated (.) =
Anna:  Yeah
Jodie:  = action (.) =
U:  Hmm
Jodie:  = a verbal or a physical something that’s happening (.) =
Anna:  Over a period of time
Jodie:  = yeah =
Dana:  And targeting =
Stacey:  Hmm
Dana:  = to specific =
Stacey:  Hmm
Dana:  = children =
Stacey:  Yeah
Dana:  = [or group of children]
Stacey:  [okay (.)] and what about in terms of (.) so you (.) so targeted to a
specific child or children hh. does the (.) the the (.) perpetrators
whatever the word would be h. the people that are doing (.) the anti-
social behaviours (.) does it have to be the same people all the time
(1.0)
Anna: I think they could (.) it could be the same behaviour and it could be copied by other people who’ve [seen] =

Stacey: [Hmm]

Anna: = it instigated by somebody else

Stacey: Okay (2.0) so it can u end up with the situation where children are being bullied by (.) =

Anna: [A group]

Stacey: = [a group] [not] =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = necessarily [collectively (.)] =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = so it could be at different [times hh.] =

U: [ Hmm ] (2.0)

Stacey: Okay (.) so (.) [repeated] =

Dana: [It’s a power thing isn’t it]

Anna: Yeah (.)

Stacey: Yeah (.)

Hayley: Intimidation

Dana: Intimidation (.), yeah

Stacey: Yeah (2.0) and I think (1.0) a lot of our issues that we’ve had here has been more (.). verbal and mind games (.). =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = [I think] =

U: Hmm

Stacey: = with children rather than actual physical (1.0)

Jodie: I don’t think children understand that it it’s not just a one off (.) thing that has happened to them (.). =

U: Hmm

Dana: Or a falling out with [someone]

Jodie: = [yeah] they think that’s bullying (.)=

Stacey: Hmm

Jodie: = they often bandied the word around [“I’m being bullied”] =

Stacey: [Hmm (.)] no (.) I agree the (.) the word’s often used as just (interruption) it’s often used (.). I think it’s used inappropriately and I [think] =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = that’s an issue as well and I’m not hh.) I don’t know necessarily how we (1.0) address that whether we need to maybe look at our (.) ‘cause we do erm (cough) we do the (.) anti-bullying week (.) in November h. =

U: Hmm

Stacey: = (.). but how much we do on that is (.). I don’t know (.). =

U: Hmm

Stacey: = maybe not enough to reinforce the message (.) I just don’t know whether (1.0) perhaps by having more (1.0) input with the children (1.0) that that may (.). [stop] =

Dana: [I think it] (.). it needs to be more than just the persistent (1.0)

Jodie: offense sort of thing because (.). I think the children pick up on that (.) and that’s all they say well if somebody keeps saying (.). “I don’t like you” (.). everyday (.). they class that as bullying (.) whereas actually they’ve just got to accept “that person doesn’t like me” (3.0) and I [think that’s where you get] =

Jodie: [But the tone of voice] they say it in =

Dana: = yeah that’s [when you get] =

Jodie: = [could be] perceived as =

Dana: = yeah (.) [but fo] =

Jodie: = [bullying (.) I don’t know] =

Dana: = but for how long has it got to go on or (.) =

Stacey: I don’t know

Dana: = how much power ha (.) has the perpetrator got to have over the other one

Dana: [I think it] (.) it needs to be more than just the persistent (1.0)
Stacey: I would kind of (.). I would personally have an issue (.). if a child was saying on a daily basis “I don’t like you” ‘cause actually in life (.). we all meet people that we don’t like [but (.)].

Hayley: We’ve learnt to

Stacey: = I think the majority of us don’t [verbalise that] =

U: [Yeah hmm]

Stacey: = and I would consider that to be actually (.). behaviour (.). that could be (.). classed as bullying =

Anna: Because you’ve got children in year six who don’t get on and who have learnt to (.). keep themselves [apart] =

Dana: [Yeah]

Anna: = whereas (.). would then have like Stacey was saying (.). one child just making that comment every day (.). in a certain tone [of voice] =

Stacey: [Hmm]

Anna: = and it can be (.).

Stacey: It’s (.). it (.). it can be very subtle (.). =

Anna: (demeaning)

Stacey: = drip drip drip isn’t it (.). =

Anna: Hmm (.). it is (3.0)

Stacey: Hmm (.). it is (3.0)

Anna: Hmm (.). it is (3.0)

Dana: What about the erm sort of internet comments on websites and so on (.). that we have (.).

Stacey: Hmm (.). but that see that’s a whole other dimension to the bullying [and] =

Dana: Websites

Anna: Hmm websites

Stacey: = that’s the focus actually of the anti-bullying week in November coming (.). =

U: Hmm

Stacey: = is erm (.). it’s a focus on erm (.). that kind of [thing] =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = about (.). I can’t remember the tagline it’s got some (.). you know tagline for the week but basically [the focus] =

U: Hmm

Stacey: = is on (.). on allowing children to use new technology to hh. to communicate and enjoy in the way that it should be and not (.). [to] =

U: [Hmm]

Stacey: = use it for bullying (.). =

U: That’s it (1.0)

Stacey: = may be we need to look at that (.). ‘cause that (.). that is an issue and that hadn’t really I’ve never had that before (.). =

U: [No]

Stacey: = [in my] teaching career (.). never had that sort of (.). but that (.). I would class that as bullying (.).

U: Hmm

Stacey: = erm (.). in terms of the fact that those children were (.).

Anna: And it almost (.). there almost seemed to be an element of organisation to it (.).

U: Hmm

Anna: = in that they know each of them was going on (.). and they were making the comments and they were having a discussion (.). at a certain time weren’t they

Stacey: Hmm (1.0) yeah there was a degree of (.). kind of (.). erm (1.0) yeah Premeditation

Stacey: [Yeah (.). it was (.). yes]
Anna: [It does happen doesn’t it]
U: [generally yeah] (2.0)
Stacey: Hmm (.) okay (.) I should [have erm] =
Dana: I would put that as (.) maybe that’s part of what bullying is is that you
plan (.) you know (.) [you plan to do it] =
Stacey: [Plan it yeah]
U: [Hmm]
Dana: = you have every intention of saying those things to hurt somebody (.)
it’s like sometimes a child just comes [out with] =
Stacey: [Plan it yeah]
U: [Hmm]
Dana: = you have every intention of saying those things to hurt somebody (.)
Stacey: Hmm (3.0) okay (1.0) so hh. I think (.) from what everybody’s saying
(.) erm hh. that (.) that we kind of have a (.) a consensus (.) what (.)
my gut feeling is and I know I (.) I was going to circulate the anti-
bullying (.) the current anti-bullying policy before-hand and get you to
read it but I didn’t kind of want to (.) erm sort o) colour your
judgements (.) as it were but I think pretty much what we’re saying is
that we do have a consensus in terms of (.) what it [is] =
U: [Hmm]
Stacey: = [now] =
U: [Hmm]
U: [Hmm] (1.0)
Stacey: = it’s just I (.) I guess my issue would be the (.) and that is difficult to
define would be like the [threshold] =
U: [Hmm]
Stacey: = of at which point we intervene because I think historically we tend to
intervene when the parents come in to us (.) =
U: Hmm
Stacey: = and I don’t know necessarily if (1.0) but (.) but then maybe we
don’t see stuff]
Jodie: [It’s difficult sometimes] because [the children don’t say] =
Anna: [You’re not aware of it]
Jodie: = or perhaps [they don’t] =
Stacey: [Yeah]
Jodie: = feel that they can say because of what (2.0) =
Hayley: There’s that other pressure isn’t there =
Jodie: = is happening
Hayley: = you daren’t go and tell an adult =
Stacey: Hmm
Anna: [And if it’s]
Hayley: = [particularly in a small] environment (.) it’s (.) it (.) the [the
perpetrator] =
Anna: [It’s too close]
Hayley: = will know (.)
Stacey: Hmm
Hayley: = that the child being bullied has gone and told an adult
Anna: And it’s difficult because it’s that sort of mental mind games (.) if it’s
verbal (.) it can go on and you don’t necessarily see it (.) =
U: Yeah
Anna: = whereas if it’s physical (.) =
U: Yeah
Anna: = you would be much more aware of it in the playground =
Hayley: [Because some children are very (?)]
Anna: = [and that we don’t tend to have] the physical (.).
Stacey: No
Anna: = because (1.0) we have children who have problems with other children or being in a group (.). but we know the reasons (.). and most of the parents (.). I feel they recognise that we’ve been working with those sorts of children (.). whereas the verbal (.). is very =
U: Hmm
Anna: = very different (.). and the physical we don’t (.). have (1.0)
Stacey: No (.). not generally
Anna: Do we
Stacey: No well not since I’ve [been here] =
Anna: No
Stacey: = in the last three years (.). not really no hh. erm (.). okay so I think we’re probably coming all (2.0) pretty much from the same (.).
U: Hmm
Stacey: = direction in terms of what (.). what we (.). view it to be hh. erm (1.0)
it’s just that at the moment the anti-bullying policy doesn’t it’s just about how we deal with it so we’ve got in the (.). behaviour policy we’ve got (.). like a time frame of (.). you know the parents recording (.).
U: Yeah
Stacey: = this will happen that will happen and all this will happen within several weeks hh. but it doesn’t reference anything like so the last time we did have an issue hh. between the boys last summer (.).
U: Hmm
Stacey: = erm (.). erm (1.0) whoever it was somebody that was covering when Alex was off (.).
U: Hmm
Stacey: = on maternity leave hh. erm the Ed Psych that was covering then sent me (.). some erm ‘No Blame’ which is basically when you sit down with the two children together (.).
Anna: Hmm
Stacey: = and kind of have dialogue [with them] =
Anna: [Hmm]
Stacey: = and get them to each say hh. and I (.). I’m not saying that’s exclusively what I’d like to do if we do have situations because I think each situation is different hh. but I would quite like our policy to reference that as one of the strategies that we use hh. (.).=
Anna: Yeah hmm
Stacey: = erm (1.0) if we need to (2.0) okay (.). so are you all happy if I just (.). carry on (.). with re-drafting the [behaviour policy]=
Anna: Hmm
Stacey: = and then I will then (.). hopefully get on to the (.). anti-bullying part (.).
Anna: Hmm (.).
Stacey: = erm I’m trying to get it done (.). I hope to get it done (.). by the end of term (.). it might be (.). like (.). right close to the wire as in hh. like it would be the INSET day on the last day of term but if I get as much as I can done (.). and share it with you and as long as you’re happy and there’s nothing else that you (1.0) want me to change or don’t agree with or [whatever] =
Anna: [Hmm]
Stacey: = and then we can have it in place from September (.). and we can send it out to parents in September and hh. kind of say this is the policy that came out as a result of (.). ‘cause the parents all know that we’ve been (.).
Anna: Hmm
Stacey: = looking at behaviour (.). and we know that we used the INSET day for that so (.). we need to (.). to send the policy ‘cause it would be quite different to the current (.). policy
Anna: Yeah (1.0)
Stacey: Yeah
Anna: Okay
Stacey: Good (. ) thank you
School 4 Staff Meeting

Terry: Right so we’ve got the new anti-bullying policy now this policy is a brand new whole school one so it incorporates what we had before with what we’ve got now it’s a senior school and junior school combined now the first thing that I need to be sure of is we are right in having a whole school policy rather than two separate ones

Clive: [Hmm]

Terry: I mean you agree yeah you agree with that completely

Clive: Yep

Terry: So what’s happened here then is I’ve incorporated the two aspects (hh) together to try and give something that makes (hh) some sort of coherent sense =

Clive: [Hmm]

Terry: = [right] through right through the school so it defines roles and responsibilities of (.) and everything else (h) so if we start at the top (.) I just wanted the first three or four lines (h) so (.) what we’re committed to is providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils (.) so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment (h) through the pastoral system and various facets of school life the college aims to foster healthy personal relationships (h) and an attitude that care for one another within the community (h) so first of all within that (.) with what we’re doing at the moment do you think (.) we show that commitment (.) Clive (.) to a caring, friendly, safe environment supportive of each other as well as the children (.) so I think because we (.) we cement that within our own relationships (.) the children can see what is right and what is wrong

Clive: Yeah definitely (.) I think we’re very much role models that expresses that erm within our classrooms within the school (h) and to each other really ‘cause we’re very respectable for each other (.) and we’re very supportive of each other as well as the children (.) so I think because we (.) we cement that within our own relationships (.) the children can see what is right and what is wrong

Terry: Alright so we set a (.) a good example [that follow as role models (.) of what is acceptable behaviour]

Clive: [Yeah a good example (.) yeah (.) I think we all have that in our ethos that we are role models (.) and not just for our own year group but for the whole school (.) infant and infants and (h) EYFS we (.) you know it’s the same role model

Terry: So going to Derek who (.) ‘cause you deal with the (.) behaviour policy on the whole and you know the way that you deal with behaviour which sometimes slips into (.) bullying (h) how do you think we as a school

Derek: I think we take the child aside and (.) find the time to explain to that child why that particular behaviour is not acceptable (.) why it’s not acceptable on his behalf (.) and what it might do to that person he’s (.) he’s actually err aiming his behaviour at (.) I think we take the time out (.) you know any instances of bullying (.) takes us weeks (.) as you know (.) you know taking evidence whatever or so-called bullying (.) instance are (.) actually investigated (.) you know the bully (.) whoever it comes is taken to one side what has he done (.) the victim (.) and then we bring it together (.) and that could take up to about five, six, seven days (.) [that’s] =

Terry: [So we] definitely show that first sign [which] =

Derek: [yeah]

Toby: = is [committed]

Derek: [committed]

Terry: [there is clear]

Derek: [yeah]

Terry: (Interuption) there is (.) there is a [clear commitment]
Derek: [that's right]

Terry: There is a clear commitment to (. ) providing the environment we describe what about down in the pre-preps because bullying is something I don't suppose you hit that often or am I wrong

Carole: I think we deal with it in a very different way you know we have our regular circle times and it’s done in (. ) much more of a whole group situation (h) whenever things like that start cropping up you deal with it as a whole class rather than pulling individual children (. ) [aside (. )]

Terry: [Doing it more] through (. ) PSHE (. )

Carole: = yeah it’s through PSHE else well daily circle times (. ) after playtimes (h) =

Terry: [Absolutely]

Carole: = it’s a lot more (. ) regular [(than the upper schools)]

Terry: [So it’s slightly] different in the pre-preps but you still believe that we should be following [this policy] =

Carole: [Absolutely]

Terry: = through when an incident occurs (h) ’cause this cross references to the PSHE which is obviously (h) gonna be reviewed an changed and [added to] =

Clive: [Yeah yeah]

Terry: = and add spirituality and things like that which are all part of what we do (h) what about the fact that we should be a telling school Derek do you (. ) is that (. ) Derek do you think the kids (. ) tell (. )

Derek: I try and insist upon that (. ) I’d rather know if they’re being bullied before their parents do (. ) ’cause once you tell (. ) once they tell a parent they tend to put that bit out of its proportion (. ) they come in all guns blazing as though that child has told us (h) the instant that thing had occurred (. ) the person who’s perpetrated the bullying in inverted commas (. ) he can actually (. ) he still hasn’t had time to get his story straight (. ) or to tell us some fabrication (. ) =

Clive: Yeah

Derek: = the sooner I know (. ) the better (. )

Clive: I think I think also we are very strong about pastoral care which means we have very strong relationships with our children and they trust us and they see us as a (. ) avenue if there is a problem (. ) I work very hard to get my children to believe that I am there for them (. ) 'cause I’m quite tall and quite big compared to them (. ) and I break down boundaries and say you know ”if there are problems come and talk to me if not get a friend” (. ) I also have a bottom drawer (. ) policy of if there’s a problem I put it on a piece of paper and it goes in the bottom drawer and I check that once a week in PSHE (. ) if there is an issue (. ) I pull them in and we talk about it (. ) so I think because we are very caring and open (. ) and a telling school as it says there (. ) the children see us as an avenue (. ) if there any problems come (. ) [and we’re very very approachable]

Terry: [You were (. ) you were nodding strongly] Carole (. ) you feel strongly [we are a telling school]

Carole: [A lot of my] pre-preps enjoy (. ) telling (laugh) after every playtime (h) what ha what has happened erm I know Ally on reception has erm what she calls an incident book (. ) and so she will make a record in there of (. ) any incidents that have happened at play time the idea being that over the course of (name)e you can pick up patterns of behaviour, repetitive names, days, so she records it all (. ) but yes I think my pre-preps are erm (. ) [very keen] =

Terry: (?)

Carole: = at telling (. ) us what has been going

Derek: I’m more than happy to receive (. ) people telling me what’s happened rather than not tell me ’cause then you can actually work it out wh whether whether it needs (. ) err following up (. )

Clive: Yeah

Derek: = or you can just ignore it (. ) just have a chat with that person
Carole: I’d say in pre-rep if there are witnesses as well if there ever has been an incident they are always very happy to "I saw that I [saw that"]

Clive: [Yeah]

Carole: = witnesses (.)

Clive: Yeah

Carole: = they’re not so worried about the (.) the peer groups and (.) you know not as [inhibited]

Clive: [Yeah]

Terry: Do we do enough with our (.) pupils (.) to make them aware of the bullying policy and what they should do (.) in a situation or do you think it just permeates (.) what we do they seem to know and understand (.)

Derek: I think if you introduce the subject of bullying then people might think "right what he said to me last week is that bullying? (.) rather than let them come to us if they feel aggrieved about something rather this is what bullying is (.) they might not be aware (.) of that

Clive: Yeah yeah I think I think that they’re very clear at understanding of what’s right [and wrong]

Derek: [Yeah]

Clive: = and if there is an injustice (.) they’re very happy to even talk to you about that injustice and I think that’s very good (h) ’cause they have a very clear guide line for what’s right and what’s wrong and what’s school rules and what’s breaking the school rules (.)

Derek: They know that [is there]

Clive: [They know] that yeah (.) and I think they’re believing of the school (h) ’cause it instigates and (.) you know (.) implements all those things they believe in it

Terry: So does that help prevent bullying

Clive: Well

Terry: ’cause we don’t have [that many instances of bullying in the school]

Clive: [Well if you think on reflection we don’t have a lot bullying] so that must (.) =

Terry: No

Clive: = that must go a long way to say right (.) preventing bullying (.) because the children believe that we are approachable (.) the school rules are enforced [that they know] =

Derek: [The staff are trying to be in the yard aren’t they (.)]

Clive: [They do try that]

Derek: [They do try to be in the yard] and an experienced member of staff can see something (.) about to occur before it actually occurs and step in

Clive: Yeah I mean we often get flashpoints [where say] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Clive: = there’s a football match [or something] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Clive: = or there’s a a a disagreement (.) we’ve had a lot of [disagreements (hh)]

Carole: [Hmm]

Clive: = and then you can deal with that there and then (.) it’s not a bullying issue they’re just (.) flashpoints (.) and because we’ve got a very calm and relaxed system where we can they can just discuss these things and we can reinforce the rules it doesn’t really go any further than that (.) [rarely it does]

Terry: [So we don’t need a heavy we don’t need a heavy dose of sanctions (.)]

Clive: ’cause I don’t think we have (.) a heavy handed approach to sanctions (.) I mean when we’ve dealt with bullying instances in the past (.) [those have been resolved]

Derek: [(he gets a blow up) on the] head because of football (.) it’s done and dusted (.) it’s all dealt with]

Clive: [They’re flashpoints yeah]

Derek: Sometimes the girls perhaps let it linger (.) and that’s not wishing to be snide and sexist but (. .) [the girls sometimes] =
Derek: don’t let it lie (.) they want (.) you know (.) they’ve got to have (.)

Terry: [Do you think] boys and girls deal with it differently [they do don’t they] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: = and it rumbles on with [the girls]

Clive: [Well we] have smaller groups of the girls aren’t they [so it’s] =

Terry: [Yes]

Clive: = harder to diffuse some of these issues where the boys it tends to
diffuse because we’ve got more boys (.) I think sometimes the girls
hold it because (.) it it may empower them (.) and we just need to be
aware of that

Terry: And when is bullying and not bullying (.) [’cause] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: = with the minute we distribute that [leaflet (.)] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: = at some stage during the year (.) which is the anti-
bullying leaflet
which goes out to the parents and pupils (.) you know you’re going to
get reports of bullying coming in (.) because parents read it they’re
alerted to it and the minute something happens as you said (.) the
child’s suddenly alerted (.) and calls it bullying (.) (what’s) the
difference between (.) how do we define the difference between the
bullying (.) and just (.)

Derek: This is where it’d hope parents at home would actually help us out (.) if
a child complains to a parent that this has happened (.) they’d use
their common sense and see it wasn’t a bullying incident it was just
something that happened (.) and I think that’s where parents could
help us

Carole: [And it has to be repetition as well]

Terry: = exactly yeah (hh) and you know ’cause we’re such a small school
[we are very open] =

Clive: [We are small]

Clive: = very openly or e-mail (h) and that makes up a pattern and you think
actually (.) this is (?) ah (?) so there may be something here and you
can take the next step

Carole: Hmm

Terry: The erm (hh) the back of the policy there’s a whole list of supportive
agencies (.) that (.) children can turn to (.) so we’ve got the anti-
bullying hot line (.) =

Terry: Hmm

Clive: = you’ve got however many other (.) there are a whole range of (.)
places that they can go to telephone numbers websites (.) is that
something we should make them aware of (.) you’ve got the child for
example Childline bullying line you’ve got kidscape national bullying
helpline (.) [bullying UK]

Terry: [I actually think one] one of the worst things they did is let children
know (.) that they (.) the number for Childline because you’ve got so
many children that are abusing it (.) here I’d expect that if they (.)
they thought they were being bullied (.) they’d have the
conscience to come and see us

Terry: You don’t think they (.) you’d rather they [that it was]

Derek: [I’d rather it was in school]

Terry: = [done in school]

Derek: [Yep]

Terry: = [than they went and turned round to]
Terry: and they went and turned round to a helpline and we don't know anything about it.

Derek: I'd think we'd have failed if (.) they turned to a helpline before they came to us (.) I don’t think they (.) that if we had a good rapport with our (.) pupils (.) I'd expect them to come to us (.) [rather than]

Clive: [Yeah]

Carole: [We may well have failed but at least you have still (.)] you are still giving [that option as well]

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: I mean you said that point about Childline (.) but [for every hundred people in the UK that use it (.)]

Derek: [Yeah of course yeah]

Carole: [Yeah]

Terry: = but about the one [that (.) takes]

Derek: [Yeah]

Carole: [Yeah]

Terry: = all the courage in their hands and picks up the telephone and rings it and it (.) saves a life (.) =

Carole: Because they couldn't go to the school [for whatever reason]

Terry: = that's my only concern is that I'm torn sometimes (.) [because]

Carole: Yeah

Terry: = I think if you promote bullying (h) it gives the impression (.)

Carole: Hmm

Terry: = there's lots of bullying in the school (.)

Carole: Hmm

Terry: = if you hide it (.) under a (.) bushall (.) then (.) you're almost denying that bullying exists (.) and I feel a little bit torn as to what we should do about that or whether we should add these telephone numbers and stuff to the leaflet that (.) goes out (.) is that a way (.) is that worth doing or is it not worth [doing at all or]

Carole: [Perhaps it might work for]

Derek: [Perhaps it might be for some] of the older pupils who find because the bullying is so much that they couldn't talk to a member of staff (.) I'd have thought that our age group (.) they could talk (.) they could speak to us =

Terry: We should be encouraging them [to speak to us and not to speak to something else]

Derek: = encouraging them to speak to us (.) there's a slightly older fifteen sixteen year old who’s being bullied [via the]

Terry: [Yeah]

Derek: = internet or a chat room (.) it might be beyond that (.) they can't deny that bullying exists (.) and I feel a little bit torn as to what we should do about that or whether we should add these telephone numbers and stuff to the leaflet that (.) goes out (.) is that a way (.) is that worth doing or is it not worth [doing at all or]

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Carole: [Perhaps it might work for]

Terry: We don’t have a bully culture

Derek: [No]

Clive: [No] no we [don’t]

Derek: [Not within] the lower school

Clive: We have a positive culture really

Derek: Yeah

Clive: I mean we we always reinforce positivity (.) and we always celebrate positive behaviour and positive good work (h) I mean we stamp out the negative sides of things (.) and I think we’ve always done that here and I think that reflects that we don’t have (h) =

Derek: Hmm

Clive: = very little if any bullying

Terry: [It’s (?) to reward (.) rewards] =

Clive: [Very reward yeah]

Terry: = [rather than punishment and therefore the children should understand that positive behaviour gets the rewards]

Clive: Yeah yeah

Terry: And in turn (.) the area we struggle with the most as we go up through the school (.) we don’t get it much in the junior school (.) as far as I’m
aware although we have had it since it’s been about a lot with the senior school and is cyber bullying (.)

Derek: Yeah

Terry: = and this is an area that concerns me (.)

Clive: Hmm

Terry: = what line are we going to take with this because although we don’t have a huge amount of it at the moment the amount of internet use with our children (. is increasing (. rapidly (.)

Derek: Well while I was reading this I looked at this erm (. these chat-lines erm (. our children go on chat-lines so therefore (. this [should never be] [I know they shouldn’t be]

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: = but they shouldn’t be on facebook

Carole: [It’s text messaging as well though isn’t it]

Derek: [Facebook it’s facebook I meant yeah]

Carole: [It’s not just limited to the internet [it’s phone often as well]

Derek: [If a parent came in and] said ”my child’s being bullied on facebook” (. well the answer to that is ”why have you let your child [go on to facebook”]

Terry: [But you dealt] with an incident of people being bullied by text [not long ago]

Derek: [Yep]

Terry: What was that what three or [four years ago]

Derek: [Yep]

Terry: And that was quite an [unpleasant one]

Derek: [Yep]

Terry: So is it something we should address more seriously (. should we make our children more aware of it (. should we bring parents [in and do a talk]

Derek: [I think on one of the instances] where the young child was being bullied (. she actually had the sense to come straight to her father (. and the father then had the good sense (. to take it to the right channels (. rather than going off on a (?) ad actually thumping the lad who did it (. and the school took all the necessary err (. sanctions (. the boys were (. disciplined (. suspended and it’s not happened again so that’s where it worked (. but that girl had the right (. sense (. to go and do it (. eventually she plucke [to go and] =

Clive: [Yeah]

Derek: = it’s not happened since so

Clive: Is it our role to make them aware (. of their actions (. what would happen if they do don’t stop like bullying (. is it our role to make them aware that things will happen against them if they are cyber (. bullies (. ”cause they may feel because it’s anonymous (. ”I can get away with it (. but actually (. looking at the policy (. you won’t get away with it (. [it will be recorded and it will (?)]

Terry: [But that’s why they do it’s easier to bully anonymously isn’t it]

Clive: Yeah (. I mean we don’t get it down here because mobiles are handed in (. and mobiles are turned off we don’t have this mobile culture that we hear in the junior school (. =

Terry: No

Clive: = like we said with facebook and the other (. erm (. networking systems they’ve got err you have to get parental permission (. at this age group to be able to set up a facebook (. so

Terry: Well what happens if it happens out of school so (. it’s four or five of our children start picking on (h) this happens in the senior school (. =

Clive: Yeah

Terry: = and inevitably girls (. =

Clive: Yeah

Terry: = pick on (. each other on (. facebook or (. other websites or (. other social media (.)

Clive: [Well the policy]
Terry: [If it happens out of school] do we just wash our hands of it as we have done in the past when we’ve said well “so and so came round my house and called my son a this a that and the other” and we’ve said “well hh we’re very support the children but (. . .) this happened out of school” (. . .) are we still able to do that in the [age of the internet]

Derek: [I think if this was a pupil of mine (. . .) in my] class (. . .) being bullied (. . .) by text message (. . .) I’d say something to the people who’d done it because I don’t want (. . .) my pupil (. . .) to be (. . .) [you know]

Clive: [Yeah]

Derek: = to be put [in that]

Clive: [Yeah]

Derek: = situation where it might prevent them from progressing (. . .) and making them unhappy (. . .)

Terry: [So we should deal with] =

Derek: [I (. . .) yeah]

Terry: = we’ve got to [deal with it] =

Derek: [Yeah]

Terry: = if it comes

Clive: We have to be as a supportive role don’t we (. . .) I think we need to be in a supportive role to parents (. . .) and that child (. . .)

Terry: Hmm

Carole: I think on the (whole part) you should put (. . .) in some strategies (. . .) of education on it (. . .) [you know]

Clive: [Yeah]

Carole: = if you’re talking to the children [a bit as well]

Terry: Yeah I I’m wondering whether within our PSHE we should [bring in] =

Carole: [It should start to come in]

Terry: = we should start to bring in this whole issue of (. . .) [bullying on the internet]

Derek: [Well (name) went on that course didn’t] he (. . .) and he (. . .) he said that a lot of what parents are doing now is (. . .) and children (. . .) they’re using the internet (. . .) and chatlines and (busy link) up (. . .) would it be worthwhile asking (name) to give us the crux of what his meeting [was about (. . .)] =

Terry: [Hmm]

Derek: = it’s this thing about cyberbullying (. . .) make parents aware (. . .) "your child is doing this" (. . .) you know "they’re guilty of this" (. . .) you know

Carole: You educate [the parents first don’t you]

Derek: [Educate the parents]

Terry: So there might be some merit in perhaps as a whole school (. . .) bringing parents in and then saying (. . .) “these problems exist (. . .) you need to be aware of them” (. . .) ‘cause a lot of parents (. . .) take the ostrich [syndrome] =

Carole: [Yes]

Terry: = bury their heads and hoping their children aren’t doing it (hh) but in reality (. . .) the minute they’ve got the internet access out of parental (. . .) supervision (. . .) there is a chance that they are involved in some form of social (. . .) networking (. . .) which might not always be positive (. . .) for want of a better way of putting it there’s huge amounts of it going on (. . .) younger and younger (. . .) most of our kids (. . .) going down to the lowest juniors (. . .) have i-pads (. . .) i-phones (. . .) so they must be accessing (. . .) sites they must be (. . .)

Clive: But there there has to be parental permission to access those things doesn’t it (. . .) [if they’re if they’re accessing it]

Terry: [But they know the way around it]

Clive: = if they’re accessing all that I I mean (. . .) some (. . .) responsibility has to be put on the parents if they’re if you’re got a child who’s using an (. . .) i-pad two or whatever you need to be responsible to know what that child’s on I mean my daughter uses an i-pad two but she doesn’t do any networking (h) she just has a couple of games that we’ve (. . .) already (. . .) earmarked and she’s got (. . .) parental code on it (. . .) so (. . .) again maybe educating parents to say [this (. . .) this is the system you need to follow]
Carole: [It’s parental education yeah]
Terry: [Showing them how (.) yeah]
Clive: = to protect your child
Terry: Yeah (.) I think there may be some merit in actually (.) as a service to our parents (.) =
Clive: Hmm
Terry: = actually saying look we’ll bring somebody in (.) who knows about these issues (.) I mean I’m sure our community police officers (.) must deal with this and maybe they would come and do a (.) [you know a twilight talk] =
Derek: [Well didn’t we have a] =
Terry: = to our parents (.) about (.) the [dangers of internet bullying]
Clive: [Yeah]
Derek: = [yeah (.) we had the community police officer] in about two years ago we had the six sevens and eights (.) and she was talking about what we’re talking about now (.) has anybody seen this par has anyone got this particular video game (.) and four or five boys put their hands up (.) it was an eighteen (.) certificate (.) and the support officer went “well do your parents know” “well yeah” (.) they bought it then (.) so (.) we are fighting a losing battle against some parents then (.)
Terry: But we have a duty of care [to protect our children] =
Derek: [We have a duty of care yeah]
Terry: = to protect them and well I’m just conscious I think that in the next few years that the exposure that our older children here (.) you know nine to eleven year olds are going to get to the internet is going to increase (.) they’re going to find their way around security (.) and parental control (.) and there are (.) I mean we’re lucky not to have dealt with any (.) cyberbullying as such (.) but (.) it’s going to happen (.) surely (.) at some stage (.) I know that (.) as I said once they get into year seven you start to get the facebook (.) [problem]
Terry: [(hh) well that’s the idea and it’s worked pretty well in the senior school] =
Derek: [and it’s controlled and recorded and I think that’s the best way] to have that (.) they won’t have the need to go on to the (.) external (.) [network (.) systems]
Terry: [(hh) well that’s] the idea and it’s [worked pretty well in the senior school] =
Derek: = [and it’s controlled and recorded and I think that’s the best way] to have that (.) they won’t have the need to go on to the (.) external (.) [network (.) systems]
Clive: [Yeah]
Terry: = that they can access and use which is controlled (.) [’cause it] =
Clive: [Yeah]
Terry: = works well in the senior school (.) =
Clive: Hmm
Terry: = lots of children use it (.) apparently (.) they communicate with one another but it’s all completely controlled it’s also transparent (.)
Clive: Yeah
Terry: = because everything that’s communicated can [be seen]
Clive: [Yeah]
Carole: Because you (you know you bring out the bit in the policy) about young people have the right to be both empowered and protected (.) =
Terry: Hmm
Carole: = and you’re giving them (.) the vehicle to do it through frog (.) [which also has the protection]
Terry: [That’s a really good] point and I agree with you entirely on that one we have discussions as heads all the time about this and actually (hh)
many people believe that we should just allow children to (.) use these tools and teach them how [to use them (.)] =

Carole: [Yeah]
Terry: = [best (.)] =
Carole: [Yeah]
Terry: = rather than restrict it and make that unknown (.) =
Clive: Hmm
Terry: = that tempts them to you know something “oo that’s quite (.) dangerous and risky we’ll give it we’ll give that a go ‘cause it’s wrong” (.)
Clive: Yeah
Terry: = we’re providing them wi with a ready-made opportunity to use a network site but it’s controlled (.) so maybe that’s the way (.) we should go forward (.) =
Clive: Hmm
Terry: = get frog up and [running and]
Clive: [Get frog up and running]
Terry: = and introduce it to some of the children that are interested to use it and communicate with one [another]
Clive: [Hmm]
Derek: [I think if] you show them the positive any (.) anything electronic then they they’ll follow your example and follow it (.) =
Terry: [Yeah]
Clive: [Absolutely]
Derek: You’ll get the one or two that’ll fi [find a way around it]
Terry: Brilliant (.) [right well] =
Clive: [Yeah]
Terry: I’m happy that we’re happy with the policy (.) and then we’ll all (.) maybe steps forward then let’s see if we can find someone to come and talk to our parents and offer them that service and a second step (.) is to (.) get frog up and running (.) =
Clive: Yeah
Terry: = and introduce perhaps our elder (.) older children to (.) to frog and see how they go with the networking aspect of it (.)
Clive: Yeah
Terry: = which has proven to have worked quite well already with years seven to thirteen (.) thank you very much
Appendix 11a ~ Chapter 3

Recurrent points:
Conformation and reinforcement of personal constructs

During the analysis of Extract 1 (School 1) as part of the sub-theme Constructing features of bullying, the discussants construct teachers has having the correct definition of bullying in contrast to both children and parents. There are further examples of this within the discussion of the first school as is shown by the following extracts:

Extract A11a.1 (School 1)

Sienna: I have a similar sort of problem in my class erm (.) with the fact that my children find it difficult to distinguish between what is bullying and what is just annoying behaviour so I think that the assembly that Rachel did actually helped .h clear that up because we discussed it as a class and it’s made it a lot clearer for them .h to be able to distinguish (. ) the two

Simone: When I discussed this with the class they couldn’t dist (. ) they couldn’t distinguish the two but =

Sienna: They couldn’t [in the beginning]

Simone: = [but there was] annoying behaviour which they they even thought could go in the bullying =

Sienna: [Mm]

Simone: = [so] I think they [can’t (. ) distinguish the two]

Sienna: [They couldn’t] in the beginning ( . ) but once we (. ) spoke about it ( . ) and the whole repetition is it’s more likely to be bullying rather than a one off .h then they (. ) understood it better

Extract A11a.2 (School 1):

Seren: We we had that today at swimming (.) when um (. ) someone had said to me that two chil one child was supposed to be bullying another child but they were sitting there having a nice old chat weren’t they =

U Yes [they were]

Seren: = [but again] that was a misconception because of probably that’s the same it’s just that they’re being unkind they’ve done something unkind and then it’s mis (. ) misconstrued is that the right word

Esme: But you can have on-going arguments between children as well can’t you though where one of them feels they’re being bullied because they’re constantly arguing but the other one doesn’t and you know is it u is it bullying then just ‘cause they’re then you when the victim’s being doing stuff as well ‘cause they think that’s the way it’s been going =

Seren: Oh yeah [oh that’s a good point]

Esme: = [or is one of the people in need] or is it kind of =

Seren: [Yeah]

Esme: = [the same on] both sides

Seren: It is like when they start play fighting but it’s always the same person who comes out with crying they always in the same one but they’ve chosen to enter into a bit of play fighting =

U Mm

Seren: = but it’s not alw it’s not because they’ve someone’s been unkind
This positioning is something that is also present in the staff meetings of other schools as illustrated by the following extracts.

**Extract A11a.3 (School 2)**

Lisa: Last time (.) the bullying thing came up and it was discussed and I think it was done (.) in a very sensitive and child friendly way but they’d come in off the playground and because (.) someone didn’t pass them the football or something “he’s bullying me” (.) “he [won’t let me play with the ball he’s bullying me]”

Daniel: I think that’s (.) that’s something else we need to discuss yeah how (.) do we (.) deal with those cases when children think they’re being bullied (.) but we think they’re not (.) is that part of it if a child think they’re being bullied is that bullying (2.0)

Natalie: But I don’t think in a case like [that they do] = Emma: [But then it’s it’s]

Natalie: = think they are (.) =

U: Yeah

Natalie: = [they’re just hoping that] =

Emma: = [it’s their understanding of the word]

Natalie: = by using that emotive term you will take bigger action if they just said “it was a foul and he didn’t pass me the ball”

Perry: There was a (.) there was a poster that was up in the place I used to work that said erm (.) “harassment” (.) it might of even been bullying actually but “harassment is harassment whether real or perceived” (1.0) which seemed (laugh) a bit vague really (.) but I don’t know if that’s an official way of describing it if you feel like you’re being bullied (1.0) [then]

Daniel: [Does] that mean you are (.) in which case (2.0) this whole definition of bullying needs to be so tight (.) =

Perry: Hm

Daniel: = that the the children do understand that it is that being picked on again and again =

The next extract also illustrates an example of how the discussion within the second school returns to the element of repetition of behaviours being a criteria for what constitutes bullying. Further examples of this can be found in Appendix 11 and referenced in the main analysis. Also of interest within this extract is the use of listing from June (lines 292 – 293). This is a five-part list and it allows June to put across the suggestion that there is a different between how children feel when on the receiving end of bullying behaviours and this might dictate whether an incident is actually bullying. This still constructs children as having a different definition of what constitutes bullying.

**Extract A11a.4 (School 2):**

Daniel: And if (.) again if we’ve got that definition (.) watertight (1.0) and it’s understood by us and by the children then that should be easier to do shouldn’t it (.) and we won’t get the cases of children coming in (.) saying “he’s kicked the ball (.) over that way therefore I’m being bullied” (2.0) do you think
June: I think it’s very much the fact that it’s continuous and prolonged or whichever word you want to use that “he didn’t give me the ball” it’s not b (.) unpleasant but it’s not (.) it’s not bullying (1.0) and it’s also a case of how you (.) how the child involved feels isn’t it because if you’re being (?) you will feel ineffectual (.) worthless (.) hurt (.) upset (.) any of those things whereas you know just to be a bit cross is not quite the same (.)

Extract A11a.5 (School 2)

Daniel: In the case of the reception children (3.0) part of I’m going back to what Perry said about bullying is bullying if you perceive it to be so (.) was the victim there (1.0) aware (.) that it was bullying (.) =

Emma: No = that she was being manipulated [into this]

Daniel: [No] and still isn’t really even though I’ve spoken to her on her own (.) and really encouraged her to come and tell me (.) if anything happens or if anything is said to her (.) that she thinks maybe isn’t very nice (.) and that doesn’t really (.) I mean sh (.) she did say something today actually (1.0) erm (.) you know it’s only “so and so won’t let me play with those” (.) because they’re four and five

Daniel: Hm (1.0) but it’s interesting isn’t it that it’s (.) the parents (.) who’ve jumped on it as possible (1.0) [bullying]

Natalie: [Yes]

Emma: [Yes] and they did [quite] =

Lisa: [Two]

Emma: = got the right (2.0) end of the stick (2.0)

Lisa: ‘Cause if it’s the two that I’m thinking of (1.0) actually it was the the victim (.) that I had to keep away from [the] =

Emma: [Yeah]

Lisa: = [supposed] (2.0) =

Emma: [Yeah]

Lisa: = and I’m not saying that that doesn’t happen it’s (.) it just makes (.)

the grey area that much greyer (.) I think

Daniel: Hmm (.) Hmm (2.0)

Emma: It’s very very (grey) (2.0)

The following extract gives another example of the positioning of parents having an incorrect view of bullying as a result of their own experiences:

Extract A11a.6 (School 1)

Kelly: See with bullying it might be learnt behaviour from home or from another environment and if they don’t know it’s wrong they’re never gonna [learn]

Seren: [No] so you’ve got to try and change their behaviour but they also need to be in trouble for (.) d they’ve got to realise it’s wrong haven’t they
This last extract illustrates the construction of both parents and children as having an incorrect definition of bullying as well as the influence parental views can have on the views of children:

**Extract A11a.7 (School 4)**

195  Terry: And when is bullying and not bullying (. ) [‘cause] =
196  Derek: [Yeah]
197  Terry: = with the minute we distribute that [leaflet (. )] =
198  Derek: [Yeah]
199  Terry: = at some stage during the year (. ) which is the anti-bullying leaflet
200  which goes out to the parents and pupils (. ) you know you’re going to
201  get reports of bullying coming in (. ) because parents read it they’re
202  alerted to it and the minute something happens as you said (. ) the
203  child’s suddenly alerted (. ) and calls it bullying (. ) (what’s) the
204  difference between (. ) how do we define the difference between the
205  bullying (. ) and just (. )
206  Derek: This is where it’d hope parents at home would actually help us out (. )
207  if a child complains to a parent that this has happened (. ) they’d use
208  their common sense and see it wasn’t a bullying incident it was just
209  something that happened (. ) and I think that’s where parents could
210  help us
Appendix 11b ~ Chapter 3

Recurrent points:
Conformation and reinforcement of personal constructs

Within the analysis of Extract 4 (School 2) as part of the sub-theme Constructing features of bullying, a contrast structure ~ 'Inside school versus outside school' ~ is highlighted where teachers construct bullying as existing but not in their school. The extracts below highlight other examples of this contrast structure within the talk from the staff meetings of other schools. Within the first example extract the discussants identify physical bullying behaviours as existing but not in their school. In the second example extract, bullying exists but in their school it is a negative that is ‘stamped out’ (line 297).

Extract A11b.1 (School 3)

301 Anna: And it’s difficult because it’s that sort of mental mind games (.) if it’s verbal (.) it can go on and you don’t necessarily see it (.) =
302 U: Yeah
303 Anna: whereas if it’s physical (.) =
304 U: Yeah
305 Anna: you would be much more aware of it in the playground =
306 Hayley: [Because some children are very (?)]
307 Anna: [and that we don’t tend to have] the physical (.) =
308 Stacey: No
309 Anna: because (1.0) we have children who have problems with other children or being in a group (.) but we know the reasons (.) and most of the parents (.) I feel they recognise that we’ve been working with those sorts of children (.) whereas the verbal (.) is very =
310 U: Hmm
311 Anna: = very different (.) and the physical we don’t (.) have (1.0)
312 Stacey: No (.) not generally
313 Anna: Do we
314 Stacey: No well not since I’ve [been here] =
315 Anna: No

Extract A11b.2 (School 4)

296 Clive: I mean we we always reinforce positivity (.) and we always celebrate positive behaviour and positive good work (h) I mean we stamp out the negative sides of things (.) and I think we’ve always done that here and I think that reflects that we don’t have (h) =
297 Derek: Hmm
298 Clive: = very little if any bullying
Appendix 11c ~ Chapter 3

Recurrent points:
Conformation and reinforcement of personal constructs

Within the analysis of Extract 3 (School 2) under the sub-theme Constructing features of bullying the discussants identify the need for consistency of instances to be included as part of the definition of bullying. The following extract comes at the end of that which is linked to this appendix and demonstrates how the discussants provide agreement with their colleagues as well as how the same element can be considered via different terminologies (i.e. ‘prolonged’ in line 56):

Extract A11c.1 (School 2)

Lisa: Someone throwing a throw away comment ‘cause they’re annoyed (.)

Perry: = hm hm

Lisa: = is that bullying (. because the children (. come back with well they [say “I’m being bullied”] =

June: It’s more talked to isn’t it

Lisa: = because someone’s (. because someone’s you know said “you can’t sit here” (. ‘cause [you] =

June: = [hm]

Lisa: = know (.)

June: I thought it had to be prolonged (. to be bullying

There are other instances within the staff meeting discussion from School 2 where the speakers present return to the notion of consistency (using different terminology to that employed within the main analysis and as seen above in Extract A11c.1). In the next extract, Lisa uses the word ‘sustained’ and introduces an additional element of ‘targeted’:

Extract A11c.2 (School 2)

Lisa: I think that if this is (. sustained and targeted and I I think that one of the [things] =

June: [Hmm]

Lisa: = that I’m [I’m struggling with]

Emma: [I like that word]

June: [Targeted yeah]

Lisa: = is the whole idea of (. intent (. because you can have bad behaviour (. =

Emma: Yeah

Lisa: = you can have upsetting behaviour

Emma: Yeah

Lisa: But (. to me: (. bullying is a targeted (. erm (.)

Daniel: No I would agree with that
The introduction of ‘targeted’ as a key feature of bullying by Lisa follows the same formula as the manner in which Perry introduces the ‘consistent’ element shown in Extract 3; through employment of a stake inoculation with the phrase ‘I think that’ stated either side of the words ‘sustained and targeted’ (line 92). This phrase reinforces her personal construct and serves to inoculate her against the possibility that her colleagues may not agree with the suggestion. This section of speech from Lisa also allows her to provide agreement with the suggestion from Perry about the consistent nature of bullying behaviours (through use of the word ‘sustained’). Additionally, the series of agreements given from Emma, June and Daniel (lines 97, 100, 102 and 104) demonstrates the construction of consensus regarding the suggestion from Lisa.

Lisa then introduces the terms ‘bad behaviour’ (lines 98 – 99) and ‘upsetting behaviour’ (line 101) thereby constructing these as comparable to ‘targeted’ and therefore ‘bullying’ behaviours. Specifically, Lisa constructs bullying in terms of positioning those carrying out the actions as choosing whom they wish to be on the receiving end of their actions. In comparison, ‘bad’ or ‘upsetting’ behaviours do not have this element where the implication is a spontaneous occurrence. This is the first instance of the discourse *Bullying as a comparable behaviour* that will be discussed later in more detail. In making this comparison, Lisa is careful to inoculate herself against possible challenges from the other discussants when she uses the words ‘to me’ (line 103).

The following extract shows use of the words prolonged, persistent and ‘keeps’ as well as the phrase ‘over and over again’ which is an ECF placed in for emphasis:

**Extract A11c.3 (School 2)**

```
231 Daniel:  What I'd like to do is go back to that definition of bullying which I think
232 is quite (2.0) tight once (.) once we've added that manipulative bit (.)
233 and the fact that it's prolonged (.) persistent (1.0) and could be over a
234 period of time (1.0) but that's not very child friendly is it (1.0) how do
235 we get across to the children (.) what bullying is (1.0) I wouldn't want
236 to be saying (.) "now then children bullying is (.) a physical or
237 emotional and could (.) include racist taunting" 'cause that's (.) you
```
know (. ) how do how do we get them to (. ) understand what bullying
is (1.0)

Perry: If you feel like you’re being picked on by the same person (2.0) over
and [over again]

Emma: If someone keeps [hurting you] =

Natalie: And [it’s the “keeps” it’s the key over and over again]

U: Yes it is

Emma: = either (. ) by what they say or what they do

The analysis notes that this element is also to be observed within the staff
meetings of other schools as can be seen within the following extracts:

**Extract A11c.4 (School 3)**

146 Jodie: I don’t think children understand that it’s not just a one off (. ) thing
147 that has happened to them (. ) =
148 U: Hmm
149 Dana: Or a falling out with [someone]
150 Jodie: = [yeah] they think that’s bullying (. )=
151 Stacey: Hmm
152 Jodie: = they often banded the word around [“I’m being bullied“] =
153 Stacey: [Hmm (.)] no (. ) I agree the (. ) the word’s often used as just
154 (interruption) it’s often used (. ) I think it’s used inappropriately and I
155 [think] =
156 U: [Hmm]

**Extract A11c.5 (School 3)**

167 Dana: [I think it] (. ) it needs to be more than just the persistent (1.0)
168 offense sort of thing because (. ) I think the children pick up on that (. )
169 and that’s all they say well if somebody keeps saying (. ) “I don’t like
170 you” (. ) everyday (. ) they class that as bullying (. ) whereas actually
171 they’ve just got to accept “that person doesn’t like me” (3.0) and I
172 [think that’s where you get] =
173 Jodie: [But the tone of voice] they say it in =
174 Dana: = yeah that’s [when you get] =
175 Jodie: = [could be] perceived as =
176 Dana: = yeah (. ) [but fo] =
177 Jodie: = [bullying (. ) I don’t know] =
178 Dana: = but for how long has it got to go on or (. ) =
179 Stacey: I don’t know
180 Dana: = how much power ha (. ) has the perpetrator got to have over the
other one
Appendix 11d ~ Chapter 3

Recurrent points:
Conformation and reinforcement of personal constructs

Within the analysis of Extract 8 (School 3) under the sub-theme Constructing features of bullying the staff discuss an incident as having elements of organisation and premeditation. This continues later in the meeting from School 3 as illustrated in the extract below:

Extract A11d.1 (School 3):

248 Dana: I would put that as (. ) maybe that’s part of what bullying is is that you
249 plan (. ) you know (. ) [you plan to do it] =
250 Stacey: [Plan it yeah]
251 U: [Hmm]
252 Dana: = you have every intention of saying those things to hurt somebody (. )
253 it’s like sometimes a child just comes [out with] =
254 Stacey: [Hmm]
255 U: [Hmm]
256 Dana: = something (. ) and actually [it’s] =
257 Anna: [A knee jerk reaction]
258 Dana: [Spur of the moment]
259 Hayley: = yeah they didn’t mean to =
260 Dana: It’s different
261 Hayley: = for it to be nasty
262 Stacey: Yeah (1.0) but if they’re continually [doing it] =
263 Dana: Because those children you were talking about (. ) would turn round
264 and say “well we didn’t mean it to be” (. ) but actually (. ) [yes they did]
265 Anna: [They had organised it]
Appendix 12 ~ Chapter 3

Recurrent points: Constructions of cyberbullying

Within the analysis of Extract 17 (School 4) the discussants construct parents as having responsibility for the use of and any resulting bullying from internet chat lines. This is something that is repeated later in the discussion as illustrated with the following extracts.

Extract A12.1 (School 4)

423  Clive:  But there there has to be parental permission to access those things
424  doesn’t it (.). [if they’re if they’re accessing it]
425  Terry:  [But they know the way around it]
426  Clive:  = if they’re accessing all that I I mean (.) some (.) responsibility has
427  to be put on the parents if they’re if you’re got a child who’s using an
428  (.) i-pad two or whatever you need to be responsible to know what that
429  child’s on I mean my daughter uses an i-pad two but she doesn’t do
430  any networking (h) she just has a couple of games that we’ve (.)
431  already (.) earmarked and she’s got (.) parental code on it (.) so (.)
432  again maybe educating parents to say [this (.) this is the system you
433  need to follow]
434  Carole:  [It’s parental education yeah]
435  Terry:  [Showing them how (.) yeah]
436  Clive:  = to protect your child
437  Terry:  Yeah (.) I think there may be some merit in actually (.) as a service to
438  our parents (.) =
439  Clive:  Hmm
440  Terry:  = actually saying look we’ll bring somebody in (.) who knows about
441  these issues (.) I mean I’m sure our community police officers (.) must
442  deal with this and maybe they would come and do a (.) [you know a
443  twilight talk] =
444  Derek:  [Well didn’t we have a] =
445  Terry:  = to our parents (.) about (.) the [dangers of internet bullying]

Extract A12.2 (School 4):

349  Clive:  Is it our role to make them aware (.) of their actions (.) what would
350  happen if they do don’t stop like bullying (.) is it our role to make them
351  aware that things will happen against them if they are cyber (.) bullies
352  (.) “cause they may feel because it’s anonymous (.) “I can get away
353  with it“ (.) but actually (.) looking at the policy (.) you won’t get away
354  with it (.) [it will be recorded and it will (?)]
355  Terry:  [But that’s why they do it’s easier to bully anonymously isn’t it]
356  Clive:  Yeah (.) I mean we don’t get it down here because moblies are handed
357  in (.) and moblies are turned off we don’t have this mobile culture that
358  we hear in the junior school (.) =
359  Terry:  No
360  Clive:  = like we said with facebook and the other (.) erm (.) networking
361  systems they’ve got err you have to get parental permission (.) at this
362  age group to be able to set up a facebook (.) so
Extract A12.3 (School 4):

454  Terry:  But we have a duty of care [to protect our children] =
455  Derek:  [We have a duty of care yeah]
456  Terry:  = to protect them and well I’m just conscious I think that in the next
457    few years that the exposure that our older children here (.) you know
458  Terry:  nine to eleven year olds are going to get to the internet is going to
459    increase (.) they’re going to find their way around security (.) and
460  Derek:  parental control (.) and there are (.) I mean we’re lucky not to have
461  Terry:  dealt with any (.) cyberbullying as such (.) but (.) it’s going to happen
462  Terry:  (. ) surely (. ) at some stage (. ) I know that (. ) as I said once they get
463  Terry:  into year seven you start to get the facebook (. ) [problem]
Appendix 13 ~ Chapter 4

Government document from the Department for Education

Preventing and tackling bullying:
Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies
Preventing and tackling bullying
Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies

March 2014
# Contents

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Summary

About this advice

This document has been produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy. It outlines, in one place, the Government’s approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face.

Review date

This advice will next be reviewed in December 2014.

Who is this advice for?

School leaders and school staff in all schools in England.

- For the purposes of this advice references to “maintained school” means a community, foundation or voluntary school, community or foundation special school. It also means Pupil Referral Units and non-maintained special schools.
- For the purpose of this advice references to “Academy” means Academy schools (including mainstream free schools) and AP Academies (including AP Free Schools).
- Where particular provisions do not apply to a particular type of school we make this clear.

It may also be useful for:

- FE and community settings.
What does the law say and what do I have to do?

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school’s behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

Independent School Standard Regulations 2010

The Independent School Standards Regulations 2010 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to
suffer, significant harm’. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children’s social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

**Criminal law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

**Bullying outside school premises**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member. More detailed advice on teachers’ powers to discipline, including their power to punish pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside school, is included in ‘Behaviour and discipline in schools – advice for headteachers and school staff’ – see further sources of information on page 10.
What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school’s first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers’ powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International link under ‘further resources’ on page 10.
Dealing with bullying

Successful schools have policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour which are clear to parents, pupils and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly. However a school chooses to define bullying for the purposes of its own behaviour policy, it should be clearly communicated and understood by pupils, parents, and staff. Successful schools create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. School staff, headteachers and governors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect their pupils. There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools.

Prevention

A school’s response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. The best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

Schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

Intervention

Schools should apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

The organisations listed in the ‘further resources’ section provide a range of practical resources for schools to help staff develop their own approaches to different issues which might motivate bullying and conflict.

Successful schools also:

- involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
• involve pupils. All pupils understand the school’s approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders

• regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating ‘acceptable use’ policies for computers

• implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable

• openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable

• use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying

• provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school’s policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils

• work with the wider community such as the police and children’s services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school

• make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying

• create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination

• celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

**School’s accountability**

Pupils will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. The revised Ofsted framework which came into force in January 2012 includes ‘behaviour and safety’ as one of its key criteria for inspections. Schools should be able to demonstrate the impact of anti-bullying policies.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Should we prioritise tackling some types of bullying over others?

A: Immediate physical safety obviously comes first. All bullying, whatever the motivation or method, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Some issues will be more familiar to schools than others and this guidance points to other specialist organisations for further information about how to tackle specific types of bullying. Please see ‘Further Sources of Information’ at the end of this document.

Q: Should I discipline pupils for bullying outside the school?

A: Yes. If an incident of bullying outside the school premises is reported to the school, it is important that it is investigated and appropriate action is taken. This will send a strong signal to pupils that bullying will not be tolerated and perpetrators will be held to account.

Q: How do schools with a religious character – or schools dealing with parents with particular religious beliefs – respond to prejudice based bullying?

A: Notwithstanding the particular tenets of their faith, schools with a religious character should uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others and condemn all forms of bullying, as in any other school.

Q: How can we involve parents more in our anti-bullying work?

A: Schools should talk to parents about their anti-bullying policy and make it available to them and prospective parents as part of their behaviour policy. Schools should ensure that parents know what measures are being taken to prevent bullying, as well as how incidents are responded to, and may also encourage positive messages about good behaviour and respect for others at home.

Q: Should I record incidents of bullying?

A: Staff should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents in their school and evaluating whether their approach is effective. For some schools, that will mean recording incidents so that they can monitor incident numbers and identify where bullying is recurring between the same pupils. Others do not want to keep written records. We want schools to exercise their own judgment as to what will work best for their pupils.
Further sources of information

Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance

Legislative links

Schools’ duty to promote good behaviour: Section 89 Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010

Power to tackle poor behaviour outside school

The Equality Act 2010

Specialist organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children’s Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

BeatBullying: A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, BeatBullying have developed a peer support programme for young people affected by bullying.

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

The Diana Award: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

The BIG Award: The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for schools to tackle bullying effectively.


Cyber-bullying

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves

Think U Know: resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

Digizen: provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.
Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0: The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced universal guidelines for providers on keeping children safe online.

LGBT

EACH: A training agency for employers and organisations seeking to tackle discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation.

Schools Out: Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education.

Stonewall: An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

SEND

Mencap: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

Changing Faces: Provide online resources and training to schools on bullying because of physical difference.

Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.

Racism

Show Racism the Red Card: Provide resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism.

Kick it Out: Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools.

Anne Frank Trust: Runs a schools project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.

Please note that internal servers may block access to some of these sites. Schools wishing to access these materials may need to adjust their settings.
Appendix 14a ~ Chapter 5

Parental information leaflet

Bullying in schools: Research feedback
Traditionally bullying is thought of as:

“... an aggressive act, has an imbalance of power ... has some element of repetition ... can be physical, verbal or indirect ... it is directed, often repeatedly, toward a particular victim, who is unable to defend him/herself effectively ... attacks are mostly unprovoked and are intended to hurt the other ...,”

Smith & Monks (2008; p. 101)

Developed from traditional ways of collecting data:

- Children’s / Parents’ / Teachers’ self-reports
- Questionnaires
- Observations

Which also tell us about:

- Characteristics of bullies / victims / bystanders
- How often bullying occurs
- Where bullying happens
- Interventions used to address bullying
However...

... children, adolescents and adults all use the word bullying but to describe different behaviours

... young children view single instances of certain behaviours as bullying

... bullying is seen as being different things in different contexts and countries

There is no doubt that the traditional methods and the traditional definition of bullying have been useful in helping us to address bullying but ...

... given the differences in what people class as bullying I would argue there is a missing piece of the puzzle!

We need to look at bullying from another angle

Let’s look at the language people use to talk about bullying because:

- Language is the way we share our opinions and learn about those held by others
- Talk changes based on new information that’s shared
- People jointly build a construction of bullying using language
- Talk about bullying is a social event like bullying itself

But whose talk do we look at?

As children we first encounter language about bullying from the adults around us so it makes sense to explore the talk of teachers and parents.

Many hats make more work

I am a parent and have been a teacher and am now an Educational Psychologist!

So it makes sense to look at EPs as well as we support parents and teachers in dealing with bullying!
**Study 1: Educational Psychologists**

An analysis of a discussion between my colleagues and I in a peer support session last an hour.

During the discussion, we constructed the themes:

- Bullying by any other name …
- EP identity
- Barriers to the application of our skills
- The absence of psychology
- If it ain’t broke don’t fix it

**Study 2: Teachers**

An analysis of staff meeting discussions between teachers in 4 different schools lasting between 10 and 30 minutes.

Across the meetings the teachers constructed the themes:

- The need for consensus
- Confirmation and reinforcement of beliefs
  - What constitutes bullying?
  - A means to an end
- Bullying as part of continuum or a hierarchy?
- Cyberbullying as a separate entity
Study 3: Government Guidance

An analysis of the most recent guidance to schools on preventing and tackling bullying (a 12 page document published in March 2014).

Within the document, the language used by the author (i.e. the government) constructs the themes:

- Authority by positioning
- The letter of the law
- Bullying as part of a continuum or a hierarchy?
- Cyberbullying as a separate entity
- Bullying as a within child problem

Next Steps – Study 4: Parent discussion

What are your thoughts on the information that has been shared this morning?

An analysis of the discussion we are having today!
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Principal Investigator: Alexandra Boys
E-mail: alex.boys@port.ac.uk
Supervisor: Maggie Linnell
Email: Maggie.linnell@port.ac.uk

STUDY TITLE:
Parent discussions on bullying: A response to data feedback

I would like to invite you to take part in my research. Before you decide, we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with me if anything is unclear.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this project is to explore the way parents talk about bullying in schools in everyday speech. I have previously analysed the talk of a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) during a peer support meeting and several groups of teachers during staff discussions. I have also analysed the most recent government guidance to schools on bullying (published March 2014). I would now like to explore the talk of parents about bullying during an informal discussion group session based on membership of the Portsmouth Parent Voice forum. To provide a basis for discussion, I have organised with (INSERT NAME) as the coordinator for the forum to share the results of my first three studies via an information leaflet.

Why have I been invited?
As a parent and a member of the Portsmouth Parent Voice forum I felt that you were likely to have an interest in both hearing more about the research I have already conducted and sharing your views.

Do I have to take part?
No. Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. I will describe the study in this information sheet. If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to sign an informed consent form on the day of the discussion group.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will participate in a discussion group organised by (INSERT NAME) and attended by myself. The discussion will last no more than an hour. I will start the discussion by sharing the results of my first three studies via an
information leaflet as previously stated. Following this, you will be able to share your responses / views. The discussion will be audio-taped from the point at which I start to talk through the information leaflet. You will be able to see me operate the recording device which will be placed in the centre to enable clear data collection.

**Expenses and payments**
There is no monetary cost to participating in this study.

**Anything else I will have to do?**
Following the discussion, you will be provided with a de-briefing sheet. I will then transcribe the recording and give you a copy to review (further details of this process will be contained within the aforementioned de-briefing sheet). Following analysis, I will provide all participants with a summary of the findings via a letter to (INSERT NAME).

**What measurements will be taken?**
There will be no measurements taken during the discussion.

**Are there any possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**
There are no foreseeable risks or disadvantages associated with participating in this study.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**
At the end of the discussion you will have received information on the research conducted as part of my previous studies.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**
The raw data (in this case an audio recording), which identifies you, will be kept securely by myself. It will not be passed to anyone outside of my supervisory team without your express written permission. The exception to this will be any regulatory authority who may have the legal right to access the data for the purposes of conducting an investigation in exceptional cases. The raw data will be retained for 5 years following publication (in line with APA guidance). When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely.

The transcription of the audio-recording will anonymised where you and other participants will be given pseudonyms as will any schools or government authorities mentioned during the discussion.

When made anonymous, the transcript will be utilised as part of my thesis report. In addition, the anonymised transcript may be presented to others at scientific meetings, or published as a project report, scientific paper or book. The anonymised transcript may be used in future research studies approved by an Appropriate Research Ethics Committee.

**What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?**
You withdraw from the study at any time before finishing the discussion without giving a reason if you do not wish to. If you do withdraw before the discussion is finished but after some data has been collected, you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included
in the study. Once the discussion has been completed, and the transcript analysed, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the study.

**What if there is a problem?**
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to myself in the first instance if this is appropriate, or my Supervisor (as detailed on page 1).

If you have a complaint, you can contact:

a. The Chair of the Science Faculty Ethics Committee:
   Dr Chris Markham  
   Chris.Markham@port.ac.uk

b. The University Complaints Officer
   023 9284 3642,
   complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk

**Who is funding the research?**
I am a self-funding student. Neither myself nor my supervisors receive any financial reward for conducting this study (other than their normal salary as part of the University staff team).

**Who has reviewed the study?**
This study has been scientifically and ethically reviewed, and given favourable ethical opinion by the Science Faculty Ethics Committee.

**Thank you**
Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for discussion group. If you do volunteer for this discussion group your consent will be sought via the Consent Form. You will then be given a copy of this information sheet and your signed consent form, for you to keep.
Appendix 14c ~ Chapter 5

Parent Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Alexandra Boys
E-mail: alex.boys@port.ac.uk
Supervisor: Maggie Linnell
Email: Maggie.linnell@port.ac.uk

STUDY TITLE: Parent discussions on bullying: A response to data feedback

Please initial each box if content

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the attached information sheet for the above study. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and that any of these have been answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I understand that the results of this study may be published and / or presented at meetings. I give my permission for my anonymous data, which does not identify me, to be disseminated in this way.

4. Data collected during this study could be requested by regulatory authorities. I give my permission to any such regulatory authority with legal authority to review the study to have access to my data, which may identify me.

5. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for any future research that has been approved by a Research Ethics Committee.

6. I consent for the discussion to be audio-taped with my identity anonymised via the inclusion of a pseudonym.

7. I consent for the audio recording to be heard by the research and possibly the supervisor team members.

8. I agree to take part in this study.

Name of Participant: Date: Signature:

Department of Psychology
King Henry Building
King Henry I Street
PORTSMOUTH
Hampshire
PO1 2DY
Name of Person taking Consent:   Date:   Signature:

Note: When completed, one copy to be given to the participant, one copy to be retained in the study file.
Appendix 14d ~ Chapter 5

Parent De-briefing Sheet

Title of study:

Parent discussions on bullying: A response to data feedback

Thank you for taking part in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of language in everyday discussions concerning bullying in schools. Although there have been numerous studies concerning the topic of bullying, it is becoming increasingly obvious that bullying means different things to different people in different situations. The reason behind the current study was to gain an understanding of how parents talk about bullying, the kind of language they use and how conversations centred on bullying emerge through social interaction. I have previously conducted a similar study with a group of Educational Psychologists and collected data on the talk of teachers and I hope that by conducting this research I can gather evidence demonstrating a slightly different perspective on the topic. Ultimately, I hope that my research will encourage a more flexible view of bullying in schools and a greater understanding of its nature from the perspectives of parties linked to such social interactions in an educational context.

Once I have transcribed the group discussion I will send you copies via (INSERT NAME) for your approval to check that they are an accurate reflection of the conversation. The transcripts will be made anonymous so that no one other than those involved will be able to recognise the discussant. Please get in touch with me if any of the details are incorrect, or there is anything you would like to change or amend. If, upon reflection, you are uncomfortable with having on record any part of your contribution to the discussion, the transcript could be amended to reflect this. I would ask that you return the transcript to me once read in the envelope provided which I shall collect from (INSERT NAME) on (INSERT DATE) and request that you do not take any copies.

If you have any further concerns or questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with either myself, or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Alexandra Boys (Researcher)          Maggie Linnell (Supervisor)
Department of Psychology,            Department of Psychology,
King Henry Building,                 King Henry Building,
King Henry I Street,                 King Henry I Street,
Portsmouth,                          Portsmouth,
Hampshire,                           Hampshire,
PO1 2DY                              PO1 2DY
alex.boys@port.ac.uk                 maggie.linnell@port.ac.uk

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in this study.

A. Boys
Alexandra Boys

If you become distressed as a result of taking part in this discussion I would recommend that you contact one of the following organisations who will be able to put you in touch with an appropriate person to talk to:

- Family Lives 0808 800 2222
  www.familylives.org.uk

- Contact a Family 0808 808 3555
  www.cafamily.org.uk

Alternatively, you may wish to explore the following NHS website for further options:

- www.nhs.uk/livewell/Bullying/Pages/Bullyingadviceforparents.aspx

If you have any concerns about the way this study was conducted please contact the Chair of the Science Faculty Ethics Committee at:

University of Portsmouth
James Watson Building
2 King Richard 1st Road
Portsmouth
PO1 2FR
Appendix 15 ~ Chapter 5

Parent Discussion Group

Alex: Right the numbers are moving and the bar is moving which means it’s recording now (. . .) um (. . .) so firstly thank you all very much for meeting with me this afternoon I really appreciate it and I’m really keen to get your views on the data I’ve collected thus far (. . .) so as I’ve said I’ve done a summary in the booklet here (h) which talks about where (. . .) traditional methods of looking at bullying have come from from a psychological research point of view (hh) and it looks at (. . .) the standard definition that most of us would understand (h) and agree with (h) um that’s where I’ve started from and basically (. . .) is this correct as it were is this something that we do all agree with is this something that everybody buys into and understands or are there differences around how we talk about bullying (. . .) the research from the Smith and Monks article which I’ve referenced indicates that actually (h) there are quite a bit of differences (h) there are quite a few different ways in which people talk about bullying (h) particularly in differences between children and adults and children and teenagers (h) which I found really interesting so I started thinking about well hang on a minute then why do we all buy into this one definition (h) if there are so many variations and so many differences that we all have about bullying (. . .) so that’s where my research has come from so I started looking at Educational Psychologists because (. . .) so my contract says I am one (h) and (laugh) I had a peer meeting with my colleagues and I just asked the question ‘how can we as Eps help schools address the bullying issue (h) and the discussion flowed freely (h) we ended up not talking about bullying at all (. . .) =

Bridget: (Laugh)

Alex: = but (laugh) talking about our job (. . .) so as it says here on page three we constructed three sorry five different themes around (. . .) our discussion that came from that question (hh) and we started talking about well (. . .) is it all bullying (. . .) is everything that we talk about actually bullying (hh) and the answer is (. . .) well (. . .) actually we talk about it (. . .) as a yes (. . .) we say that (. . .) we try an introduce different terms in different ways but actually everything we talk about i (. . .) we still say bullying at the end of the day (hh) we then started moving off (. . .) on a bit of a tangent into (hh) what our role is (. . .) what our identity is in helping schools (hh) um the barriers to us being able to apply our skills in helping schools (hh) um (. . .) I think the the absence of psychology was more my own issue (laugh) in that I felt (. . .) there are a lot of issues with the government documentation that’s given to schools only using very old (. . .) data and very old stuff from sort of 1970s 1980s (h) and not moving forward with the times (hh) and then the last one is we kept thinking that other people needed to have their views on bullying changed (hh) we all sort of (. . .) said that we have the correct view and teachers don’t because they are not looking at it broadly enough (. . .) or f for various other reasons so we nee we clearly need to educate them (hh) we need to correct their views (. . .) which is a weird thing to (. . .) consider (hh) as I was like I’ve never [done that]

Unknown: [(Laugh)]

Alex: = in my job (. . .) =

Unknown: No

Alex: = I’ve never thought I needed to change anyone’s views (h) but that was how we ended up talking about it (hh) so I then went to teachers (. . .) next logical step (. . .) um and they were fascinating to analyse because they kept looking at the need for consensus (. . .) =

Unknown: Oh

Alex: = so (. . .) their staff meetings were introduced by the head teacher (. . .) and the head teacher gave the topic (h) um (. . .) free fro their choice not
nothing to do with me that was totally their decision (h) and from that people talked about bullying and what they thought it was and how they (.) could address it (hh) but what was particularly interesting was (hh) people would change their ideas and their talk half way through a sentence in order to get a consensus (h) so they might start off very vitriolically saying ‘I think it should have this included in the definition (h) and then on feedback from the head or other members of staff they’d go ‘well actually I quite agree with that’ and they’d do a complete u-turn (.) = 

Unknown: Mm

Alex: = just to get [the] =

Unknown: [Mm] =

Alex: = consensus (h) but you can see that (.) because within a school (.) you’d want a consensus (hh) so (.) from there they (.) when they talk about what bullying is it seemed to be that they would share their idea and they would all say (h) ‘yes I agree with that yes it’s that plus this’ (.) =

Unknown: (Quiet laugh)

Alex: = in order to get that consensus (hh) and it that way they reinforced (.) their own ideas about bullying (.) which again was really interesting because ev every step of the way (h) there’s a a need for uniformity (.) um and then (.) last couple of things there (.) I was fascinated by the fact that cyberbullying seems to be seen as something completely separate (.) (h) it has elements of the traditional definition of bullying (.) but it’s seen as something that needs to be addressed separately (.) and needs to be talked about separately (hh) prior to that the teachers talked about bullying as (.) either being on a scale where bullying was an extreme form of bad behaviour (h) and there were lots of other behaviours in between that and good behaviour (.) or (.) at the top of a hierarchy where you had to achieve certain levels of bad behaviour before you could move into bullying (hh) which was really interesting so two kind of different ways but in both of them bullying was a bad or a negative behaviour (hh) the last thing I did was look at the government guidance which I’ve just finished (hh) and again (.) that was quite interesting (giggle) (hh) there’s lots of authority coming across in the government guidance (h) they put themselves as saying to the schools this is what you must be doing (h) and this is why you’ve got to be doing it and that comes in to putting into lots of declaration about acts (hh) and parliamentary (h) things and legislations that (.) ‘this is why you should be doing it (h) we’re not saying this as the government we’re saying this because parliamentary acts and laws dictate that you should be doing it’ (h) and you should be addressing the bullying in this way (h) so that comes through quite strongly so they the author in this case the government positions themselves as being the ones in the know (h) the ones in authority and the schools need to be doing this (h) and if they don’t that they are failing or unsuccessful in some way (hh) =

Unknown: Mm

Alex: = and then as with the other (.) the teachers they put bullying on a continuum (h) um and they also see separate cyberbullying as something separate (h) and then the other thing is that they seem to see bullying as being something that’s being brought into schools by the child or children themselves (h) so it’s not something that’s there already (.) it’s something that the child [brings]

Unknown: [Mm]

Alex: = into the school (.) and that’s what the government guidance is saying so that’s if that’s what the government guidance is saying to schools (.) where do we go with that (.) so that’s where I’m at (.) =

Unknown: Mm

Alex: = that’s about eighty thousand words in a very short space of time (laughing) =

345
All others: (Quiet laughing) but er do you have any additional thoughts what would be your reaction to any of that information (1) hopefully I've represented it clearly for you (laugh) [(3)]

All others: [Mm]

Alex: = so someone’s gonna have to be the first to speak (laugh) (1)

Bridget: I think that that continuum of of that’s an interesting (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = concept (. )

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = and I think I think (. ) bullying is viewed (. ) differently by different people (. ) what I consider bullying might not be seen as bullying by somebody else despite all the discussions we’ve had around (. ) um (1) just as an example my son was bully bullied at school (h) er coming home with bruises (. )

Alex: Hm

Bridget: Um but because the other child had special needs it wasn’t really bullying because he did not understand despite the fact that it was repetitive (. ) he was the target (. )

Alex: Hm

Bridget: and it wouldn’t stop um so (. ) that was I thought that was an interesting you know the the well not an excuse and I did understand that the other child [had] =

Alex: [Hm]

Bridget: = special needs and that’s fair enough (. ) but that’s not an excuse to do nothing (. ) and (. ) yes that’s and so I viewed it as bullying (. ) they didn’t (. ) =

Alex: Right

Bridget: = so we disagreed (. ) [on] =

Alex: [So] 'they’ being the school =

Bridget: = yes =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = [yep yeah] (. ) so (. ) =

Alex: So did you felt that anything had been done as a result of your concerns

Bridget: No what happened was I I removed (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = my child from that particular activity because it was felt that um the other child had higher needs (. ) [than mine] =

Alex: [Right]

Bridget: = [so] =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = because he came from quite a deprived background as well so [it was] =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = unfair (. ) to well not punish him but I you know and as I I was very reasonable as I said I do understand [that] =

Alex: [Hm]

Bridget: = these things do happen (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = but someone needs to learn consequences along the way (. ) you know (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: you do (. ) if you have these behaviour and if your actions hurt [another] =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = child you need to somehow understand that actually that’s not okay (h) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = but it was viewed you know well you know ‘poor poor him’ you know 'he doesn’t have this he doesn’t have that’ [and] =

Alex: [Hm]

Bridget: = and because we’re quite a (. ) nice family (. ) [(laugh)] =

All others: [(Laugh]
Bridget: um um it (.) yeah it was unfair and uh and it was (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = you know it did make me think you know I view it as bullying (.) you
don’t (.) really (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = because you’re finding mitigating circumstances (.) [so] =
Alex: [Okay]
Bridget: = so you’re not going to address it on (.) on because of that
Alex: Okay so I don’t want to put words into your mouth but did you feel like
they were making excuses for (.) =
Bridget: Oh completely (.)
Alex: = okay
Bridget: = you know it did make me think you know I view it as bullying (.) you
don’t (.) really (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = because you’re finding mitigating circumstances (.) [so] =
Alex: [Okay]
Bridget: = you’re clearly not listening to me (.) so (.) =
Alex: Okay
Bridget: = you know he’s not going to attend this particular activity (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = and we’ll leave it as that’
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = Um but yep
Alex: So there are kind of three things that strike me there the first is have
either of yourselves (referring to the other discussants) also
experienced an issue where you felt that (hh) what you were saying
was bullying [wasn’t] =
Unknown: Hm
Alex: = necessarily being viewed as bullying another party (.) =
Unknown: Hm
Alex: = probably a school [looking]
Unknown: [Yeah]
Alex: = at your faces I’m gonna say yeah [(laugh)]
All others: [(Quiet laugh)]
Alex: Er is do you want to start there would would you just care to share (.)
not necessarily the experience but (.) how it made you feel or the way
in which hh your views weren’t the same as the other party’s
Denise: Hm well the school that my son attended it was a junior school (.) and
he’d been picked on since he was at infant school (.) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = (hh) um (1) because of his circumstances (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = erm (.) and (1) the school kept telling me there was nothing going
on (.)
Alex: Okay
Denise: = we were having nightmares (.) [and] =
Alex: [Right]
Denise: = I was making it up (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um we had the single child syndrome (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = you know ‘he’s your only child and you’re o you’re an overprotective
mum’ (.) and (.) the fact that he was coming home with like yours
marks (.) =
Alex: Right
Denise: = where he shouldn’t have marks (.) =
Alex: Hm Hm

Denise: = not just falling over and hurting his knee he had bruises on his bottom (hh) under his arms under here (with visual demonstration) (=)

um (=)

Alex: Hm

Denise: = and it got (=) it got so bad that he (=) wasn’t even getting out of school (=)

Alex: Hm

Denise: = getting out of bed to go to school [in the morning]

Alex: [Yeah yeah]

Denise: =h but I was making it all up and I was making it worse apparently (=)

Alex: Right

Denise: = so they were blaming it on me (h) in some respects but they were also blaming it on him (h) that [because] =

Alex: Right

Denise: = of his social communication skills (hh) um he was not understanding what the other boys were saying (=)

Alex: Right (=) so that again that feels like a lot of excuses (=)

Unknown: Hm Hm

Alex: = from the other party (=) [okay] =

Unknown: Hm

Alex: = and quite significant stuff I I mean it’s no verbal it’s physical acts [that] =

Denise: [Actual] physical acts [that one of one of the] =

Alex: = [that are being experienced]

Denise: = one of the acts was round our local park and I ended up getting the police involved (=)

Alex: Hm [so you had to take] =

Denise: = [*cause the school weren’t doing (=) had] to take further action [by]

=*

Alex: [Yeah]

Denise: = getting the police involved

Alex: Right (=) again that’s quite (=) significant isn’t it the fact that you’ve had to go that far (=) [okay]

Denise: Well they hurt him and damaged his bike (=) so (=) you [know] =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = I thought ‘no I’ve had enough now’ it’s [you know] =

Alex: [Yeah]

Denise: = ‘they’re hurting him they’re [damaging property’] =

Alex: [Yeah it’s too much]

Denise: = so the police went and saw them (=)

Alex: Yeah

Denise: = and after that it did calm down a bit (=)

Alex: Okay

Denise: = but the school’s reaction was that I shouldn’t have done it (=)

Alex: Right(=) so (=) again a bit of a (=) almost a battle ground between (=)

All others: Hm

Alex: = you as the parent and the school as (=) in in their [position]

Denise: [The school] don’t want to see it as (=) they’d like to say there’s no bullying going on

=*

Nicole: They don’t even like the word do they

Denise: No

Alex: [So have you experienced]

Nicole: [Get frowned at for using the word]

Alex: You’ve experienced something similar then

Nicole: Yeah my daughter’s got special needs [um] =

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: = and because of her communication difficulty she’s in mainstream school (hh) =

Alex: Hm Hm

Nicole: = and she appears from the outside to be perfectly (=) normal (=) =

Alex: Hm Hm
Nicole: and erm to understand everything that’s said to her and to understand other people’s body language and how (.) interpret (.)
correctly (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = what they mean and what they say (hh) and (hh) she was getting bullied on a daily basis and I was told that it was her (.) she didn’t understand (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = it’s her misunderstanding erm let’s give her some more ELSA (h) she doesn’t understand other people’s behaviour she doesn’t understand their intentions (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = she’s over the top (h) she’s misinterpreting it erm (.) you’re feeding into this her not wanting to get out of bed every day (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = not eating (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = erm not having any enjoyment out of anything not even at home because her anxiety about going to school (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Nicole: = was so fierce (.) =

Alex:  Yeah

Nicole: = that it affected her whole life (.) =

Alex:  Okay

Nicole: = that by me even acknowledging that let alone bringing it up at school was feeding into her (.) =

Alex:  Okay

Nicole: = letting her never taking any accountability for the child or children who were instigating the bullying

Alex:  So that that’s very similar to your experience [isn’t it] =

Denise:  [Yeah Yep]

Alex:  = [in the not getting out of bed etcetera]

Denise:  = [exactly the same yeah yeah]

Alex:  How do you feel then the information I’ve got about the government guidance (h) it’s saying that bullying is a problem that is brought into the school (.) =

Denise:  Don’t agree

Alex:  = not something that exists within the school itself (.) you’re all saying no you don’t agree [with that]

Denise:  [It might be] brought into the school but it’s brought into the school by the kids that bully (.) =

Alex:  Hm Hm

Denise:  = um (.) my son was called a liar my son’s actually adopted (.) =

Alex:  Hm Hm

Denise:  = and he has (.) birth siblings (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Denise:  = but we don’t have the siblings we only have him (.) =

Alex:  Yeah

Denise:  = um so (.) in his world he has got a family and he has got brothers and a sister (.) =

Alex:  Yeah

Denise:  = and for (.) and I could I can see it from the kids’ point of view [they] =

Alex:  [Hm Hm]

Denise:  = don’t understand it he’s got brothers and a sister (.) =

Alex:  Hm

Denise:  = ’cause they would only see me and Ronnie and my husband (.) =

Alex:  Yeah

Denise:  = um (.) whereas (.) they live with their brothers and sisters so they constantly called him a liar (.) =

Alex:  Okay

Denise:  = um and even the teacher (.) =

Alex:  Hm
Denise: I mean his class teacher’s actually called him a liar.

Alex: Okay.

Denise: until I went up there with the photographs and letters and said 'excuse me, now you apologise to him.'

Alex: Right [and he]

Denise: [for calling] him a liar and you tell the rest [of the]

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = class [he’s not] =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = a liar (hh) you’ve seen pictures of his family (h) [he’s not] =

Alex: [Hm and]

Denise: = lying’

Alex: And that feels like you’ve had to go at to get (.).

Denise: = [for calling] him a liar and you tell the rest [of the] =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = quite some lengths (. to get (. that accusation removed (. =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = don’t keep it secret and which we never wanted to do anyway and we’ve always been open with him (. =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = he’s known from the day he’s moved in with us that (h) you know he was you know (. [from] =

Alex: [Yeah yeah]

Denise: = wherever else (.) um (. so for him to talk about it freely as well I you now for me he was being penalised (hh) =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = erm (.) they weren’t giving him the space and the time to talk about (. his feelings and him and (h) [this is] =

Alex: Right

Denise: = where he comes from (. =

Alex: [Hm Hm]

Denise: = so whenever they would do anything about families [at school] =

Alex: Oh yeah

Denise: = I would go into panic mode (laughing) [because] =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = we had it four times

Alex: Yeah you’ve got to be very very sensitive as a teacher to things like that (h) so from what you’re all saying then (. =

Alex: [Acknowledgement okay]

Nicole: = because they will brush it under the carpet (. =

Alex: [Acknowledgement first] =

Nicole: = or they will go to lengths to make (hh) I feel that they will only do something about it if you (. not threaten that’s the wrong word (h) but if you (. make them uncomfortable (. [so] =

Alex: [Okay]

Nicole: = even within schools SENCo EP not you know they can still keep it in house (h) =

Alex: [Hm Hm]

Nicole: = the minute you talk outside agency like taking someone like (Location Name) Parent Partnership [with you] =
Alex: [Yeah]
Nico: = or chair of governors (.).
Alex: Yeah
Nico: = then they leap into action (.).
Alex: Or the police
Nico: = or the police =
Alex: Okay (.). [Okay] =
Nico: Um
Alex: = so again going back to what I’ve found about the letter of the law
and the government guidance putting in putting forward the weight of
(h) legislation and parliamentary acts behind it you have to be doing
this because (h) if you don’t you don’t meet OfSTED requirements (hh)
you don’t meet the equalities act of 2010 you don’t meet various other
things that I can’t remember them all of the top of my head (laughing)
(hh) so from that perspective (.). the schools should be taking things
forward according to the government guidelines but in your
experiences (.). that’s not happened (.).

Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = and that there’s [this denial]
Denise: [No]
Alex: = of bullying [going on] =
Denise: [There there is] and I think as well wh when we had OfSTED
inspections (.). as a parent I was never chosen to speak to OfSTED or
do a report [for OfSTED] =
Alex: [Hm okay]
Denise: = um and (.). my son and a couple of others when they were doing
OfSETD inspection were taken off for a speci
class =
Bridget: [Yes] yes that happened [to me too]
Alex: [Okay]
Bridget: [Yes]
Alex: [Okay] so [we’re talking]
Denise: [So they never heard about] the OfSTED people would never hear
about the bullying (.). =
Alex: Right
Denise: = because (.). they would just go to the (.). you know good parents
(quiet laugh) (.).
Alex: Right so I’m [kind of feeling a bit] =
Denise: = [ones that don’t] act sort of [question] =
Alex: [Yeah]
Nicole: [One] who’s not got anything to say
Denise: [Yeah]
Alex: So I’m kind of feeling a bit sort of something like erm out of sight out
of mind
Bridget: Yes
Denise: [absolutely]
Alex: [Okay] if they’re not on school premises for that OfSTED day we don’t
have to worry about it therefore we don’t have to tell OfSTED therefore
=
Denise: [Yeah they can still be on the premises]
Alex: = [we can still be a successful school]
Denise: They would still be on the premises but they would go to [another] =
Alex: [Okay]
Denise: = little room while the OfSETD was in his classroom (hh) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = so if someone came into his classroom (.). he would go off (.).
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = to somewhere else so he couldn’t say anything about how he felt (h)
= =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = not that he would anyway because he would never (h) he never said
anything at school he would also wait ’till he [came home] =
Alex: [Yeah kind of hold it in]
Denise: = and it would be world war three (.). =
Alex: Yep
Denise: = in our house (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = we’d have to wait for at least an hour ‘till he’d calmed down (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = before he could tell you what had happened that day (hh) [and then] =

Alex: [Okay]
Denise: = that was my fault because I wasn’t reporting it on the day
Alex: so why do you think that your kids were holding it in why didn’t they
say anything to [the school]

Nicole: [My daughter] says to me ‘this is my safe place’ (.) =
Alex: Right
Nicole: = she would come home when she was younger she didn’t say it and
(.) it took me a long time to understand why (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = she would some home and say one thing and she wouldn’t
necessarily say what had happened (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = it would be (.) she’d make up something I think or say something
different to what had happened (hh) and then over the course of a
couple of days you’d actually really get to the real bottom [of] =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = what had happened (.) [the root of it] =
Alex: [Hm right okay]
Nicole: = and she hates confrontation so she will hate the fact that you have
to go in to school (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = and discuss it [and speak about it] =
Alex: [Yeah]
Nicole: = when we had OFSTED at her school they took her one to one away
from everybody she’s statemented fifteen hours a week (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = to put up displays and make the school look nice (.) so although she
was in class when they came round I’m surprise she wasn’t having a
meltdown or something [because] =
All others: Hm
Nicole: = she’d had her person taken away from her (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = just to make the school [look good]
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = um on the plus side (.) my sons now at college and we had an
incident a couple of years ago when he was pushed quite violently (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = by another pupil (hh) um and he ended up head butting the kid that
was standing in front of him (.) so I was called by college saying (.)
straight away this has happened (.) um (.) we’ve spoken to the child
who did it (.) do you want him to apologise to your son (.) [do you
know] =
Alex: [Hm]
Bridget: and this on the day and it was a completely different because they are adults.
Alex: Hm
Bridget: you know they are over eighteen and they seemed to be much more you know we cannot tolerate this but at school when they’re younger it’s they’re kids you know.
Alex: Hm
Bridget: so it doesn’t seem to be the same level of concern when it’s a physical
Alex: Hm
Bridget: when they’re kids compared to when they’re over eighteen.
Alex: Right
Bridget: His secondary school’s better.
Denise: Yes
Denise: but then I did put him in a secondary school that wasn’t his catchment um so
Alex: Right
Denise: so he was completely alien to everybody there.
Alex: Hm
Denise: to get into a scrape but he’s a boy and you expect them to get into a scrape but it was dealt with by the school.
Alex: Hm
Denise: he got into a couple of scrapes but he’s a boy and you expect them to get into a scrape but it was dealt with by the school.
Alex: Hm
Denise: knew him he didn’t know anybody else (hh) and he was fine I mean he got into a couple of scrapes but he’s a boy and you expect them to get into a scrape (hh) but it was dealt with by the school.
Alex: Hm
Denise: um and then there was another incident where there was a boy with special needs who threw Ronnie up against a wall by his neck um and
Alex: Yeah
Denise: hurt him quite badly but they dealt with that quite quickly they were on the phone to me and told me what happened (hh) and
Alex: Hm
Denise: that was kind of it we didn’t have anything
Alex: Hm
Denise: at secondary school I didn’t have any
Alex: Hm
Denise: any problems with bullying at all it was just the junior school
Alex: Hm
Denise: [So] how can they say that it brings I with them
Alex: Hm
Denise: if he went to a different school in a different environment with different children
Alex: [Absolutely]
Denise: and never got bullied
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: but he did in infants and juniors
Alex: Right and it was it a through infants and juniors so
Denise: [A through infants] and juniors yeah
Alex: Right
Denise: A primary school
Alex: Okey dokey
Unknown: Hm
Alex: So in under those circumstances then do you’ve got a lack of action in the early years and a lot of as you say brush under the carpet
Alex: dismissal excuses going on and then at secondary (.) there’s more action (.) and things are happening more [quickly] =
Bridget: They seem to take it more seriously (.) =
Alex: Right:
Bridget: = I think also they’re (.) um (.) you know all schools have got anti-bullying policies (.) [but] =
Alex: [Hm]
Bridget: = but in secondary school and college they’re much more details I th
more detailed I think in (h) =
Alex: = again the government guidance says that every school has to have an anti-bullying [policy] =
Bridget: = [in primary] school I think it seems to be a bit [more woolly and (.)]
Alex: =
Denise: = [Have you ever tried to get] hold of an [anti-bullying policy]
Bridget: = [and some some don’t you know it’s] not always easy to get hold of them
Alex: = I think also they’re (.) um (.) you know all schools have got anti-ullying policies (.) [but] =
Bridget: = I think also they’re (.) um (.) you know all schools have got anti-ullying policies (.) [but] =
Alex: [Okay]
Bridget: = [in primary] school I think it seems to be a bit [more woolly and (.)]
Alex: =
Bridget: = = =
Nicole: = to say that it was bullying (.)] [not to] =
Alex: [Right]
Nicole: = not to look at it not to investigate it but before I’d even because I used the word bully (.]
Alex: =
Nicole: um ing bullying um that I was wrong and I was causing a situation that wasn’t there and I was making more of it than (h) was like than was there to be made of um and I find in the school that she’s at she’s at juniors now they in very rarely tell the parents of the child that has hurt another child on a day to day basis what is going on (.) =
Alex: =
Nicole: = they will only tell them (h) when it’s once in a blue moon a really big thing (.]) =
Alex: =
Nicole: = but the day to day stuff they don’t even get told about (.] they [don’t have] =
Nicole: = consequences for it they’re not told about it
Alex: =
Nicole: =
Alex: =
Nicole: =
Alex: =
Nicole: The sorts of things that you guys were describing [with the hands] =
Alex: =
Nicole: = um and they’re not being (.]
Alex: =
Nicole: =
Alex: =
Nicole: No and things like erm psychological stuff like taking lunches (.] =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = kicking things over spilling things (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = um putting things in people’s hair (.) =
Alex: Right
Nicole: = putting their possessions down a toilet (.) [erm] =
Alex: Yeah
Nicole: = which are more (.) I think I worry more now about my daughter’s emotions and about her health [if she] =
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = continues to be as stressed as she sometimes is (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = than I do I have to focus on (. ) what’s ha (. ) the con (. ) the results of the bullying (.) [as opposed to] =
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = you know what’s actually gonna nothing’s gonna get done about what’s going on (. ) um [my] =
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = priority is to protect her (.) =
Alex: Yeah [so]
Nicole: = [and] making sure she access her education (.) =
Alex: So
Nicole: = does not seem to be in their priority at all
Alex: Right so given that the schools themselves will adhere to a definition such as the one that I’ve written down here (hh) where you’ve got elements of you know repetitive imbalance of power lots of different types of bullying (h) what you’re describing seems to me that it would fit that definition (.) =
Unknown: Hm
Alex: = but the school are saying it’s not fitting the definition (.) it’s not their criteria (.)
Nicole: Yep
Alex: Hm (1)
Denise: And the parents definitely don’t get told their kids are bullying (.) =
Bridget: No
Denise: = other kids because we had an incident one day where I was (. ) I’d pulled up outside our house and getting out we’d been away for the weekend (hh) unloading the car and (. ) my husband had taken some stuff in I was just getting some stuff and my son was there (. ) =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = and he says ‘oh here comes so and so’ as he passed us he look he stopped ‘cause he was on his bike and his mum and dad were a little bit behind him (.) [and he] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = stopped on his bike and looked at Ronnie and went ‘you’re dead Monday’ (1) and I just went ‘I beg your pardon’ at the top of my voice [‘how’] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = dare you threaten my son’ (.) =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = and of course his dad come running up ‘what’s going on what’s going on’ (h) =
Denise: = and until that moment he hadn’t known what was going on (1) =
Alex: Right okay
Denise: = so I told him what was going on and um my son’s not very good with
drawing and writing he’s (h) a bit slow (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = with those kinds of things but he (.) he drew a picture one day of
him and this particular boy (h) um he drew him beside Ronnie (.) he
was about that big (accompanyed by visual demonstration to show
comparative size of about 4cm) (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = in the picture and he drew the one that was bullying him this big
(accompained by visual demonstration to show comparative size of
about 10+cm) (.) =
Alex: = shouting (.) =
Denise: = and all the tears coming out of hi his eyes (h) =
Alex: = and I said ‘what’s that’ and he said ‘that’s when he’s being horrible
to me’ (1) =
Alex: Oh okay so
Denise: = and I took that to the school and said ‘this is what he (.). is going
[through] =
Alex: = but still nothing
Denise: = = and I told them again a lack of action
Alex: = They don’t do anything
Denise: = the schools that have you’ve been involved with just haven’t (.).
haven’t taken anything forward (.) that it feels again like they’re (.) um
again dismissing brushing under the carpet (.). =
Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = making excuses not really taking notice of what you’re saying (.) =
Bridget: = Hm and I think having that the the anti-bullying policy (.) =
Alex: = Hm
Bridget: = serves no purpose (.) =
Alex: = when someone’s saying you’re describing something to them (.) =
Bridget: = Hm
Alex: = and they’re clearly not listening to what you are saying (h) =
Alex: = Hm
Bridget: = and they say well no that’s not what’s happening here so (.). so (.).
you know (.). it’s it’s completely dis (.). [they’re] =
Nicole: = [Yeah]
Bridget: = dismissing what you’re saying to them (.) =
Alex: = Hm
Bridget: = and you know like were saying they think you’re making it up
[you’re making it up you’re making it worse or yes yeah and] =
Alex: = Or over reacting yeah over protecting yeah]
Nicole: = [Yeah]
Bridget: = what I really don’t like is it’s picking you only or the only child thing
(.) =
Alex: = Hm
Bridget: = so it they sort of twist it [and throw it] =
Alex: = Yeah
Bridget: = back at you (.) [because] =
Alex: = [Okay]
Bridget: = you’re (.) so [you know]
Nicole: = [So it was] my daughter’s fault because [she has] =
Bridget: = [Yeah]
Nicole: = difficulties [understanding]
All others: [Yeah]
Nicole: = she doesn’t she’s very good she’s learnt she’s probably at the same (hh) level now as all the other children in her class but she needs to repeat it often to (.) to keep those skills up (.) [in order] =
All others: [Yeah]
Nicole: = to be able to use them every day (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = and so she’s not at any disadvantage really she knows exactly what’s going she probably knows better she’s got a strict black and white moral code (.) [she knows (.) yeah] =
All others: [Yeah]
Alex: Hm
Denise: [Ronnie did yeah yeah (. ) fifty fifty]
Bridget: [They usually do (.) have a very strict sense of justice haven’t they]
Nicole: = so it’s really if you’ve spent all your life trying to explain to them (h) all their life trying to teach them the right way and why they should behave especially if they don’t know it from gut instinct (hh) =
All others: [Yeah]
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = to then see the child (.) do the complete opposite and not be held accountable for it (h) [it’s just] =
Alex: [Right]
Bridget: [Yeah yeah]
Alex: So whe when we’ve got that discourse from the government guidance that bullying is something that is brought into the school (h) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = from what you’re saying the schools that you’ve been involved with are saying ‘yes it’s brought in but it’s brought in because (h) you’re children have certain characteristics (h) that make them (.) make other children [want] =
Bridget: [Yep]
Alex: = to bully them want [to b’] =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = okay so there’s a lot of blame (.) being put on (.) [the] =
Denise: [Yeah ‘cause] when you were saying about (.) you know why do they leave it ‘till they get home (.) [um] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = my son always [said] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = he wouldn’t do anything at school (hh) because he would get into trouble (.) =
Alex: Okay he was [worried]
Denise: = [he was worried] from the point of view that he [would] =
Alex: [Yeah]
Denise: = get into trouble at school and he didn’t want to get into trouble at school (hh) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = um (1) but one day I think it was in year six (.) I think I think he just I think it was just that was it [he] =
Bridget: [Yep]
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = he’s really had enough by then (hh) and he did turn round and punch one and gave him a black eye (quiet giggle) (.) so when they phoned up and told me that he’d hit somebody I said ‘oh that’s great I’ll take him to MacDonald’s tonight then’ [(quiet laugh)]
Alex: [(Quiet laugh)] did they do anything [about it (.) given] =
Denise: They said ‘that’s not the attitude Mrs Jones’ (.) and I said ‘but I’ve been telling you the last four years that that boy has been hurting my son (hh) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = and the one time he turns round and hits him you’re phoning me up and having a go (.) don’t think so (.) [so we’re going to MacDonald’s] =
Alex: [So there’s a real difference]
Denise: = tonight he’s actually stood up [for himself ‘(. )] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um (.) which [is what] =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = we’ve been trying to get him to do you know stand up for yourself
(h) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = 'he hits you you hit him back but you don’t hit him first’ (hh) [sort of thing] =
Alex: [Okay so] =
Denise: = and so that’s what he did (laugh) [bless him] =
Alex: [So do you] feel that the schools aren’t giving the children skills then to be able to (.) =
Nicole: No
Alex: = deal with [such situations (.)]
Bridget: [No]
Nicole: [No]
Denise: [Oh no no (.)] because in their eyes it doesn’t happen
Alex: [Right]
Nicole: [They won’t] acknowledge it they won’t deal with it
Alex: Okay so again the government guidance and schools will in their anti-
bullying policy’s etcetera wil talk about (h) ‘we have these methods in place to address bullying’ and they use words like ‘tackle bullying’
address bullying deal with bullying’ (h) but from your experiences (.) that’s not happening (laugh)
Bridget: [They’re words they’re words]
Denise: ['They’re words on a piece of paper I think it’s a piece of paper]
Nicole: [(unclear) behind it]
Alex: [Okay (.) okay so]
Denise: [It’s a piece] of paper they’ve got it there (.) but they don’t actually (.)
[go by it] =
Nicole: [Who’s there approving] yeah we’re the ones saying [that it’s not working (.) you’re not doing it] =
Denise: = [who’s (.) you know it’s not]
Alex: [Right]
Nicole: = but no one’s listening to our voice
Alex: Right [okay]
Denise: [So one one’s] listening that bit they’ve got that piece of paper there
[because] =
Alex: [Hm Hm]
Denise: they’ve got to have it there [by law (hh)] =
Alex: [Hm Hm]
Nicole: [But we’re not given a chance to say
Denise: = but (.) they’re not implementing it (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = in the in the school they’re not implementing those guidelines
Alex: [Okay]
Bridget: So what would be interesting (.) there’s a lot of talk about co-
production with with parents [these days (.)] =
Alex: [Oh yes the new legislation yes (.) I’m very impressed (laugh)]
All others: [(Laugh)]
Bridget: So would it be interesting to have a group of parents within the same school some who have experienced bullying (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = some who haven’t get together (.) discuss that policy (.) agree to it does it say [you know] =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = what it’s meant to (.) does it really explain what it’s [meant to do]
Alex: [Yep yeah]
Bridget: and work in partnership with parents (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = because I think that would be much more powerful then (.) =
Alex: Hm
Bridget: = you’re given a piece of ‘oh well this [is what we do’] =
Alex: [Hm (. ) Hm]
Bridget: = and uh 'but if you come to me and s complain um (. ) [you know] =
Alex: [Hm]
Bridget: = well that doesn't fit our [criteria of bullying so] =
Alex: [Hm (. ) Hm] (. ) one of the reasons I wanted to meet with parents last
as it were (h) is because (. ) from your perspective you are you're there
on the ground (. ) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = experiencing this with your children seeing what happens (h) and
making those complaints and putting those um suggestions forward
about things that a) need to be done and b) sh you know have you
done it (h) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = but aren’t necessarily experiencing that (h) and (. ) from my
perspective getting your feedback against (h) what (. ) sh people think
they are doing and what the government guidance says they should be
doing is really interesting and I I’m I kind of feel that on a professional
Educational Psychologists level and at a parental level very concerned
about your experiences I kind of feel for you (h) =
Bridget: Hm]
Alex: = that you’ve had to go through that and your children have had to go
tough through so (h) if I could wave a magic wand what in an ideal world (. )
would or should have happened from your perspective (h) when you
first made your (.) you know issues and concerns known to the schools
Denise: I think like you said it needs to be acknowledged =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = that something is happening (h) =
Bridget: Yeah
Alex: Hm
Denise: = and it needs to be looked into (. ) =
Nicole: Hm
Denise: = and talked about (h) it’s not (. ) that’s not done (. ) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: Okay [yeah]
Denise: = [you know] you’re (. ) [just] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = sort of to blame (h) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = and it even to the point where (. ) um (1) my son was biting himself
( . ) =
Alex: Gosh
Denise: = you know all up [and down] =
Alex: [Yeah yeah]
Denise: = his arms (. ) I was making a big thing of it (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = you know I was really upset the doctor was ready to put him on
antidepressants (h) and she’s saying I’m making a big thing of it (h) =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = you know and (. ) there’s no acknowledgement that there is a
problem and I think that would be the first step if they could
acknowledge [there] =
Alex: [Hm Hm]
Denise: = was a problem and you’re not just talking a load of (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = twaddle (. ) um which is what they make you feel [like you’re doing]
Nicole: [They make you feel like you’ve got] nothing better to do
Denise: Yeah
Alex: That you’re complaining for complaining sake (. ) [rather] =
Nicole: [(Quiet laugh)] that this is what you want that this makes you happy
going in and saying these things (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = and not that you’re doing it because there’s a real (. ) reason behind
it
Alex: Hm (.) okay so basically it’s acknowledgement (.) and action (.) [and quickly] =

Nicole: [Yep]

Bridget: [Hm]

Denise: [And quickly]

Alex: = but not after a great deal of time (.) =

Bridget: [No]

Alex: = before something is done about it (.) =

Bridget: [No]

Alex: = it should be investigated and (.) I suppose (.)

Bridget: I don’t understand why it can be done in secondary and college setting (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = and not within (.) [at primary school] =

Denise: [At primary school]

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = because you know I was really taken aback at how quickly (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = you know they said this is what happened (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = we’re taking this action what would you like us to do (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = you know (.) it’s not it’s not difficult and I think (.) =

Alex: No

Bridget: = within schools I think that they seem to be really scared you mention the word bullying and (.) =

Nicole: Yep

Bridget: = oh you know and I don’t understand why you now if you’re open about it

Alex: I think I know again from my perspective as research EP parent and teacher (h) I’d say that people are (h) people are scared about the word bullying because they don’t want to be seen to be a school with bullying issues because that (.) means that from their perspective other parents won’t want their kids to go there because their kids might risk bullying (.) =

Bridget: Hm

Alex: = because it’s a school with a lot of bullying (h) =

Bridget: Hm

Alex: = so it’s a matter of you you know if you (.) [if you] =

Bridget: [Hm]

Alex: = declare it (.) it’s out there (.) =

Unknown: (Quiet laugh)

Alex: = a bit like when you sell a house if you declare [you’ve] =

Nicole: Yeah

Alex: = got problems with your neighbours you’ve got to [(chuckle)] =

Nicole: Yeah

Alex: = you know that has to be acknowledged [I wonder if this is the same thing]

Denise: [I remember going around and looking at secondary schools (h) um (.) when it was time for him to go to secondary school and you can go round and look at [secondary schools (hh)] =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = and you go and speak to the SENCo because he’s got his special needs and everything else and (hh) you’d say sort of like ‘he’s also been you know very badly bullied (.) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = so emotionally he’s (.) his self-esteem is very low’ (.) =

Alex: Hm
Denise: = and (h) 'well if he comes here if he was bullied before he came here he’ll be bullied when he’s here' (h)
Alex: That’s the reaction you were [given]
Denise: [That’s the] reaction we got so we just got up and walked out (h) =
Alex: Wow
Denise: = 'won’t be coming to your school then’ (laugh) [that’s for sure]
Alex: I fi I find that quite shocking (.) actually
Denise: And that was the response that we had (.) =
Alex: Hmm
Denise: = from that particular school and I thought (hh) (2) [‘but you] =
Alex: = you don’t know him (.) =
Denise: = you don’t know his circumstances or anything you don’t even
know what his special needs [are (hh)] =
Alex: Hmm
Denise: = and you’re making that (.) [statement’]
Alex: = [Okay so it’s a] bit of a judgement before (.) =
Denise: = [before]
Alex: = = [they’ve even arrived] =
Denise: = It’s because you’ve mentioned the word that he’d been bullied (hh)
well he’ll bring it with him
Alex: = [It’s brought into] =
Denise: [It’s brought into] =
Alex: = [it’s not something that’s created by] =
Denise: [You know wherever he goes] he will be bullied
Nicole: Like they’ve got a beacon on the top of their head or something
Alex: = ‘Can you please bully me’ [yeah]
Nicole: [Yeah] my daughter’s just at the stage now where’s she’s just had to
pick which secondary school she’d like to go to (h) =
Alex: =
Nicole: = = and she’s been asking for two years to be home schooled (.) =
Alex: = Oh bless her (quietly spoken)
Nicole: = = on an intermittent or constant basis um and we finally found a school
which quite surprised us about where she thinks she’d like to go (.) =
Alex: Hmm
Nicole: = and she went in and the SENCo lady who is also the deputy head she was really good with Sally and really (h) um but naturally good with
Alex: =
Nicole: = she picked to go to a school that not all of the people that she knows
are going to go to now she’s only got one close friend anyway (h) but she would normally pick what was more comfortable for her (h) =
Alex: =
Nicole: = and she said to me a year ago (h) ‘I’d rather go to a school where I can be safe all day and see my friends outside of school (.) =
Alex: = Yeah
Nicole: = and she said to me a year ago (h) ‘I’d rather go to a school where I can be safe all day and see my friends outside of school (.) =
Alex: = Yeah
Nicole: = my people that I know (.) than go to a school where I know everybody but I don’t feel safe to learn’ (.) =
Alex: = [Right okay]
Nicole: So she’s picked this school and she went in and in every single
classroom there’s this behaviour policy on [the wall] =
Alex: =
Nicole: = and she said ‘well tell me (.) tell me what’s going to happen [the] =
Alex: =
Nicole: = first time they’re naughty the second time they’re naughty [the] =
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = third time they’re naughty (. . .) and this deputy head told every single
time and she went ‘that’s it I want to come here’
Alex: Oh right so she felt safe [from that]
Nicole: [Yeah] and she went to me you know she looked at me like really
seriously in the eyes and she went to me ‘and if this doesn’t work out
(.) I will be home schooled and [that is it’]
Bridget: [Oh bless her]
Nicole: She ‘I’ve worked this hard I’m not going to let it all’ (. . .) and I agreed
with her I said ‘if you try a secondary school and if you can’t
manage it that’s fine I will get you the help you need ’cause she’s the
fact that if she gets through you know to get through junior school will
be her biggest achievement (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = ’cause that’s been the [hardest-to (. . .) yeah]
Bridget: [Yeah]
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: Yeah it is hard when they’re in the junior school part but I know when
we went to the catchment school my son’s catchment school (h) the
only things we liked about the catchment school was the fact that they
had security cameras (1) =
Alex: Okay so [from]
Denise: = so when he gets beaten up (. . .) [it’s on film] =
Alex: [There’s evidence]
Denise: = and to me that was heart breaking (. . .) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = to the head teacher (. . .) that’s a positive (2) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = and I couldn’t (. . .) I still can’t fathom to this day why that’s a positive
Alex: I suppose because they’ve (. . .) obviously from your son’s perspective it
will be (h) um acknowledgement that you know ‘I’m not making this up
and neither are you mum we can say to the school because there’s
evidence’ (. . .) =
Denise: Hm
Alex: = from the school’s perspective it’s (hh) there’s evidence I can do
something about it so maybe (. . .) is it a lack of evidence that the school
feel it’s just (. . .) it’s just your word against theirs (. . .) [is that]
Denise: [Sometimes] that is yeah (. . .) [you know] =
Alex: [Okay]
Denise: = but sort of like with my son he (h) with his social communication
difficulties he didn’t have a particular [friend] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = all the way through [school] =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: = he would flit from friend to friend (. . .) =
Alex: Right
Denise: = and because he (. . .) =
Alex: Yep
Denise: = has difficulty with that um (. . .) but (1) because he was a bit like that
(h) and the others were all mates and there was sort of a crowd of
them (h) um there was always four or five of them it was always their
word against his (. . .) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = so (. . .) =
Alex: Okay
Denise: = because there was more than one of them (. . .) they would believe
them rather than my son (. . .)
Alex: Right so power in numbers (. . .) [sort of thing going on]
Denise: [Hm yes every time]
Nicole: It’s got to be what’s best for (. . .) um (. . .) the majority than like what’s
best (. . .) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: but I don’t see if they can’t handle having if they can’t acknowledge children who are in mainstream school who have special needs (h) um and I think aspire achieve and some sort of inclusion malarkey with the school that my daughter goes to and it’s they all the right things but they don’t do it (.) [and] =

Alex: [Okay]

Nicole: = they don’t want any of the hassle that comes with it (.) [they] =

Alex: [Right]

Nicole: = just you know they’re brilliant with the [aspirers] =

Bridget: [Yes]

Nicole: = and the [achievers (hh)] =

Bridget: [Yes]

Denise: [Yep]

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: = and everybody else is just a problem (.) [um] =

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: = and she feels like that she’s ten (.) =

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: = and she knows that everybody else who doesn’t have any issues gets on absolutely fine and that (.) she’s not listened to she’s not (.)

Alex: [Okay] so it comes back to what you were saying earlier they’re just words [yeah so] =

Bridget: Yeah

Alex: = you don’t wh wh from your experiences we’re feeling that the words are not carried through [it’s] =

Bridget: [No]

Alex: = just a bit of paper that they can wave as [and when] =

Bridget: [That’s right]

Alex: = they feel it’s appropriate [to do so]

Nicole: [Yep yep]

Alex: Okay so do you feel that (.) within the actions that should have been taken what sh what sh what actions should have been taken from your perspective (.) at the point at which you say you know ‘this is going on I’d like something done about it’ (.) what would that something be

Bridget: Well it think it’s first of all that you know a [willingness] =

Alex: [Hm]

Bridget: = to hear more [about it] =

Alex: [Hm]

Bridget: = instead of instantly thinking [(.) no] =

Alex: [It’s not bullying]

Bridget: = it’s not bullying =

Alex: Okay

Bridget: = to listen (.) uh =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = to to be quick about (.) =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = and to you know it’s not as if we’re asking you know for the other child to be expelled but (.) =

Alex: [Quiet laugh]

Bridget: = tell me what you’re going to do about it [you know]

Nicole: [We’re not asking them to fix it]

Denise: [And tell the child] but the child that’s being bullied I know um sometimes they said ‘oh yes they’ve told him off’ but (.) my son never saw that (.) he never saw them being told off (.) =

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = so he never saw them being punished so as far as he was concerned (.) nothing was being done (.) =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Denise: = so we (1) i if those children are being punished or they are being told off (hh) I think that child should be there (.) =

Alex: [Okay]
Denise: = or that child should be told (.) 'well we took so and so into here and
we’ve told him off and he’s got to do litter duty or whatever (.) [um] =
Alex: [Hm yeah]
Denise: = and you know he’s not allowed to go out in the playground at
lunchtime [or whatever] =
Alex: [Yeah]
Denise: = the punishment is’ (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = so that he knows (.) [or that child knows] =
Alex: [Hm]
Bridget: [Hm]
Denise: = okay ‘you’ve hit me whatever [but now] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = you’re being punished for it’ (.) [you know]
Alex: [So some] kind of sanction =
Denise: [A sanction]
Alex: = that the other child is made [aware of] =
Denise: [Yeah]
Alex: Okay
Nicole: = same as in class they have all these things out I don’t necessarily
agree with it but (h) face on you have your name on the sad side if
you’ve [done something wrong] =
Bridget: [Oh yes yes]
Nicole: = so (.) they’re not listening they get their name on the sad side
there’s [like a board with a sad side] =
Alex: [So quite quite a public acknowledgement of (.)]
Bridget: [Yes]
Denise: [Yes]
Nicole: = not listening (.) didn’t bring your stuff in whatever so really being
we’re talking about shame [in the classroom] =
All others: [Hm yes]
Nicole: = shaming children in the classroom (h) but not when they’ve done
something that’s really wrong (.) so they might maybe if they’ve done
something that’s been a bit spiteful they’ve thrown a bag or they’ve (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = especially if they’ve disrespected teachers [oh that’s] =
Bridget: Hm
Nicole: = totally unacceptable (.) not allowed to disrespect teachers that gets
taken off the sad side sent to the head teacher (.) [that does] =
Alex: Okay
Nicole: = physical or emotional bullying of children (.) nothing
Alex: Okay now I’m just going to draw your attention as you used the word
disrespectful there (.) =
Nicole: Hm
Alex: = again the government guidance says (h) that a successful school (.)
in a successful school they will encourage children to show respect to
each other and to staff (.) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = and that they can be considered unsuccessful if that’s not happening
and as a result of that you get good behaviour and as a result of that
you don’t get bullying (2) =
Bridget: Hm
Alex: = because the good behaviour and the respectfulness prevents bullying
would you agree with that statement or do you think that’s there’s
more to it than that [or] =
Bridget: [There’s] a lot more to it than that [(laugh)]
Denise: [There’s a lot] more to it than that I think
Bridget: [I think]
Denise: [I think] if the teachers want respect they’ve got to earn respect the
same as everybody else
Alex: [That’s interesting]
Denise: [If they] you know if they want the kids to respect them [then] =
Bridget: Hm
Denise: = they need to teach the children respect (.) =
Bridget: Hm
Denise: = and how can that child go to sch go to a teacher and say you know 'so and so’s done this to me' and then not do nothing about it (.) =
Alex: Right
Denise: = so how can they how can they be respectful to that [teacher] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = 'cause the te (h) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = they’ve gone to that teacher it’s taken them confidence to go to that teacher and tell [them] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = 'cause the te (h) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = they’ve gone to that teacher it’s taken them confidence to go to that teacher and tell [them] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = they’ve gone to that teacher it’s taken them confidence to go to that teacher and tell [them] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = and then they’ve not done anything
Alex: Yeah no acknowledgement [has been given]
Nicole: [In the same way] that the child who does bully (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = is not gonna be held accountable for their actions (.) so they’re not gonna respect adults or authority [or] =
Denise: [No]
Nicole: = anything else because they’re not (.) they’re getting away [with everything]
Denise: And they’re usually the ones which disrespect it’s usually the ones that are bullying [that] =
Nicole: [Yeah]
Denise: = are doing the disrespecting not the ones that are being bullied
Alex: And it’s interesting the discrepancy that your talking about in terms of (h) the children who are disrespectful to staff it’s a head teacher
sending offence (.) =
Nicole: Yep
Alex: = whereas if they’re disrespectful to each other (.) =
Nicole: Yep
Alex: = what happens is it a name on the sad face (h) [is there any acknowledgement]
Nicole: [If there’s any acknowledgement] (.) hardly ever it’s dealt with (.) =
Bridget: Yep
Nicole: = behind the scenes (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = brushed under the carpet (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = I only know of one time (h) recently (.) um (.) somebody in my daughter’s class (.) um the both parents were informed because (.) the boy touched her in an inappropriate place (.) =
Alex: Okay
Nicole: = so then both parents were informed because it was really really serious (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = but it wouldn’t if he had thrown a bag at her (.) [or a] =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = pencil my daughter’s had that thrown at her pencils thrown at her pencil marks on her (hh) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = then it doesn’t even get mentioned or talked about because it’s (.)
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: = it’s just happened in the class and they (.) they ackn they say that whatever the teacher dealt with it was (.) okay I’ve spoken with the head teacher before and he’s not even been aware of situations (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = that I’m trying to discuss with him
Alex: Hm right okay
Nicole: So it doesn’t get any further than (.)
Alex: Okay so we've got kind of (.) not I was going to say dealt with in the classroom context but it doesn't feel like from what you're saying that it's even dealt with that far (.) =

Nicole: No
Alex: = so it never gets up the the chain of (.) =

Nicole: No
Alex: = leadership =

Nicole: No
Alex: Okey dokey and well obviously you've been in situations where your children have come home and you've had to deal with and or still are dealing with [to a] =

Bridget: Hm
Alex: = certain extent what is going on at at a daily basis at school (hh) do you feel that (h) you are teaching your children skills to be able to address these situations and do you think that you should be or do you think that that's something that the school should be doing (h) as part of their anti-bullying policy (1)

Denise: I think it's something the school should be doing as part of their anti-bullying policy (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um (.) but (.) [as parents] =
Bridget: [As parents]
Denise: = we are teaching our kids (.) our kids are that little bit different because of their communication needs (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um and they don't always interpret things the same way =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um you know sometimes he would come home and say that he'd been told off for something (h) and then when you finally sort of then break it down (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = I can understand the teacher's point of view (.) =
Alex: Hm]
Denise: = they walked in the classroom and Ronnie he had this hat (.) kids were throwing this hat around (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = and it landed by Ronnie he picked it up to give it back to the boy (hh) but [then the teacher walked in] =
Alex: [Oh and under those circumstances]
Denise: = so he was the one got into trouble (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = all the others never got into trouble just him (.) =
Bridget: [Hm]
Alex: [Yeah]
Denise: = despite the fact that the boy said it wasn't him (hh) he stil got into trouble and he couldn't understand that and so I had to try and sit and explain well from the teacher's point of view (quiet laugh) (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Denise: = um but they don't do that (.)
Alex: Hm
Denise: = they know he had a communication problem and didn't interpret things sometimes (.) =
Alex: [Hm Hm]
Denise: = but they wouldn't sit down and tell him why (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um (1) so he just kind of it made you feel a little bit like they were picking on him (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = a little bit because you'd been complaining so an so anytime he did anything wrong they made a big deal of it (h) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = um whereas you knew that the ones who were bullying him won't be told anything
Alex: Hm and I do I agree with you when you say that it should be something that’s done between schools and parents [you know] =

Bridget: Hm

Alex: = I don’t think that whether or not a child has additional needs should be part of I think that every child should have the right to be skilled in and be reminded of and be helped to cope with different social situations (.) =

All others: Hm

Alex: = and obviously some like you were saying do need a little bit of additional input but I think that’s to be acknowledged alongside doing something on a daily basis I mean when I think about my own children and them in school my daughter will some home and say ‘I didn’t play with anyone today and I sat on the buddy stop and someone came over’ and I thought ‘well how do I feel about that’ it kind of reminds me of when I was a junior school and no one would play with me

Bridget: But you hear it you know from so many uh uh uh I met up with um a friend the other day and she brought a friend of ours with a little girl who’s ten who’s got beautiful curly hair she was picked on (.) picked at school you know

Alex: Hm [what for the curly hair]

Bridget: [Because of her hair]

Alex: [Yeah]

Bridget: [And she had] to take her out because it got that bad and you just think (.) =

Alex: Okay

Bridget: = you know so it seemed to to pick and pick and pick (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = and and you go to the school and know it sounds you know you go to the school you know [those] =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = kids are picking on my daughter because she’s got [curly hair] =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = it does sound a bit (.) but it’s you know the mum said that the complete oh for goodness sake she’ll be fine (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = but then you get the behaviour at home oh I feel anxiety (.) =

Alex: Hm]

Bridget: = not eating self-harming (.) =

Alex: Hm

Bridget: = um but they don’t want to see that (.) =

Alex: Okay

Bridget: = they only see well she’s only being picked on because of her [hair]

Nicole: The thing that drives me mad is the (h) but she ‘but she’s perfectly fine in class why does she’ (.) =

Bridget: Hm

Nicole: = my daughter holds it together for eight hours a day [sitting] =

Bridget: [Yeah]

Alex: = there and [then]

Alex: [And then she comes home]

Nicole: = she explodes when she [goes into] =

Denise: [Yeah my son did]

Nicole: = yeah and I’ll say ‘she’s gonna come and tell me she doesn’t feel safe she can’t come and tell you’ (.) =

Unknown: Hm

Nicole: = and yes we do teach them how to stand up for themselves and we do teach them what’s right and what’s wrong which obviously (.) helps them to understand what they should be doing [but] =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = doesn’t make any sense as to why other people aren’t held accountable for their actions (.) =

Alex: Hm
Nicole: = but she’ll look at me and she’ll go ‘yeah I know I should have stood
up for myself but like I’m gonna do that’ or (.) like I’m gonna go up to the
teacher when he’s right behind me’ or (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = ‘she’s doing this’ or she’s doing that’ (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = ‘I’m not going to do it’ and sh we’ve got a daily school link book that
we right in (h) for Sally and wha I write stuff down about how she feels
about what’s happened the day before and if it’s taken four hours to
calm her down (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = the day before or whatever else (hh) and she’ll say to me sometimes
‘don’t write that in there (.) do not write that in there do not talk to my
one to one lady do not go to my teacher I do not want it’ (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = so then that’s really hard (hh) =
Alex: Yeah
Nicole: = because she’s brave enough to say ‘okay I’m gonna go to school but
you mustn’t (. ) [do anything] =
All others: [Hm Hm]
Nicole: = about it (h) she’s terrified
Alex: Yeah (. ) so she’s she’s (. ) it’s difficult isn’t it she wants something done
about in on the one hand but she’s afraid of what that something might
be [on the other hand]
All others: [Yes]
Nicole: And she knows it’s going to lead back to consequences on her (. )
[Baconfrontation and yeah]
Alex: [Because of what the other children]
Bridget: Hm Hm
Nicole: Because they’ll be held accountable for their actions (. ) =
Alex: Right
Nicole: = so she knows that it might be by talking about one thing that maybe
wasn’t really massive (h) if sh if they are told off for it then it will
become something really (. ) [really bad]
Alex: [Okay] (. ) so have you (. ) would you say the same thing from your
experiences in that your children have wanted to say something but
then don’t want to say it at the same time
Denise: Hm
Bridget: Hm
Alex: And I kind of agree from my own experiences you don’t want to say
anything because you are worried about what the consequences might
be once the bully (accompanied by air quotes) finds out that the victim
(accompanied by air quotes) has said something (h) =
Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = and it is a bi a bit of an ever increasing circle [I guess] =
Bridget: Hm
Nicole: Yeah
Alex: = it just keeps coming round and round and round you can’t do much
about it
Nicole: With the school bit I think that you (. ) bullying can happen anywhere
can’t it (. ) [we’re not in the adult workplace yeah exactly]=
Alex: [In the workplace]
Nicole: So you’re not (. ) we’re not stupid everybody in the world should know
that (. ) but I would much rather send my child to a school where they
openly acknowledge (. ) talk about it (. ) tell you what they’re gonna do
about it like with this behaviour code at this new school (hh) um than
go to a school where they go ‘well it’s not happening and it’s not gonna
happen and’ (. ) =
Bridget: Yeah
Nicole: = [and work]
Bridget: [Completely agree I] completely agree [I think] =
Nicole: [I think trust]
Bridget: = in this day and age things should be completely transparent (. ) =
Nicole: Yeah
Bridget: = and open you know and and free it to discuss it and why is it (.) =
Nicole: Taken seriously
Bridget: = happening in a workplace for adults but not for kids
Alex: So it feels like everything’s being closeted
Bridget: Yep
Alex: Br as you say brushed under the carpet (.) =
Nicole: Yeah
Alex: = done behind closed doors (.) =
Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = dealt with internally (.) no acknowledgement given
Bridget: And there’s that real fear (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Bridget: = of of the mention of the word bullying (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Alex: = happening in a workplace for adults but not for kids
Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = done behind closed doors (.) =
Bridget: And there’s that real fear (.) =
Alex: Yeah
Bridget: = er in schools yeah
Alex: Do you feel that (.) there’s more (.) I’m gonna use the word power (.)
so that you feel powerless (.) if the school isn’t listening to you (.)
Alex: again I don’t want to put words into your mouths I’m just trying to (.)
[just kind of okay]
Unknown: Yeah
Bridget: I find it demeaning
Alex: Demeaning okay that’s a really interesting word
Nicole: I’m angry (.) =
Alex: Angry okay
Nicole: = that’s how I feel (.) um (.) [they prattle] =
Denise: [Angry (.) upset]
Nicole: = on about her accessing her education and getting the best education
Alex: = eight hours a day
Alex: = don’t deal with the situations which are within their (.) [you know] =
Nicole: = and I once said to him you know ‘if you can’t if she’s not safe I’m not
gonna leave her here with you when I’m not here she’s your
responsibility (h) you are supposed to look after her (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = if you can’t physically guarantee me her safety or her emotional
well-being she will not come to school’ (.) =
Unknown: Yeah
Nicole: = and he looked at me in the face and he said ‘you can’t do that’ and I
said ‘watch me’
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = ‘so just watch me’ I said ‘she doesn’t need to be here (.) I can teach
her you know she can be taught at home she can be taught anywhere
else she can go to a different school (h) but if you can’t even you’re not
even listening to me say all my anger and frustration (h) you’re not h
you’re not worried about Sally at all (.) =
Bridget: Yeah
Nicole: = all you’re worried about is you and your school (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = and she doesn’t fit into that’
Alex: Okay (.) so something that makes them different means that like you
say they’ve got a beacon on their head and they’re not gonna be (.)
they’re gonna be isolated in some way or picked on in some way (.)
[but it] =
Unknown: [Hm]
Alex: = not just by the pupils but ostracised (.) [in terms] =
Unknown: [Hm]
Alex: = of it not being dealt with (.) =
Denise: Yeah
Alex: = unwittingly by the staff (2) okay
Denise: = um a school trip (.) and u I was supposed to be going one day with my son's class um and the other classes were going the previous day (h) so they phoned me up the previous day and they said that one of the mums had just phoned in sick and was there a possibility I could help out (h) so I said okay so I went off to the school trip (h) um my son was at school (.) when we came back from the trip (.) I picked him up from school and he came home crying his eyes out (.) he's been dragged across the playground (.) so he had scratches all up his back (.) =
Alex: Yeah yeah
Denise: = um that had been bleeding and it was ala blood on his top (.) =
Alex: Hm Hm
Denise: = and (.) they'd also pulled his trousers down in front of all the girls (.) um (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = they'd kicked him (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = on the bottom (.) so we went and told the school and they said 'oh you should have come and told us earlier' (.) and he'd been sitting there in uncomfortable all day (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = until I got there (h) the next day when we went to go for his school trip (.) the three boys that did it (.) they you know they split you into groups (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = to look after the children (h) I had three of the boys that did it
Alex: I had a horrible feeling you were going to tell me that
Bridget: (Laugh)
Denise: And when I said to the teacher 'you're having a laugh' she said 'no' and I said 'you're expecting me (h) to look after three boys that did that to my son yesterday' (.) I said 'I don't think that's appropriate do you' (.) oh and she went mental and had to go and see the head teacher and I said 'put it this way if you don't swap me over with another parent (h) I mean my son are going home (h) (2) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = so they did eventually swap us over but it was going to be too much hassle (.) just to swap me and another mum over (2)
Alex: Okay so again it feels like there's not just a lack of action but (.) =
Denise: And that's like the next day [after this had happened]
Alex: = [when action is taken] it's all a bit too much too much bother from the sch (.) from the school's perspective or a bit too much hassle (.) =
Denise: Yeah
Alex: = too much effort needs to be put in
Denise: Yeah your sort of thinking well 'you know what happened you were there (hh) they've told you what happened and you're putting me with the boys that did it' (1) =
Alex: Hm (.) [it's a little inappropriate]
Denise: = [I mean (quiet laugh) I prob] I probably wouldn't have done anything because I mean I'm not that stupid (.) but (.0 it was entirely inappropriate (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = for me to be with them boys and you sort of thought (.) they just don't really understand at all do they (.) =
Alex: Hm
Denise: = I was making a mountain out a molehill apparently
Alex: Hm (.) yes (.) [children come home ]=
Denise: [(Laugh) my fault again]
Alex: = like that everyday (.) =
Denise: Yeah
Alex: = with scratches (laugh)
Denise: After being dragged round the playground
Alex: Okay (.) so (.) I mean (.) what would you like to see I mean from (.) my research (h) ’cause one of the things that (.) I wanted to help people to do is (.) to understand that (.) just because you don’t think it’s bullying doesn’t mean to say it’s not happening (.) and that things should (.) be done (.) to address those behaviours and (h) one I idea I had was sort of making a a website out of the research so that people could access it to see (h) and g get ideas and share [experiences] =

Bridget: [Sounds good]

Alex: = but have you got anything else that you might like to see of or just in general any other ideas for me that I can take away from today

Bridget: Well I was wondering i (.) is there any (.) good practice out there where a [school] =

Unknown: Hm

Bridget: = has been successful in working with parents in establishing [a counter] =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = bullying [policy (.)] =

Alex: [Okay]

Bridget: = and the actions they’ve taken (.) and it would be interesting to I don’t know how easy that’s (laugh)

Alex: So going back to what you were saying earlier about coproduction =

Bridget: Yeah [and for it (.) to work]

Alex: = [and working together]

Nicole: And schools realising that that is the best way

Bridget: It is (.) it is (.) and it makes sense [doesn’t it]

Denise: [Yeah]

Nicole: [Why always be] at war (.) with each other (.)

Alex: [Yeah]

Bridget: [Yeah working] together instead

Alex: No that’s very interesting because I’m going to back to the government guidance again and it says (h) ‘your anti-bullying should be shared with parents, staff and pupils’ not that it should be coproduced (.) with but that it should be shared with (h) so (.) ostensibly that is available (.) because it’s being shared through you can come and see it you can come and ask for it I can give it to you that’s not a problem

Bridget: That’s meaningless because it doesn’t mean anything to us because it’s the [production part]

Alex: [The production part]

Denise: [The production and I think you]

Nicole: And the up keep of (.) [keep of (.) keeping those values]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Alex: [Yeah]

Denise: [Because that’s all you’ve] got (.) what you’ve got is you’ve got the guidelines there (.) so why can’t schools like you said work in coproduction and produce their own policy around that document (h) =

Nicole: Yeah

Denise: = that has got the guidelines that has got what the repercussions are (hh) and that’s done in coproduction with parents for that school (.) [and] =

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: [And what] they would do about it [so that] =

Denise: = and what they would do about it

Nicole: = I could see on page three (.) if that happens to my child (.) this is [what will happen] =

Alex: [Okay]

Denise: [This is what will happen]

Nicole: = this is the procedure that will happen (.) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = and then when it doesn’t (.) you go and you go (.) =

Alex: Oh so accountability

Nicole: [Yeah]

Denise: [Yeah there’s accountability there]
Nicole: [Yeah so] you’ve got (.) ‘cause we’re supposed to protect our children and we’re leaving them in this place for all day and people who are supposed to be looking after them aren’t doing that

Alex: Hm (.) again the government guidance says accountability now interestingly the government guidance I am referring to was produced in March 2014 so March this year not long before the new SEN legislation with the talk of coproduction so I don (.) well I don’t know they may very well revamp it to reflect that (h) but it feels like that’s not happening (h) because it seems to be that everything is very separate so SEN is separate to bullying and bullying is separate but still a part of behaviour (.)

Bridget: Yeah

Alex: = but it’s all (.) interlinked (.) [in my view] =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Denise: [Yeah it’s all interlinked]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Alex: = but that’s my view I wouldn’t want to [put that on any of you] =

Bridget: [No you’re quite right]

Alex: = so we’ve got coproduction (.) doing things together (.) i i if you’re interested by the way the document I am looking at is freely available to the public on the government website (.) so can very easily look at it should you (.) require that [(laugh)] =

All others: [(Laugh)]

Alex: = that is the sort of thing I’d go away and do if I were you but (.) um so we’ve got coproduction and part of that is accountability and feeling listened to (h) so basically it comes down to the fact that you’re working together not as you say being at war and having a battle about it

Nicole: Yeah

Alex: Okay

Denise: And maybe (.) um (.) having a support person at the school (.) that you can talk to (.) ’cause I know sometimes you can get someone that you can actually talk to that knows that (h) =

Alex: Yeah

Denise: = there is that because you get your pastoral carers that work with the children um (.) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = um (.) but you’ve got no-one for you (.) [you’ve got your] =

Bridget: [That’s right sure]

Denise: = partner (h) =

Alex: Yeah

Denise: = but it’s not the same (.) because he’s at work all day (.) and then by the time he comes home (h) [you’ve stewed on it all day]

Nicole: [You’ve stewed and (growling noise) woah]

Alex: [To the mountain] =

Bridget: (Unclear)

Alex: = the volcano [has erupted (.) (laugh)]

Denise: [The volcano that erupted before he came home from work [so he] =

Unknown: [Yeah]

Alex: [Hm]

Denise: = gets it in the ear (.) =

Bridget: (Quiet laugh)

Denise: = so he’s not really (1) well he understands (.) =

Alex: Yeah

Denise: = but (.) =

Bridget: He’s not there (.) [dealing with it]

Denise: = [no he’s not there] dealing with it

Bridget: No

Alex: Right (.) =

Nicole: Generally it’s the person that’s [holding the (unclear) that has to deal with it]

Bridget: [That’s er that’s something that] sounds vaguely familiar (quiet laugh)

Denise: Some sort of support I think would be good (laugh)
Alex: So kind of a link between home and school.

Denise: [Yes]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Nicole: [And I think] involve the children (um) if you make (hmm) if you make children see good examples and they see that good examples are rewarded and that that bad behaviour (um) is unacceptable. 

Alex: [Yeah] it might come into school but it's getting out of control in school you know. We control children, we don't let them you wouldn't send them off to a park at nine o'clock at night with a bunch of teenagers where they could get bullied but it's okay to send them into school with three hundred other kids and then get bullied because they're trying to stand up for all the other children (hmm)

Nicole: is that any different but um say if you had like one child in each class (or) two (child) you know try and make it so it's not one particular child who stands out but two or three children maybe (huh) who were (like) the buddies of that group or then that year group and then so when it's in the playground at lunchtime it's not one poor child who then gets bullied because they're trying to stand up for all the other children (huh)

Nicole: it's a real majority thing where it's talked about and its known about we've got a buddy stop in our playground (walk) 

Alex: [Yeah]

Nicole: if you sat on it you'd get picked on for being only child [who] =

Bridget: [Okay]

Denise: [Okay]

Alex: [Okay]

Nicole: = children (and) [and]

Alex: [So again] not just sharing [the] =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Alex: = anti-bullying policy (huh)

Bridget: That's not enough

Alex: = producing it with parents [and pupils]

Nicole: [Yeah so] the bullying's not the main thing that the good overall (huh) that the good [triumphs over evil] =

Nicole: [The good wins]

Alex: = you know it's just it's gotta be that way otherwise no one's ever going to learn

Bridget: [Hey] you think kids (hmm) should (hmm) be given a definition of bullying (hmm) that they should be told this is what bullying is hey kids look out for it

Nicole: I say to my daughter that (huh) it doesn't matter (huh) if somebody meant it (h if they did something that made you feel bad then that is (huh) that's what you deal with you now well somebody'll say 'well I didn't mean to say it' [obviously] =

Nicole: [Huh] an excuse or because they didn't mean to say it but (huh) as human being if you something that hurts (huh) or (huh) makes somebody else frightened then (hmm) that's what needs to be dealt with isn't it (huh) =

Bridget: [Yep]

Nicole: = so it's how you treat somebody else (hmm) and how (hmm) that you when you learn 'cause the consequences of your actions and how (huh) that there should be (huh) maybe like a behaviour code you know what's
acceptable in the circle and then anything else that’s not in that circle
no then it should be on the outside
So a focus on appropriate and acceptable and good [behaviours] =
[Good]
[rather than] =
[Alex:]
dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =
Hm
= so not necessarily giving the kids a a standard definition but saying
you know this is what so a focus on the positives [as you say] =
[Yes]
you know good triumphs over evil and focus on the positives [and] =
[Yep]

Alex:
= dealing with or or saying you know saying that's
this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =
[Alex:]

Nicole:
[Good]

Alex: = [rather than] =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Alex: = dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =

Unknown: Hm

Alex: = dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Alex: = dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =

Nicole: [Right]

Alex: = dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
to go this is bullying (h) =

Nicole: [not just having respect] for teachers but (h) ‘cause they know they
have to respect their parents (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = so my my girls know that (. ) they have to respect me (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Nicole: = and respect their teachers and everything else but (h) they wouldn’t
think twice then about not respecting children (. ) =

Alex: Yeah

Nicole: = they think that that it’s everybody (. ) all in one thing not just (. ) like
I can respect some people because they’re in authority (h)

Bridget: Yes

Nicole: = and I can make other people feel small

Alex: Okay (. ) okay I’ve got two more questions for you then if I may (. ) my
first is (h) do you think the word bullying should be used at all (5)
that’s a question isn’t it (quiet laugh)

Alex: Okay

Denise: I don’t know what else you could use (3)

Alex: Okay

Denise: I don’t know what other sort of word you can use ‘cause (3)

Alex: Do you think it fulfils a purpose then the word bullying that it allows us
to (h) discuss things that aren’t always serious that have as you you
were talking about an emo emotional impact on the children (. ) [at
quite a] =

Denise: [Yeah]

Alex: = significant level

Denise: I think it because it’s continual (h) it is (. ) bullying (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = I mean if it happens a one off um like when you get to secondary
school (h) um and got into this fight that was a one off (. ) that wasn’t
bullying they were mates after that (. ) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = you know (. ) um it was kind of (. ) a bit strange but there you go (1)
he is strange my son (. ) um (2) um (. ) I think something [that’s
continual (. ) re re repetitive] =

Alex: [oh blimey I’ve just seen the time]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Denise: = has to be classed as bullying (. ) [I can’t think] =

Nicole: [Yeah]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Denise: = of anything else it can be classed as

Alex: Okay (. ) my last question was just going to be do you think this
definition is accurate (3) I’m going to have to ring my daughter’s
school and say I’m going to be ate picking her up (laugh)

Bridget: Oh gosh (. ) um

Nicole: I think it is but I think the ‘aggressive act’ at the beginning (. ) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = shouldn’t be at the beginning (.) =
Alex: Okay
Nicole: = I think the imbalance of power (.) =
Alex: [Hm]
Denise: [Yep]
Nicole: = and then all the other descriptions of how (.) you know work up to
the fact that (.) ‘cause people think that’s its aggression (.) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: = and it’s violence (h) =
Alex: Hm
Nicole: and then if it’s not aggressive or violent then it doesn’t count and
Alex: Okay
Bridget: I would say that works for us but my son would not understand that [at
seventeen]
Alex: [Okay (.) so it’s] from the [child’s perspective as well]
Nicole: [Yeah child friendly language]
Denise: [So you know (unclear) the child (.) yeah]
Alex: [A definition has to be understood] (.) [so]
Bridget: [So] it’s the level of [understanding]
Denise: [Yeah but] I’m like you (.) and aggressive act (.) it’s not usually
aggressive as such [I think it’s more]
Nicole: [I almost feel] people would stop reading at that point (.) =
Denise: [Yeah]
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: I think they’d get to that point [and] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: [Yeah] (.) take [that bit out]
Nicole: = [think right okay] (.) it’s physical
Alex: Yeah
Nicole: = and then they don’t get to read necessarily the rest
Denise: Yeah
Alex: Okay
Nicole: But definitely those words
Appendix 16 ~ Chapter 5

Recurrent points: Constructions of blame and excuses

The extract below follows on from Extract 1 and illustrates the continued manner in which Bridget constructs the school her son attended as making excuses for the actions towards him from another child:

Extract A16.1

151 Alex: So did you feel that anything had been done as a result of your concerns
153 Bridget: No what happened was I I removed (.).
155 Alex: Hm
156 Bridget: my child from that particular activity because it was felt that um the other child had higher needs (.). [than mine].
158 Alex: [Right]
159 Bridget: = [so] =
160 Alex: [Okay]
161 Bridget: = because he came from quite a deprived background as well so [it was]
163 Alex: [Hm]
164 Bridget: = unfair (.). to well not punish him but I you know and as I I was very reasonable as I said I do understand [that].
166 Alex: [Hm]
167 Bridget: = these things do happen (.).
168 Alex: Hm
169 Bridget: = but someone needs to learn consequences along the way (.). you know (.).
170 Alex: Hm
171 Bridget: = you do (.). if you have these behaviour and if your actions hurt
173 Alex: [another] =
174 Alex: [Hm]
175 Bridget: = child you need to somehow understand that actually that’s not okay (h).
176 Alex: Hm
178 Bridget: = but it was viewed you know you know ‘poor poor him’ you know ‘he doesn’t have this he doesn’t have that’ [and]
180 Alex: [Hm]
181 Bridget: = and because we’re quite a (.). nice family (.). [(laugh)] =
182 All others: [(Laugh)]
183 Bridget: um um it (.). yeah it was unfair and uh and it was (.).
184 Alex: Hm
185 Bridget: = you know it did make me think you know I view it as bullying (.). you don’t (.). really (.).
187 Alex: Hm
188 Bridget: = because you’re finding mitigating circumstances (.). [so] =
189 Alex: [Okay]
190 Bridget: = so you’re not going to address it on (.). on because of that

Within this extract, as well as the previous excuse of the other child having special needs, Bridget constructs the school as employing further associated excuses; the child has ‘higher needs’ (line 156), a ‘deprived background’ (line
160), ‘he doesn’t have this he doesn’t have that’ (line 179) and because there are ‘mitigating circumstances’ (line 188). Bridget also continues with constructing the excuses as being an excuse for the school not to address the issues; ‘I do understand that these things do happen but someone needs to learn consequences’ (lines 164 – 168), ‘if you have these behaviour and if your actions hurt another child you need to somehow understand that actually that’s not okay’ (lines 171 – 174) and ‘because you’re finding mitigating circumstances so you’re not going to address it because of that’ (lines 187 – 189).

In the following extract Nicole discusses her construction of the school blaming her for the incidents at the school involving her daughter:

**Extract A16.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Nicole:</th>
<th>Alex:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>648</td>
<td>I had a head teacher raise his voice to me and tell me that it what had happened was not bullying (h) and that I had no right to bring it up (.)</td>
<td>[Hm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>649</td>
<td>[and] (.) =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[Hm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>652</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>[to say that it was bullying (.) [not to] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>653</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[Right]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>654</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>[not to look at it not to investigate it but before I’d even because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>655</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>used the word bully (.) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>656</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Hm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>657</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>um ing bullying um that I was wrong and I was causing a situation that wasn’t there and I was making more of it than (h) was like than was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>658</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>659</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>there to be made of um and I find in the school that she’s at she’s at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>660</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>juniors now they in very rarely tell the parents of the child that has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>661</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>hurt another child on a day to day basis what is going on (.) =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here Nicole recalls the school as blaming her because ‘I had not right to bring it (bullying) up’ (line 648) and that she was ‘wrong’ (line 657) and ‘causing a situation that wasn’t there’ (lines 657 – 658).

Within the next extract Bridget and Nicole jointly re-construct the schools as blaming their children for the experiences recalled earlier in the discussion:

**Extract A16.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Bridget:</th>
<th>Alex:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>802</td>
<td>= what I really don’t like is it’s picking you only or the only child thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>803</td>
<td>(.) =</td>
<td>[Hm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>804</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>805</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>so it they sort of twist it [and throw it] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>806</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[Yeah]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>807</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>back at you (.) [because] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>808</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[Okay]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specifically, Bridget states that ‘it’s picking on you or the only child thing’ (line 802) and Nicole states that ‘it was my daughter’s fault because she has difficulties understanding’ (lines 810 – 812). This construction also receives agreement from the other discussants including myself indicating support for what has been proposed.

In Extract 8, Denise constructs excuses for her son. The next extract illustrates the continuation of this later in the discussion:

**Extract A16.4**

Denise: = they know he had a communication problem and didn’t interpret things sometimes (.) =

Alex: Hm Hm]

Denise: = but they wouldn’t sit down and tell him why (.) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = um (1) so he just kind of it made you feel a little bit like they were picking on him (.) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = a little bit because you’d been complaining so an so anytime he did anything wrong they made a big deal of it (h) =

Alex: Hm

Denise: = um whereas you knew that the ones who were bullying him won’t be told anything

Here Denise states that her son has a ‘communication problem’ (line 1426) where does not always ‘interpret things sometimes’ (lines 1426 – 1427). Denise also constructs the school as not taking these differences into account when exploring incidents involving her son which she discusses as making her feel ‘like they were picking on him’ (lines 1431 – 1432).
Appendix 17 ~ Chapter 5

Recurrent points: Constructions of responses to bullying

Sub-theme: Parental responses

The extract below illustrate the way in which Denise constructs the school as being responsible for taking action to address the incident described although it occurred outside of the educational context. Denise subsequently constructed herself as having to take action because the school will not. These constructions were initially discussed in relation to Extract 9:

Extract A17.1

723 Denise: And the parents definitely don’t get told their kids are bullying (.) =
724 Bridget: No
725 Denise: = other kids because we had an incident one day where I was (.) I’d
726 pulled up outside our house and getting out we’d been away for the
727 weekend (hh) unloading the car (.) my husband had taken some
728 stuff in I was just getting some stuff and my son was there (.) =
729 Alex: Hm Hm
730 Denise: = and he says to me ‘oh here comes so and so’ (h) he said ‘I’d better hide’ (1) =
731 Alex: Right
732 Denise: = and I said ‘there’s no need for you to hide’ (h) =
733 Alex: Yeah
734 Denise: = and I said ‘he’s with his mum and dad he’s not going to do anything
735 when he’s with his mum and dad’ (hh) but the little (laugh) =
736 Alex: [So and so]
737 Denise: [So and so] as he passed us he look he stopped ‘cause he was on his
738 bike and his mum and dad were a little bit behind him (.) [and he] =
739 Alex: [Hm]
740 Denise: = stopped on his bike and looked at Ronnie and went ‘you’re dead
741 Monday’ (1) and I just went ‘I beg your pardon’ at the top of my voice
742 Alex: [Hm]
743 Denise: [’how] =
744 Alex: [Hm]
745 Denise: = dare you threaten my son’ (.) =
746 Alex: Hm Hm
747 Denise: = and of course his dad come running up ‘what’s going on what’s going
748 on’ (h) =
749 Alex: Hm
750 Denise: = and until that moment he hadn’t known what was going on (1) =

Sub-theme: Parental constructions of known school actions

The extracts below provide additional examples from the discussion where the response of the schools referenced is constructed as being a result of the age group of the children attending. They relate to the construction from Bridget
initially identified in Extract 13 where secondary / college level responses are more effective than those related to younger children because of the detail in their anti-bullying policies (Extract A17.2) and because primary schools do not wish to discuss bullying because they are scared’ (Extract A17.3):

**Extract A17.2**

627 Bridget: = I think also they’re (.) um (.) you know all schools have got anti-
628 bullying policies (.) [but] =
629 Alex: [Hm]
630 Bridget: = but in secondary school and college they’re much more details I th
631 more detailed I think in (h) =
632 Alex: [Okay]
633 Bridget: = [in primary] school I think it seems to be a bit [more woolly and (.)]
634 =

**Extract A17.3**

1016 Bridget: I don’t understand why it can be done in secondary and college setting
1017 (.) =
1018 Alex: Hm
1019 Bridget: = and not within (.) [at primary school] =
1020 Denise: [At primary school]
1021 Alex: Hm
1022 Bridget: = because you know I was really taken aback at how quickly (.) =
1023 Alex: Hm
1024 Bridget: = you know they said this is what happened (.) =
1025 Alex: Hm
1026 Bridget: = we’re taking this action what would you like us to do (.) =
1027 Alex: Hm
1028 Bridget: = you know (.) it’s not it’s not difficult and I think (.) =
1029 Alex: No
1030 Bridget: = within schools I think that they seem to be really scared you mention
1031 the word bullying and (.) =
1032 Nicole: Yep
1033 Bridget: = oh you know and I don’t understand why you now if you’re open
1034 about it

Within this extract Bridget returns to the construction raised in Extract 12 regarding a difference in response between secondary and college settings and primary schools. She makes particular reference here to the quickness with which she recalled action being taken (line 1022) and her involvement in the organisation of action (line 1026) at the secondary and college levels. This conversely constructs the responses at the primary level as being slow and absent of parental involvement. Furthermore, Bridget blames the lack of action at the primary level as being due to the schools being ‘scared’ when bullying is mentioned (lines 1030 - 1031). This constructs the schools as
wanting to avoid even mentioning the word bullying let alone discuss an incident.

The next extract illustrates the way Denise constructs the response at the secondary school level as being different to junior school:

**Extract A17.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1144</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>Yeah it is hard when they’re in the junior school part but I know when we went to the catchment school my son’s catchment school (h) the only things we liked about the catchment school was the fact that they had security cameras (1) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1148</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Okay so [from]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>= so when he gets beaten up (.) [it’s on film] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1150</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[There’s evidence]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1151</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>= and to me that was heart breaking (. ) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1152</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1153</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>= to the head teacher (.) that’s a positive (2) =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1154</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1155</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>= and I couldn’t (.) I still can’t fathom to this day why that’s a positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within this Denise discusses the presence of security cameras at the secondary level with the implication that these were not present in the junior school her son attended. The presence of the cameras is discussed as a positive by Denise (lines 1146 – 1147). However, the use of them to obtain evidence of her son being ‘beaten up’ (line 1149) is discussed differently. Indeed, Denise positions the head teacher of the school as describing this in a positive way (line 1153) where this response was something she could not understand (line 1155).

Within the next extract Nicole continues her construction of the responses from schools as being dependent on the nature of the event which she originally discusses in Extract 14:

**Extract A17.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1271</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>Same as in class they have all these things out I don’t necessarily agree with it but (h) face on you have your name on the sad side if you’ve [done something wrong] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1274</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>[Oh yes yes]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1275</td>
<td>Nicole:</td>
<td>= so (.) they’re not listening they get their name on the sad side there’s [like a board with a sad side] =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1277</td>
<td>Alex:</td>
<td>[So quite quite a public acknowledgement of (.)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1278</td>
<td>Bridget:</td>
<td>[Yes]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1279</td>
<td>Denise:</td>
<td>[Yes]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nicole: = not listening (.) didn’t bring your stuff in whatever so really being we’re talking about shame [in the classroom] =

All others: [Hm yes]

Nicole: = shaming children in the classroom (h) but not when they’ve done something that’s really wrong (.) so they might maybe if they’ve done something that’s been a bit spiteful they’ve thrown a bag or they’ve (.)

= Alex: Hm

Nicole: = especially if they’ve disrespected teachers [oh that’s] =

Bridget: Hm

Nicole: = totally unacceptable (.) not allowed to disrespect teachers that gets taken off the sad side sent to the head teacher (.) [that does] =

Alex: Okay

Nicole: = physical or emotional bullying of children (.) nothing

In addition to this extract and Extract 14, the discussion returns to the points raised shortly afterwards where the constructions are repeated (Appendix 20; lines 1341 – 1353).

Sub-theme: Parental constructions of appropriate school actions

The extracts below provide additional examples from the discussion where the parents discuss what they would consider to be appropriate actions for schools to take in response to bullying. Specifically, they both refer to the points raised previously about the co-production of, for example, anti-bullying policies between parents and schools (initially raised in Extract 15).

Extract A17.6

Alex: No that’s very interesting because I’m going to back to the government guidance again and it says (h) ‘your anti-bullying should be shared with parents, staff and pupils’ not that it should be coproduced (.) with but that it should be shared with (h) so (.) ostensibly that is available (.) because it’s being shared through you can come and see it you can come and ask for it I can give it to you that’s not a problem

Bridget: That’s meaningless because it doesn’t mean anything to us because it’s the [production part]

Denise: [The production and I think you]

Nicole: And the up keep of (.) [keep of (.) keeping those values]

Bridget: [Yeah]

Alex: [Yeah]

Denise: [Because that’s all you’ve] got (.) what you’ve got is you’ve got the guidelines there (.) so why can’t schools like you said work in coproduction and produce their own policy around that document (h) =

Nicole: Yeah

Denise: = that has got the guidelines that has got what the repercussions are (hh) and that’s done in coproduction with parents for that school (.) [and] =

Alex: [Hm]

Nicole: [And what] they would do about it [so that] =

Denise: = and what they would do about it
Nicole: = I could see on page three (. ) if that happens to my child (. ) this is [what will happen] =
Alex: = [Okay]
Denise: = [This is what will happen]
Nicole: = this is the procedure that will happen (. ) =
Alex: = Hm
Nicole: = and then when it doesn’t (. ) you go and you go (. ) =
Alex: = Oh so accountability
Nicole: = [Yeah]
Denise: = [Yeah there’s accountability there]
Nicole: [Yeah so] you’ve got (. ) ’cause we’re supposed to protect our children and we’re leaving them in this place for all day and people who are supposed to be looking after them aren’t doing that

This extract illustrates the preference for co-production but also the construction of the parents regarding the absence of this at the present time. In addition, as this part of the discussion follows a statement from myself (lines 1718 – 1723), my contribution to the construction is evident when I note that the government guidance encourages policies to be shared with schools but not that they should be coproduced (lines 1719 – 1720).

Extract A17.7

Nicole: = Make it (. ) so that (. ) the whole school’s involved (. ) =
Bridget: = [Yeah]
Denise: = [Yeah]
Alex: = [Okay]
Nicole: = and the parents [and the] =
Alex: = children (. ) [and] =
Nicole: = [So again] not just sharing [the] =
Alex: = [Yeah]
Nicole: = anti-bullying policy (h) =
Alex: = producing it with parents [and pupils]
Nicole: = [Yeah so] the bullying’s not the main thing that the (. ) good overall (. ) that the good [triumphs over evil] =
Alex: = [The good wins]
Nicole: = you know it’s just it’s gotta be that way otherwise no one’s ever gonna [learn]
Appendix 18 ~ Chapter 5

Recurrent points: Constructing schools as deliberately ignorant

The extract below follows on from Extract 1 and illustrates the continued manner in which Bridget constructs the school her son attended as making excuses for the actions towards him from another child:

Extract A18.1

962  Denise:  I think like you said it needs to be acknowledged =
963  Alex:  Hm
964  Denise:  = that something is happening (h) =
965  Bridget:  Yep
966  Alex:  Hm
967  Denise:  = and it needs to be looked into (.) =
968  Nicole:  Hm
969  Denise:  = and talked about (h) it’s not (.) that’s not done (.) =
970  Bridget:  Hm

Extract A18.2

1225  Bridget:  Well it think it’s first of all that you know a [willingness] =
1226  Alex:  [Hm]
1227  Bridget:  = to hear more [about it] =
1228  Alex:  Hm
1229  Bridget:  = instead of instantly thinking [(.) no] =
1230  Alex:  [It’s not bullying]
1231  Bridget:  = it’s not bullying =
1232  Alex:  Okay
1233  Bridget:  = to listen (.) uh =
1234  Alex:  Okay
1235  Bridget:  = to to be quick about (.) =
1236  Alex:  Okay
1237  Bridget:  = and to you know it’s not as if we’re asking you know for the other child to be expelled but (.) =
1238  Alex:  Yeah (Quiet laugh)
1239  Bridget:  = tell me what you’re going to do about it [you know]

Extract A18.3

1552  Nicole:  So you’re not (.) we’re not stupid everybody in the world should know that (.) but I would much rather send my child to a school where they openly acknowledge (.) talk about it (.) tell you what they’re gonna do about it like with this behaviour code at this new school (hh) um than go to a school where they go ‘well it’s not happening and it’s not gonna happen and’ (.) =
1558  Bridget:  Yeah
1559  Nicole:  = [and work]
1560  Bridget:  [Completely agree I] completely agree [I think] =
Nicole: [I think trust]
Bridget: = in this day and age things should be completely transparent (.).
Nicole: Yeah
Bridget: = and open you know and and free it to discuss it and why is it (.).
Nicole: Taken seriously
Bridget: = happening in a workplace for adults but not for kids
Alex: So it feels like everything’s being closeted
Bridget: Yep
Alex: Br as you say brushed under the carpet (.).
Nicole: Yeah
Alex: = done behind closed doors (.).
Unknown: Yeah
Alex: = dealt with internally (.). no acknowledgement given
Bridget: And there’s that real fear (.).
Alex: Yeah
Bridget: = of of the mention of the word bullying (.).
Alex: Yeah
Bridget: = er in schools yeah
Appendix 19 ~ Chapter 5

Recurrent points: Constructions of an unheard voice

The extract below follows on from Extract 1 and illustrates the continued manner in which Bridget constructs the school her son attended as making excuses for the actions towards him from another child:

Extract A19.1

475 Alex: So I’m kind of feeling a bit sort of something like erm out of sight out
476 of mind
477 Bridget: Yes
478 Denise: Yes [absolutely]
479 Alex: [Okay] if they’re not on school premises for that OfSTED day we don’t
480 have to worry about it therefore we don’t have to tell OfSTED therefore
481 =
482 Denise: [Yeah they can still be on the premises]
483 Alex: = [we can still be a successful school]
484 Denise: They would still be on the premises but they would go to [another] =
485 Alex: [Okay]
486 Denise: = little room while the OfSETD was in his classroom (hh) =
487 Alex: Okay
488 Denise: = so if someone came into his classroom (.) he would go off (.) =
489 Alex: Hm Hm
490 Denise: = to somewhere else so he couldn’t say anything about how he felt (h)
491 =

Extract A19.2

899 Bridget: [They’re words they’re words]
900 Denise: [‘They’re words on a piece of paper I think it’s a piece of paper]
901 Nicole: [(unclear) behind it]
902 Alex: [Okay (. ) okay so]
903 Denise: [It’s a piece] of paper they’ve got it there (.) but they don’t actually (.)
904 [go by it] =
905 Nicole: [Who’s there approving] yeah we’re the ones saying [that it’s not
906 working (. ) you’re not doing it] =
907 Denise: = [who’s (. ) you know it’s not]
908 Alex: [Right]
909 Nicole: = but no one’s listening to our voice
910 Alex: Right [okay]
911 Denise: [So one one’s] listening that bit they’ve got that piece of paper there
912 [because] =
913 Alex: [Hm Hm]
914 Denise: they’ve got to have it there {by law (hh)} =
915 Alex: [Hm Hm]
916 Nicole: [But we’re not given a chance to say
917 Denise: = but (.) they’re not implementing it (.) =
918 Alex: Hm
919 Denise: = in the in the school they’re not implementing those guidelines
Appendix 20 ~ Chapter 5

Participant / Researcher dichotomy

The following extract has been split into three sections and illustrates the way in which I influence the discussion by asking the discussants specifically about the information given on introducing the conversation:

Extract 20.1a

1863 Alex: [So do] you think kids (.) should (.) be given a definition of bullying (.)
1864 that they should be told ‘this is what bullying is hey kids look out for it’
1865 Nicole: I say to my daughter that (.) it doesn’t matter (1) if somebody meant
1866 it (h if they did something that made you feel (.) bad (.) then that is (.)
1867 that’s what you deal with you now well somebody’ll say ‘well I didn’t
1868 mean to say it’ [obviously] =
1869 Alex: [Hm]
1870 Nicole: = an excuse or because they didn’t mean to say it but (.) as human
1871 being if you something that hurts (.) or (.) makes somebody else
1872 frightened then (.) that’s what needs to be dealt with isn’t it (.) =
1873 Bridget: Yep
1874 Nicole: = so it’s how you treat somebody else (.) and how (h) that you when
1875 you learn ‘cause the consequences of your actions and how (.0 that
1876 there should be (.) maybe like a behaviour code you know what’s
1877 acceptable in the circle and then anything else that’s not in that circle
1878 no then it should be on the outside
1879 Alex: So a focus on appropriate and acceptable and good [behaviours] =
1880 Nicole: [Good]
1881 Alex: = [rather than] =
1882 Nicole: [Yeah]
1883 Alex: = dealing with or or saying you know saying that’s this is not the way
1884 to go this is bullying (h) =
1885 Unknown: Hm
1886 Alex: = so not necessarily giving the kids a a standard definition but saying
1887 you know this is what so a focus on the positives [as you say] =
1888 Bridget: [Yes]
1889 Alex: = you know good triumphs over evil and focus on the positives [and] =
1890 All others: [Yep]
1891 Alex: have that as the main [thrust of] =
1892 All others: [Yep]
1893 Alex: = and and talk about it in terms of behaviour (.) [not in terms of]
1894 Nicole: [Of respect for others] =
1895 Alex: [Right]
1896 Nicole: = [not just having respect] for teachers but (h) ‘cause they know they
1897 have to respect their parents (.) =
1898 Alex: Hm
1899 Nicole: = so my my girls know that (.) they have to respect me (.) =
1900 Alex: Hm
1901 Nicole: = and respect their teachers and everything else but (h) they wouldn’t
1902 think twice then about not respecting children (.) =
1903 Alex: Yeah
1904 Nicole: = they think that that it’s everybody (.) all in one thing not just (.) like
1905 I can respect some people because they’re in authority (h)
1906 Bridget: Yes
1907 Nicole: = and I can make other people feel small
Extract 20.1b

Alex: Okay (. ) okay I’ve got two more questions for you then if I may (. ) my first is (h) do you think the word bullying should be used at all (5) that’s a question isn’t it (quiet laugh)  
Denise: I don’t know what else you could use (3)  
Alex: Okay  
Denise: I don’t know what other sort of word you can use ’cause (3)  
Alex: Do you think it fulfils a purpose then the word bullying that it allows us to (h) discuss things that aren’t always serious that have as you you were talking about an emo emotional impact on the children (. ) [at quite a] =  
Denise: [Yeah]  
Alex: = significant level  
Denise: I think it because it’s continual (h) it is (.) bullying (.) =  
Alex: Hm  
Denise: = I mean if it happens a one off um like when you get to secondary school (h) um and got into this fight that was a one off (.) that wasn’t bullying they were mates after that (.) =  
Alex: Hm  
Denise: = you know (.) um it was kind of (.) a bit strange but there you go (1) he is strange my son (.) um (2) um (.) I think something [that’s continual (.) re re repetitive] =  
Alex: [oh blimey I’ve just seen the time]  
Bridget: [Yeah]  
Denise: = has to be classed as bullying (.) [I can’t think] =  
Nicole: [Yeah]  
Bridget: [Yeah]  
Denise: = of anything else it can be classed as

Extract 20.1c

Alex: Okay (. ) my last question was just going to be do you think this definition is accurate (3) I’m going to have to ring my daughter’s school and say I’m going to be ate picking her up (laugh)  
Bridget: Oh gosh (. ) um  
Nicole: I think it is but I think the ‘aggressive act’ at the beginning (. ) =  
Alex: Hm  
Nicole: = shouldn’t be at the beginning (. ) =  
Alex: Okay  
Nicole: = I think the imbalance of power (. ) =  
Alex: [Hm]  
Denise: [Yep]  
Nicole: = and then all the other descriptions of how (. ) you know work up to the fact that (. ) ’cause people think that’s its aggression (. ) =  
Alex: Hm  
Nicole: = and it’s violence (h) =  
Alex: Hm  
Nicole: and then if it’s not aggressive or violent then it doesn’t count and  
Alex: Okay  
Bridget: I would say that works for us but my son would not understand that [at seventeen]  
Alex: [Okay (. ) so it’s] from the [child’s perspective as well]  
Nicole: [Yeah child friendly language]
Denise: [So you know (unclear) the child (. .) yeah]
Alex: [A definition has to be understood] (. .) [so]
Bridget: [So] it’s the level of [understanding]
Denise: [Yeah but] I’m like you (. .) and aggressive act (. .) it’s not usually aggressive as such [I think it’s more]
Nicole: [I almost feel] people would stop reading at that point (. .) =
Denise: [Yeah]
Alex: [Hm]
Nicole: I think they’d get to that point [and] =
Alex: Hm
Denise: [Yeah] (. .) take [that bit out]
Nicole: = [think right okay] (. .) it’s physical
Alex: Yeah
Nicole: = and then they don’t get to read necessarily the rest
Denise: Yeah
Alex: Okay
Nicole: But definitely those words
Appendix 21

UPR16 Form
FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID:</th>
<th>62476</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Name:</td>
<td>Alexandra Boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Supervisor:</td>
<td>Maggie Linnell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)</td>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Mode and Route:</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Thesis:</td>
<td>Exploring social constructions regarding bullying in schools by adult stakeholders working with children in the British education system.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/)

| a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame? | YES |
| b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged? | YES |
| c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship? | YES |
| d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration? | YES |
| e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements? | YES |

*Delete as appropriate*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Statement:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Student)</td>
<td>29th May 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain why this is so:

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<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Student)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

|  |  |
Dear Ms Boys,

Thank you for your submission for ethical review. Having completed their review, members of the Science Faculty Ethics Committee have reached a Favourable opinion of your proposed research.

Please notify the committee of any substantial amendments to the proposed procedures, send an annual report to the committee regarding study progress and a final study report once the study has concluded. Please send these to sci.fac@port.ac.uk. Thank you and the committee wishes you well with your study.

Dr Simon Kolstoe – Vice Chair SFEC

CC -
Holly Shawyer – Faculty Administrator

If you would like to offer any feedback on the Science Faculty Ethics Committee process please email sci.fac@port.ac.uk, to be forwarded to the Chair.