An Exploration into Children’s
Experiences of Pupil Mobility

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the Degree of
Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

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School of Education
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Abstract

The University of Manchester

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Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

An Exploration into Children’s Experiences

of Pupil Mobility

2012

Pupil mobility, defined as “a child joining or leaving a school at a point other than at the normal age at which children start or finish their education at that school” (Dobson & Henthorne, 1999 p. vi), is a complex phenomenon that is linked to the academic, social and emotional outcomes of children and young people (Gagnon & Malmgren, 2005; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; South & Haynie, 2004). There is limited published research that has illuminated pupil mobility through eliciting the views of the pupils, their families and class teachers. This qualitative study explored how children experienced pupil mobility when it was combined with a residential move and the factors that were perceived to affect the experience.

A multiple case study design with embedded (multiple) units of analysis was adopted (Yin, 2009). Each case study consisted of a Key Stage 2 aged child who had moved into a northern coastal Local Authority within six months of the data collection. The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews in two primary schools. Four children, five parents and five class teachers took part in the study.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed before being analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis identified key themes raised in the interviews in relation to how the children experienced pupil mobility and the factors that were perceived to have impacted upon this experience.

The findings of this study highlight that pupil mobility is a challenging experience for children that elicits a contrasting range of emotions which are affected by a series of interactions between the children and the systems around them. The findings are discussed in relation to psychological theories and previous research. Implications are considered for the practice of Local Authority personnel, school staff, parents and educational psychologists and suggestions for future research are highlighted.
Declaration

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The Author

After graduating with an honours degree from the University of York in 2000 I spent two years travelling around the world, during which I had the opportunity to work in a number of roles including working in a residential setting with vulnerable adults in New Zealand. This gave me great life experience and highlighted to me my enjoyment of working with people. Upon my return to England I worked with children with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour and as a support worker in a variety of children’s homes. Following this I trained as a Graduate Mental Health Worker, providing therapeutic input within a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. I undertook this role for four years before enrolling on the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at The University of Manchester in 2009.
Dedication

Firstly, I would like to thank all the children, parents and school staff who took part in my study for sharing their experiences with me and giving me their time. Without you this thesis would not have been possible.

Secondly, I would like to thank my research supervisor, Dr. Caroline Bond and Professor Kevin Woods for their inspiration, support and availability over the past three years.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Local Authority and school staff - there are too many to mention! I am grateful to them for sharing their ideas and expertise during the formation of this research and going out of their way to facilitate the data gathering.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my family and friends for their unconditional support. In particular my wife, Becky, without whose help, endless encouragement and humour this thesis would not have been possible.
List of Abbreviations

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education

LA: Local Authority

ECM: Every Child Matters

GRT: Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage

EP: Educational psychologist

EPS: Educational Psychology Service

RQ: Research questions

APA: American Psychological Association
**Introduction**

Every year thousands of children experience pupil mobility (Dobson and Pooley, 2004) which has been defined as:

“A child joining or leaving a school at a point other than at the normal age at which children start or finish their education at that school, whether or not this involves a move of home. Pupil mobility at the level of the school is defined as the aggregate of such children joining and leaving.” (Dobson & Henthorne, 1999 p. vi)

Within the UK the prevalence of pupil mobility varies from zero to 80 percent in primary schools and zero to 35 per cent in secondary schools (Office for Standards in Education [Ofsted], 2002). A series of case studies of UK Local Authorities (LA) highlighted that pupil mobility was most prevalent within inner London, in coastal resorts and in areas in the vicinity of armed forces bases (Dobson, Henthorne, & Lynas, 2000). It was also found to be associated with specific groups of children and families; those experiencing social deprivation, those excluded from school, refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage (GRT).

The author of this research is a trainee educational psychologist who works in a coastal town in the north of England that has high rates of pupil mobility and high levels of social deprivation (Dobson & Pooley, 2004). The Local Authority statistics indicate that in the 2009-2010 academic year the town’s pupil mobility level for primary school aged children was 15.9 percent. This can be compared to research that, although dated, provided an insight into the rates of pupil mobility across the country; 14.2 percent in inner London, 5.8 percent in Metropolitan areas, 6.3 percent in unitary authorities and 5.7 percent in Shire counties (Ofsted, 2002).

Within the author’s LA there are three predominant reasons for pupil mobility; moving to and from the town, movement within the town, and families of GRT status, although the

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1 The term GRT is used as an umbrella term for all Gypsy and Traveller groups including children of Occupational/Show Travellers. Please refer to Appendix A for definitions of the groups.
latter group are cited as only a small percentage of the mobility rate (Dobson & Pooley, 2004). In relation to social deprivation the LA is ranked within the top 10 most deprived areas in England (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

Over the past 15 years there has been a growing interest in understanding and addressing the impact of pupil mobility both nationally and internationally. In 2003 the government commissioned the “On The Move” project (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2003a p. 1) that worked with schools with high pupil mobility across the country and produced practical guidance to address it. The government recognised the challenge that high levels of pupil mobility created at school and child level:

“Pupil mobility is a common experience for most schools but some experience significant numbers of pupils moving in and out of the school, which means that this phenomenon becomes a significant challenge for the school and both the mobile and stable communities of pupils.”

(Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2003b p. 2).

In conjunction with publication the government produced guidelines on the employment and role of an induction mentor to support the children and the schools during this process (DfES, 2003b).

Within the author’s LA pupil mobility is regarded as a key priority for both the LA and schools. It was highlighted in the LA’s Special Educational Needs action plan and a transition plan was developed in 2008. Pupil mobility is a priority for the EPS, particularly in relation to supporting children with SEN who move in and out of the area.

Within the LA pupil mobility continues to be regularly monitored and addressed at a senior management level. Additional resources are allocated to fund a key stage one and key stage two educational provisions for children who have experienced an extended period of time out of education prior to moving into the town. This small group environment bridges the gap into mainstream school for children and provides a nurturing environment in which to ascertain the children’s learning levels and build confidence in their ability before they are integrated back into a mainstream school. The majority of children moving into the town start within a mainstream school and are
supported within the schools’ budget. A key priority for the schools with high pupil mobility levels is reducing the attainment gap between children who joined the school and those who remained there throughout their academic careers. Such schools adopt general inclusive practices that support these children and other vulnerable children and prioritise their budgets to employ an induction or learning mentor to specifically support the child, their family and their class.

The author became aware of the priority schools placed upon supporting children through pupil mobility during the early stages of developing the research, when he obtained school staffs’ views of possible research areas that would be useful to the LA. A head teacher, various SENCos and class teachers expressed their concerns that despite utilising years of experience, using additional resources and employing a learning mentor to support the transition, the school statistics illustrated that these children continued to underperform academically when compared to their peers who were from the same demographic but who started and finished at the school. These conversations led the researcher to a general search of the literature on pupil mobility which identified a gap in relation to understanding the views of children and young people who had experienced the phenomenon.

The value of ascertaining the views and perspectives of children and young people was highlighted by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12.1 which states that adults should ensure that:

“[A] child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views in all matters affecting the child”. (United Nations, 1989 article 21.1)

This specific piece of research was chosen as there was a gap in the literature on a priority issue for the Local Authority and some of the schools within the town. It was also consistent with the researcher’s axiological position of valuing the voice of children and their families.

An overview of each chapter will now be presented.
Chapter 1: Literature Review

The literature review explores the many and complex reasons for children moving outside of regular transition points, factors that are associated with pupil mobility and the implications for children’s academic progress and social and emotional development. This is followed by a review of literature that explores the impact of residential moves upon children and upon schools and of research that elicited the experiences of children from particular cultural groups linked with pupil mobility.

The chapter then goes on to a systematic literature review of children’s experiences of pupil mobility that are not aligned to a particular cultural group and theories that have been proposed as frameworks to understand the phenomenon.

The literature review concludes by stating the aims of the study and the research questions that were devised to carry it out.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This section presents an outline of the theoretical orientation of this study. It discusses critical realism as the epistemological and ontological position of the research before critically reviewing the data collection methods adopted. It outlines the study’s research design and critically discusses the data collection techniques. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is critically reviewed followed by an overview of the attempts to increase the trustworthiness of the study’s findings and conclusions.

Chapter 3: Results

The results section provides an in depth exploration into four children’s experiences of pupil mobility when combined with a residential move into the Local Authority. Each case study is presented with a thematic map followed by a detailed analysis of the themes in relation to the research questions. Illustrative quotes are presented to illuminate the themes.
Chapter 4: Discussion

The thesis concludes with a discussion of the pattern of findings across the case studies and the theory used to illustrate the findings. The chapter includes a discussion about the limitations of the study, the possible implications for practice for the schools, parents, educational psychologists and the Local Authority in which the study was conducted. The discussion concludes with a reflective account of the research process and recommendations for future research.
1. Literature Review

1.1. Defining Pupil Mobility

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a “pupil” as:

“A person who is taught by another, especially a schoolchild or student in relation to a teacher”. (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011a)

The dictionary defines “mobility” as:

“The ability to move between different levels in society or employment”. (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011b)

Within the academic and non-academic literature there is no standard definition for children who change schools outside of regular times. International literature has cited various terms such as “student mobility” (Gruman, Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, & Fleming, 2008), “school mobility” (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004) and “making a non-promotional school change” (Xu, Hannaway, & D'Souza, 2009). Other researchers have focused upon the number of school moves and used terms such as “highly mobile students” (Rhodes, 2008) or “transient” students” (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007). Within the UK the term “geographic mobility” (Blane, 1985) has been cited, although government documents and other UK researchers have used the term “pupil mobility” (Department for Education and Skills, 2003a, 2003b; Dobson & Henthorne, 1999; Strand & Demie, 2007). However the term “pupil mobility” has been interpreted differently within the literature. Government guidance (DfES, 2003a) has adopted Ofsted’s definition of pupil mobility:

“The total movement in and out of schools by pupils other than at the usual times of joining and leaving.” (Ofsted, 2002 p. 2)

Whereas Dobson and Henthorne’s (1999) definition distinguished between pupil mobility at the individual and school level:

“A child joining or leaving a school at a point other than at the normal age at which children start or finish their education at that school, whether or not this involves a move of home. Pupil mobility at the level of the school is
“defined as the aggregate of such children joining and leaving.” (Dobson & Henthorne, 1999 p. vi)

Strand and his colleagues explicitly state that pupil mobility can involve one or more repeated school moves (Strand, 2002; Strand & Demie, 2006; 2007):

“Movement between or changes of school, either once or on repeated occasions, at times other than the normal age at which children start or finish their education at a school.” (Strand, 2002 p. 63)

For the purpose of clarity, this research will adopt Dobson and Henthorne’s (1999) term “pupil mobility” as this incorporates pupils’ movement at both an individual and school level. As the focus of this research is children who have experienced a change in home alongside a change in school the term residential move was also adopted.

1.2. Overview of the Literature Review

It is widely acknowledged that pupil mobility is a complex topic with many interacting factors (Dobson, Henthorne, & Lynas, 2000; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004). This literature review provides an overview of pupil mobility that will explore the reasons why children change schools, the factors associated with moving and the research that has explored its impact upon children’s academic, social and emotional development. This is followed by an overview of research that has focused upon the experiences of children of particular groups that are often associated with high levels of pupil mobility, before ending with a systematic review of studies that have focused upon the experiences of children and young people who do not belong to a specific cultural group.

1.3. Literature Search Strategy

Given the complexity of pupil mobility and the variation in terms used to define pupil mobility, conducting a literature review was an iterative process that involved revisiting the databases after different definitions were discovered within the literature.

The literature search was conducted in two stages; to generate a holistic understanding of pupil mobility a broad initial literature search was conducted followed by a systematic literature review of research that focused upon the primary interest of the thesis. This can be viewed in section 1.5.
1.4. **Initial Literature Review**

The following databases were searched for peer and non-peer reviewed journals: PSYCINFO, ASSIA, ERIC and Google Scholar using the terms: “pupil mobility”, “pupil mobil*”, “transience”, “school mobility”, “school mobil*”, “school t rans*”, “residen*”. Literature was also obtained following a review of related articles on Google Scholar and ERIC, from the reference lists of the articles and from discussions with colleagues and university tutors. The title and abstract of each article were reviewed to ascertain its relevance. Given the depth of literature in this area it was beyond the scope of this study to discuss all the literature retrieved. Priority was given to UK based research and articles by prominent figures in the field.

1.4.1. **Antecedents and Associated Factors of Pupil Mobility**

Literature in this field has adopted both descriptive research methods (Dobson, Henthorne, & Lynas, 2000) and quantitative research methods (Machin, Telhaj, & Wilson, 2006). It is widely accepted amongst the literature that pupil mobility “is a complex issue with many patterns and variations” (Dobson & Henthorne, 1999, p vi).

High pupil mobility in England is predominantly associated with different groups of people. These include those experiencing low-socio economic status (Dobson et al., 2000; Machin et al., 2006), travellers and refugees (Dobson, Henthorne, & Lynas, 2000; Ofsted, 2002) and military families (Ofsted, 2002). Children who move schools are more likely to enter the school with lower academic attainments than their stable peers (Machin et al., 2006) and the change of school is often combined with a residential move (Dobson et al., 2000; Kerbow, 1996). A survey of head teachers in an inner London LA found one of the main reasons was movement between council and housing association properties (67 per cent per cent of responses) (Demie, 2002).

Researchers have conceptualised the reason children change schools as “strategic” and “reactive” moves (Rumberger, 2003 p. 14). Strategic moves are pre-planned with the aim of improving the child’s education, quality of life or for sporting opportunities (Kerbow, 1996; Machin et al., 2006; Rumberger, 2003). Within the UK, strategic moves tend to be made by families from more affluent backgrounds (Machin, Telhaj & Wilson, 2006). Reactionary moves in contrast are often involuntary and not planned (Schafft, 2006) and
can be in response to a crisis such as moving between affordable housing, family instability, dissatisfaction with the previous school and the child’s behaviour or social problems (Dobson et al., 2000; Kerbow, 1996; Rumberger, 2003; Schafft, 2006).

Following a series of 6 case studies of UK schools, Dobson, Henthorne and Lynas (2000) concluded that pupil mobility was most prevalent within inner London, in coastal resorts and in areas in the vicinity of armed forces bases.

The DfES (2003a) identified five categories of pupil mobility:

- Social deprivation (looked after children, homelessness, housing relocation, fragmentation of families, unemployment)
- Exclusion (official and informal)
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Immigrants
- Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage (GRT)

In England the reasons for pupil mobility varied depending on the area of the country (Dobson & Pooley, 2004). Within inner London international immigration, such as children seeking asylum, was the predominant antecedent to mobility whereas in the northern coastal town where this research was located this was cited as only being relevant to a small number of pupils. Internal migration, involving short and long distance moves within the UK, was the main reason cited for pupil moves in this area and GRT children were found to have a small impact upon the schools’ mobility. Dobson and Pooley (2004) described factors affecting the mobility in this LA in terms of “pull and push factors”. Please refer to the “Background to the Local Authority” section (section 2.4.1) for further details.

1.4.2. Impact upon Attainment

It is widely accepted that pupil mobility is linked to lower academic outcomes (Kerbow, 1996; Demie, 2002; DfES, 2003a). Government guidelines highlight that:

“High levels of pupil mobility can be a major factor in the underachievement of pupils.” (DfES, 2003a p. 3)
This risk is heightened when the pupil moves more than two times (Gruman et al., 2008; Mantzicopoulos & Knutson, 2000; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Temple & Reynolds, 1999; Xu et al., 2009) and risk increases with the number of moves (Kerbow, 1996). It is argued that changing schools can disrupt children’s exposure to key concepts and prerequisites for further learning due to variations between each school’s curriculum or through having gaps in between schooling (Kerbow, 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). It is also associated with declines in classroom participation particularly when there has been more than one school move (Gruman, Harachi, Abbott, Catalano, & Fleming, 2008).

Ascertaining the exact impact pupil mobility has upon attainment is difficult due to associated factors such as socio-economic status, deprivation levels, special educational needs and fluency in English (Ofsted, 2002 and DfES, 2003a) and other known causes of disadvantage such as parental attitudes, prior attainment (Temple & Reynolds, 1999) and family structure (Tucker, 1998). The reason why the child moved can also impact upon attainment; children who move for reactive reasons such as family disruption tend to have poorer academic outcomes than children who move for strategic reasons such as moving to improve their quality of life (Rumberger, 2003; Warren-Sohlberg & Jason, 1992). Similarly child factors can impact upon attainment; children who utilise adaptive coping strategies achieved higher academic levels than students who had non-productive coping strategies when changing schools (Boon, 2010).

There is a debate in the literature as to whether pupil mobility in itself causes low academic achievement and this may be related to the quality of the research. Early research neglected to take into account confounding variables and so the quality has been described as being quite weak (Strand & Demie, 2006). This is supported by a meta-analysis of American studies conducted by Mehana & Reynolds (2004) who found a lack of published research in this area. The authors located 5 published and 21 unpublished articles between 1975 and 1994, many of which did not account for the confounding variables mentioned above. As such, a negative association between pupil mobility and school achievement was concluded with the exception of studies of children of military personnel where no effect was found (this subgroup of children is discussed later in this review). The meta-analysis found a composite effect size of -0.25 for reading and -0.22
for mathematics. The major predictors of variation in effect size were the frequency of mobility, socio-economic status and the grade at which the move occurred.

The complexity of the issue is summarised by Ofsted (2002) who state that:

“The relationship between pupil mobility and attainment is complex. As a result it is difficult to isolate the effect of pupil mobility on attainment because it often occurs alongside other factors, such as disrupted family life. Differences in the relationship between mobility and attainment also reflect differences between schools in their ability to manage mobility effectively.” (Ofsted, 2002 p. 3)

Subsequent research has attempted to disentangle pupil mobility from the associated factors. Although the research in this area is limited, as the majority of studies use localised samples, it suggests that pupil mobility may affect children differently depending upon whether they attended Primary or Secondary school.

1.4.2.1. Impact upon Primary School Attainment

Pupil mobility is associated with lower academic attainment in Key Stage 2 (Dobson and Henthorne, 1999; Demie, 2002). However its exact impact upon primary school attainment is a contentious area.

A UK study that analysed data from the National Child Development Study of progress in mathematics for children aged 7-11 years old (Blane, 1985) concluded that when controlling for home circumstances, gender and the type of school, changing school once had no effect on mathematics progress and two or more moves had a minimal effect when compared to the impact of socio-economic circumstances.

Blane’s conclusions are supported by a series of studies within a London context. Strand and his colleagues identified that pupil mobility (defined as a school change either once or on repeated occasions at times other than normal) is significantly linked to academic attainment in national tests and examinations for reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage one, two and three (Strand, 2002; Strand and Demie, 2006; Strand & Demie, 2007). When confounding factors such as free school meals, having English as a second language, having a special educational need and levels of absence were taken into
account, pupil mobility was only significant for performance in mathematics in Key Stage one pupils. Strand and Demie (2006) concluded that “there is no indication that changing school has a negative impact on educational progress during primary school” (p. 551).

A criticism of Strand and his colleagues’ studies is that the research was conducted within a London Borough that had high levels of international immigration and so may not be able to be generalised to other localities or other forms of mobility. In addition the variable of moving more than once was not taken into account. This may be important as a Chicago based study found the impact of frequent school moves rather than occasional moves significantly increased the risk of underachievement (Temple and Reynolds, 1999). Strand’s findings however have been broadly supported by Melhuish et al., (2008) who tracked children through pre-school to the end of Key Stage 2 in six English Local Authorities. Their multivariate analysis found that pupil mobility (defined as at least one change of school) had little independent impact on cognitive outcomes measured through the British Ability Scales Second Edition or on academic progress, when both background and prior attainment were taken into account. Similarly Goldstein, Burgess, & McConnell (2007) analysed data from the national pupil database of Key Stage 2 pupils with a focus upon whether pupil mobility should affect a school’s ranking in terms of the school effectiveness. The authors used multiple membership multilevel models to account for background characteristics, including prior attainment. Goldstein et al (2007) concluded that pupil mobility had little effect upon attainment.

1.4.2.2. Impact upon Secondary School Attainment

In contrast to the research on primary school age children the negative association between pupil mobility and GCSE results remains significant after confounding factors such as age, gender, special educational needs, fluency in English and socio-economic disadvantage are taken into account (Strand & Demie, 2007). Leckie (2009) argued that the strength of the effect varied according to the reason for the move and when the move occurred. The study concluded that pupils who change schools close to GCSE examinations make particularly low progress, as did the pupils who experienced multiple moves, moved during term time, and moved to and from more deprived areas. The timing of the move is supported by an American study which found that changes early in a high school career may not be harmful and can even be beneficial, while changes later
in a high school career (aged 15-16) can have a negative impact upon attainment as well as an increase in behavioural difficulties and increased rates of school dropout (Swanson & Schneider, 1999).

1.4.3. Impact upon Social and Emotional Development

Research that has focused upon the effect of pupil mobility on the social and emotional development of children and young people is primarily based upon the American secondary school system. In the only UK based research located in the literature search Melhuish et al. (2008) concluded that pupil mobility was associated with reduced self-regulation and pro-social behaviours at Key Stage 1 (age 7 years) and reduced social and behavioural outcomes at Key Stage 2 (age 10-11 years). The authors stressed however that due to confounding variables such as family characteristics, a causal link could not be made.

American research similarly reports that pupil mobility is linked to behavioural problems in schools (Engec, 2006) and to emotional difficulties. An archival review of school records of 70 secondary school age pupils who received support for “emotional disturbance” found that 66 percent of the pupils had changed school at least once by age 8 and 89 percent once by age 11 (Gagnon & Malmgren, 2005). It should be noted however that the study did not control for other factors that may have contributed to the “emotional disturbance” and did not have a control group of children without such disturbance.

Rumberger’s (1999) non-peer reviewed mixed methods design found that pupil mobility was associated with a decrease in self-esteem and locus of control, although the effect was not statistically significantly different from their stable peers. Mobile pupils were also found to have significantly more incidents of misbehaviour and less involvement in extracurricular activities.

Pupil mobility is negatively associated with high school dropout. A longitudinal analysis of data of American schools highlights that pupils who change schools at least once in high school are twice as likely not to complete their schooling (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). This is expanded upon in the literature that has explored school dropout in relation to residential mobility below.
1.4.4. Impact of Residential Moves

Changes in residence can have a detrimental effect upon children and young people’s emotional well-being and behaviour which can remain throughout adulthood (Brown et al., 2012; Bures, 2003; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010). A Danish study by Qin, Mortensen and Pedersen, (2009) reported that frequent relocation increased the level of stress upon children and adolescents (aged between 11-17 years old) which then increased the risk of suicidal behaviour. The impact of the move is mediated by several factors (Pribesh & Downy, 1999) that are consistent with those discussed within the “Impact upon Attainment” section of this literature review. Specific to residential mobility, research has highlighted key mediators such as family instability (Bures, 2003), the personality of the child (Oishi & Schimmack, 2010) and the number of moves (Brown et al., 2012; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010).

Simpson and Fowler (1994) examined data of 10362 US school age children whose family completed the National Health Interview Survey of Child Health. A multiple regression analysis (that controlled for gender, age, race/ethnicity, region of the country, mothers’ marital status, poverty level and duration of current residence) found that children and young people who moved three or more times were significantly associated with having emotional and behavioural problems, having received psychological help, having repeated a grade in school or to having been suspended or expelled. In contrast, one or two residential moves had no significant difference on the outcomes when compared to stable peers. In a meta-analysis of studies published between 1965 – 2005, Jelleyman & Spencer (2008) concluded that “high frequency residential change is potentially a useful marker for the clinical risk of behavioural and emotional problems” (p. 582) that included behaviour problems, illicit drug use, adolescent depression, premarital sexual behaviour and teenage pregnancy. The analysis found some support for a causal relationship, particularly in studies that were assessed as being of higher quality. This is supported by Brown et al. (2012) who tracked 850 people over a 20 year period. This longitudinal study concluded that residential mobility during childhood was associated with poor overall health, illegal drug use in late adolescence and adulthood and psychological distress, when socio-demographic factors were taken into account. Gasper, DeLuca and Estacion (2010) examined data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997) in America.
The multivariate analysis of 4890 13-18 year old youths also found that there was an association between residential mobility and behavioural difficulties. However the analysis concluded that there was no causal link. It should be noted that Gasper et al.’s study did not account for the frequency or number of residential or school moves.

Residential moves disrupt family support networks and social support (Jelleyman & Spencer, 2008) and are a stressful experience for the family and young people. In a study that issued questionnaires to junior and high school students in Israel, Raviv, Keinan, Abazon, & Raviv, (1990) concluded that the greatest reported stress was social stress (which encompassed starting a new school, leaving old friends and finding new friends) followed by relocation stress and moving preparation stress. The study found that moving greater distances was associated with greater stress and that pre-adolescent girls were most sensitive to the level of stress.

Pupil mobility when combined with a residential move impacts negatively upon children’s social networks (Oishi & Schimmack, 2010; South & Haynie, 2004; South, Haynie, & Bose, 2007). A study conducted by South & Haynie (2004) found that residential and school movers were significantly more likely to have smaller friendship networks, occupy less prestigious positions within the networks and that the parents were less knowledgeable about their child’s friends. The regression analysis further found that normative school moves such as moving from a feeder school to a high school had no significant effect upon friendship networks. The study also found that the negative effects were greater for older adolescents and girls. A study by Oishi and Schimmack (2010) suggests that social networks may be influenced by the personality of the young person, as participants with introvert personalities were found to have smaller social networks, lower well-being in adulthood and an increased early mortality rate in adulthood, compared to children with extrovert personalities.

Changing residences is linked to school dropout in adolescence (Astone, 1994; Crowder, 2003; South et al., 2007). South et al., (2007) found that pupils who recently changed both residences and schools were approximately twice as likely as their non-mobile counterparts to drop out of school. South et al. suggested that friendship networks were mediators for the drop out. The friends of mobile students tended to exhibit weaker
academic performance and mobile students tended to have smaller, denser networks and to be less centrally located in their networks.

1.4.5. Impact upon Schools

High pupil mobility disrupts schools’ planning, organisation and classroom teaching (DfES, 2003a). A survey of head teachers in an inner London Local Authority (Demi, Lewis, & Taplin, 2005) and in American based research (Schafft, 2005) highlight a series of negative effects upon schools. These include; diverting resources away from pupils already in the school to meet the needs of a new arrivals, children with English as a second language not being able to fully access the curriculum upon transfer, and increased administration time to understand and address the pupil’s needs, which is also often hampered by school records taking a long time to arrive.

Teachers and school staff in an American study by Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) reported that pupil mobility caused disruption to consistent teaching approaches, placed additional demands upon the teaching staff and had a negative effect upon the stable pupils. The teachers reported that time and attention needed to be spent backtracking and reviewing material to allow the children to catch up with their new peers and this was perceived to slow the progress of the other members of the class. Similar to Demi et al’s (2005) finding, Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) cited inefficient data processing systems that led to delays in the school receiving information regarding the young person’s history and academic ability. The DfES (2003a) highlighted the additional demands placed upon schools in the UK. These are summarised in Table 1.
Table 1: Impact of Pupil Mobility upon School Processes (DfES, 2003a)

- **Administrative tasks:**
  - Establishing eligibility for free school meals; – entering pupils’ details on the school’s management system
  - Gathering information and coursework from previous schools, often a time-consuming task with few schools transferring information electronically
  - Analysis of attendance figures
  - Making contact with a variety of agencies
- **Time needed to induct and admit pupils and parents/carers**
  - Difficulties in placing new pupils due to the lack of adequate information; the complexity of curricular implication; impact on current pupils.
- **Support for other colleagues in school**
- **Responding to the impact of new pupils on other members of the school community**
- **Support for new pupils and parents/carers**
- **Concern about not knowing all pupils (when school population changes regularly)**
- **Responding to behavioural problems**
- **Managing volatile school budgets**
- **Assessment of pupils’ learning and personal support needs**
- **Provision and coordination of specialist support e.g. via SENCO**
- **Planning an appropriate curriculum within the constraints of the school and in relation to pupils’ needs**
- **Justification of time spent on new arrivals, possibly at the expense of other pupils**

1.4.6. **Supporting Mobile Children**

Research that has elicited the views of school staff, pupils and parents/carers of highly mobile children in the UK (Demie et al., 2005) and America (Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa, & Durante, 2002) state that interventions in primary schools should address a variety of factors. A key aspect of this is to establish positive relationships with the pupils and their parents and maintain high expectations for students. A range of strategies has been proposed to facilitate this including providing academic support, personal development of students, family support, and activities that promote relationships between families and schools (Fisher et al., 2002). In addition Demi et al (2005) argue that strategies should include providing staff training on issues of mobility, fostering a sense of
belonging, analysing and tracking pupil performance and providing language support for bilingual mobile pupils.

Similarly, Government guidelines (DfES, 2003a) provide strategies that include those noted by Demi et al (2005) and Fisher et al (2002) and are summarised in Table 2. To facilitate the implementation of the strategies the DfES (2003b) provided detailed guidance for an induction mentor to coordinate and support the transition. This can be viewed in Appendix B. An evaluation of this guidance has not been located within the literature search.

**Table 2: Guidance on Managing Pupil Mobility (DfES, 2003a)**

| • Provide a systematic induction that establishes links and relationships with the parents and buddy opportunities for the young person |
| • Enable pupils to access the curriculum |
|   o Gathering and adding information |
|   o Responding to learning needs |
|   o Considering new arrivals in lesson planning |
| • Narrow the attainment gap |
|   o Tracking and monitoring |
|   o Curriculum provision to meet the needs of pupils |
|   o Filling the gaps in learning |
|   o Attendance |
| • Enable the stable pupil community to cope with mobility |
| • Exit procedures |
| • Involving external agencies |
1.4.7. Experiences of Pupil Mobility

The value of ascertaining the views and perspectives of children and young people was highlighted by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12.1 which states that adults should ensure that:

“[A] child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views in all matters affecting the child”. (United Nations, 1989 article 21.1)

This became law through government legislation including the Children Act 1989;2004 (HM Government, 1989, 2004) and government policy such as the Every Child Matters: Change for Children program (DfES, 2004).

There is a limited body of research that has elicited pupils’ views to help understand the impact of pupil mobility from their perspective.

This literature review will now focus upon research that has qualitatively explored children’s experiences of pupil mobility from specific groups; children of military personnel, children attending international schools, immigration and asylum seeking children and children from a GRT background. It was beyond the word count of this thesis to cover all the research, examples have been highlighted that were pertinent to the topic. The review will then critically discuss studies that have focused upon ascertaining the views of children who had experienced pupil mobility that were not associated with a particular cultural group.

1.4.7.1. Children of Military Personnel

Children of military families experience a unique upbringing in comparison to their school peers. The children face frequent relocation, repeated parental separation, fears about their parent’s military deployment and encounter school and residential moves as a result of military commitments (Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010). Military families face increased strain when adapting to a parent being away for an extended period of time and then adjusting to their return (Clifton, 2004). In America, a typical military family relocates every 2-3 years (Kelley, Finkel, & Ashby, 2003). There is a debate in the literature as to whether these moves have a detrimental effect upon academic
attainment and emotional well-being. Some studies have found that the children and young people’s academic and school functioning may be affected (Long, 1986). Clifton (2004) states that in the UK children of military personnel may repeat topics and face adjustments to different examination boards as a consequence of their mobility and children born in military hospitals abroad may experience symptoms of depression due to a lack of understanding of their experiences and their home culture feeling “alien” (p. 460) to them. In contrast other studies indicate that frequent relocation may not result in psychological (Jensen et al., 1995), social or academic problems (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Plucker & Yeckie, 1999). Factors that mediate the experience are family cohesiveness, closeness to their mothers, length of time at a fixed address (Kelly et al., 2003), level of parental coping and having support from other military families (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

American based qualitative studies conducted by Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum (2010) and Mmari et al. (2010) have illuminated this topic through exploring the lived experiences of the children and young people. Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum (2010) and Mmari et al. (2010) explored the experiences of children of military personnel aged 12-18 through focus groups with students, their parents and teachers and Plucker and Yeckie (1999) conducted a qualitative exploration of the experiences of gifted elementary and high school children of military personal over a two year period.

All the studies elicited themes that related to adapting to peer relationships, the new academic environment and to family stress.

A primary stress reported by the young people was related to peer relationships. Plucker and Yeckie (1999) found that young people were more concerned about forming friendships than continuing their academic success at their new school. The issues experienced were wide ranging and included coping emotionally with leaving established friendships, the process of making new friends, and the quality and nature of new friendships. It was noted that some children became scared to commit to new friendships due to knowing they would move again and leave these friends. It was noted that the timing of the moves had an impact upon forming friendships. Students moving mid-year reported the additional difficulties of becoming part of an established clique. A common
theme across all the groups was difficulty integrating into extracurricular activities that had already been established, such as sports teams. This can be made more difficult through missing the try outs for the teams. In addition, there was a reported reluctance by coaches and students to give children of military personnel a predominant role in teams due to the fear that they would move on again and disrupt the team.

The young people cited challenges such as learning the layout of the school, adapting to the school culture and learning school routines and procedures. Academically the young people reported a range of difficulties, from having to repeat lessons covered at a previous school to their missing critical topics such as fractions, multiplication, and handwriting. Several of the students described a “hit and miss” relationship with teachers. Some teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of their situation and were willing to go the “extra mile” and other teachers were unsure of what the right thing was to say or do (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Mmari et al. (2010) argue that children of military personnel have a “connectedness” to being in the military and this is a unique protective factor that helps them manage school transitions and life stressors. This involved the students feeling connected to other children of military personnel and the wider support networks for military families that provided feelings of “safety, security and social support” (Mmari et al. 2010 p. 359). The families cited that living on an army base provided this sense of support and “trust” (p. 363). Mmari et al. argues that this connectedness served as a buffer for life stressors experienced by the children in military families. This is supported by Morris and Age (2009) who found that increased levels of effortful control and parental support are key protective factors for children of military personnel against developing emotional or conduct problems. Similarly Plucker and Yeckie (1999) reported the most effective parenting strategies involved showing enthusiasm and excitement for a move, openly discussing the young person’s concerns, and discussing strategies for the young people to use to cope with the move.

1.4.7.2. Children who attend International Schools

Children who moved into an international school, as a result of residential relocation due to their parents work commitments, often experienced more than one international
move during their school years (Dixon & Hayden, 2008; Mclachlan, 2007). The literature on this topic has provided valuable insights into the unique and similar experiences these children and their families have faced. However the literature has predominately been exploratory with limited samples. This review will focus upon two studies, one based in a school in England (Mclachlan, 2007) and one in Thailand (Dixon & Hayden, 2008).

Mclachlan (2007) obtained the views of 45 families including those of the parents and young people who attended an international school in England. The study reported that the young people experienced a sense of loss and grief at leaving friendships, cultures and family members behind. This was compounded by the schools having a high pupil turnover. As a consequence some pupils reported a constant disruption of friendships which resulted in some only making casual friendships as opposed to close friendships. The parents of these children reported feelings of guilt in relation to the effect the move had upon their children. The families also faced having a new independence as they left friends and family. This was mediated by other international families acting as a “surrogate extended family” (p. 242).

Mclachlan (2007) highlighted that international moves had beneficial effects upon the families. These included the parents being proactive in forming close relationships with their children and having more family activities, although some children reported the relationship with their parents as being too intense. Mclachlan (2007) reported that factors perceived to aid the transition involved parents coaching and preparing their children on how to adapt to the new school, openly talking about feelings of loss and keeping in contact with friends.

Dixon (2008) researched the experiences of primary school aged children before, during and after the transition to an international school in Thailand through a computer based questionnaire combined with parent and child interviews. Prior to the move the children cited experiencing anxiety related to not knowing what to expect from the new country and school, having to establish new friendships and leaving friends behind. A mixture of emotions was cited in their first day that included loneliness, anxiety, embarrassment and happiness. Longer term issues related to adapting to the change of routine, food and language and feeling homesick. The majority of the children reported that they felt
settled within less than a term after arrival, although three children continued to feel unsettled which related to experiencing negative interactions with their peers.

The research in this area suggests that children have unique experiences in relation to pupil mobility as a result of an international move; adapting to a new culture, food and language, parental feelings of guilt and support from other international families. Similar experiences consist of initial anxiety in relation to establishing friendships, leaving friends and learning the layout of the school, the benefits of extended family support and the positive role parents have in supporting their children through this process.

1.4.7.3. Immigration and Refugee Children

The qualitative research in this area has tended to be on a small scale with localised samples therefore generalisation is difficult. Nevertheless the research provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of refugee children.

Hulusi and Orland (2010) presented a case study which utilised a personal construct psychological technique, Talking Stones, to illuminate the experiences of a 16 year old boy who relocated to England from Afghanistan to escape persecution. Initial school experiences were of loss of identity and difficulties forming relationships. This was followed by feelings of optimism and a sense of belonging through the creation of friendships.

In relation to first day experiences refugee children report feelings of isolation, often having no one to talk to or play with, and a “sizing up period” before they made friends in their new school (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003). School life can be a stressful time for these children. Many children report conflict with peers, exclusion from peer groups and bullying (Kirova, 2001; Maegusuku-Hewett, Dunkerley, Scourfield, & Smalley, 2007) which could lead to the feeling of loneliness (Kirova, 2001) in school. Academically the students had to adapt to differences in the school culture and method of delivery of education from that of their home country (Hek, 2005).

A key factor cited by refugee children was difficulties that related to learning a new language. This can negatively impact upon the understanding of lessons and tasks whilst at the same time adjusting to their new environment (Oikonomidoy, 2010). This can make
it difficult to form friendships with their new peers (Hek, 2005; Kirova, 2001) and can lead
to low self-esteem (Kirova, 2001). The lack of language skills can create misunderstanding
with teaching staff; a case study of a Kosovan boy highlighted that staff can misinterpret a
child as being disruptive or naughty when in reality he did not understand what he was
expected to do (Basha & Zezlina-Phillipsa, 2006).

Interviews with high school students from diverse backgrounds found that factors that
positively affected the school experience were the presence of a specialist teacher, peers
who spoke the young person’s first language, and a positive whole school ethos (Hek,
2005). Narratives from students revealed that joining a new school can provide protective
factors such as a sense of belonging, social and emotional development and structure and
routine (Hek, 2005a and 2005b). It could also provide hope and optimism for their future
as it was viewed as a mechanism for achieving future aspirations (Hulusi & Oland, 2010;
Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007).

1.4.7.4. Children from a Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of an Irish Heritage

Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller (GRT) children are a vulnerable group both academically
(Department for Education, 2010) and socially (Bhopal, 2004; Lloyd & Stead, 2001). GRT
children consistently achieve the lowest attainments in Key Stage 2 English and
Mathematics than any other ethnic group (DfE, 2010). A review of the literature by
Wilkin, Derrington and Foster (2009) and studies that have elicited GRT family views
(Bhopal, 2004; Lloyd & Stead, 2001) highlight a variety of barriers for such children in
accessing education. These include poor attendance and interrupted learning (Wilkin,
Derrington & Foster, 2009; Lloyd & Stead, 2001), experiences of racism and discrimination
within society, bullying and name calling in schools (Bhopal, 2004; Lloyd & Stead, 2001)
and teacher misconceptions/negative stereotypes of parental attitudes to education. In
school, cited barriers included inconsistent or inadequate support, difficulties in sharing
information when pupils are registered at two schools and misidentification of Special
Educational Needs (Wilkin, Derrington, & Foster, 2009).

1.4.8. Overview of Experiences across Groups

The qualitative research that has focused upon specific groups of children has elicited
similarities and differences across the groups. Each group of children reported
experiencing anxiety which related to leaving old friends, developing new friendships, difficulties in relation to accessing the curriculum in terms of missing elements of the curriculum or repeating topics, and adjusting to a new school’s culture, rules and procedures. The research illuminated the differences between the groups, such as being part of a cultural group (military and GRT families), difficulties with regards to a loss of identity and language (refugee children), fear of a parent’s safety when going to war and adjusting to the changes of having a parent leave for extended periods of time and then return (military children), and adjustment to a new language and parental guilt (international mobility). Studies with GRT children highlighted that this group can face discrimination based around their distinct cultural identity which negatively impacts upon their school experience.

1.5. Systematic Literature Review
Several databases were systematically searched to locate publications that elicited children’s experiences of pupil mobility. A list of key words and phrases based upon children’s experiences of pupil mobility was developed. A summary of the databases, the search terms and exclusion criteria can be viewed in Appendix C. Reference lists of the documents retrieved from both literature searches were then examined to identify additional publications. Literature was also obtained following a review of related articles on Google Scholar and ERIC and from discussions with colleagues and university tutors.

The title and abstract of all identified documents were examined to ascertain their relevance to children’s experiences of pupil mobility. Stage 1 of the literature review identified that children from specific subgroups of mobility such as those from military families, children with refugee and asylum seeker or immigration status and GRT families had common experiences but also specific experiences associated with their background. Due to the specificity of these experiences a decision was made that these would be excluded from the systematic literature review.

1.5.1. Children and Young People’s Experiences of Pupil Mobility
There is very limited research that has illuminated pupil mobility by eliciting the views of the children and young people involved, particularly those who were not aligned with a
specific cultural group. The DfES, (2003a p. 13) summarised children’s experiences of pupil mobility as:

“While some will feel positive about moving schools, others will have regrets about leaving. Usually, their change of school has been accompanied by other significant life changes, such as moving house, changes in their family unit, or moving from a town or country many miles away. All new pupils will be nervous about coming to their new school, and for some, these nerves will be exacerbated by emotional difficulties associated with the circumstances that triggered their change of school.” (DfES, 2003a p. 15)

The systematic literature search identified four studies that explored the views of children and young people who experienced pupil mobility, of which only one has been peer reviewed. These are critiqued below.

In a peer reviewed study conducted in an American secondary school Rhodes (2008) explored pupils’ experiences of the transfer process. The study interviewed six African American pupils and two Caucasian siblings who had changed schools between four and fourteen times and consisted of one or more open ended interviews with the young people. The questions focused upon the young person recounting their experiences of starting a new school, how long it took them to feel they had settled in and how they went about the process. Rhodes’ study provided descriptive statistics and narrative examples of the findings. However Rhodes does not provide evidence of validity or reliability checks or of a systematic analysis of the data set. Nevertheless the results provide a valuable contribution to this under researched field.

A range of reasons for changing schools was cited, these included escaping domestic violence, eviction from a property and seeking a better school for academic reasons. When describing their first day experiences the students reported feelings of fear, loneliness, embarrassment and anxiety. Overall the predominant concern related to social concerns (58 per cent of responses) and emotional issues (28 per cent) followed by academic concerns (18 per cent). Rhodes reported that all the students felt that
identifying and forming social relationships was their first priority and was more important initially than their academic needs.

“All interviewees identified the need to develop friendships and workable peer relationships as their first priority, more important initially than any academic needs.” (Rhodes, 2008 p. 123)

Long term concerns included gaps in learning, especially instructional foundations in mathematics, and the disruption of long-term friendships.

The severity of the emotional responses and the social adjustment of the students highlighted the impact of associated factors on the move. Students who moved schools due to involuntary, unexpected or negative reasons cited more negative experiences as opposed to students who moved for planned academic reasons.

Rhodes related her results to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs stating that “students interviewed needed to feel safe first, then engage in peer social relationships, and only then are able to turn their attentions to issues such as academics” (p. 123). However there is no direct comparison of the results to Maslow’s framework.

Rhodes’ research has provided an insight into the views of pupils however it is limited as it did not explore the perceptions in light of psychological frameworks. Despite the lack of reporting in relation to the rigour of the analysis and design of the study, Rhodes provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of children and young people who experienced pupil mobility.

Alcock (2008) explored the academic and non-academic experiences of five high school students in New Jersey. This dissertation provided an insight into the experiences of young people from a middle and high socio-economic background who had changed school and residence within a three year period. The research consisted of in-depth telephone interviews with the participants that were then analysed through Hatch’s (2002) 9 step inductive analysis. Although this data was from a limited sample, it provided an in-depth analysis of the experiences of students who were not affected by social deprivation issues.
Alcock’s (2008) findings are summarised below:

Non-academic experiences:

- A variety of emotions, including excitement, worry, anxiety, helplessness, confusion, being upset, nervousness, and displacement in connection with changing their environment.
- A change of personal attitude from negative to positive or “more mature” as the students adapted to the move.
- Stress and anxiety in connection to changing their social group.
- Growing closer to their families despite negative emotions attached to the decision to move.
- Non-academic differences in connection with changing schools.
- A belief that their personal attitude was important to make new friends and adapt.
- The social reception in New Jersey to be initially harder to connect to, and/or less diverse.
- They found moving during high school to be different from moving during any other grade level.

Academic Experiences:

- A variety of emotions including confidence, nervousness, fear, and appreciation in connection to changing their classes.
- Lower grades after changing schools.
- Different learning environments after changing schools.
- Gaps and redundancies in their program of study after changing schools.
- A recovery in their grades after a period of time, ranging from three weeks to two years.
- A belief that non-academic factors impacted their grades in a negative way.
- A belief that academic placement was worse after changing schools and negatively impacted their grades and their ability to make appropriate friends.
In a non-peer reviewed piece of ethnographic research, MacArthur and Higgins (2007) adopted a social constructionist approach to understand the lived experiences of transient students and their families as part of action research within one school. This involved ascertaining the views of 6 families/13 students of Maori or Pakeha origin who had attended between 6 and 13 schools. The views of teachers and school personnel were also gathered. The interview data was combined with archival documents and field notes to create a narrative of the experiences. Each interview was open ended, they were transcribed and themes were identified. The analysis was shared with members of the research team to check consistency and reliability of the themes.

The research identified a variety of reasons why the children changed schools; parental work opportunities, to be in a safer neighbourhood and to access affordable housing. Mobility was also a consequence of negative school experiences; three families moved due to dissatisfaction with a previous school.

11 of the 13 students experienced academic and/or social difficulties, some due to their learning difficulties and whose school had also had a delay in receiving their records, leading to the school being unaware of the academic support needed. Other students cited having gaps in their learning or having to repeat a topic. Some students in the study were doing well academically and displayed resilience to overcome the transition. MacArthur and Higgins noted that these children tended to come from families that did not live in poverty.

The degree of friendships varied for the students; three students felt they had no friends whereas others felt they had made friendships or were part of social cliques such as sports teams. Most of the students reported experiencing bullying and eight of the students felt at times like they did not belong in the school or community, with one family describing themselves as feeling like “outsiders”. One factor that aided integration into the school was sport; the school had a strong rugby culture and the three students who played rugby cited that it helped them establish friends, although one boy described them more as “acquaintances” (p. 41). In relation to establishing relationships with the school staff “good teachers” were described by the students and their families as those
who “formed positive relationships with students; were kind and ‘nice’; and took time to explain school work so that students could understand what was required” (p. 19).

MacArthur and Higgins’ (2007) research provided an insight into young people’s experiences of pupil mobility in New Zealand. A limitation of the design is that it is a case study of a school in New Zealand and thus the experiences may not be able to be directly generalised to other schools, countries, cultures and age groups. The themes that emerged indicate that the major experiences of mobile pupils are with difficulties in forming friendships and the experience of bullying. The study enhances quantitative research through highlighting the gaps in learning that students’ experience.

In an extensive non peer reviewed report, Rumberger, Larson, Ream, & Palardy, (1999) used a mixed method analysis of pupil mobility within California. The researchers interviewed 19 mobile high school students and their parents from mixed cultural backgrounds and themes from the transcripts were identified.

The results highlighted the high variance of responses; individuals cited different effects of mobility, some of which were positive but most negative. The themes from the pupil and parent interviews suggested that mobility negatively affected the young person’s psychological wellbeing, the degree to which they socially engaged in school and after-school activities, their academic engagement and achievement and their school completion. Although the majority of the responses were negative five interviewees felt that mobility impacted positively upon their psychological wellbeing and social engagement. Other responses suggested that pupil mobility impacted positively upon academic attainment.

Common across all four studies was the variability in the reasons cited for the moves. This fits with the UK based research of Dobson, Henthorne, & Lynas, (2000) and also the strategic and reactive conceptualisation of pupil mobility (Rumberger, 2003). In relation to the experience of pupil mobility, across all the studies are the themes of social and academic concerns. The findings reflect the complexity of the phenomenon (Dobson et al., 2000) and the interacting variables that help and hinder children and young people’s experiences of pupil mobility.
1.5.2. Psychological Theories

Researchers have linked pupil mobility to numerous psychological theories however they have not directly interpreted their findings in a psychological light. It is beyond the scope of this literature review to discuss all the proposed psychological theories contained within the literature. This literature review will concentrate upon ecological system theory, resilience theory and social capital theory as these were the most cited within the literature.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1986) ecological system theory has been proposed (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004) as a framework to explain the impact pupil mobility has upon a child. Bronfenbrenner (1993) argued that children’s development is influenced by the interaction between the child’s inherited genetics and the socially organised subsystems that exist around the child. In relation to pupil mobility, the model provides a structured framework that draws attention to the variety of proximal factors (such as a pupil’s relationships with their teacher) and distal factors (such as policies and practices within the LA) that may influence the child’s experience.

Brewin and Statham (2011 p. 369-370) provided a useful description of the subsystems:

“The ‘**Microsystem**’, which comprises the child’s immediate environments. It refers to the environments that the child actually experiences.

The ‘**Mesosystem**’, which comprises connections between immediate environments (for example, the relationships that those involved directly with the child have, such as the way teachers communicate with each other).

The ‘**Exosystem**’, which comprises external environmental settings that affect the child indirectly (for example school management or local authority policy).

The ‘**Macrosystem**’ which refers to the wider cultural context in which a child lives, and includes beliefs and cultural values (for example what constitutes a ‘good education’).
The ‘Chronosystem’ was proposed later by Bronfenbrenner (1986). This refers to the influences of changes over time (that is, changes within the individual and changes within their environments).”

Bronfenbrenner (1993) acknowledged that the inclusion of the child’s genetics into the formulation had yet to have its validity demonstrated. However Bronfenbrenner asserted that validity is not the principal goal his ecological model aimed to achieve. A criticism of the theory is that the structured series of systems are not directly relevant to the complexities of the real world which is less orderly (Penn, 2005).

Ecological systems theory has been used by psychologists as a framework to understand a variety of topics including Children Looked After moving to Secondary School (Brewin & Statham, 2011), paternal involvement in the statutory process of special educational needs (Hart, 2011) and neighbourhood risk factors (Whipple, Evans, Barry, & Maxwell, 2010). Following their meta-analysis Mehana and Reynolds (2004) argued that pupil mobility created an “ecological transition” (p. 95) that included:

- Adaptation to a new school, new textbooks and curricula, teacher style and expectations, closeness of extended family, changes in relationships with peers and social environments, change of neighbourhood.
- Parental attitude to education and dissatisfaction with previous school.
- The influence of economic status and residential instability.

The applicability of the theory to research is summarised by Bronfenbrenner (1993) who stated that primary goal of the theory was:

“Not to claim answers, but to provide a theoretical framework that, through its application, will lead to further progress in discovering the processes and conditions that shape the course of human development.”
(Bronfenbrenner, 1993 p. 41)

Coleman’s (1988) social capital theory has been heavily cited within the literature as a way of conceptualising pupil mobility (Astone, 1994; South & Haynie, 2004; Tucker, 1998). Coleman’s theory proposes that pupil mobility, particularly when accompanied by a residential move, negatively affects children’s achievement because social ties are broken
which in turn reduces their levels of community and social support. The theory takes a sociological standpoint which neglects the interaction of child factors and the environment. Critics of this theory have cited methodological difficulties such as vague definitions as causing inconsistencies in supporting the research and an imbalanced focus upon kindred and neighbourhood factors at the expense of other factors. Despite the criticisms some researchers argue that Coleman’s theory has promise (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000) whilst others argue that more empirical research is required to enhance its validity (Van Deth, 2010).

Pupil mobility can also be viewed in terms of resilience to the transition. In a review of the literature for Barnardo’s Policy, Research and Influencing Unit, Newman & Blackburn (2002) explored various risk and resilience factors that impact upon children’s transitions. Newman and Blackburn (2002) defined a transition as:

“Any episode where children are having to cope with potentially challenging episodes of change, including progression from one developmental stage to another, changing schools, entering or leaving the care system, loss, bereavement, parental incapacity or entry to adulthood.” (Newman and Blackburn, 2002 p. 1)

Resilience was defined as:

“Resilient children are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, cope with change and uncertainty, and to recover faster and more completely from traumatic events or episodes.” (Newman & Blackburn, 2002 p.4)

The review concluded that risk and resilience factors related to three broad areas:

- Personal characteristics
- Family characteristics
- Environmental characteristics

The report concluded that adequate personal, family and environmental influences such as coping strategies, strong social networks, positive school experiences, a sense of mastery, a belief that one’s actions can make a difference, and participation in extra
curricula activities protect an individual against excessive demands and provide opportunities for the person to learn and adapt, thus increasing the chance of a successful transition. However, if these are not in place then the child is likely to experience a difficult transition and negative outcomes.

It should be noted that resilience is an under-researched field that has various pitfalls including; ambiguity of terminology used within the literature, heterogeneity in risks experienced and the competence achieved by individuals viewed as resilient (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000) and little research evidence of effective strategies (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).

Despite the criticisms of resilience theory, Newman and Blackburn (2002) summarise a variety of factors that promote resilience that relate to pupil mobility. These include:

- “Strong social support networks.
- The presence of at least one unconditionally supportive parent or parent substitute.
- A committed mentor or other person from outside the family.
- A sense of mastery and a belief that one's own efforts can make a difference.
- Positive school experiences.
- A range of extra-curricular activities that promote the learning of the capacity to re-frame adversities so that the beneficial as well as the damaging effects are recognised.
- Competencies and emotional maturity.
- The ability or opportunity to “make a difference” by for example helping others through volunteering or undertaking part time work.
• *Exposure to challenging situations which provide opportunities to develop both problem-solving abilities and emotional coping skills.***

(Newman & Blackburn, 2002 p.8-9)

1.6. **Summary and Rationale for this Study**

It is widely accepted that pupil mobility is linked to lower academic outcomes (Kerbow, 1996; Demie, 2002; DfES, 2003a) which are heightened when the pupil moves more than twice (Gruman et al., 2008; Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Temple & Reynolds, 1999). However, ascertaining the exact impact is difficult due to the complexity of the phenomenon and the associated factors (Ofsted, 2002) thus the exact impact upon primary school attainment is a contentious area.

Research has found that pupils change school for a variety of reasons (Dobson et al., 2000) which can be said to be strategic reasons or reactive reasons (Rumberger, 2003). These impact upon school adjustment; students who move for strategic reasons generally fare better than pupils who move due to reactionary moves (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007; Rhodes, 2008; Rumberger, 2003).

British and American research has found that pupil mobility is linked to a variety of emotional and social difficulties for the pupils, particularly when combined with a residential move (Jelleyman & Spencer, 2008; Melhuish et al., 2008; South et al., 2007).

Research that has elicited student experiences of pupil mobility highlights the similarities and differences between the groups associated with the phenomenon (such as military children, refugee children and GRT children). There is limited research that has elicited the views of children who are not aligned to a particular cultural group. Within the literature common experiences involved difficulties relating to leaving friends, developing new friendships, the continuity of the curriculum and adjusting to a new school’s culture, rules and procedures (Alcock, 2008; Rhodes, 2008).

To date there is very limited peer reviewed qualitative research that has illuminated pupil mobility through the exploration of children’s experiences and their perspectives of changing schools, none of which is UK based or based upon primary school age children.
Although certain researchers have alluded to psychological theories none have formally interpreted their data in a psychological light.

This piece of research attempts to address this gap by providing a qualitative exploration into children’s experiences of changing schools and the factors that were perceived to affect their experience, through interviews with the children, their parents and teachers. It is acknowledged that pupil mobility was associated with different cultural groups (DfES, 2003a) and to make the research manageable, given the time restraints, it focused upon children who changed primary school alongside a residential move and on those who were not part of a particular cultural group such as military family, refugee status or GRT children. The rationale behind this was that research had identified that this group of children were most prevalent within the author’s LA (Dobson & Pooley, 2004) and it addressed a gap in the literature that had yet to explore this subgroup of children.

This piece of research aimed to explore the following research questions:

Research question 1: How do children experience pupil mobility?

Research question 2: How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?
2. Methodology

This section critically discusses the methodology used to answer the research questions. A summary of the research is presented followed by the epistemological stance of the researcher. The sampling and participant recruitment strategies are critically discussed followed by the data collection techniques, the data analysis procedures and the steps taken to maximise the trustworthiness of the study’s findings. This section concludes with the ethical considerations pertinent to this research and a critique of the methodology adopted.

2.1. Summary of the Research Method

This research was designed to provide insight into children’s experiences of pupil mobility when combined with a residential move into a northern coastal town and the factors that were perceived to affect the experience. It aimed to explore the following research questions:

Research question 1: How do children experience pupil mobility?

Research question 2: How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

The research adopted a multiple case study design with embedded (multiple) units of analysis (Yin, 2009, p. 60). The methods used within the case study consisted of semi-structured interviews with the children, their parents and class teacher. Archival records such as Ofsted reports, LA statistics, fieldwork notes and a research diary were used to provide contextual information to triangulate with the qualitative data.

Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. A computer-assisted qualitative data analysis tool, NVivo8, was utilised to facilitate a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the data sets. The results section provides an overview of the themes from each case study. An overview of the research can be viewed in Figure 1.
Figure 1: Overview of the Research
2.2. Epistemological Stance of the Researcher

Research methodologies are dependent upon the epistemological stance of the researcher (Coolican, 2009). This section provides definitions of key concepts before discussing the stance taken by different paradigms. The section concludes by exploring the epistemological position that guided this research; critical realism.

Epistemology is concerned with “the nature, origin and limitations of knowledge. It is also concerned with the justification of truth claims.” (American Psychological Association [APA], 2009, p. 170)

Associated with epistemology is ontology. Ontology is concerned with “the question of existence itself” (APA, 2009 p. 339).

A positivist epistemological position would be:

“All meaningful propositions must be reducible to sensory experience and observation.” (APA, 2009, p. 382)

Positivist researchers strive for:

“Objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterning, the construction of law and rules of behaviour, and the ascription of causality.” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 27-28)

In contrast a relativist epistemological position would be:

“The assertion that there exists no absolute grounds for truth of knowledge claims. Thus, what is considered true will depend on individual judgments and local condition of culture, reflecting individual and collective experience.” (APA, 2009, p. 429).

A relativist researcher strives to:

“Understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors...where meanings and interpretation are paramount.” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 28)

These two ends of the spectrum have attracted criticism in relation to social research. Positivist research is seen to be difficult to replicate in social settings due to the
complexity and interactive factors that are inherent, as illustrated by Robson; “constant conjuncture in its strictest sense is so rare as to be virtually non-existent” (Robson, 2004, p. 21). It also neglects the influence of the researcher’s interpretations and perspectives on the findings. In contrast, in relativist paradigms the research participants are viewed as jointly constructing the reality with the researcher (Robson, 2004). Some authors have criticised this approach through its “divorce from science” (Robson, 2004, p. 42).

This research adopted a critical realist epistemological position that was pioneered by Roy Bhaskar in the 1970s. Critical realism has been described as a middle ground (Robson, 2011) or “third option” (Sayer, 2000 p. 2) to the positivist and relativist paradigms.

Critical realism has the belief that the world is independent to our thoughts and perceptions of it (Sayer, 2000) and that a scientist’s conceptualisation is a way of knowing that reality which is likely to be provisional (Bryman, 2012).

In relation to research, critical realism acknowledges that closed system conditions (such as experimental conditions) do not occur in the social world (Sayer, 2000). Critical realists believe that “causal outcomes follow from mechanisms acting in contexts” (Pawson & Tilley, 1997 p. 58) and this is not a fixed relationship but contingent upon the conditions of the context (Sayer, 2000) that may not be directly observable (Bryman, 2012). Critical realism does not assume that all causes must be physical and acknowledges that social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful and this needs to be understood (Sayer, 2000). Thus research involves identifying generative mechanisms, understanding how they work and discovering whether they have been activated and under what conditions (Sayer, 2000). A graphical representation of a realist explanation, adapted from Robson (2011 p. 33), can be viewed in Figure 2.
Figure 2: A Representation of the Realist Explanation

Bhaskar (1975) elaborates on this through the concepts of intratransitive and transitive dimensions of knowledge.

Intratransitive knowledge relates to:

“*The objects of science (or other kinds of propositional knowledge) in the sense of the things we study – physical processes or social phenomena.*”

(Sayer, 2000 p. 10)

Transitive knowledge relates to:

“*The theories and discourse as media and resources of science.*” (Sayer, 2000 p. 10)

Thus critical realists explore a course of an event, but also the mechanisms that generated it (Collier, 1994). The exploration of intratransitive and transitive knowledge allows for the use of qualitative and quantitative methods to generate and explore theories.

Kelly (2008) summarises the ontological assumptions of critical realism as:

- The role of values in enquiry.
- The theoretical nature of facts.
- Reality is complex, multiple and constructed.
- Any particular set of data is explicable by more than one theory.
The ontological assumptions of critical realism have led researchers to argue it is a pragmatic approach to real world research (Robson, 2002) and is particularly suited to the work of educational psychologists as it provides a theoretical framework for “analysing and acting in the complexity of social and educational contexts” (Kelly, 2008, p. 25). Researchers (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004) have cited Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory as a framework to understand pupil mobility as it reflects the complex nature and inter-related factors that impact upon the experience. Kelly (2008) argues that this theory is consistent with a critical realist view of the world.

The current research acknowledged that there is not an absolute reality in relation to the effects of pupil mobility. The research hypothesised that children would each experience psychological phenomena within their own contexts which could then be compared to the literature.

2.3. Research Design

This section discusses the suitability of a case study approach in relation to answering the research questions before exploring the methods used to recruit the participants and gather the data.

A multiple case study design was chosen to answer the research questions. This design can provide rich information (Coolican, 2009), detailed accounts of lived experiences about a situation or context (Cohen et al., 2000) and can bring clarity or insight to a situation (Stake, 1995).

Yin (2009, p. 18) defines a case study as:

“An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

A case study design:

- “Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
In relation to pupil mobility, the case study design was appropriate as the literature review highlighted blurred boundaries that were associated with a variety of factors that could impact upon children’s experiences such as low income, housing difficulties and strategic or reactionary moves (Machin et al., 2006; Schafft, 2006). The case study methodology allowed the researcher to explore the research questions in light of the inherent associated factors.

Yin (2009 p. 27) provides five components to the design of a case study:

- “A study’s questions;
- Its propositions, if any;
- Its unit(s) of analysis;
- The logic linking the data to the propositions;
- The criteria for interpreting findings.”

The literature review enabled the researcher to narrow the topic of the questions and identify suitable gaps in the literature to inform the study’s questions (Yin, 2009). The systematic literature review generated the following research questions:

1. How do children experience pupil mobility?
2. How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

A study’s propositions direct attention to what should be examined in the study, keep the research feasible and resist the temptation to cover everything (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) argues that not every study should have propositions but the main criteria are its relationship with the purpose and the rationale for the study. The propositions in this
study related to how children experienced pupil mobility when combined with a residential move and child and systemic factors that affected the experience.

The units of analysis describe the actual case and the methods used to study it. A case is derived from the research questions and can be a situation, an individual, a group, an organisation or any other point of interest within a context (Robson, 2011). To answer the research questions a multiple case study design with embedded (multiple) units of analysis was adopted. The cases were children who experienced pupil mobility alongside a residential move in a northern coastal town in England. The embedded units of analysis consisted of interviews with the children, their parents and teachers. Grey data such as Ofsted reports, Local Authority statistics and field notes were used to illuminate the context of the case studies.

Qualitative data collection techniques are the predominant method used in exploratory research (Robson, 2011) although case study designs can contain a mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques (Punch, 2005, Yin, 2009 and Robson, 2011). This research adopted a purely qualitative design; this was suited to the research questions as it allowed for a holistic illumination of the children’s experiences (Gray, 2004) and the opportunity to triangulate the views through the perceptions of key adults who supported the child at that time. The adults provided insights that the child participants would not necessarily have been aware of such as family factors and school processes that impacted upon the experience.

Participant observation was considered as a unit of analysis however it was deemed too impractical and unethical to obtain informed consent to observe children on their first day at a new school. A survey design was considered as it would have provided a greater number of experiences and views to be gathered. However, these would have been in less detail and would have required prior research to identify relevant questions.

The design lent itself to the critical realist position of the researcher and focused upon understanding the experience alongside the mechanisms that affected it, as opposed to a more quantitative design that would be better suited to measuring the degree of incidence of the phenomenon (Yin, 2009).
In summary the multiple case study design was suited to the research questions as it allowed the researcher to:

“Understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its content.” (Punch, 2005, p. 144)

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen to systematically analyse the data and interpret the findings. This allowed the research to “reflect reality and unpick the surface of reality” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). Yin’s (2009, p. 87) levels of questions were adopted as an organisational framework for the analytical process and can be viewed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Levels of Questions Asked of a Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
<td>Questions asked of specific interviewees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
<td>Questions asked of the individual case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
<td>Questions asked of the pattern of findings across multiple cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4</strong></td>
<td>Questions asked of an entire study – calling on information beyond the case study evidence and including other literature or published data that may have been reviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 5</strong></td>
<td>Normative questions about policy recommendations and conclusions, going beyond the narrow scope of the study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.4. Sampling and Participant Recruitment**

This section provides details with regards to the context of the research followed by the sampling and participant recruitment strategies. The section concludes with a contextual overview of the case studies.
2.4.1. Background to the Local Authority

The data was collected in a unitary coastal Local Authority (LA) situated in the North West of England.

Social deprivation was a predominant factor within the LA. The LA was ranked within the top 10 most deprived districts in England in relation to the numbers of deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LASO) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). The overall poverty levels per LASO in the authority ranged from 55 per cent to 9 per cent with a median of 25.8 per cent. Within the LA, 67 per cent of the children in poverty lived in single parent families and 32 per cent lived in two children households (Anonymous LA Statistics, 2011).

During the 2010-2011 academic year the rate of pupil mobility in the LA for primary school aged children was 15.9 per cent (Anonymous LA Statistics, 2011). In comparison, the national average rate of pupil mobility was 6.3 per cent in other unitary authorities, 14.2 per cent in inner London, 5.8 per cent in Metropolitan areas and 5.7 per cent in Shire counties (Ofsted, 2002).

A case study of the LA by Dobson and Pooley (2004) identified several factors that influenced pupil mobility in the LA. These related to three main areas; moving to and from the town, movement within the town and families of Gypsy/Roma or Traveller (GRT) status. The movement of GRT children was cited as only a small percentage of mobility. Mobility within the town was predominately associated with movement between council accommodations, parents changing employment or for improved living conditions. In relation to movement to and from the town, Dobson and Pooley (2004) cited various pull and push factors.

Pull factors included:

- The availability of cheap residential accommodation, especially out of season.
- Actual or supposed availability of employment. Some families were reported to arrive in the town looking for work whereas others moved as part of their job such as council workers, publicans and those working for the church.
- Positive memories and perceptions of the resort.
Push factors included:

- Loss of employment, including seasonal employment.
- Family break-up, new parental relationships or experiences of domestic or other forms of violence.
- Social networks.
- The advertisement of accommodation outside the town.

Dobson and Pooley (2004) noted that for some parents mobility was seen as “an opportunity for a fresh start” whereas for others the mobility was “a way of life and children had attended many different schools, missing periods of education along the way” (p. 89).

2.4.2. Participating Schools

The research was conducted in two primary schools. Both schools experienced levels of pupil mobility above the national average and were able to identify children who were eligible for the research. The characteristics of the schools can be viewed in Table 4:
Table 4: School Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Number of Pupils on Role</th>
<th>Rate of Pupil Mobility*</th>
<th>Percentage of Children Living in Poverty**</th>
<th>Ofsted Rating***</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>46.8% and 35.2 %</td>
<td>Outstanding (2008)</td>
<td>Town Centre</td>
<td>Modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>21.8 %</td>
<td>Good (2011)</td>
<td>Residential area</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Anonymous Local Authority Statistics for the academic year: 2010-2011

** Department for Communities and Local Government (2011)

*** Office for Standards in Education publications (Bryrne, 2008; Cordey 2011)
2.4.3. Sampling Strategy

The research population of the study was children who have experienced pupil mobility when combined with a residential move. This particular characteristic was selected as it was the predominant reason for pupil mobility within the author’s Local Authority (Dobson and Pooley, 2004) and provided access to appropriate participants (Stake, 1995; Silverman, 2010).

A purposeful sampling strategy was utilised to establish boundaries for the research (Punch, 2005; Yin, 2009) and promote homogeneity in the sample. This involved;

“seek[ing] out groups, settings and individuals where…the processes being studied are most likely to occur”. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994 p. 202)

The purposeful sampling strategy required careful consideration of the parameters of the population being researched (Silverman, 2010) and resulted in the formation of inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria consisted of children of primary school age who had experienced pupil mobility and a residential move within six months of the data collection. The six month cut off point allowed the balance between the increased likelihood that the participants would be able to recall their experiences and the practicalities of identifying a satisfactory number of suitable participants.

The literature review elicited that certain groups associated with pupil mobility had unique contextual and cultural factors that may impact upon the children’s experiences. In light of this, children of military personnel, GRT children and children seeking asylum fell outside the research population and were excluded from the research.

Careful consideration was given to the ethics of interviewing children and families who had experienced potentially distressing events alongside mobility, such as domestic violence or the need for social care involvement (Dobson and Pooley, 2004). They were excluded from the research because ethically the research could have increased the strain upon the family.
Careful consideration was given to the child being able to access the qualitative methods of the research and the potential effect of this upon the reliability of their data. Thus children with a record of speech and language difficulties were also removed from the sample.

An overview of the purposeful sampling criteria can be viewed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Overview of the Purposeful Sampling Criteria**

| Inclusion Criteria                      | • Primary school age                     |
|                                       | • Experienced pupil mobility and a residential move |
|                                       | • The move had taken place within six months of data collection |

| Exclusion Criteria                     | • Changed school without a residential move |
|                                       | • History of domestic violence             |
|                                       | • The family were open to social care      |
|                                       | • GRT status                               |
|                                       | • Military family status                   |
|                                       | • Asylum seeker status                     |
|                                       | • Speech and language difficulties         |

Despite the inclusion and exclusion criteria being established it became apparent during Ruby’s child interview (case study 4) that she had difficulty fully understanding and answering the questions. Given the impact upon the reliability of the results this child’s interview data was removed from the data set and insights of her experience were generated from the perspectives of her parents and teacher.

### 2.4.4. Participant Recruitment

Six primary schools were invited to take part in the research, on the basis that LA statistics suggested they experienced high levels of pupil mobility.
Each school was approached by the researcher who initially contacted either the head teacher or a senior member of school staff. A brief outline of the research was discussed and followed up with an email containing an overview of the research (Appendix D). Two schools opted out of the research at this stage. A meeting was held between the researcher and a member of the Senior Management Team where the practicality of the research was discussed and formal consent was given by the schools. At this stage the schools checked their records against the inclusion and exclusion criteria and a member of staff who knew the families contacted the parents to ascertain if they were interested in taking part in the research.

Two schools reported that they did not have pupils matching the eligibility criteria or families who wanted to join the research. The schools thus left the research. The principal reasons cited were the involvement of social care or the children having experienced domestic violence in their history.

The two remaining schools identified four families/five children who were interested in taking part in the research.

A standardised procedure inviting the families to take part in the research was conducted (Appendix E). One parent did not attend the initial meeting on two occasions and subsequently opted out of the research.

2.4.5. Overview of Participants

Data were collected from four children, five parents and four class teachers. An overview of the participants for each case study can be viewed in Table 6. To promote trustworthiness of the findings the data from Ruby’s child interview was removed from the data analysis as she experienced difficulty maintaining her concentration and responding consistently to the interview questions.
Table 6: Overview of the Research Participants

| Case Study 1 (pilot case study) | • Year 3 child  
|                               | • Father  
|                               | • Year 2 and 3 class teachers |
| Case Study 2                  | • Year 4 child  
|                               | • Mother  
|                               | • Year 4 class teacher |
| Case Study 3                  | • Year 5 child  
|                               | • Mother and father  
|                               | • Year 5 class teacher |
| Case Study 4                  | • Mother and father  
|                               | • Year 3 class teacher |

Data was collected during the interviews to provide background demographics. This can be viewed in Table 7.
Table 7: Demographic Information of the Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Reason for move to LA</th>
<th>Who they moved with</th>
<th>Parent employment status</th>
<th>Number of previous schools</th>
<th>Location of former address</th>
<th>Family in the town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>St. James’ School</td>
<td>To live at grandmother’s hotel</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
<td>Grandparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Oakridge School</td>
<td>To live near family</td>
<td>Mother and two sisters</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>South East England</td>
<td>Auntie and Grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Oakridge School</td>
<td>Town features</td>
<td>Mother, father and two sisters and nephew</td>
<td>Carer and disability allowance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Oakridge School</td>
<td>Town features</td>
<td>Mother, father and two sisters and nephew</td>
<td>Carer and disability allowance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5. Data Collection Techniques

In this section the data collection methods are presented and critically discussed. The pilot study is discussed followed by the interview procedures. This includes the factors that were considered when interviewing the adult and child participants; the structure of the interviews, the use of audio recording equipment, the use of counselling and interpersonal skills and the dual role of the researcher. The section concludes with a description of the interview process of the child, parent and teacher participants.

2.5.1. Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale version of the real thing that allows researchers to check the feasibility of their data collection techniques (Robson, 2011, p. 141). Pilot studies help “to refine your data collection plans with respect to the content of the data and the procedures to be followed” (Yin, 2009 p. 92).

Pilot case participants are often selected due to convenience, access and geographical proximity (Yin, 2009). Robson (2011) argued that often there are no equivalent participants due to the particular areas and features being studied. In these cases Robson claims that the pilot study can be included within the main dataset although they also serve an exploratory function where some of the research questions are methodological. Given that the research involved eliciting participants’ recollections of pupil mobility it was felt that no equivalent participants could be located apart from children who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A pilot study was therefore conducted to explore whether the data collection techniques were a suitable tool to answer the research questions and this study is presented in the Results section as case study 1. The methodological findings from the pilot study can be viewed in Table 8.
Table 8: Positive and Negatives Findings from the Pilot Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Factors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The semi-structured interview guides elicited relevant responses to answer the research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helen appeared to positively respond to the visual prompts such as the feelings cards, scaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questions and the playground picture. These appeared to help to prompt and scaffold her answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helen was able to identify her feelings and the factors that had influenced her experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The parent and teacher interviews provided additional insights that Helen may have been unaware of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The member checking interviews allowed the researcher to confirm his understanding and probe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguous information and interesting points that emerged from the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Factors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The interviews predominately elicited positive factors and comparatively few themes around what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hindered the move. This may have been due to the move being viewed positively and Helen settling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quickly into the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helen predominantly provided short answers and had difficulty expanding upon her answers when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probed further. This may have been related to her age (7 years).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helen appeared to confuse the word “surprise”. During the interview Helen did not elaborate on this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and when probed further at the member checking interview she aligned this with feeling shy. Helen's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father felt it may have related to being surprised at the school features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helen’s Year 2 teacher had difficulty remembering the time of her transition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the data collection tools elicited rich information to answer the research questions, the original interview guides were used for the remaining interviews with minor adjustments that included:

• Supplementary cue cards of family, school staff and children to help scaffold the children’s thinking around factors that impacted upon their experience.
• The use of additional questions to help the teachers reflect back to the time when the child was undergoing their transition.
2.5.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data to answer the research questions. Semi-structured interviews are described by Robson as:

“The interviewer has an interview guide that serves as a checklist of topics to be covered and a default wording and order for the questions, but the wording and order are often substantially modified based on the flow of the interview, and additional unplanned questions are asked to follow up on what the interviewee says.” (Robson, 2011, p. 280)

Semi-structured interviews were suited to answering the research questions as phenomenological research allows the researcher to enter the world of the research participant (Willig, 2003) and allows exploration of the quality and texture of the participant’s experiences. They are also particularly appropriate when working with a variety of participants including adults and children (Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2007).

Semi-structured interviews were appropriate to answer the research questions as they were a “flexible and adaptable way of finding things out” (Robson, 2011 p. 280). Having flexibility as to the sequence with which the questions were delivered, the time spent on each question and the wording of the questions (Cohen et al., 2000; Lyons & Coyle, 2007; Robson, 2011) was particularly useful in eliciting the views from the participants. The flexibility enabled the children to have autonomy as to whether to use the visual prompts, thus providing them with an element of control as to the direction of the interview (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). It also allowed the researcher to follow up unexpected comments and avenues of discussion and facilitated a relaxed feel to the interviews.

The disadvantages of using a semi-structured interview design were acknowledged. The flexible nature of the interviews can impact upon the trustworthiness of the findings (Robson, 2011). Section 2.7 describes the steps taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Practical disadvantages of semi-structured interviews included relying upon co-operation from the interviewees and it being a time consuming process (Robson, 2011). The time demands consisted of researching and developing resources for the child interviews, engaging both the child and adult participants prior to the main interviews, confirming appointments, rescheduling missed appointments, writing up notes and
conducting the interviews (Robson, 2011). Other aspects of time relate to checking the accuracy of the transcriptions, ensuring the interview questions were pertinent to the research questions and that they had been piloted to ensure they were fit for purpose (Bryman, 2012).

The process of conducting the interview was also a demanding process upon the researcher and required high levels of interpersonal skills (Robson, 2011). Throughout the adult and child interviews the researcher was mindful to follow Robson’s direction (2011 p. 282). This included:

- “Listening more than you speak
- Put questions in a straightforward, clear and non-threatening way
- Eliminate cues which lead interviewees to respond in a particular way
- Enjoy it (or at least look as though you do)”.

The researcher utilised counseling skills throughout each interview as a means to facilitate Robson’s advice (this is discussed in section 2.5.5) and was particularly mindful to phrase questions and use the visual prompts in the child interviews in as open a way as possible in order to avoid leading the responses.

2.5.3. Interview Schedule

Each interview followed a standardised interview schedule. The interview schedules can be viewed in Appendices F, G and H. This was piloted in Case Study 1 and minor amendments were made in the child interviews, such as the inclusion of additional visual prompts of family, peers and school staff to help scaffold the children’s answers and questions and to help the teacher and parent to think back to when the child joined the class (please refer to the interview schedule Appendix F where this addition is highlighted). Each schedule followed Robson’s (2011, p.284) interview sequence that consisted of an;

- Introduction
- Warm up
- Main body of interview
- Cool off
- Closure

The introduction contained key prompts (such as the research questions and a brief rationale of the research) to help the researcher tune in to the research. A script and a checklist ensured informed consent was obtained and confidentiality explained in a consistent manner.

The warm up section of the interviews consisted of non-threatening questions to obtain biographical and contextual information and for the children a question and answer game was played.

The interview questions were carefully constructed to ensure that they were pertinent to the research questions and elicited a holistic picture of the case studies. The Every Child Matters (ECM) Five Outcomes; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being were adopted as an organisational framework to guide the creation of the questions. The ECM framework was selected as government legislation recommends it as a framework for universal services to support every child to achieve well-being, develop their full potential and prevent negative outcomes (DfES, 2004). It had also been used in other DocEdChPsy theses (White, 2010) as an organisational framework for data collection. A time frame model was adopted within the questions in order to explore the perceptions of the child’s experience before the residential move, on the child’s first day at school and at the time of the interview.

The interview schedule contained closing comments and prompts to ensure that each participant was debriefed after each interview with regards to the purpose of the interview, the option to remove any comments and to gain consent for a further interview to member check the themes.

2.5.4. Audio Recording and Transcription

A digital audio recorder was used in each interview. The researcher was aware that participants may have felt inhibited by the presence of the recorder (Coolican, 2009) and
care was taken to minimise any concern the participants may have had. The use of the recorder was explained in the participant consent forms and discussed prior to the interviews, where written consent was also obtained. To help the child participants become accustomed to the recorder it was shown and discussed at the initial meeting. The researcher followed Coolican’s (2009) advice and placed the recorder in a subtle position in the room and the batteries were checked prior to each interview.

The interviews were fully transcribed by a professional typist and relevant sections of the member check interviews were partially transcribed by the researcher. A transcription should be rigorous and provide a thorough orthographic script (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and be a verbatim account of verbal and nonverbal utterances (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cohen et al., 2000). Each interview was checked by the researcher for accuracy prior to the data analysis. It is acknowledged that by the nature of audio recording it was inevitable that aspects such as some of the nonverbal communication would be lost. To compensate for this the researcher was mindful to verbally reflect and clarify the interviewees’ body language throughout the interviews. This helped to clarify the meaning behind the actions and also acted as a prompt to include them within the transcription.

2.5.5. Counselling and Interpersonal Skills

Exploratory interviews often contain emotional topics and require skills from the interviewer to manage the situation and enable the interviewee to talk freely, openly and honestly (Cohen et al., 2000). Throughout the interviews the researcher utilised active listening skills, taught during the counseling skills element of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology course. This promoted an emotionally safe climate, showed that the researcher was interested and listening, and ensured the opportunity to reflect and clarify the researcher’s understanding of the participants’ views (Coolican, 2009; Willig, 2003). The value of this was evident in the child interviews where the participants openly told the researcher when they had misunderstood a statement and this prompted further discussion in order to clarify the point.

Verbal and non-verbal probes were used to help the participants elaborate upon interesting points. These consisted of descriptive questions to provide general accounts of events, structural questions to explore how the interviewee organised their knowledge
(such as what does it mean to you that…?), contrasting questions to allow comparisons, and evaluative questions to explore the participants’ feelings about the subject (Willig, 2003). Non-verbal cues consisted of non-verbal utterances, head nods and gestures (Coolican, 2009).

### 2.5.6. Dual Role of the Researcher

The dual role of researcher and trainee educational psychologist (TEP) was acknowledged throughout the research process. This had the potential to create a power imbalance with the participants, as the researcher may have been perceived in relation to the TEP role as opposed to the researcher role. The research followed Asselin's (2003) guidance in reducing the impact of the dual role; it was stressed throughout the recruitment process and before each interview that the author was acting as a researcher from the University of Manchester whose aim was to expand his understanding of pupil mobility and confidentiality was carefully discussed. All written communication contained the University of Manchester letterhead and logo.

Working in the schools as a TEP subjected the researcher to the risk of making assumptions about the culture of the school, which could have prevented him exploring deeper meanings or avenues further (Asselin, 2003). Being a TEP as opposed to an established EP allowed the researcher to adopt a “naive” attitude towards the schools, as a full relationship and understanding of the school processes had not yet been established.

### 2.5.7. Eliciting Children’s Views

When interviewing children it is important to ensure that the techniques used are accessible given their age and development (Greene & Hogan, 2005). Other key factors include promoting engagement and preventing the child participants becoming bored and losing attention (Colucci, 2007). Children, like adults, are influenced by the nature of the research setting and by the dynamics of adult-child relationships which can be influenced by their desire to please rather than be truthful (Greene & Hogan, 2005). To minimise this the room was chosen to ensure that it was neutral and not associated with any negative experiences such as disciplinary or testing experiences and a script (Appendix I) was used
to ensure each child understood why they had been approached, to give them key information, and to ensure they were able to provide informed consent.

Various strategies were used to reduce the adult-child imbalance. It was explained that the child was viewed as an expert who could help the researcher understand what it is like for children who change schools and what helped or hindered the process. Meetings with the children started with a non-threatening and fun activity (Freeman & Mathison, 2009). This took the form of an “about me game” (a series of cards that asks the young person to complete sentences with regards to their likes and dislikes). This also served to reinforce the message that the interview was about their perceptions and opinions and not a matter of right or wrong answers (Hill, Layboune, & Borland, 1996). Each child was given opportunities to have elements of control, such as the presence of a familiar adult, whether to sit on a chair or the floor, to meet with the researcher or go back to their lesson. Visual cards were provided for the children to enable them to stop the interview, pass on a question, or answer a question later in the interview.

The choice of activities was informed by prior research and therapeutic activities that have explored children’s experiences. Research has previously adopted visual prompts such as pictorial vignettes and outline faces of different feelings (Hill et al., 1996), dolls, picture and cartoon prompts (Greene & Hogan, 2005), sentence completion cards and role plays (Hill et al., 1996), projective techniques, card sort activities and rating scales (Colucci, 2007). Therapeutic work also generates activities to promote engagement and understanding, these include the use of a Salmon line (Beaver, 1996) and school situations pictures (Beaver, 1996).

In the child interviews interactive activities were used, these are outlined in the child interview section. These included the use of prompt cards of different feelings (Hill et al., 1996). The specific cards chosen were used in schools across the LA during circle time. These were colour cards of stylised boy and girl faces with the word of the emotion written underneath the picture. The cards consisted of happy, sad, worried, surprised, embarrassed, confused, cross, sleepy and other. The use of the cards varied depending upon the children’s age and developmental level; the older participants relied on them less than the younger children. Each card that was selected was discussed with the
participant during the interview to clarify that the researcher understood the meaning the child placed upon the card. To avoid limiting the responses to the cards a blank card was used with the word “other”. Following the pilot study additional prompt cards were used to help the child participants expand upon their answers and to prompt discussion. These consisted of colour drawings of general representations of a family, students, a school, teachers and a blank “other” card.

Table 9: The Purpose of the Child Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Contact</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial meeting</strong></td>
<td>• Create rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure informed consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check understanding of prompt cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduce adult-child imbalance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child interview</strong></td>
<td>• Explore child’s views and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member check interview</strong></td>
<td>• Clarify ambiguous terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow up interesting points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check accuracy of findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.8. Initial Meeting with Child Participants

The researcher met each child participant, accompanied by a familiar member of staff, prior to the data collection interview. This ensured that the child participants provided informed consent and gave an opportunity to practice the activity-based techniques (Salmon line and emotion card prompts).

A question and answer activity, where the child was asked a series of open ended questions, was used to build a rapport between the researcher and the child and to emphasise that there were no right or wrong answers as it was the child’s views that the researcher was interested in. Example questions were:
- My favourite television programme is?
- If I had £20 I would buy?
- My favourite food is?

2.5.9. Child Interview

The child interviews lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. Chloe (Child 2) requested that her mother be present during the interview. To minimise the impact of this the mother was briefed prior to the interview to remain as quiet as possible and write down any points, comments or observations to discuss at the end of the interview. The child was sat facing away from her mother and when she tried to engage her in discussion her mother explained to her that she should talk to the researcher as it was her views that were important as she herself had already talked to the researcher. Ruby (Child 4) requested that a member of staff be present. The member of staff sat at the back of the room and completed some work and did not engage in the interview. Table 10 illustrates how the interview techniques linked to the research questions;
Table 10: Child Interview Techniques in Relation to the Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do children experience pupil mobility?</td>
<td>Semi-structured questions with visual prompts (emotions pictures, key people prompt cards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salmon line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playground situations picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?</td>
<td>Semi-structured questions with visual prompts (key people prompt cards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up verbal probes such as “what helped?” and “what made it harder?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brainstorming activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.10. Teacher Interview

Each teacher was interviewed in their classroom at the end of the school day. As case study 1 moved in the summer term and was interviewed in the autumn term their Year 2 and Year 3 teachers were interviewed together. Case studies 2, 3 and 4 involved only one teacher in the interview. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 53 minutes. An interview schedule was followed (Appendix F). A “do not disturb” sign was placed on the door of the classroom. The sign however did not prevent interruptions by cleaners or children wishing to collect an item from the room. These interruptions were removed from the transcription and after each break the researcher summarised the previous comment to help the participant locate their train of thought.

The data from the teacher interviews was primarily used to answer research question 2 but their observations and perspectives of the child were used to triangulate the child and parent accounts of their experience.
2.5.11. Parent Interview

The parent interviews were conducted in school. An interview schedule was followed for each interview (Appendix G) and the researcher followed up unexpected but interesting points or comments. As case study 3 and 4 were sisters, the parents were asked each question for both children in turn. Throughout the interview the researcher clarified which child the parents were discussing.

2.5.12. Member Checking Interviews

Member checking interviews were conducted with all the child participants, parents 1 and 2 and the teachers for case study 1. The remaining teachers declined to take part in the member checking interview due to prior commitments related to the end of term and the parents of case study 3 and 4 did not attend the interview and the researcher was unable to re-arrange a convenient time within the time scales of the research.

The interviews allowed the researcher to gain an updated picture of the situation, clarify the accuracy of his themes and explore ambiguous information from the main interviews. Field notes were taken during these interviews and the additional comments were transcribed. The transcription was added to the thematic analysis and followed the same coding process as the first interviews. The value of the member check interviews is discussed in section 2.7.2.2.

2.6. Data Analysis

This section describes the methods used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is critically discussed, followed by the decisions that guided the analysis. Methods used to facilitate the analysis such as audio recording, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, the use of a fieldwork diary and fieldwork notes are critically presented.

2.6.1. Thematic Analysis

The interview data was analysed by thematic analysis. In their seminal paper Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as:

“A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79)
2.6.1.1. Epistemology

The epistemological position of the research guides how researchers approach the analysis and construct their findings. Thematic analysis is compatible with a wide range of theoretical positions and as such has been widely used by qualitative researchers (Coolican, 2009). It can lend itself to realist paradigms through reporting the experiences, meanings and reality of the participants, or a constructionist paradigm that explores the ways in which events, realities and experiences are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In relation to the epistemological position of this research, critical realism, a thematic analysis can be conducted to acknowledge the ways the participants make meaning of their experiences in addition to the broader social contexts that affect those meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) summarise this as:

“A method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality.” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81)

Other data analysis methods were considered such interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This approach lends itself to the title of the research as it provides a method to “explore in detail individual and lived experiences” (Smith & Eatough, 2007 p. 35). However IPA is attached to a phenomenological epistemological stance (Smith & Eatough, 2007) that is not consistent with the critical realist position of this research. Similarly IPA involves a double hermeneutic; the participants are trying to make sense of their world and the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants making sense of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This is inconsistent with the research questions that sought to gather the views from the children, their parents and teachers to triangulate the children’s experience and explore the factors that were perceived to impact upon the experience across cases.

Thus thematic analysis was chosen as it was consistent with the epistemological position of the research and provided a systematic method to explore the children’s experiences in relation to the social and psychological interpretations of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
2.6.1.2. Limitations of Thematic Analysis

The flexibility of how thematic analysis can be conducted is regarded as a strength as it allows the technique to be compatible with a variety of paradigms. However, this generic approach can be perceived as having less kudos than more established methods (Robson, 2011) and has led to the observation that thematic analysis was a “poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged” research method (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). This in part was due to the tendency of researchers to not be explicit in the methods they used during the analysis (Robson, 2011; Coolican, 2009) which led to questions about the rigour and validity of their findings. Robson (2011) noted that research which utilised thematic analysis was often limited to description with little attempt at interpretation. This relates to the observation that thematic analysis does not inevitably lead to theory production and can be in danger of “declaring the obvious and failing to rise above the mundane” (Coolican, 2009, p. 237). The generation of theory was not an aim of this research. This research is an exploration and aims to illuminate children’s experiences and the factors that impact upon this experience. To allow interpretations of the findings to be made, Yin’s (2009) levels of questions (Table 3) were used as a framework to analyse the findings in relation to existing literature and related theories so that tentative generalisations could be made.

Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that some of the worst examples of thematic analysis have simply used the questions posed to the participants as themes in the analysis. The researcher was mindful of this when making decisions that guided the analysis.

2.6.1.3. Decisions that Guided the Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a flexible approach to conducting thematic analysis. This research adopted a semantic analysis of the whole data set using a hybrid technique of deductive and inductive analysis. The key decisions as to the nature of the analysis are discussed below.

A key question addressed was the focus of the analysis. The analysis can provide a reflection of the entire data set whereby some depth or complexity may be lost or can provide a detailed and more nuanced account of one particular theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given the exploratory nature of the research it focused on the entire dataset, as
rich overall descriptions are particularly useful for under researched areas and when working with participants whose views are not known (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Themes and codes can be identified inductively - a bottom up analysis, or deductively - a top down analysis, or as a combination of the two (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Inductive analysis is a data driven method that involves analysing the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions. In contrast deductive analysis is driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytical interest or the research question and is influenced by prior engagement of the literature. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that prior reading of the literature can enhance the analysis as it sensitises the researcher to subtle features of the data. This research used a hybrid approach whereby a deductive analysis was primarily used in relation to searching for codes and themes in light of the research questions and prior reading of the literature, and an inductive approach was used as a means of coding unexpected data that emerged.

The data was analysed at a semantic level, where the themes were identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data. This process involved a progression from a description of the patterns within the data to interpretation of their significance and their broader meanings and considering any implications in relation to previous research and theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A latent analysis was considered; this explores the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations of the dataset. Given the exploratory nature of the research and the critical realist position a semantic level analysis seemed most appropriate to answer the research questions.

2.6.1.4. Phases of the Analysis

Braun and Clarke’s six phase model was used as a guiding framework to promote the validity and reliability of the analysis. The phases presented by Braun and Clarke (2006 p. 86) can be viewed in Table 11.
Although the phases of the analysis are presented as a sequential model, this was a “recursive process” where the researcher moved back and forth between the phases throughout the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). A description of the phases of analysis during the research can be viewed in Appendix J.

### 2.6.2. Research Diary

A research diary was kept throughout the research process. This provided a systematic way of recording the events that took place as they occurred and promoted reflection, insight and theoretical decisions throughout the research process (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). Research diaries can take different forms. In this research the diary contained an account of the events that occurred throughout the different stages of the research (Coolican, 2009). This included reflections on relevant reading, thoughts about the project, appointments (Robson, 2011) and reflections on conversations, meetings and interviews (Altrichter & Holly, 2005). Altrichter and Holly (2005) recommend that diary entries take the form of memos that contain; a description of the event, an interpretation of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Familiarizing yourself with your data</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generating initial codes</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Searching for themes</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reviewing themes</td>
<td>Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Defining and naming themes</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Producing the report</td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
event, methodological notes and future planning notes. This research followed Altrichter and Holly’s (2005) format containing the following headings:

- Date of entry
- Event details
- Researcher’s interpretation of the event
- Researcher questions
- Next steps

A reflective log structured the post-interview notes. This contained two headings; points raised and questions for next time. This facilitated a routine where initial impressions, thoughts and reflections were recorded as soon as possible after each interview. These were referred to during phase 1 of the thematic analysis; familiarising yourself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.6.3. Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

A computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data (CAQDAS) program, “QSR NVivo8”, was used to support the thematic analysis.

A key advantage of using CAQDAS software is its capacity to store and organise large amounts of qualitative information in a way that allows easy retrieval of the transcripts and coded data (Robson, 2011). Additional tools such as the use of mind mapping software to conceptualise and interpret the themes and codes allowed the researcher to view the data from different perspectives and helped to enhance his “closeness” to the data (Lewins & Silver, 2008 p. 10). Seale (2010) illustrates these advantages:

“Qualitative data analysis then becomes more devoted to creative and intellectual tasks, and less immersed in routine.” (Seale, 2010, p. 254)

When selecting a package there is not a “best” CADQAS software option (Lewins & Silver, 2008). Instead different packages lend themselves to different forms of analysis, such as the code and retrieval method for grounded theory or the rapid retrieval of particular words or phrases for discourse analysis. It is argued that a danger of CADQAS software is that it can lead to a narrow focus or can influence the analysis depending on the
particular software used (Seale, 2010). As such the researcher was mindful to utilise an appropriate software program to conduct the thematic analysis. Prior to the research, QSR NVivo8 and QSR NVivo9 were trialed. Although time consuming this was a valuable exercise as the structure of QSR NVivo8 of creating “free nodes” and organising these into “tree nodes” lent itself to Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis (please refer to Appendix J for an overview of this process). In contrast QSR NVivo9 is a more flexible program without the structure of the explicit phases of analysis. QSR Nvivo8 was also chosen as it had been used in research that utilised thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

2.7. Trustworthiness of the Data

The qualitative methodology suited the exploratory nature of the research questions as it facilitated insightful and illuminating data (Gray, 2004). However the nature of qualitative research means that there are inherent threats to its trustworthiness or validity (Robson, 2011). This section briefly discusses issues in relation to validity and reliability for qualitative research before outlining the risks pertinent to qualitative case studies and the steps taken to minimise these risks. The section concludes with a discussion of the effect the researcher may have had upon the data.

There is a debate in the literature as to the terms and methods used to promote the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Robson, 2011). Quantitative research methods assume that the researcher is independent from the research topic (Lyons & Coyle, 2007) and that reliability and validity checks are possible through exact replication of the research design, replicating the findings, inter-rater agreement, testing of hypotheses and explicit controls to maximise consistency and reduce threats to validity (Robson, 2011).

Silverman defines validity and reliability as:

“Validity is another word for truth.” (Silverman, 2010, p. 275)

“Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.” (Silverman, 2010 p. 275)
In contrast, within qualitative research the researcher cannot detach himself from the analysis and thus his influence cannot be separated from it (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Within the critical realist epistemological stance it is acknowledged that there are numerous mechanisms that impact upon children’s experiences of pupil mobility and thus each case study would not be exactly replicable.

There is not a consensus about the best way to evaluate qualitative research (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Some qualitative researchers have rejected the terms validity and reliability whilst others argue that these concepts are a useful basis to increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Robson, 2011; Silverman, 2010). This study followed strategies suggested by Robson (2011) and Yardley (2008) to increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

2.7.1. Transferability

A weakness associated with case study research is the ability to transfer the findings from a limited sample of cases to a wider population (Coolican, 2009, Yin, 2009 and Punch, 2005). Complete transferability of the findings was not a key aim of this study and the researcher was mindful that it can detract from the generation of rich details from the individual cases being studied (Stake, 1995). Despite this steps were taken to increase the level of commonality.

The multiple case study design increased the transferability of the findings as the replication of findings across the case studies allowed for analytical conclusions to be made (Yin, 2009). Silverman (2010) argued that amplifying the homogeneity of the sample and theoretical sampling can increase, to some extent, the transferability of the findings. The purposeful sampling methods used in this research enabled the researcher to critically select cases that had particular features in common in order to increase the sample’s homogeneity. Theoretical sampling, through comparison to existing theory and literature (Silverman, 2010), was also utilised within the Discussion section.

The study’s position in relation to the transferability of the findings was illustrated by Punch:

“Every case that can be studied is in some respects unique. But every case is also, in some respects, similar to other cases.” (Punch, 2005 p. 146)
2.7.2. Addressing Threats to the Trustworthiness of the Findings

The study followed strategies suggested by Robson (2011) and Yardley (2008) to increase the trustworthiness of the findings these included:

- Triangulation
- Member checking
- Audit trail
- Peer debriefing and support

2.7.2.1. Triangulation

To improve the trustworthiness of the findings checks can be made to triangulate them (Coolican, 2009). Lyons and Coyle (2007) state that triangulation involves:

“Exploring the phenomenon from different vantage points, on the assumption that similar findings from each perspective indicate that the research has presented a valid picture.” (Lyons and Coyle, 2007)

This research developed a rich picture of the children’s experiences by viewing the phenomenon from three converging perspectives; the child, their parents and their teacher. In the Discussion section the findings were compared across the case studies and in relation to previous research and psychological theories such as Social Ecological Theory and Resilience Theory.

2.7.2.2. Member Checking

Each participant was offered the opportunity to check the analysis of their interviews. This involved discussing the themes, interesting points that emerged from the analysis and any ambiguous information that emerged.

Throughout the feedback interviews the researcher was mindful that the participants may not be able to relate to the wider analysis (Silverman, 2010; Yardley, 2008). As such the interviews occurred at stage 2 of Yin’s levels of analysis – questions asked of the individual cases. This was piloted in case study 1 which highlighted its usefulness, as it provided additional understanding and additional quotes to illustrate the themes.
2.7.2.3. **Audit Trail**

The research followed the University of Manchester’s ethical guidelines in that all the raw data (including interview transcripts, field notes and research diary) are kept for five years. The use of QSR Nvivo8 software allowed the researcher to save the phases of the thematic analysis and the process of how the raw data evolved into the final report can be demonstrated (please refer to Appendix J for an example).

Keeping accurate records facilitated discussions with the researcher’s supervisor. This allowed the researcher to explore any underlying assumptions that could impact upon the interpretations.

The Results section provides a clear overview of each child’s experience alongside quotes to illustrate the conclusions. Due to limitations in relation to word count only key quotes were selected to illustrate the analytical points.

2.7.2.4. **Peer Debriefing and Support**

Throughout the data analysis phase of the research the emerging themes were discussed with the research supervisor. This ensured that the analysis was not carried out purely to the researcher’s own perspectives and allowed discussion with regards to potentially unidentified themes and highlighted clarifications or modifications required to increase the consistency and coherence of the analysis (Yardley, 2008).

Inter-rater reliability was considered and rejected as it is not appropriate for small scale qualitative research. Inter-rater analysis is better suited to quantitative research with samples large enough to meet the requirements for statistical analysis and simple codes that can be strictly defined and identified (Yardley, 2008).

2.8. **Researcher Reflexivity**

It is acknowledged that the researcher could not disentangle himself from the social world being studied (Cohen et al., 2000) and his understanding of the literature in this field. As such the researcher’s values, beliefs, ideas, experiences and wider aims in life may have impacted upon the research procedures, data interpretation and conclusions (Coolican, 2009). It is thus essential that the researcher’s axiological position is discussed and clearly located within the study (Willig, 2003).
A fundamental belief of the researcher was that the views of children and their families are important. This was reflected in this research that sought to explore these views. In relation to pupil mobility the researcher was aware that it was a complex phenomenon with many interconnecting factors which impact upon the experiences. As such it was acknowledged that the children may not have been fully aware of every factor that impacted upon their experiences. The views of the parents and teachers were sought in order to provide insights into wider social and school factors.

In relation to interviewing children, through experience and reading literature the researcher believed that they may have required support to verbalise their experiences dependent upon their age, experience and developmental level. As such the researcher was mindful to utilise a flexible semi-structured approach alongside the option of visual and verbal prompts to scaffold their understanding and answers.

2.8.1. Impact of the Researcher’s Background

The researcher was a trainee educational psychologist with previous experience of working for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and as a support worker in various children’s homes. A major implication of this experience was the internalisation of the British Psychological Society’s four ethical principles of respect, integrity, honesty and competence. These guiding principles complemented the ethical checks and validity checks with the participants, such as displaying genuineness alongside placing importance on ensuring the participants understood key information such as confidentiality, the reason for the research and the value of their views.

The researcher’s therapeutic background and understanding of psychology may have also had a positive impact upon the participants’ engagement in the interviews, through the researcher’s use of Rogerian counselling techniques and non-verbal cues, which allowed the researcher to clarify his understanding in a safe and supportive manner.

The nature of the researcher’s professional experience lent itself to reflective practice, both through taking time to critically explore his perceptions of events via the research diary or through peer discussions, but also formally through university supervision. This allowed the researcher to “step back” at times and view the research as a whole or
explore the potential effects the researcher’s assumptions, beliefs and pressures may have had upon his interpretations and the participants during the interviews.

The author’s view of pupil mobility evolved with the research process as new insights and data emerged. Initially it was based upon the author’s recollections of pupil mobility when he was 6 years old and the differences in his experience from that of his older brother. On reflection this highlighted to the author that pupil mobility was complex and dependent on numerous variables, even within families, and was consistent with the critical realist approach. This acknowledgment of not being an expert in the field was consistent with the author’s stance of valuing the participants’ contributions to aid his understanding of this research.

The author had a strong belief in the value of communication and openness between people in society. It was surprising therefore that two of the families had not spoken in depth to their children’s teachers. Although this clashed with the researcher’s belief of communication it facilitated the exploration of the perception of why this had not occurred. During this stage of the data analysis the author was mindful not to place judgment or blame upon any of the participants and to keep an open mind.

The researcher was mindful in the interviews of the cultural aspect and potential perception of power differentials when a professional meets a parent to talk about their children. The author’s axiological position of respecting the participants facilitated a non-judgmental approach that was complemented through attempts to be explicit with each family through openly valuing their contribution to the research and making clear that the sharing of their experiences and views would improve the researcher’s and society’s knowledge which could in turn support other children. This approach lent itself to the counseling skills used throughout the interviews whereby the researcher attempted to summarise and reflect back his understanding of what the participant had said in the form of a question. This was very useful, particularly when the researcher got it wrong, as the process of the participant correcting the researcher led to other avenues to explore via the semi-structured format of the interviews. This linked with the researcher’s axiological position that was consistent with the British Psychological Society’s (2006) core principle of respecting the participants’ knowledge, views and experience.
2.8.2. Impact of the Researcher’s Epistemological Position

The critical realist epistemological position was consistent with the research methodology and facilitated the author keeping an open mind throughout the research process in order to explore the various mechanisms that may have impacted upon the children’s experiences. This view lent itself to the exploration of negative cases or viewpoints within the research and prevented the temptation to tie everything into a neat and tidy box. An example of this was when interpreting Helen’s (child 1) statement that she was “surprised”. Rather than taking it literally the analysis explored the child’s meaning behind the word, although when rechecked the meaning continued to be ambiguous, which can occur in real world research (Robson, 2011) and is more likely when interviewing younger children.

2.9. Ethical Considerations

As discussed in previous sections the ethical considerations were central to the research process. Prior to the data collection ethical approval was granted from the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee (Appendix K). Some of the key considerations pertinent to the study are discussed below.

The research design was guided by the Health Professions Council (HPC) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2008) and the British Psychological Society’s (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2006). The researcher was mindful throughout the research process to uphold the ethical principles of respect, competence, responsibility and integrity (BPS, 2006). Care was taken to ensure that all the participants were able to provide informed consent. Please refer to the participant recruitment procedure (Appendix E) for an overview of the consent process. Following the parent interview of case study 4 the author followed the HPC (2008) standard of acting in the best interest of service users. It became apparent that the parents were concerned that the school may not have been aware of their child’s special educational needs. It was agreed with the parents that the researcher would pass on the information they supplied during the interview to the school’s SENCo to follow up their concerns.

The emotional nature of the interviews was discussed prior to each interview. Each participant was offered the opportunity to debrief with the researcher post interview and
a member of school staff was made available to support the child participants if needed. The parents and teachers were provided with contact details of the interviewer in case they had any questions before or after the interviews. None of the participants took these options.

The dual role of the researcher as a trainee educational psychologist and a researcher in the schools was acknowledged. It was stressed to each participant from the outset that the author was acting as a researcher who was interested in pupil mobility and valued the participants’ expertise in this area. Throughout the data collection process the researcher stressed the value he placed upon the participants’ views and perspectives and it was explained to each participant that their contribution would help services to understand and support other children who experienced pupil mobility and a residential move.

Care was taken to ensure confidentiality of the information. All names, including those of people, places and schools were changed.

2.10. Critique of the Research Design

This section provides a discussion around some of the key strengths and weaknesses associated with the design of this study.

The design of the study was guided by prior research, psychological theory and government guidance. The methodology was consistent with the exploratory aims of the research and the critical realist epistemological position.

As with all case study research a limitation of the design is the ability of the findings to be generalised to a wider population (Coolican, 2009, Yin, 2009 and Punch, 2005). It is acknowledged that the findings would not be directly transferable to children’s experiences of pupil mobility in other LAs. Similarly the findings’ ability to be generalised to children from different cultural backgrounds, such as military children or GRT and those that have moved school but not residences, will also be limited.

The multiple case study design enabled comparisons to be made across the case studies which could then be compared with existing literature and theory. The design reduced the vulnerability associated with drawing conclusions from single case study designs of “putting all your eggs in one basket” (Yin, 2009 p. 61 ). Although the sample size was
relatively small, being four case studies, it provided an opportunity to explore the experiences in depth and from different perspectives. The use of thematic analysis in conjunction with Yin’s (2009) levels of questions provided a framework for the systematic analysis of the entire dataset whereby commonalities and differences between the case studies were able to be explored.

The critical realist position of this research supported the use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative approaches such as survey and questionnaire methods were considered. However given that no research had elicited the views of Key Stage 2 age children in the UK it was felt that an exploratory qualitative study would generate rich insight. It would also provide a foundation for considering the implications of supporting children when they experience pupil mobility and act as a foundation for future research.

2.11. Summary of Methodology

This chapter described the methodological approach, the data collection methods and the analytical approaches used in this research. The critical realist epistemological position of the research is consistent with the exploration into the children’s experiences of pupil mobility and the causal mechanisms that influenced the experience.

The multiple case study design with embedded (multiple) units of analysis addressed the research questions; it facilitated the generation of an in-depth understanding of each child’s experience and factors that influenced it.

The use of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) phases of thematic analysis provided a systematic way of identifying themes in the data to create a cohesive story of each child’s experience of pupil mobility when combined with a residential move into a northern coastal town.

The findings are presented in the Results section and the common themes across the case studies are considered within the Discussion in relation to the literature and psychological theory.
3. Results

This chapter represents stage 2 of Yin’s (2009) levels of questions; the findings from the individual case studies in relation to the research questions. The Discussion chapter represents Levels 3, 4 and 5; the pattern of findings across the case studies in relation to psychological theory and existing research, implications for practice and future research.

For each case study a thematic map is presented. A colour coding system is utilised to illustrate the structure and hierarchy of the themes. The overarching themes are presented in pink followed by the various levels of subthemes in the order of green, blue and yellow. The thematic maps are followed by a description of the themes, illustrated by quotations from the participants. To allow the reader to locate the quote the following codes were utilised: C = child, P = parent, T = teacher. Please note in Helen’s case study (case study 1) the teachers were interviewed together. To differentiate between them their school year was added to the code. Thus T2 stands for year 2 teacher and T3 stands for year 3 teacher. Similarly in Sarah and Ruby’s case studies (case studies 3 and 4) the parents were interviewed together. For clarity M stands for the mother and D stands for the father. To allow the reader to identify which interview the quote was taken from, the number was added. For example, P1 stands for parent interview one (main interview) and C2 stands for child interview 2 (member checking interview).

Due to limitations of word count it was beyond the scope of this thesis to triangulate each theme from participants within the text. Priority was given to the children’s quotes to illustrate the themes in relation to research question 1 and a balance of selected quotes have been chosen to illustrate the themes in relation to research question 2.
3.1. Case Study 1: Helen

Background

Helen was a 7 year old girl who moved to the town after the spring half term when she was in Year 2. Helen, her father and her class teachers from Years 2 and 3 were interviewed in the autumn term and the member checking interviews were conducted in January of Helen’s third year.

This was Helen’s first school move. Helen lived with her father in a neighbouring county in the north of England and moved to the town to live with her paternal grandmother at her hotel as her father was experiencing financial difficulties at the prior address. Helen’s father trained as a Teaching Assistant and was seeking employment. Helen’s mother and maternal grandmother continued to live near Helen’s former address in the neighbouring county. Helen was eligible for free school meals.

Helen entered a stable class which had two children leave and arrive during the academic year. The catchment demographic is described by Ofsted (Bryne, 2008) as “a community with high levels of social and economic deprivation”. Please refer to section 2.4.2 for an overview of the school.

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For the purpose of confidentiality all names of people, schools and locations have been changed.
3.1.1. Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?

Figure 3: Thematic Map for Case Study 1 - Research Question 1
3.1.1.1. **Contrasting Emotions**

Helen experienced a variety of emotions throughout the process of moving house and changing schools. These consisted of feeling excited and happy but also feeling upset, apprehensive and surprised.

**Before the Residential Move**

Before the move Helen felt optimistic about moving to the town. This was related to excitement with the prospect of living at her grandmother’s house and accessing the resort features.

“I was happy because I got to see my grandma every single day.” (C1)

“It was quite amazing really. She said she would like to move here for the beach, amusements, to live in Grandma’s hotel, the pleasure beach, waterslides, the sandcastle and on the other side it [a list of positive and negative reasons for the move] said she did not want to move because of her friends.” (P1)

However, conflicting with the excitement was feeling upset which Helen attributed to having to leave her friends. A similar observation was made by Helen’s father who explained that Helen was also upset about leaving her mother and grandmother.

“I don’t like it when I move schools . . . leaving all my friends behind at another school.” (C1)

**First Day at School**

On Helen’s first day at her new school she initially worried about not knowing anyone but she was also optimistic that she would make new friends. Linked to these feelings was the theme of family support discussed later in this chapter.

“Cos when you first start school you get worried because you don’t know anybody.” (C1)

“I was happy...because I was going to make new friends.” (C1)
During her first day the apprehension changed to feelings of excitement about the features of the school, feelings of enjoyment and the realisation that she would make friends.

“Oh the first day. Yeah she loved it. She said she had met some new friends and one of the first things she turned around and said was ‘oh dad the kids got their own laptops!’” (P1)

However, accompanying the excitement, Helen was upset as she missed her old friends.

“And can you think back to your first day at St. James School. Which one would you have been on your first day at St James?

That one [points to a child stood on their own at the back of the playground looking upset]. . . . Because I’m upset, I miss all my old friends at my old school.” (C1)

Helen said that she felt surprised on her first day. During the first interview Helen was not able to elaborate on this. When probed during the second interview Helen related feeling surprised with feeling shy.

“Can you tell me what you were surprised about?

Because when I started school I felt shy because I did not know any people.” (C2)

Helen’s father felt that it may be the unusual school features that may have impacted on her feeling surprised.

“It might have been about the school because of like the lift and all that...with this school there are three or four playgrounds and one is on the roof as well.” (P2)

After the First Day at School

Settled

A theme across all the participants was that Helen soon settled into her new school.
Helen related being settled to losing the initial feelings of nerves and excitement.

“When you go to a new school you get excited but once you are used to it you do not get as excited.” (C2)

Helen’s father explained that he was surprised that Helen settled quickly.

“I thought she would be really down and crying and upset for a few weeks but, after the first day she came she wanted to look around it and she wanted to go.” (P1)

To Helen the key factors of settling were learning the layout of the school and establishing new friendships.

“[Why do you feel settled?] I am used to St James’ school.

And what things have you got used to?

Making friends.

So you started to make friends. What else have you got used to in the school?

Knowing my way around St. James.” (C1)

Positive Effect on Schoolwork

Related to being settled in the school is that the move had a positive impact upon Helen’s schoolwork. Helen and her father noticed that her performance and confidence increased. A similar observation was made by the teacher who observed that Helen enjoyed and performed well in school.

“Can you think of any other reasons why you are happy?

Because I am learning more.” (C2)

“To be honest I think she has got a lot better and wants to learn more... it seems she is doing a lot better here than she did at her old school.” (P1)
Missed Family and Friends

Despite settling into the town and school, all participants commented that Helen continued to miss her friends and family. To Helen this was the hardest part of the move.

“What are the bad things about changing schools?

That I miss all my friends from my old school.” (C1)
3.1.2. Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experience of Pupil Mobility?

![Thematic Map for Case Study 1 - Research Question 2](image)

Figure 4: Thematic Map for Case Study 1 - Research Question 2
3.1.2.1. Personality

Easy Going Personality

Helen’s father and teacher described her as having an easy going personality. In school Helen was content to play and work on her own but also with her peers and was open to trying new experiences. Helen’s teacher found that this had helped her not become embroiled in arguments within the class.

“She’s quite laid back. She just sort of bobs along, like you say. She will work with anybody. She’s not bothered who she lines up next to or who she sits and eats her dinner with. She is quite happy to go along with everyone.” (T3-1)

Assertive Personality

Although Helen appeared laid back, both her teachers and father commented that she was assertive enough to request help when she needed it.

“[Helen] is genuinely a lovely little girl. . . She will ask if she needs help, she will interact.” (T2-1)

Studious Attitude

Helen was described as an average ability child who started the school with a positive attitude towards her schoolwork. Helen’s father and teachers felt this had a positive impact upon her adapting to the lessons in her new school and enjoying her school work.

“I would say from the day she came. She had the right attitude to learning. . . she listened and she wanted to improve upon her work . . . So I would say from the day she came her learning from where it was should of carried on progressing.” (T2-1)
3.1.2.2. Family Factors

Better Quality of Life

Helen’s transition to a new town and school was positively affected by an improved quality of life. This related to better living conditions, improved diet and improved finances.

**Improved Living Conditions**

Moving into her grandmother’s hotel improved the family’s living conditions. Both Helen and her father explained that it created more living space.

“What else helps not be bored all the time?”

*Cause we live in a hotel.*

*And why is it living in a hotel helps?*

*Because you have more room to play.* (C2)

**Improved Diet**

Linked to better living conditions was the impact of living with her grandmother. This provided Helen with another family member to support her and has also improved the family’s diet.

“The food that my mum gets now... is more the food that my daughter likes. [Before the move] I would have had to go for basic stuff and not the expensive stuff. . . Now she has put a lot more weight on.” (P1)

**Improved Finances**

The move improved the family’s finances. This combined with the features of the seaside resort had reduced the pressure upon Helen’s father, increased the positive time they spent together as a family and created more disposable income.

“I’d probably say spending more time with me. Back in [town name] I didn’t really, well I must admit I got a bit stressed really. Money, finance, Helen was asking [for something]. Sometimes I would have to ring mum
[Helen’s grandmother] up. Say Helen came home from school and her tights were ripped and I didn’t have any money for it. I was really struggling on my own... I kinda don’t want to get money off my mum. But I think she spends more time with me because I have more money to do her things.”

(P1)

Having better finances meant that the family spent more money on Helen and was linked with the theme of regular contact with her family and friends.

“She is costing me a lot of money ringing her mum and her nan. Always asking to ring them.” (P1)

Resort Features

The availability of affordable activities such as amusement arcades and the beach increased Helen’s enjoyment of her new town.

“Even if it is raining over here you can go to [amusement arcade name]. It’s a few quid. It’s not much money for a few hours. But over there [former address] if it was raining you could not do owt.” (P1)

Communication

A theme across all the interviews was communication. This occurred at different times and at different levels; between the father and Helen, with friends and family from her previous address and between her father and school.

Communication with Child

A predominant feature of both the parent and the child interviews was Helen’s father understanding her thoughts and feelings. Factors that supported this were the father actively trying to understand and address Helen’s concerns and recalling his own experiences of changing schools.

Understand and Address Concerns

Helen’s father helped to prepare her for the move by exploring with her the positives and negatives of moving house and school. This helped him gain an understanding of her
thoughts and feelings about the move and prompted reassurance about Helen’s concerns and improved Helen’s understanding of the reasons behind the move and the benefits of the move.

“I did a survey with her. I got her to write down on a list of all the reasons she would like to move to [town name] for and put on the list all the reasons she did not want to move to [town name] for. And on this list. It was quite amazing really. She said she would like to move here for the beach, amusements, to live in Grandma’s hotel, the pleasure beach, waterslides, the sandcastle and on the other side it said she did not want to move because of her friends. So I just explained to her that you’ll meet new friends out there and because we have still got family in [town name] we travel back there about every month at the weekend to see her nan and her mum is getting in more contact now so she sees her mum every now and again.” (P1)

Helen and her father explained that her father recalling his own experiences of moving schools helped him to address her concerns about making friends.

“I went to an infants in [town name]. Cried my eyes out and all that but it got better and I made all these new friends. People, when you move school and are a new person, people want to make friends with you. . . I said ‘you’ll love it and you’ll get used to it’ and that.” (P1)

Contact with Family and Friends

Helen had regular communication with her family and friends from her previous town. This mediated her feeling upset when she missed them. This was done via regular telephone calls, weekend and holiday visits and the use of social networking sites.

“She will phone her nan every day. Nan I’m doing dancing. When I come see you I will show you how to do it.” (P1)

“I’ve got her [best friend’s mother] address and all that and am friends on Facebook. She asked me to put pictures of Helen on in the new school
uniform and then she put pictures of [best friend] on in her school uniform so they can see pictures of each other and how they are getting on.” (P1)

Family Communicating with the School

Helen’s father was viewed by school staff as being a supportive parent who took an active interest in his daughter’s education. The father communicating with the school through attending parents’ evenings and school events was seen as a sign that Helen was well supported at home.

“I think we had parents evening about a week after she started, a week or fortnight after she’d started and her dad made an appointment and came and saw me. And I said well I hadn’t got a lot to say about progress made. But it was great he was willing to come in and show an interest right from the beginning.” (T2-1)

Prepared for Move

School staff explained that the family ensured that on her first day Helen had the correct uniform and a school book bag and this showed a commitment to the school and helped Helen to feel part of the school.

“I think she has a book bag which is again a further sign because if they go and get a school book bag with the school’s logo on. That is again showing you are part of the school whereas some of them just send a carrier bag or whatever. It’s giving the right message to the child that they are part of our school and that dad’s happy for her to be part of that.” (T3-1)

3.1.2.3. School Features

Modern Equipment and Resources

Helen’s excitement about the school was related to the school’s modern features and equipment. These included novel features such as a lift, a playground on a roof and better computers.

“Her old school, all they had was a tarmac, pebbly playground and she says ‘dad
they have three playgrounds and one on the roof!’ The first thing she told her nan and then she told her mum that there was a playground on the roof!’” (P1)

**Stable Class**

Although the school had a high level of pupil mobility Helen entered a relatively stable class. Helen was the second child to join that year and this was thought to have helped Helen settle in and make friends.

“If you’ve had a lot of children who have come in new and then you get another new one it does have an impact on that child because if they are all new and finding their way and the new one attaches themselves onto a relatively new one they all end up all over the shop so if they are all established members of the class it does help with sort of when they settle.” (T3-1)

**Inclusive Culture**

The school had an inclusive culture; new children were greeted warmly by school staff and their peers and welcomed into the class. This is linked to the theme of friendships and built relationships with staff, as discussed later in this section.

“They [Helen’s peers] are quite good here because we do have a lot of new children. They are very good at helping each other out. And like you say they all clamber to be that person’s friend.” (T3-1)

3.1.2.4. **Learning Mentor**

The school had a learning mentor who supported Helen and her father throughout the transition. The role of the learning mentor is discussed in the subthemes of initial visit, communication with family, and monitoring.

3.1.2.5. **School Practices**

**Communication with the Family**

School staff being approachable and available to Helen and her father was cited by her father and school staff as a positive factor in supporting Helen’s transition to her new
school. This began with the learning mentor inviting the family to an initial visit prior to starting school and continued through the head teacher standing at the school gates and the teachers being approachable.

**Initial Visit**

The learning mentor invited Helen and her father to visit the school before she started. This involved discussing the school rules and procedures with the head teacher, showing Helen around the school and introducing her to her new class.

“[At the initial visit] we had a good chat. It was just the things she was saying you know? ‘We like to keep our kids smart so make sure she dresses smart’. The other school there were loads of kids in tracksuit bottoms and trainers and that. It should not be like that in school really.” (P1)

“Kath’s [learning mentor] a lovely woman. On the first day she [Helen] looked around [the school] and the headmistress was brilliant with her, talking to Helen”. (P2)

**Addressed Concerns**

The initial visit helped Helen to feel welcomed into the school and her concerns with regards to friendships and the layout of the school were addressed.

“When she first came here she wanted to be here. It is basically the general kids and the teachers made her part of the school. Coming here and explaining you have got this and got that. You know you don’t feel worried you are safe here. Loads of friends here.” (P1)

**Communication with Helen’s Father**

The school was proactive in communicating informally with Helen’s father. This involved the teacher meeting and reassuring him after her first day, the learning mentor feeding back that Helen had settled into the school and the head teacher making herself available to parents.

“I also try to speak to the parents at the end of the first day. Go over and actually
say to them. ‘Oh she had a good day today’. You know? Everything been alright and actually interact with the parents so that they know that I am supporting them as well.” (T2-1)

“She [head teacher] stands at the gate and says; ‘Goodbye Helen, have a good day and have a good weekend’. It’s nice to know that there are teachers out there that do that. It’s nice to know your daughter is being looked after in school.” (P1)

The learning mentor monitored Helen while she adapted to her new school and communicated this to her father.

“After the first day did you have any contact with [the learning mentor]?
She spoke to me after she had started school and said that Helen had settled in so I was quite happy about that.” (P2)

Helen Built Relationships with Staff

Helen’s teachers and support staff were proactive in forming a relationship with Helen and being available to her if she had any concerns. This was linked to the inclusive culture of the school.

“Is there anything else that you think would be useful for me to know about changing schools?
If I’m worried about something my teachers say come and talk to me.” (C2)

Friendship Support

Related to communication was friendship support. As discussed above the school had an inclusive culture whereby Helen’s peers were proactive in forming friendships. For Helen this may have reduced her concerns around building new friendships. Helen observed this during her initial school visit.

“Because when I went in there [the classroom] everybody started gathering round me.

So when you got in everyone gathered round. And were they trying to talk to you?
Yeah

*Was it good that people came to talk to you?*

Yeah.

*Why was it good?*

*Because I made friends easier."* (C2)

“The teacher called out ‘this is Helen and she will be starting here next week and who is going to be her friend?’ and some kids put their hands up. It was good to know that other kids were putting their hands up to be her friend and that . . . and I thought ‘yeah it’s a good sign that’ so she’ll think there are people out there who want to be my friend.” (P1)

**Peer Buddy**

The class teacher arranged a peer buddy to help address her friendship concern and support her in learning the layout of the school and the school routines.

“I usually find a good role model to be their friend for the day. I attach them to somebody who I think would be a good . . . A trustworthy role model to look after them and support them throughout the first couple of days.” (T2-1)

**Accessed After School Clubs**

Helen accessed after school clubs such as the dance club and the Glee club. This helped to promote her enjoyment of school, and facilitated her forming friendships.

“*Are there any other school factors that have helped your daughter adapt to the change?*

*Dancing, yeah. It’s basically country dancing, she says she wants to do it so I thought yeah that would be a good after school activity for her. Bit of exercise for her, children need exercise don’t they, yeah. She loves it."* (P1)
Assessments

Helen’s teachers explained that her school records were slow to arrive. To generate an understanding of her skills, Helen was assessed by a teaching assistant. This helped the teacher determine if there were any gaps in her learning, where to pitch her work and to ascertain if she would benefit from any targeted work.

“I would say very rarely do we get good quality records from another school.” (T2-2)

“We have a member of our teaching assistants. [Name of teaching assistant] . . . With children who come new to the school. She does BPVS is it? All kinds of understanding and reasoning tests. She gets a reading age for it. At the end of the year I’ve had it done in a couple of my classes where children have come in part way through the year and she’s redone it at the end of it to see [rate of learning].” (T3-1)

Additional Support

Helen received additional small group work to boost her literacy skills. Helen’s teachers felt that a possible consequence of the move is that the change in accent may have disrupted her acquisition of phonic skills.

“I think especially with literacy and sounding out we do a lot of phonics based stuff. I wonder how much the accent change could of affected her because how we sound things out is not real broad [county name] accent.” (T2-1)

Teacher Approach

Helen’s class teacher initially provided Helen with additional leeway and support. Once Helen was used to her new school she was treated equally to her peers to reduce the sense of her being different from her peers.

“You make that fuss for the first few days while they’re getting settled. But then my personal [pause] I just tend to back off and let them be part of the
class and then step in if I need to again but let them find their feet for themselves.” (T3-1)

3.1.2.6. General Observations of Pupil Mobility
The class teachers in case study 1 made some general comments regarding pupil mobility that did not directly relate to Helen.

School Records
Children’s school records arrive after the pupil has started. These can be slow to arrive and generally contain limited academic information thus the school conducts their own assessments (as was the case with Helen).

“What quality are they [school records] like?
You tend to do your own. Let’s put it that way! A new child arrives and you do your own assessment. I would say very rarely do we get good quality records from another school.” (T2-2)

Increased Teacher Time
Addressing consequences of pupil mobility such as a child’s gap in learning, learning difficulties and social difficulties all require additional teacher time which in turn reduces the time spent teaching the whole class.

“You never know when children come in we have outside agencies that might need to be involved so again its more time and attention on the new child that can have a very disturbing effect (on the class).” (T3-1)

“You have children that come whose attendance have been bad at the last school so we’ve got massive gaps in what they have learnt or covered or whatever so your re-tracking and re-tracing; re-pitching for them and you’re constantly adjusting.” (T2-1)
This additional time can impede the teacher’s attention on the stable children and can lead them to feel neglected and negatively impact upon their behaviour as they seek the attention.

“You are pulled to that child at which point the other ones are like ‘notice me I’m still here’, so then you’re trying to balance it all.” (T2-1)
3.2. Case Study 2: Chloe

Background

Chloe was a year 5 girl who moved to the town on the 26th September 2011 and joined her current school, Oakridge School, on the 3rd of November 2011. Chloe, her mother and class teacher were interviewed between January and February of the following term. Chloe and her mother’s member checking interviews were conducted in July of that year.

Chloe was the youngest of five siblings and moved with her mother, two sisters (who attended the local high school) and brother (who was awaiting a college place in the next academic year). The family moved from a large city in the south of England and Chloe’s eldest sister remained there. Chloe’s mother was originally from the town and following being made redundant decided to move back to be nearer to Chloe’s grandparents and aunties. Chloe was eligible for free school meals and her mother was seeking employment.

Chloe was the second child to join her class since the start of that academic year, alongside other children who had joined the school in Chloe’s year group that were allocated to a different class. The size of the school and catchment demographic was described by Ofsted (Cordey, 2011) as “larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.” Please refer to section 2.4.2 for an overview of the school.
3.2.1. Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?

Figure 5: Thematic Map for Case Study 2 - Research Question 1
3.2.1.1. **Contrasting Emotions**

Chloe experienced contrasting emotions throughout the process of changing schools. Chloe settled in to her new school although she continued to miss her friends and family.

**Before the Residential Move**

When Chloe learnt that she was moving she initially did not believe it as the family had talked about moving previously and it had not happened.

“My mum said that [we were moving] quite a few times and this time I thought it was actually real [and] I thought she wasn’t going to go through with it.” (C1)

When Chloe realised that she was moving she felt a mixture of emotions. Chloe and her mother explained that she felt happy and excited to see her family, have a new school, meet new friends, have a bigger room and that her mum was able to return to her home town. During this period Chloe also felt sad which was attributed to the thought of leaving the city, her friends and her family there. Chloe described this mixture of emotions as feeling “weird”.

“I was going to see my Nan, my Auntie and I was happy because my mum, my mum lived in [town name] but for fourteen years. . . she has been visiting [town name] but she hasn’t lived in [town name].” (C1)

“And you mentioned that you felt a bit sad as well, why did you feel sad? ‘Cos I’ve lived in [city name] all my life and I’ve made friends and I felt that [pause] I felt sad because it was weird.

**Why was it weird?**

‘Cos I was [also] happy ‘cos I thought I was going to get the biggest room!” (C1)

“[Chloe was looking forward to the move because of] getting new friends she said. And then she realised she would be leaving her old friends behind and she got a bit upset.” (P1)
Linked to these feelings is that the family prepared for the move and discussed Chloe’s concerns, which are discussed under research question 2.

**Time Out of School**

Once the family moved to the town Chloe had a six week wait before starting school. Chloe’s mother described this time as being “in limbo” due not knowing which schools Chloe and her sisters would attend and when they could start. Chloe explained that she found this time boring and frustrating although it increased her desire to start school. Themes related to this such as dissatisfaction with the admissions system and family support are elaborated upon in the next section.

“What was that like waiting to start school?”

*Boring ‘cos there was nothing to do and I only had one friend and I wanted to get used to [town name] but I didn’t know how.”* (C1)

“She was nagging me as well, she was keen to get in [to school]. And every time we walked past she would be like ‘that is my new school!’ I said ‘well hopefully, fingers crossed!’ . . . . you are like in limbo and you just don’t know what is happening.” (P1)

**First Day at School**

Following Chloe’s induction (discussed in the next section) into the school the contrasting emotions continued. Chloe was excited to start school however she was worried about learning the school layout and routines and about making new friends.

“I just wanted to get all my clothes on and just run to school.” (C1)

“I thought like ‘Oh my God where’s everything, Oh what am I gonna say to everyone, how am I gonna say it!’ I just felt worried.” (C1)

Although Chloe enjoyed her first day, she also experienced negative emotions related to missing her old friends and being nervous about how to make friends.

“I mostly, I miss[ed] moving on from my old friends.” (C1)

“And how was she when she came back from her first day?
Oh, she was brilliant, she loved it yeah.” (P1)

**After the First Day at School**

**Settled**

Chloe and her mother explained that after three days she began to feel settled in her new school and felt confident walking to school on her own. Similarly Chloe’s teacher observed that she made friends quickly and “slotted into the class”. Subthemes included being more confident, enjoying school and that the initial concerns of learning the school layout and of making friends had ceased.

“I did not really want to go on my first day of school and three days in [sic] and the third day I walked to school on myself.” (C1)

“[Chloe points to the number 10] Why would you put yourself at a 10?

Because I know where everything is, I got friends and I just feel . . . settled in and happy.” (C1)

At Chloe’s member checking interview, her enjoyment of school had continued to improve.

“How have you been since last time we met?

Ok.

OK. And what does OK mean?

Dunno. It’s just been better than last time.

OK. Why has it been better?

‘Cos I’ve been liking school much better.” (C2)

**Missed Friends and Family**

All participants commented that Chloe continued to miss her old friends and family. This is linked to communication, discussed in the next section.
“She missed her friends, once she was here she was alright but the odd times she does get a bit upset still. And I have said ‘well it’s understandable you have known them since you have started at nursery there’.” (P1)

**Developing Friendships**

Chloe and her mother observed that her friendships had developed over time. At the first interview Chloe explained that her peers acted differently than her old friends and were nasty to her at times. Chloe’s mother felt that her daughter initially “held back” from having a best friend out of loyalty to her old friends.

“*My old friends they wasn’t like – oh say, say this was like a diary or something. And like ‘oh can I have it? can I have it?’ I was like ‘no’ and they say ‘if you don’t give it me then I won’t be your friend’. It’s just like my old friends they didn’t do that but my new friends they do that sometimes and it’s annoying. . . .It’s kind of nasty ‘cos that’s not how friends are.”* (C1)

“She has held back because of her friend in [city name] you see? She is one of these, once she is your friend, she is your friend. So if that makes any sense? She is very loyal.” (P1)

At the member checking interview both Chloe and her mother had noticed that her friendships had developed.

“*How are your friendships now?*”

*Much different . . . Now they don’t say if you don’t give me that I won’t be your friend.”* (C2)

“*Now I had a friend sleepover two weeks ago and I slept at hers. We’ve been doing our homework together.”* (C2)

“*She’s got a quite a few more friends here and one just lives round the corner as well so that’s made it a little bit easier for her as well . . . I think the friendships are developing properly now.”* (P2)
Feeling Different

Chloe found moving from the south of England to the north made her stand out from her peers; having a different accent was often commented on and joked about by her peers and teacher which was a source of annoyance for her.

“There are more northern people than [city name] people . . . You guys’ say ‘path’ we say ‘parth’ you guys’ say ‘funny’ we say ‘fanny’ whatever. You guys’ say it in a weird way.” (C1)

“[Peers are interested in Chloe] because of her being a cockney or a southerner. They do laugh at her sometimes, not in a cruel [way]. Certainly not in a cruel way at any point, but they do laugh sometimes at little ways that she comes out with certain things.” (T1)

“I wonder how that [people joking about her accent] makes you feel?

It’s annoying. I don’t like it. They still do it now you know?” (C1)
3.2.2. Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experience of Pupil Mobility?

Figure 6: Thematic Map for Case Study 2 - Research Question 2
3.2.2.1. Pupil Characteristics

Personality

Chloe was described by her mother and teacher as being friendly, talkative and having a sense of humour. This was perceived to have helped her to establish friendships.

“What is her personality like?

Chatty, chatty and cheeky, cheeky chatty if you know what I mean?” (P1)

“She’s that personality you see? So that always helps. There are other children who come to school and they’re so painfully quiet. You find that the buddy system lasts a long, long time because they have trouble making friends. But Chloe definitely didn’t.” (T1)

Academic Attainment

Chloe had below average literacy skills and average numeracy skills. Both Chloe’s mother and teacher felt the change in school had not affected her learning although Chloe and her teacher felt the change in accent may have negatively affected her spelling skills.

“Once we were doing ‘path’ and I did p-a-r-t-h and I got it wrong because I put an r in it.

So when you are saying it out as you spell it. Because you say it differently you spell it differently?

Yeah.

And are you ok now with that?

No I still get it wrong.” (C2)

“She is below average but she does - she can come out with some really good ideas but she really struggles to put it down on paper but the information we have had from her previous school that that was exactly the same before [the move].” (T1)
Valued School

A protective factor for Chloe is that she valued her education and was motivated to learn both in and outside school.

“Because having an education is an important part of your life.” (C1)

“She was a bit behind with her reading. But I mean since, about a year and a half ago, she has just done that much herself, wanting, every night wanting to come home and read anyway, she has improved a hell of a lot, she has come on quite good.” (P1)

3.2.2.2. Family Factors

Preparation for the Move

Moving to the town had been a long term plan for the family. They had discussed moving several times previously as one of Chloe’s sisters was keen to move nearer to their grandmother and aunts. When the opportunity arose the family positively discussed the move which helped Chloe understand the reasons for moving.

“They knew I was losing my job and being made redundant and, years ago my oldest daughter kept saying about moving back to [town name] and I said no ‘cos of my work and everything else so I just said ‘right do you fancy a move to [town name]?’ and it was all ‘yay!’” (P1)

“I just sat down and spoke to them all. . . ‘where are we going? [town name]! Oh yeah, Nana! Oh Auntie Shelly!’ And all that.” (P1)

Part of the preparation was the communication between Chloe and her mother. This helped Chloe to explore the positives of the move and helped her feel happy and excited about moving.

“She said it like in slow motion and she said it in a happy motion. . . . She said it in a happy way because I know my Mum really likes [town name] ‘cos she lived in [town name].” (C1)
“I just kept saying about all the advantages of meeting new friends and everything else.” (P1)

While waiting for a school place Chloe’s mother purchased her uniform. This increased Chloe’s desire to start school and ensured that she did not stand out on her first day.

“[At the initial visit] they said you can either start Thursday or Monday, and I already had the uniform waiting, and she couldn’t wait, so she started the Thursday so she was really excited.” (P1)

On Chloe’s first day her mother and sisters supported her by walking with her to school until she felt confident to go on her own and through giving her advice on how to act and make friends.

“They just said make some new friends, be happy and get settled in and be happy most of the time.

Right and what difference did it make your family saying those things to you?

If they didn’t say it to me I’d just be like ‘what should I do? I don’t know what to do!’” (C1)

“On my first day I came to this school she [Chloe’s mother] walked me to the school . . . It made me happy ‘cos I did not really want to go on my first day of your school and three days in and the third day I walked to school on myself.” (C1)

Wider Family Support

Chloe received support from her family throughout the process. This included her immediate family and her grandmother and aunties. Chloe’s mother explained that moving back to the town and having a network of family support positively contributed to the whole family settling into the town as it gave her support and was positive for Chloe.

“For me it was easier as I had family but it’s when you have no family and you’ve nobody. That would be a lot harder I reckon.”
So why is it easier having family?

Because you have already got the support group there, you have got friends and everything else . . . if ever you want to chat ‘I’m coming around for a brew’ and I mean if you don’t know anybody you can’t do that, you’re just stuck indoors on your own.

So one thing that helped your family was having that support network?

Yeah and the girls would go around and spend a couple of hours with their nana, do you know what I mean? So it just made it easier so they weren’t stuck indoors on their own because it was piddling down and there is nowhere for them to go if it is too cold. ‘Nana, I am coming round!’” (P1)

Chloe was close to her mother and sisters who were assertive in encouraging her to talk about any problems with them. This helped Chloe talk through her friendships concerns.

“‘My sister says . . . ‘if you don’t tell me you’re never getting the remote again’.

So your sister wants you to talk to her about these things [problems]?

Yeah.

And does it help that your sister talks to you about it?

Yeah because I’m letting it out and I’m telling someone.” (C1)

Keeps in Touch with Family and Friends

Chloe regularly kept in touch with her eldest sister and her old friends by the telephone and through a social network website. Chloe’s mother explained that this reduced her upset at leaving her friends as it stopped the move being a “total cut off” from her friends.

“She always speaks to her [sister] on the phone, she has got her on Facebook so they are always chatting on Facebook. So she is only ever two minutes [away] to turn it on and go and say hello or whatever . . . It makes it a lot easier, yeah, than totally cutting her off all together.” (P1)
“So how does it work, Facebook, with your friends in [city name]?

Click on chat and just start talking.

What difference has it made having that?

What Facebook? A lot because I did not have a phone. I had Facebook to talk to my friends.” (C2)

Although visiting her friends and keeping in touch supported Chloe, her teacher observed Chloe could become upset following her sister visiting her.

“I think it [Chloe’s mood] depends on whether she’s seen any of her family from [city name], I think when she has I think she becomes a little bit more subdued, because obviously it brings it all home you know? That they’ve gone back and she’s still here and that must be hard.” (T1)

Bigger House

The family’s move to a bigger house gave Chloe more personal space, helped the household feel calmer and provided new opportunities for Chloe to invite her friends to the house.

“When we lived in [city name] we lived in a flat but now we live in a bigger house. . . . [It is] a really good thing . . . Because I never used to have my friends round. It’s because the [previous] house was really small.

So your house in [city name] was really small and now you’ve moved to a bigger house?

A big house you can like have a sleep over with like 10 people and there’ll be people all over the house!” (C1)

“Sometimes when she is arguing with her sisters, instead of having to sit in the same room she can go off into her room, shut her door and calm down and then come back and say right sorry for being whatever or whatever.” (P1)
**Academic Support**

Chloe’s family were supportive of her academic work and this may have positively influenced Chloe’s value of education and her adapting to lessons in her new school. Chloe had good attendance in school, she read at home with her family and her mother attended school activities.

“She reads on her own, with me, with her sisters . . . the girls, Emily does and Ella tries to help her as well.” (P1)

Despite this Chloe’s completion of homework was variable. Her teacher suspected that this may have been due to the demands placed upon her mother.

“It must be hard to get through [Chloe’s homework] you know? Hearing them all and still hold down a job and move to a new town and make friends yourself because you know? That’s necessary as well.” (T1)

**Limited Home-School Communication**

At the time of the first parent and teacher interview there had not been a parents’ evening. As such there had been limited contact between Chloe’s mother and teacher. The limited contact between Chloe’s mother and teacher may be related to Chloe walking to and from school on her own as this reduced the informal opportunities for her mother to meet the teacher. It also may be related to Chloe settling into the school and the induction mentor having time off due to illness around this time. The lack of contact with the teacher created uncertainty for her mother.

“And what else do the school do to support parents?

I don’t really know because I really haven’t had that much to do with them since [Chloe started].

No? Well I suppose if she started in October so how long has she been in now, about three months?

About three months.

And have there been a parents’ evening in between?
At the follow up interview Chloe’s mother explained that she had attended the parents’ evening and had heard that Chloe had settled into her new school. Chloe’s mother explained that she was pleased with the school’s communication systems.

“How has communication been with the school?

They have been great. Any problems they ring you. You get texts all the time about what’s going on with everything so.

Have there been any problems for them to phone you?

I’ve not had any problems. It’s all been fine touch wood!” (P2)

3.2.2.3. Time Out of School

Dissatisfaction at Admissions System

Chloe waited six weeks to be allocated a school in the town. This was a stressful time for the family that was filled with uncertainty. Chloe’s mother explained that the admission system was different to what she expected and was a difficult process.

“It was terrible trying to get the kids into school . . . it was a nightmare. . . the worst thing was not knowing when [Chloe would start]. . . In [city name] you go and apply and within a week [you get a place] . . . I did not know what to do or who to turn to to get help about it.” (P2)

3.2.2.4. School Factors

Whole School Communication

Chloe’s mother found the school newsletter and text messages a useful way of informing her of school events.

“How does the school communicate with you?

If there is anything ever going on you will get text messages and they let you know everything that is going on all of the time which is good. . . So it is like the carol service. They text you saying right the carol service is, well they let you know in
advance but two days before, I think it was a 6.00 or 6.30, this time, blah, blah, blah. Just keep reminding.” (P1)

Supportive Peers

Having supportive peers was associated with Chloe making new friends quickly and settling into her new school. Chloe explained that her peers were friendly, kind and helped her learn the school layout and routines. This was linked to the school culture, the buddy system and Chloe’s personality.

“[They made me feel] comfortable, because they just, they just started to talk to me and started like, they started to be nice to me.” (C1)

Whilst waiting for a school place Chloe met a neighbour who was in her class. Although Chloe’s mother felt that this was not a factor, Chloe explained that this helped to settle some of her nerves on her first day and he helped her to settle.

“‘Cos I already had a friend then and I knew, I knew he was going to be nice to me because he was my next door neighbour.” (C1)

“[On my first day] he was, he was helping me getting settled in and he was being kind to me.

**Right and what did he do to help you settle in?**

He was just like, he was just saying where everything was.” (C1)

Despite Chloe’s peers being initially supportive she observed that once she had settled they could be nasty towards her. As discussed earlier it took time for her to develop meaningful friendships.

School Demographic

Chloe entered a large school with a three form intake that had a high level of pupil mobility. The school was situated in an area that had high levels of social deprivation. The school staff were experienced in working with new pupils and the school had developed a culture of being welcoming, having approachable adults, a nurturing environment and opportunities for the pupils to access extracurricular activities through the “enrichment”
programme. This was perceived to have supported Chloe’s transition.

“We know that the children out of school are not necessarily in a safe environment. So whether they see abuse, whether they see or hear shouting and screaming whatever. So while they’re in school we always hope that this is the safe environment for them. So we do try to make things fun we make sure, that any worries they’ve got somebody to turn to whether it is a teacher, whether it’s an LSA, whether it’s another child.” (T1)

Extracurricular Activities

The school had a variety of extracurricular activities available for Chloe. These involved specific clubs such as the choir, “enrichment” activities one evening per week and vocational courses. Accessing the school-based activities helped Chloe to enjoy school. Chloe noticed that trying new activities helped to develop her confidence. This was linked to her experiencing success discussed below.

“I love swimming. It’s the best and I keep on getting certificates.” (C1)

“She is doing choir this time and gymnastics.” (P1)

“I joined a choir. . . . before that I didn’t even sing a note in front of nobody, not even on my own.” (C1)

3.2.2.5. Role of the Induction Mentor

Initial Visit

The induction mentor supported and addressed Chloe’s initial concerns. During her initial visit this involved showing Chloe around the school and introducing her to her class. On her first day the induction mentor met Chloe in the yard and supported her to find the correct line to join. This helped reduced Chloe’s concerns of entering the “unknown” on her first day.

“[The induction mentor] was helping me getting settled in [showing me] where everything was, she showed me where the dining hall was. . . . [and] she started to talk about the things that I was going to do with her.” (C1)
“It made it [the first day] a lot easier for Chloe ‘cos she knew what she was walking into then and now she has said ‘I know my teacher now’ so it made it easier for her. . . . [instead of] you know, being a big unknown.” (P1)

Classroom Support

During her first few weeks the induction mentor joined Chloe in some of her lessons to support her until she was settled.

“She [induction mentor] tried to come in two or three times a week at different sessions so it wasn’t always [the same lesson] . . . then when she was confident in numeracy she came out. So once they got settled into class she knows that her time can be taken away.” (T1)

Assessments

Alongside supporting Chloe to settle into her new school the induction mentor conducted assessments of her literacy and numeracy skills and completed a booklet of her likes and dislikes. This informed Chloe’s teacher with regards to differentiating the curriculum and helped the teacher to build a relationship with her.

“[The induction mentor does] a reading, spelling. So there is that baseline and it’s a case of waiting for all the information to come from the previous school but at least we have something.” (T1)

For Chloe these assessments informed the teacher that she was behind in her literacy skills and prompted her to telephone Chloe’s former school to gain a clearer picture of her needs. This is discussed in the theme of previous school records later in this section.

Monitored Chloe

The induction mentor monitored how Chloe settled into the school; this involved meeting with Chloe to gain her perspective of school and informally observing her. The induction mentor also made herself available to Chloe’s mother and other parents in the school yard. It is possible that as Chloe walked to school on her own her mother was unable to have the informal discussions with school staff and this may have contributed to the
limited communication between home and school discussed above.

“She [induction mentor] makes some quite distinct observations about how she [Chloe] comes into school and she then talks with other people and obviously that’s written down on there for you.” (T1)

“A few weeks down the line, usually a couple of months, the mentor will go back to Chloe and again ask her you know how’s she’s settled in, what friends she’s got, etc, so it’s just continuing on with that build up.” (T1)

**Communication with Class Teacher**

The induction mentor communicated her observations and assessments to the teacher verbally and through a fact file. This enabled the teacher to get to know Chloe, differentiate the work to Chloe’s level and monitor any concerns. This was highly valued by the class teacher.

“We do this little fact file again so she tells a little bit about herself, her family, what hobbies she’s got . . . a favourite television programme. So, it’s very, very quick but it’s simple to do.” (T1)

“We use this information [assessment] straightaway so that I can see who she can be sat with, who she can be friends with, etc. It is it is an absolute life saver because it’s something that often with 29 other children in the class you don’t have time to do.” (T1)

**3.2.2.6. Teacher Practice**

**Friendship Support**

Chloe forming friendships was associated with the teacher’s practice of providing friendship support. This involved a peer buddy, group activities in the classroom and lessons with other children from different classes. The peer buddy helped to reduce Chloe’s initial friendship concerns and worries about finding her way around school.

“It was Bianca [the peer buddy] the one who slept over.

**What was it that Bianca did on the first day that helped?**
She helped me, played with me. She showed me around school.

And what difference did that make?

It made a lot of difference because now I knew where everything was and I knew I had a best friend.” (C2)

“...In numeracy she’s with other children from the other two classes in the year group so she... has acquaintances now with other [children] which is good and then with PE on a Friday... she’s going to be with other children from another class”. (T1)

Experienced Success

The school and teacher providing opportunities for Chloe to experience success and providing recognition for her achievements supported her enjoyment of school. This involved understanding her level of learning, differentiating the curriculum, monitoring progress, providing team points and certificates, including a settling in certificate.

“They get rewarded, they get team points, they get merits for good work, they have, there’s the head teacher’s award so one child per week is chosen for the head teachers award.” (T1)

“I’ve got five now [certificates]. Two for swimming, one for walking to school, bike ability. I got one for star pupil for best literacy.” (C2)

Building Relationships

Chloe’s teacher was pro-active in developing a relationship with her. This was aided by the initial information supplied by the induction mentor as discussed above. To form a relationship Chloe’s teacher provided informal opportunities for Chloe to talk to her and found a common joke with regards to her accent. Although this may have helped to develop a rapport with Chloe it also related to Chloe’s experience of feeling different to northern people.

“She does like a laugh and a joke, and she’s quite happy to have a laugh and a joke with you.” (T1)
Chloe noted that her teacher was kind and initially provided her with some leeway. Once she was settled, Chloe was keen to be treated equally to her peers and recognised that her teacher had become stricter as she settled in.

“When I first started my teacher was really kind and now she’s just like kind and strict.” (C1)

**Preparation**

This was heavily linked to the assessment information the induction mentor provided the teacher but also to the teacher ensuring Chloe had her books and a tray allocated on her first day; this helped Chloe to feel like she was part of the class straight away.

“[One thing that helped on my first day was] getting my new . . . books. They get me new books and I had to write my name down.

*So one thing is getting?*

*New books and teachers helping me the first day I came.” (C2)

3.2.2.7. **Previous School Records**

Chloe’s teacher noted that it took around 2-3 months for school records to arrive. This made it difficult for the teacher to triangulate her initial impressions and assessments. Following Chloe’s performance on the induction mentor’s assessments, the teacher was proactive and telephoned the previous school. This conversation and the information supplied triangulated her results of the assessments, gave an insight into Chloe’s attendance and home support, and also provided information to inform supporting Chloe in class.

“We did phone because of my initial worries and the mentor’s worries, we did phone up quite early on to find out anything that they could [tell us] from the previous school [such as] what sort of things did they have in place for her, how was she in school.” (T1)
3.3. Case Study 3: Sarah

Background

Sarah was a Year 4 girl who joined Oakridge School in December 2011 alongside her sister Ruby who was in Year 3 (case study 4). Sarah’s parents were interviewed in early January and Sarah and her class teacher were interviewed in February. Sarah’s member checking interview was conducted in July of that year.

Sarah was born in Stoke on Trent and moved to Wales when she was a baby. This was Sarah’s third school move. Sarah initially moved from Bryntag Junior School to join her sister at Masteg School, a Welsh speaking school. The family then moved to the town in mid-September 2012 due to dissatisfaction with the previous town and the perceived availability of recreational and employment opportunities the town offered their children. Sarah subsequently attended St. Margaret’s School between September and December before moving to her current school, Oakridge School, in mid-December so that she and Ruby could attend the same school. Sarah lived at home with her parents, her younger sister Ruby, two older sisters and her nephew. Sarah’s father was a registered carer for her mother who herself received incapacity benefit. Sarah was eligible for free school meals.

Sarah was the first child to join the class that academic year and two children had left the class to join another school at the time of the teacher interview. The size of the school and catchment demographic was described by Ofsted (Cordey, 2011) as “larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average”. Please refer to section 2.4.2 for an overview of the school.
3.3.1. Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?

Figure 7: Thematic Map for Case Study 3 - Research Question 1
3.3.1.1. **Contrasting Emotions**

Sarah found moving to Oakridge School a difficult experience that involved contrasting emotions throughout the transition. Despite this Sarah settled and enjoyed attending her new school.

3.3.1.2. **Difficult Transition**

Sarah and her parents commented that she found the transition from leaving Wales to attending St Margaret’s School followed by Oakridge School a difficult experience. For Sarah, this involved a progression of emotions from not wanting to leave her school in Wales to enjoying attending Oakridge School;

“I didn’t really like it [moving schools] ‘cos I loved it. I loved it there [Masteg School] but now I like it here [Oakridge School].” (C1)

During the transition Sarah displayed uncharacteristic changes in mood at home;

“M. She has been in moods just lately a lot hasn’t she? So it must be affecting her in a way.
D. ‘Cos she.
M. She doesn’t normally go in moods.
D. She never used to go in moods, she used to be happy go lucky but these last 2, 3 weeks?
M. [nods head]
D. She’s been getting downbank [sic] hasn’t she?
M. Yeah getting in little moods.” (P1)

**Before the Residential Move**

**Disliked St. Margaret’s School**

Sarah and her parents explained that she was happy to move to Oakridge School as she did not like the first school she attended in the town, St. Margaret’s School. This was a Catholic school and Sarah and her parents explained that she was not religious and found
that element of the school quite “scary”. Sarah’s experience may also have been affected by the change from learning in Welsh to learning in English which is discussed in the next section.

“Can you remember your first day there [St Margaret’s]? How did you feel then?

Kind of scaredy [sic].

Why?

‘Cos I never knew what to do ‘cos they were all talking about God and I can’t really say this but me and my mum and dad don’t believe in Jesus. . . I didn’t really like it.” (C1)

Sarah’s parents explained that the prospect of leaving St. Margaret’s School and attending the same school as her sister outweighed the conflicting emotion of leaving a friend that she had made at the school.

“M. She wanted to move, even though she was going to miss one of her best friends from St. Margaret’s.” (P1)

Used to Changing Schools

Another element to Sarah’s move of school was that she was beginning to get used to changing schools.

“And how did you feel about leaving St Margaret’s?

I didn’t mind. Didn’t mind.

Why not?

‘Cos I always change schools so I didn’t mind.” (C1)

First Day at School

Sarah described her first day at Oakridge School as being a hard experience. This related to a mixture of feelings from initial excitement to feeling scared, sad and nervous and
then happiness. Sarah explained that these feelings predominately related to friendship concerns.

“Can you think back to the morning of when you woke up and it was your first day at your new school?”

I was excited.” (C1)

“It [the first day] was hard. . . It was kind of scary like shaky”. (C1)

Friendship Concerns

Sarah attributed feeling sad, scared and nervous to not knowing anyone in her new school, making new friends and the prospect of being bullied.

“A sad card? And why did you feel sad on your first day?”

‘Cos I had no friends. ‘Cos I had no-one to play [with].

So on your first day you were excited about your new school but you felt quite sad because you didn’t know anybody?

But Katy came walking up and said ‘what’s wrong?’.

Oh so on your first day something that helped was that Katy came up and talked to you and asked you what was wrong?

Yeah.

And how did that make you feel?

Kind of worried. I was kind of frightened.

And why did you feel worried?

I didn’t know what to do because I never, [sic] I didn’t know her.” (C1)

Sarah started school with the expectation that she would be bullied due to previous school experiences. This contributed to her feeling scared on her first day. Despite
reassurance, this worry continued until she met her peers. For Sarah, the realisation that she would not be bullied helped her to feel settled in her new school.

“*When I started here she [mum] said ‘don’t worry you’re not gonna get bullied’ you’ll be alright’. But I didn’t believe her ‘cos I knew that I was gonna get bullied ‘cos I got bullied at my other schools. But now I’m not getting bullied.*” (C1)

Establishing friendships helped Sarah to feel happy on her first day (this theme is related to supportive peers which is discussed later in this chapter).

“*Are there any other of these that you felt?*”

[Spoke in Welsh and pointed to happy]

*You pointed to happy. What did you say there?*  
[Repeats Welsh phrase]

*And is that happy in Welsh?*

Yeah.

*And why were you feeling happy?*

*Because I never knew that I had so much friends in my class but Katy is my favourite.*” (C1)

**After the First Day at School**

**Found Lessons Hard**

Sarah found her lessons hard. This experience is related to low literacy and numeracy levels and adapting to learning in a different language. Sarah’s parents and teacher observed that she worried about her school work and could be anxious in class.

“*How was it with moving from a Welsh speaking school to an English speaking school?*

Hard ‘cos . . . I didn’t really know English much ‘cos I learned Welsh.”
And how did that make you feel when you were moving to an English speaking school?

I felt nervous because I never, I never knew English but I did a bit but then I had to learn Welsh, all of it. I hated it.” (C1)

“[Sarah] finds it difficult to ask [and] to answer direct questions. [Sarah] Looks at bit, a little bit sometimes like a rabbit in the headlights.  

Do you mean she looks a little bit lost or? 

She looks anxious sometimes if she asked a direct question.” (T1)

Missed Friends

Sarah explained that she missed her friends from her previous schools and had not kept in touch with them following the move.

“Do you keep in contact with any of your old friends?

No not now. My Mum won’t let me. ‘Cos I never mention it and that nobody gives me their names or their numbers.” (C1)

Settled

Despite the difficult transition and finding the lessons hard Sarah had settled into Oakridge School. Sarah enjoyed attending the school, quickly established friendships and recognised that she was learning more.

Enjoyed School

“I like this school the most.” (C1)

“M. They enjoy school, it’s just the lessons they’re finding hard.” (P1)

Made Friends

Sarah and her parents noted that she had established friendships in school and her teacher observed that she was a popular member of the class.
“Could you tell me a little bit about how things are now?

Greater [sic]. . . ‘Cos new people have come to the school and I have new friends.” (C2)

“M. This time she’s made friends quicker. She’s got a hell of a lot of friends.” (P1)

“She’s quite a popular member of the class.” (T1)

Learning More

Related to enjoying and settling into school was Sarah noticing that she was learning more than when she attended her old school. This related to the subtheme ‘in class support’ which is discussed later in this chapter.

“I’m getting more things learned than my old school. Learning more things that I like.” (C1)

Not being bullied

As mentioned above, Sarah explained that a major factor in her enjoying school was that she was not bullied.

“I want to pick happy! . . . ‘Cos this is the best thing in the world ‘cos in my old school I hated it.

So why is it better than your old school?

I did tell yer. I got bullied . . . it’s better here ‘cos I don’t get bullied.” (C1)
3.3.2. Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experience of Pupil Mobility?

Figure 8: Thematic Map for Case Study 3 - Research Question 2
3.3.2.1. Pupil Characteristics

Friendly Personality

Sarah was described by her parents and teacher as a friendly, “happy go lucky” girl. This combined with being proactive, having a positive attitude and a willingness to work cooperatively with her peers was thought to have aided her transition.

“The other children . . . took to her. She’s quite. You know? She’s a happy girl, she’s not forceful but she, she comes in . . . she doesn’t look sulky which is a big thing when you’re starting a new school. So she started really well.” (T1)

“She’s quite able and quite proactive to go and find somebody to work, to co-operate with.” (T1)

Learning Difficulties

Sarah had difficulties with reading and numeracy. This impacted upon her worrying about her school work and was linked to the subthemes of change of language, lack of communication and school support described later in this section.

“M. She speaks English but she didn’t understand the word English if you know what I mean. She can’t put it down on paper. But I think some of it comes from dyslexia ‘cos they said there’s a touch of dyslexia in her as well.” (P1)

Sarah’s schoolwork had benefitted from her positive attitude.

“She’s showing a great willingness to improve her reading and obviously mum must be supporting that.” (T1)

Change in Language

The change from learning in Welsh to learning in English contributed to Sarah’s difficult transition; it impacted upon her learning in class and her relationship with her peers.

All participants commented that Sarah had difficulty following instructions in English. This may have compounded her learning difficulties.
“Can you understand the teacher in the classroom when she speaks English?

Yeah. I can understand her but I can’t understand her all the time.

Right and why is that?

Because I speak Welsh.” (C1)

“D. Because it’s a bit harder at this school than it was in North Wales ‘cos in North Wales it was all Welsh, it was penetrated Welsh, Welsh, Welsh.

M. And then you come to an English school and it’s all English, she can’t understand because she [sic]. The teachers want her to be to a certain standard but when you’ve been used to another standard in Wales and it’s been all Welsh.” (P1)

Sarah also noted that speaking Welsh made her stand out from her peers and she did not enjoy her friends joking and talking about this.

“[At the first interview you said] moving from a Welsh speaking school to an English speaking school was quite hard for you? It still is.

In what way?

My friends keep telling me ‘speak Welsh! Speak Welsh!’ and I’m trying to get rid of Welsh.

And why are you trying to get rid of it?

‘Cos I don’t like it. They just keep saying. Keep telling me to say it [speaks a phrase in Welsh].” (C2)
3.3.2.2. **Family Factors**

**Joined with Her Sister**

Sarah joined the school at the same time as her younger sister. All participants observed that Sarah enjoyed spending social time with her sister in school.

“She’s got a younger sister who seems very bubbly and the two of them together are very bubbly!” (T1)

**Preparation**

Sarah’s parents planned the move to the town. This involved two visits to the town before the move and discussion of the reasons behind the move and their daughter’s concerns. Visiting the town before the move helped Sarah to be aware of the positives of moving to the resort.

“I stayed over at my mum’s friend’s house for a week. . . . We went out and went to the park, wall climbing and had fun.” (C2)

Sarah and her parents explained that part of the preparation involved discussing the move to ensure she understood the reasons behind the move and the positives that it would bring.

“M. We just told them there was more activities in the place where we were moving to, better school.” (P1)

As discussed earlier, Sarah’s parents provided reassurance in relation to Sarah’s concern that she would be bullied. Sarah noted however that this only had a limited effect.

“When I started here she [mum] said ‘don’t worry you’re not gonna get bullied] you’ll be alright’. But I didn’t believe her ‘cos I knew that I was gonna get bullied ‘cos I got bullied at my other schools.” (C1)

**Accessed Activities**

Sarah’s enjoyment of school and her new town related to accessing various activities in school (such as school trips, reading club and enrichment) and outside school (such as rock climbing).
“She’s doing a mix of modern and pop [dance lessons] and that’s when . . . [she looks like the] the skippy, happy Sarah.” (T1)

“M: it’s just like take ‘em to the park and stuff like that and now there’s only a park up the road from where we live and they joined a club in the sum [sic] . . . ‘cos they like climbing the wall and stuff like that.” (P1)

**Housing Conditions**

The move provided the family with an improvement in their living conditions. Sarah’s parents had noticed that having an extra bedroom had created more space which had helped the household seem calmer.

“M. Because [at the old address] there was four girls in one bedroom and the eldest daughter was in the bedroom with them. . . oh it was like fireworks every morning!

D. Yeah it was it was terrible.

M. It’s more calmer, and the kids love it now.” (P1)

Despite the extra bedroom, Sarah continued to share a bedroom with two of her sisters. Sarah explained that, on occasions, this caused her to feel tired as her younger sister kept her awake due to challenging behaviour.

“Now I’m this! [Showed a tired face]

**Today you’re feeling sleepy. Thank you for that.**

‘Cos Ruby . . . head banging again.” (C1)

“**Is there anything else that’s made it harder?**

Yeah my little sister waking me up.” (C1)

**Lack of Communication with the Teacher**

This theme emerged from both the teacher and parent interviews and linked with the themes of uncertainty and school practices discussed later in this section. Sarah’s parents
and her teacher commented that they would have liked more communication between them.

“‘I’ve only seen mum briefly when she brought Sarah in.’” (T1)

“M. I know we’ve only just moved up. But I would like to have known a bit more and discussed more about Ruby and Sarah to the teacher themselves ‘cos the head teacher’s not going to have much time to talk to them.” (P1)

Different expectations in relation to communication emerged from the teacher and parents’ perspectives, both feeling that the other should be more proactive.

“M. They don’t talk much do they?

D. No.

M. Not like the other school, like the Welsh school, they kept in contact didn’t they all the time. Or have letters through or we went for meetings and stuff like that with the teacher and we went through everything. Here they don’t.” (P1)

“So at the moment I feel that, you know? The parents haven’t really made a bond with school.” (T1)

Sarah’s parents explained a hindrance to communication was settling after the move;

“D. With only just coming into it we haven’t really seen any teachers or anything really.

M. ‘Cos we were unpacking and then Christmas. Ohhh it’s been a big ordeal really.” (P1)

Sarah’s teacher noted that her parents had not arranged to come into school for the next parents’ evening so she planned to contact the parents directly.

“I mean because she hasn’t made an appointment I will ask to see her.” (T1)
An additional means of communication came in the form of the homework diary which the teacher reported that Sarah’s parents often did not complete. This led the teacher to believe that Sarah had not been practicing her reading at home.

“And how do you know that she doesn’t read at home?

They have a homework diary. So that they bring that every day and so that’s another means of communication with the parents.” (T1)

3.3.2.3. Uncertainty

The combination of the lack of communication between Sarah’s parents and teacher and the school not receiving Sarah’s school records contributed to the theme of uncertainty. Sarah’s teacher explained that she was unsure of Sarah’s prior learning experiences, whether she had any support for special educational needs and the accuracy of the school’s assessments and assumptions.

“We haven’t got the [school] records, maybe she didn’t [require additional support]. They’re being chased.

So you don’t have the records from the previous school yet?

No. So I mean whether or not she had special needs help at her previous school? Maybe she’s finding our method different.

So you’re not sure whether she had special needs at her previous school?

No.” (T1)

“Has anything made it harder?

The fact of not having contact, it is definitely because yeah it would be nice to know what Sarah was like at home.

And what difference would that make to you as a teacher.

It would help me understand the whole girl wouldn’t it, I mean obviously, and you know it’s a short time, November to February and I’m already
making assessments on her and I need to know whether those are true assessments or whether she’s still not settled.” (T1)

This uncertainty is reflected in Sarah’s parents’ concern that teacher expectations were too high for both their daughters given their learning difficulties and the change in language. This was linked to Sarah’s experience of finding lessons hard.

“M. They say to us that they’re finding it hard. That’s why we could do with having a speak to the teacher so they don’t push them too hard if you know what I mean?” (P1)

“D. Both of them are the same aren’t they? . . . . Where the teachers are trying to get ‘em to do stuff.

M. And they don’t understand.

D. And they don’t understand it.” (P1)

It is possible that the communication was negatively affected by the induction mentor being on long term sick leave at the time of the interviews. The role of the induction mentor is discussed below.

3.3.2.4. Role of the Induction Mentor

Sarah’s induction involved her parents completing a pre-induction form and meeting with the head teacher on the Friday prior to her starting. This provided an opportunity to discuss their daughters and learn about the culture and processes of the school. The following Tuesday Sarah and her parents arrived at school early and were greeted by the induction mentor who showed them round the school and introduced them to her class.

“And [induction mentor’s name] meets them at the door, usually if it’s a family they’re all together and she’ll bring them into the school. She’ll ask them to come early and they’ll come into the school and she’ll show them all round and then she’ll find the teacher and bring them up to the classroom.” (T1)

“She [induction mentor] showed me around the school on my first day. . . .
What difference did it make when she showed you round the school?

That was really surprising.

Why?

‘Cos I did not know what it was like this school. I did not know it was this big.” (C2)

Prepared Equipment

Sarah’s parents and teacher commented that the induction mentor ensured that a tray was prepared for Sarah with her name labeled on it and all the appropriate books were ready for her. This reduced the impact upon the teacher’s time and helped Sarah to feel part of the class straight away.

“She [induction mentor] prints out the names so that they have a tray . . . she gets all the books prepared ready and she’ll go through things like the homework diary with them and explain to parents what that is in case it’s different to other [school].” (T1)

Assessment

The induction mentor conducted assessments of Sarah’s academic skills to inform how she would be supported in class. The need for this assessment is related to the difficulty in obtaining previous school records.

“When they first come in she assesses them for their spelling, she gives them a reading test, she does that initially on a 1 – 1 very informal basis.” (T1)

Monitored Sarah

A theme from each interview was the induction mentor monitoring Sarah during her early days at the school. This involved her completing and discussing a feelings booklet with Sarah, talking to Sarah about her thoughts and feelings and ensuring that any informal observations were communicated to the teacher.
“She gave me a little book. A smiley face and a sad face. I’ve still got it. ‘Cos every day you colour in green if you’ve really enjoyed it and red if you have not. Today I’m going to put green.” (C2)

“She talks to them about if they’ve got any worries. . . during the following week she will go back and have another conversation with the child ‘was your first impression the same?’ . . . ‘do you still feel alright about it?’ And she’s another adult who the child can approach.” (T1)

The informal observations conducted by the induction mentor allowed the teacher to monitor and support Sarah’s transition.

“‘Cos (induction mentor’s name) great for just noticing little things and not always the negative things. ‘Oh I saw Sarah playing with so and so and that was nice ‘cos I hadn’t seen her playing with her before’ and ‘I saw her skipping’. Just little odd things that obviously because I’m not down on the playground at lunchtime, you might miss.” (T1)

Highly Valued

Common across all these themes was the teacher highly valued the induction mentor’s role. It was thus possible that the induction mentor having a period of time off sick negatively impacted upon Sarah’s experience of changing schools.

“I think [induction mentor’s] role is vital, that intermediary because she’s she’s not, she’s not a buddy to them but she’s not ‘the teacher’.” (T1)

“And what difference do you think it makes having [the induction mentor] to do that [prepared equipment]?

Well it’s much easier than dashing round isn’t it? Because, probably you’d forget to, you know? At a certain lesson you’d be doing maybe your Egyptian topic and you think ‘oohh she hasn’t got a book’ and then she’d be sat there thinking ‘ooohh I’m not really part of this’ and then you’d be off in a panic finding one. So it’s really helpful to have [induction mentor] doing that.” (T1)
3.3.2.5. School Factors

Oakridge School used a variety of strategies to help Sarah settle and feel part of the school. This related to role of the induction mentor, the school culture and teacher practices.

Inclusive Culture

Oakridge School was described as having an inclusive and supportive culture. This linked to Sarah's experience of making friends and enjoying school.

“I think it’s a welcoming school, there’s lots of adults about. There’s lots of things to do at lunchtime.” (T1)

Supportive Peers

The support Sarah received from her peers consisted of them being welcoming and supporting her in class. This is related to the culture of the school and the teacher preparing Sarah’s peers, discussed later in this section.

“Mmm a sad card ... mmm and why did you feel sad on your first day?

‘Cos I had no friends. ‘Cos I had no-one to play [with] . . . . But Katy came walking up and said ‘what’s wrong?’” (C1)

“[When feeding back group work to the class] she was very hesitant in explaining what they’d decided but then somebody in the team would say ‘we thought about’ so you know? They realise that she’s not confident so they would help her that way.” (T1)

Having welcoming peers helped Sarah make friends quickly which aided her settling and enjoying school.

“Why were you feeling happy [on your first day]?

Because I never knew that I had so much friends in my class but Katy is my favourite one.” (C1)
3.3.2.6. Class Teacher’s Practice

Change in Teaching Style

Sarah explained that one reason why she found lessons hard was the change from learning in Welsh to English, discussed earlier, but also due to changes in teaching methods. Sarah explained that she enjoyed this challenge, which is linked to her positive attitude discussed earlier.

“I never knew how to do maths . . . when I was in Year 3 because they didn’t really do numeracy or anything, all they did is play, play, play but all I did was drawing I never did anything so this is the best time [because I am learning more].” (C1)

Prepared Peers

Having supportive peers was facilitated by the teacher preparing them for Sarah’s arrival. This involved clarifying what was expected of them.

“[I] spoke to the class and said you’ve got a new girl who’s going to come, you need to be all really helpful, you need to make sure that she feels part of us. She won’t know where things are, I’m going to be asking some of you to look after her, to show her where things are in the school.” (T1)

Peer Buddy

The teacher nominated a suitable child to be a peer buddy to socially support Sarah and help her learn the school layout and routines.

“I had somebody ready to take Sarah out and show her where the line was and things like that.

Was that a child?

Yeah.

And how did you pick that child?
One of the nicest children, yes, yes, one of the Enid Blyton children yes, yes [laugh].” (T1)

**Group Activities**

The forming of friendships was supported by Sarah taking part in group activities in class and outside of class. This was related to the themes of accessing activities and recognition of work.

“Within the class we have teams of children, so we have the class split up into four teams and they are trying to achieve team points for a variety of things. Not just work but behaviour or helpfulness or a big improvement or various things like that and that’s added up on a weekly basis. So she’s part of a group of children and they will congratulate each other in ‘Oh oh you’ve got a team point well done’ you know? Put it on the chart.” (T1)

“When I was in writing focus I got a 1A. . . I got a 2 point and a merit so I got two things. A two point is at the end of the year or month you count them all up and the biggest number wins a surprise, well all the people in that group. Last time I were in Fossum group and we got ninety something. So we won.” (C2)

**Learning Support**

Sarah received additional classroom support from teaching assistants, her peers and through alternative methods of recording her work. This was related to her finding her lessons hard, the induction mentor’s assessments and supportive peers.

“She would be in the group that receives quite a lot of support from the learning assistant in terms of literacy and in all other associated subjects where she needs to use writing skills, ‘cos her writing is really, really poor. It’s also very slow so sometimes, I’ll scribe for her, tell me what you want to say so we might scribe or sometimes we’ll word process.” (T1)
“Well yeah Mr [name], Mrs [name] and Mr [name] they would be the best teachers because they’re the ones that make me better in work and everything.” (C1)

Recognition of Work

Achieving merits and rewards was linked to Sarah feeling that she was settling into her class and that she was learning more in her new school. This involved in-class systems such as reward systems, team activities, her teacher verbally valuing her contributions and whole school activities such as star worker of the week and a settling in certificate.

“We have a Year 4 assembly once a week . . . we have a star worker and a role model of the week and she’s had star worker of the week for presenting her work in a really good way. So she then got up in front of the whole of the 90 children. She had a certificate. It was laminated and taken home.

And how did she react to that?

Oh she was pleased yeah, yeah definitely, yeah, [laughs].” (T1)

“[I] try and give her support, try and give her lots of praise, try and show her work as an example to other people. . . . she loves it.” (T1)
3.4. Case Study 4: Ruby

Background

Ruby was a Year 3 girl who joined Oakridge School, alongside her sister Sarah (case study 3) in December 2011. Ruby’s parents were interviewed in January and Ruby and her class teacher were interviewed in March of the following term. Ruby experienced difficulty accessing the qualitative interview and her data was removed from the analysis to promote the study’s trustworthiness.

Ruby lived with her parents, her three older sisters and her nephew. Ruby’s father was a registered carer for her mother who received incapacity benefit. Ruby was eligible for free school meals.

This was Ruby’s second school move. The family moved from a Welsh speaking school, Masteg School, in mid-September due to dissatisfaction in relation to the previous town and the perceived availability of recreational and employment opportunities this coastal town offered their children. Ruby spent 16 weeks out of education whilst she waited for a school place.

Ruby was the second of three children to join her class since the start of the academic year and one child had left the class. The size of the school and catchment demographic was described by Ofsted (Cordey, 2011) as “larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average”. Please refer to section 2.4.2 for an overview of the school.
3.4.1. Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?

Figure 9: Thematic Map for Case Study 4 - Research Question 1
3.4.1.1. Difficult Transition

Ruby’s parents explained that both their children found the experience of pupil mobility a hard transition before settling into the school. For Ruby this was particularly related to the subthemes of contrasting emotions, time out of education, finding her lessons hard, adapting to a change of provision, uncertainty and changing from a Welsh to English speaking school that are discussed later in this section.

“M. They’re happy about it but they do find it hard. They say to us that they’re finding it hard.” (P1)

3.4.1.2. Contrasting Emotions

Ruby was reported to have experienced a range of emotions during the process of moving house and joining Oakridge School. These included a mixture of excitement and nervousness on her first day and stubbornness whilst she adapted to her new educational environment before settling and enjoying attending her new school.

Before the First at School Day

Time Out of Education

For Ruby an aspect of the hard transition was waiting 16 weeks to be allocated a school place. This was a stressful time for the family and involved the parents attending various meetings and placing appeals to the council for a school place. At this time Ruby’s behaviour at home deteriorated. As discussed in case study 3, Ruby’s sister Sarah attended St. Margaret’s School during this time.

“What was she like during that time [while waiting for a school]?

D. Phew! She was bouncing wasn’t she?

M. God it was hard work wasn’t it?

D. Yeah she was bouncing.

M. We were fighting to get her into school . . . I put an appeal in because they had no places for her. We put an Appeal in for [St. Margaret’s] as well didn’t we?
D. Yeah.

M. But as the appeal decided to come along then we had a meeting and then I had a letter coming through the post that same week and we got a place here in Oakridge.” (P1)

First Day at School

Ruby experienced contrasting emotions during her first day. Ruby was excited to attend Oakridge School but initially appeared quite nervous in class but seemed more confident once she had met some of her peers.

“How was she the morning of [her first day].

M. Excited.

D. Dead excited wasn’t she?

M. Yeah, ‘cos she wanted to come to school.” (P1)

“She looked quite nervous when she came but, actually once she came into the classroom and she met some of the children, I was surprised actually she was quite confident and she seemed to make friends quite easily.” (T1)

First Week at School

During her first week Ruby made friends but had limited confidence in taking part in whole class discussions. This was possibly related to changing from a Welsh speaking school to an English speaking school and to her learning difficulties which are discussed later in this section.

“Within a couple of days you could see she kind of made her own friendship groups and she was off with those children.” (T1)

“[Ruby] probably didn’t put her hand up for a couple of weeks though. So when it was in a whole class situation it was maybe a little bit perhaps overwhelming for her.” (T1)
After the First Week at School

Settled

Despite the difficult transition and finding her lessons hard both Ruby’s parents and teacher observed that she settled and enjoyed her new school.

“She’s generally quite a happy child and she comes in and she’s always got a smile on her face.” (T1)

Part of settling into the school was making friends.

“She’s done really well. I would say she is quite a popular member of the class really.” (T1)

Found Lessons Hard

Despite settling into the school Ruby continued to struggle in her lessons. This was linked to her learning difficulties, discussed later in this section. Ruby’s parents noticed that her writing had deteriorated following the move.

“I think she’s adapted quite well really to a brand new school considering the problems that she’s got because she doesn’t find things easy and she does struggle.” (T1)

“D. She mirror writes . . . . They tried to help her at the other school in North Wales and then she trigged [sic] back again when she came here again so something sparked her when we moved.

M. Yeah it’s put her back.” (P1)

Ruby’s parents explained that they thought Ruby became frustrated in school and this led to behavioural difficulties at home. They explained that this is a long standing behaviour that had occurred prior to the move as well as after the move.

“D. If she can’t get summat [sic] right.

M. She gets frustrated doesn’t she?
D. She gets frustrated and then when she comes home it’s just mad.

M. Oh we know about it!

D. She just lets loose ‘cos she can’t get stuff right at school.

So it’s almost building up?

D. Yeah. It builds up through the day and when she gets home she just lets loose on anybody.” (P1)

In contrast, in school Ruby’s teacher explained she displayed stubbornness and periods of moodiness in class as she adapted to the new school environment but was generally well behaved in school.

“*We did have a few sulky moments at the start but mum did warn me about that and she said that she can be very very determined. Very very stubborn when she wants to be and she can be!*” (T1)

“We’ve not had any problems in the playground with her. She plays nicely with the other children.” (T1)
3.4.2. Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experience of Pupil Mobility?

Figure 10: Thematic Map for Case Study 4 - Research Question 2
3.4.2.1. Pupil Characteristics

Personality

In school Ruby was described as an easy going girl who took the change of school in her stride. This contributed to her finding it relatively easy to make new friends.

“I would say she’s quite a calm, relaxed child really and she takes things in her stride. And I think that’s helped her. Another personality of child and I would say yeah. You could definitely see sort of emotional changes there without a doubt.” (T1)

Despite presenting as being easy going Ruby was described by her parents and teacher as being quite determined and stubborn. This was evident in the first couple of weeks while she was settling into the school.

“We only had the first few weeks maybe. That stubbornness coming through. That determination where, I remember when she first missed her very first golden time because she hadn’t read, she sat on the carpet and it took forever to actually open a book. She just did not want to read.” (T1)

Learning Difficulties

Ruby’s parents reported that she had difficulties with her attention and concentration and academically in literacy and numeracy. This contributed to her finding her lessons and the transition hard. As Ruby’s difficulties were noticeable the teacher was able to recognise quickly that she would require additional support. This, alongside information supplied by the induction mentor, facilitated support quickly being put into place.

“It was very clear even from day one that she was going to struggle. You can kinda see that straight away really.” (T1)

Ruby’s difficulty in relation to understanding instructions may have impacted upon her finding her lessons hard and contributed to her displaying stubborn and determined behaviours within the first couple of weeks.
“M. I do feel sorry for her ‘cos like she doesn’t understand does she? . . . she goes ‘I can’t help it. I don’t know what’s wrong’.” (P1)

“Sometimes you’ll give her a task and you’ll think she’s not quite got that and you can see a vacant look and you’ve got to go over it with her again.” (T1)

In relation to friendships Ruby quickly identified with children who were of a similar ability. This aided her forming friendships.

“She tends to stay with, I suppose, with my lower sort of end, my middle lower sort of end ability children but she’s fit in really well really.” (T1)

3.4.2.2. Family Support

Ruby’s parents were described as a caring family who, following an initial lack of communication with the school, were described as being proactive in communicating with the teacher. This was linked to the themes of initial lack of communication and uncertainty, discussed later in this section.

Living Conditions

Moving to a bigger house was reported by the parents to contribute to a calmer house. Please refer to case study 3 for a discussion of this.

Proactive Parents

At the time of the first interview Ruby’s parents planned to meet with her teacher to reduce their uncertainty. This had occurred before the teacher interview. Ruby’s teacher had found this useful in helping her understanding of Ruby, giving an opportunity to address the parents’ concerns and to ensure they facilitated her reading more at home.

“So we didn’t actually find that out until mum came in and she had a word with me about it because she was, she just wanted to know how she was settling. So I can see now why she is struggling so much. So obviously going from a completely Welsh speaking school to now coming to an English, you
know, speaking school and apparently all her reading books were in Welsh too.” (T1)

“And it’s been handy really because mum and dad . . . [are] quite happy to approach you. They’re quite happy to talk about any concerns they’ve got and if they are unsure about anything.” (T1)

The theme of proactive parents was facilitated by the teacher’s practice of making herself available for informal conversations with parents.

“I always come out into the playground when the children leave and I will wait in the playground just to see any parents who do want to grab me and speak to me and so we’re always there in the morning . . . very often parents will grab me to have a word.” (T1)

**Accessed Activities**

Ruby’s parents supported her accessing activities inside and outside of school. This helped to promote her enjoyment.

“They were doing gymnastics last term, it was on a Wednesday, they’re doing ballet this term . . . they’re well into it aren’t they? They like the after school club.” (P1)

“We went to Chester museum on Monday with the children and she was absolutely fine . . . we did do all sorts; we did marching around Chester with a Roman soldier and they were all dressed in their armour, they went to a workshop where they were doing a bit of archaeology and that type of thing. She was fine. She was lovely. . . . I think they all enjoyed the Romans!” (T1)

In addition to accessing school based activities Ruby also accessed the breakfast club.

“I think she must be accessing the breakfast club at the moment on a couple of the days.” (T1)

**Preparation**

The family visited the town twice before the move. This facilitated discussions with Ruby
to help her understand the reason for the move and identify the positives of changing school and town. The parents ensured that Ruby had the correct uniform on her first day.

“M. it’s better just talking to your child one to one and just explain.

D. Why you’re doin’ [sic] it and stuff like that.

M. Yeah. ‘Cos we tell our children everything virtually.” (P1)

“M. We just told them there was more activities in the place where we were moving to [and] a better school.” (P1)

**Joined with Older Sister**

Ruby joined the school the day before her older sister Sarah. This provided her with a supportive person in school and someone to talk and play with.

“I think it’s helped that she’s had a sister. I do because I know that she loves to see her sister in the playground and they will talk to each other and they will catch up in the playground and the fact that she’s had her sister there has given her that sense of security so she can go to her sister if she’s a bit worried about anything.” (T1)

**3.4.2.3. Initial Lack of Communication Between Home and School**

Ruby’s teacher was initially unaware that she had changed from learning in Welsh to English. At the time of the parent interview Ruby’s mother and father explained that they had not spoken fully to Ruby’s teacher and this initial lack of communication contributed to the subtheme of uncertainty and was linked to Ruby having a hard transition.

“I only recently found out that she had actually been at a Welsh school and I hadn’t been given that information initially. . . going from a completely Welsh speaking school to now coming to an English speaking school and apparently all her reading books were in Welsh too. So it’s taken us a while to kind of settle her.” (T1)

“Is there anything else that the school have done to support the transition?  

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M. They don’t talk much do they?

D. No.

M. Not like the other school, like the Welsh school, they kept in contact didn’t they all the time.

D. Yeah.

M. Or have letters through or went for meetings and stuff like that didn’t we? A hell of a lot of times. We went every term we had a meeting with Ruby didn’t we? With the teacher and we went through everything. Here they don’t. I know we’ve only just moved up. But I would like to have known a bit more.” (P1)

As discussed in case study 3, Ruby and Sarah’s parents explained the move from Wales to England and finding Ruby a school had been “an ordeal” which had taken up a lot of their time. This may have hindered their communication with school.

Uncertainty

This lack of communication linked to the theme of uncertainty; the parents’ lack of understanding of the support she was receiving and the teacher not being initially aware of the change from learning in Welsh to learning in English or of Ruby’s prior learning experiences and her academic levels at her former school.

“And what are school doing to support the children?”

M. I haven’t got a clue.

D. Don’t know.

M. That’s what I need to discuss with the teacher myself.” (P1)

“I would say that she has had to adjust to our rules I suppose. I don’t know what the rules were in her previous school. Or what her previous teachers expected of her. So you have got to expect that the expectations might be slightly different.” (T1)
Previous School Records

The uncertainty was compounded by the school not receiving information from Ruby’s previous school. This prevented the teacher from being able to compare Ruby’s progress or understand what her previous learning experience was like.

“It would be interesting to see what she was at her previous school and we’ve just never actually got any levels from them. I’m not sure whether in Wales they have a different levelling system. I’m not sure but it would’ve been too nice to get something solid really.” (T1)

3.4.2.4. School Factors

Change of Educational Provision

Part of the hard transition for Ruby was adapting to a change in educational provision. At Masteg School Ruby attended specialist provision within the mainstream school. This included a small class size and one to one support. In contrast Oakridge School was a much bigger school and had larger class sizes. This combined with adapting to changes in rules and expectations may have negatively impacted upon Ruby’s experience.

“M. If I could move that school to here I would, ‘cos the teachers were perfect, they were 1 – 1 with Ruby, that’s the only downfall about moving from Wales to here.” (P1)

“M. She’s been put into a class of 30 so that’s why she’s finding it hard.” (P1)

“I’d say the hardest thing maybe for Ruby is possibly the change of rules maybe. I think maybe that the expectations at her other school might have been different to our expectations.” (T1)

Change of Language

Linked to Ruby’s hard transition was the change from a Welsh to an English speaking school. This was compounded by the theme of limited communication between home and school, discussed earlier in this chapter, as the teacher was initially unaware of this.
“M. She said that the teachers were always having a go at her. They were telling her off and stuff ‘cos I can’t understand me numeracy’. I said well it’s probably ‘cos they don’t understand that you’ve moved from a Welsh school where it’s all in Welsh. That’s why I need to talk to the teacher.” (P1)

“And how is she progressing with her literacy?

She’s getting there. She’s a little bit hesitant. Definitely. Which is understandable.

Why is it understandable?

Well I suppose when you think back to her being in a Welsh school and suddenly having to come to an English speaking school. She’s bound to have that slight hesitantly there.” (T1)

Supportive Peers

Having supportive peers was cited as a factor that contributed to Ruby settling into her new school. Particular factors included her peers being friendly and a culture of helping other class members.

“These are a lovely class of children. I’ve got so many in here that are so happy to help out so if they do see someone struggling they do take the initiative and they’ll say ‘what are you finding difficult?’ Or ‘do you want me to read that word for you?’ . . . so I think socially she’s come to a really lovely class. She’s been lucky!” (T1)

Peer Buddy

The teacher provided Ruby with a peer buddy who provided someone to talk to on her first day and someone to help her learn the layout of the school.

“I actually picked a couple of my girls from my higher end table and they just basically showed her the playground, they made sure that they stayed with her during dinner and during playtimes so she had someone to play
with. They made sure they showed her where the dinner hall was, the toilets, that sort of thing.” (T1)

Inclusive Culture

Supportive peers were linked to the inclusive culture of the school. This included wanting new arrivals to feel welcomed and part of the school and the school providing opportunities for Ruby to experience success through a combination of rewards, team points, displaying her work, being given certain responsibilities and receiving certificates in assembly.

“[The induction mentor] gives them a certificate and that gets presented to them in assembly and it will say ‘here is a certificate to say that Ruby has settled in really well to Oakridge School’ and it just it’s quite nice that they’ve got that acknowledgement that they’re part of our school and that they’ve settled in well really to life at our school.” (T1)

“[Ruby attends] a year 3 assembly every Friday afternoon where we kind of celebrate the work of children so we have a super pupil whose worked exceptionally hard. She could actually be one of those this week!” (T1)

A further factor that helped Ruby to settle and integrate into her new class was being given responsibility. Ruby responded well to this and often volunteered to do jobs.

“[Ruby] will say ‘Mrs (name) can I collect the books up up for you?’ So I say ‘oh yeah. Definitely’. So they just like to be involved some children and like to feel a bit important. It just gives them that sense of responsibility.” (T1)

Preparation

The teacher prepared for Ruby’s arrival by providing a work book and tray ready for her first day. Ruby’s parents explained this helped her to feel part of the class straight away.

“She’d already got her books, she had her tray sorted, that was a good positive thing as well. So it was like she was part of the class already . . . it was like all there ready for her, just for her to pop into the class.” (P1)
Teacher Experience

Ruby’s teacher was experienced in pupil mobility and displayed empathy for Ruby. This may have positively affected how she supported her settling into the school.

“It’s a huge school. I mean when I first came here I got lost. Doing supply here. It’s [joining the school] a massive, massive change especially if you’ve come from a small school. So I always, always make sure that I give my new ones to the sensible children to start off with. At least then they can find their feet, they know where they are supposed to be going. Because even changing classrooms for numeracy at first is going to a different classroom. You know? Going to a different classroom is quite scary in itself. So Yeah I always make sure that my sensible ones start things off.” (T1)

3.4.2.5. Role of the Induction Mentor

The induction mentor coordinated Ruby’s induction and supported Ruby and her teacher.

Induction

Prior to Ruby starting at the school, her parents completed a questionnaire and met with the head teacher. This provided the parents with practical information about the school policy and practices and allowed them to discuss their daughters. On the form the parents did not tick the box that asked if Ruby had any Special Educational Needs. However the parents discussed their concerns about Ruby’s learning difficulties with the head teacher. The class teacher also talked to the parents on Ruby’s first day.

“M. We already went through it with the head teacher didn’t we?

D. Yeah.

M. Telling him the difficulties Ruby’s going through so they probably sussed what class to put ‘em in.” (P1)

“Miss [induction mentor] tends to pass on the information [about Ruby’s literacy difficulties]. Mr [name] the headmaster also told me about it.” (T1)
Although the various induction procedures generated an understanding of Ruby for the school, as discussed earlier her teacher was initially unaware that she had moved from a Welsh to an English speaking school.

“You mentioned that you weren’t sure that she came from a Welsh school, when was it that you found out?”

“IT was a lot further on then it should of been if I’m being honest. I think. I’m trying to think when her mum came in to see me. It was, I think it was Christmas time, Christmas time? Trying to think when she started. But mum came in and just said that she wanted to just speak to me about how she was settling and then it kind of came out then.” (T1)

Addressed Concerns

The induction mentor was the first person Ruby met on her first day and displayed a friendly, welcoming attitude towards her, she showed the family around the school and discussed any concerns the parents or Ruby had. The induction mentor introduced Ruby to her class teacher and peers.

“M. They had a teacher who . . . introduced us to the school. She’s the one who walked around the school showing me around and everything.” (P1)

Monitored Settling

The induction mentor provided daily contact for Ruby and monitored her settling in process through discussions and observations. This information was fed back to the teacher so that she could address any concerns.

“She’ll also check on them at playtimes and dinner times so she’ll nip into the playground without their knowledge though and just check that they are getting on ok and that they have got friends to play with.” (T1)

Ruby’s feelings were also monitored by her teacher through a whole class activity. This allowed the teacher to monitor Ruby’s feelings on a daily basis and provide support if necessary.
“In mornings they come in and we’ve got ‘I feel happy’, ‘I feel sad’, ‘I feel ok’ [points to poster on the wall]. So they generally put their names on the board as soon as they come in. And if they feel sad then I’ll tend to actually try and grab them maybe at playtimes and dinner times.” (T1)

Assessments

The induction mentor conducted assessments of Ruby’s literacy and numeracy skills. This reduced the teacher’s uncertainty with regards to her academic levels and highlighted that Ruby would require additional academic support.

“I think Ruby’s reading age came up as 4 years 3 months. So straight away if you have got a child like that you know ‘I need to get this child some help’.” (T1)

Academic Support

The induction mentor initially joined Ruby in her lessons. Ruby also received a differentiated curriculum, peer support through mixed ability tables, increased 1-1 teacher time and the teacher regularly checking her understanding. In addition Ruby received additional small group literacy and numeracy lessons in school.

“She goes out to Mrs [SENCo name] every morning for literacy for an hour. So it is a much smaller group and she’s with children with similar difficulties to herself. She’s is also in our target readers group. Which means that our LSAs will grab her every day or as much as they can bring on her reading a bit so she does get quite a lot of additional support and in the classroom.” (T1)

3.4.3. Discussion with Ruby

During the pupil interview Ruby said she could not think back to when she moved schools and appeared unable to understand some of the questions or express herself in a consistent and reliable manner. Her interview data was removed from the analysis to promote the study’s trustworthiness. Generally speaking Ruby’s comments triangulated with the teacher’s observation that she enjoyed school and had made friends. Ruby
referred to her peer buddy and explained that her teacher asked a friend to play with her on her first day which she liked.

3.5. Summary of the Results
The research was an in depth exploration into four children’s experiences of pupil mobility. All the children experienced contrasting emotions throughout the process of the residential move and changing schools. Several factors interacted to affect each child’s experience uniquely. The Discussion will go on to discuss the pattern of findings across the case studies in relation to previous research and psychological theory.
4. Discussion

4.1. Summary of the Research

This study explored children’s experiences of pupil mobility alongside a residential move into a northern coastal town in England. The views of the children, their parents and teachers were analysed through thematic analysis.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do children experience pupil mobility?
Research Question 2: How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

The following section corresponds to levels 3 and 4 of Yin’s (2009) levels of questions. It discusses the pattern of key findings across the case studies in relation to literature and psychological theory. An overview of how the final themes were formed and the commonalities across the case studies can be found in Appendix L.

Following a discussion around the summary of the findings in relation to the research questions, the implications of the findings that represent stage 5 of Yin’s (2009) levels of questions are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study, the researcher’s reflections of the research process and concludes with a reflection upon the study’s contribution to knowledge.

The literature that has informed this section has been drawn from the literature review and from literature that was not specific to pupil mobility but whose underlying processes and findings were relevant to the findings of this study. For example, literature that has explored the effect of gender on the development of relationships and research that has explored young people’s perceptions of primary and secondary school environments was included. As discussed in the literature review there were limited studies that directly related to the population of this research. However, literature regarding other groups of children, that were not a primary aim of this research, such as those experiencing international school moves, children moving when in secondary school and children from
military families had interesting commonalities and features in their experiences that were compared to the experiences of the children in this research.

4.2. **Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?**

The findings from the research indicate that pupil mobility combined with a residential move was a challenging transition for the children.

4.2.1. **Challenging Transition**

All of the families explained that, at times, the transition was a hard experience for their children. For some the change of home and school was more difficult, the possible reasons behind this are discussed in section 4.3. The finding that the children found the transition a difficult process was consistent with research that had focused on older students’ experiences of pupil mobility in the UK (DfES, 2003a) and in America (Alcock, 2008; Rumberger et al., 1999).

4.2.2. **Contrasting Emotions**

All the children experienced a range of contrasting emotions throughout the process of moving home and changing school. This finding is consistent with research that has elicited the experiences of high school students (Alcock, 2008; Rhodes, 2008) and children from different groups of pupil mobility, such as when changing home and school to attend an international school (Dixon & Hayden, 2008).

4.2.2.1. **Before the Residential Move**

All the children greeted the news of the move with excitement at the new opportunities and experiences it would entail. As the moving date approached the children reported feelings of sadness and upset at leaving key people in their lives such as family and friends. This pattern of findings is consistent with research that explored the effect of residential mobility upon children. Raviv et al (1990) reported that social stress, that included leaving established friendships, was the principal stressor for young people during a residential move. Also relevant to this study’s participants, Raviv et al (1990) concluded that this was most apparent for preadolescent girls and children who moved long distances.
**4.2.2.2. After the Residential Move**

Once the residential move had taken place the children were reported to have been keen to start at their new school, although this excitement was mixed with anxiety. The anxiety centered on forming relationships with peers and school staff and learning the school layout, rules and routines. Anxiety about forming new friendships matches the findings from research that has elicited the experiences of pupil mobility from high school students from a wide range of backgrounds (Alcock, 2008; Raviv et al., 1990; Rhodes, 2008). The combination of anxieties relates directly to research that has explored transitions from primary to secondary school which found two categories of concern; organisational and social (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittgerber, 2000). Similar to the children in this study, the children Anderson et al’s (2000) research did not report academic concerns until after they had settled into their new school. The findings of this study also match the findings that high school students (Rhodes, 2008) and military children (Plucker & Yeckie, 1999) placed greater importance on forming friendships than on academic progress when changing schools.

Two of the four children had a period of uncertainty whilst they waited for a school place. The wait lasted 6 weeks for Chloe and 16 weeks for Ruby. The two families reported that this was a stressful time for the whole family and related to a lack of control and to uncertainty. The children managed this time differently; for Ruby (case study 4) her behavioural difficulties intensified at home, whilst Chloe (case study 2) described this time as boring and frustrating as it hindered her from settling into her new school and town. One parent summed up this period as “you are like in limbo and you just don’t know what is happening”.

**4.2.2.3. First Day at School**

Each child described a progression of emotions on their first day. Their anxieties with regard to forming relationships and learning the layout, rules and routines of the schools continued. However these feelings were mixed with being upset at missing old friends, but also with the enjoyment of meeting new friends. A pattern across the case studies emerged that once the children had gone into school and met their teacher and their peers their initial anxieties reduced. Each child explained that they met new friends on
their first day and this was a major factor in helping them feel comfortable in their new school. This served the dual purpose of addressing their initial anxieties but also of providing peer support to help them learn the school layout and routines. Similarly, Dixon and Hayden (2008) reported that during their first day at an international primary school, children experienced a mixture of emotions; some felt worried, some missed their old friends and school, whilst others described feelings of happiness. In contrast, research that elicited the experiences of high school students (Rhodes, 2008) and refugee children (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003) cited similar anxieties. Rhodes (2008) and Candappa and Igbinigie (2003) however did not report that the children enjoyed their first day. Candappa and Igbinigie (2003) reported that some of the children described a sizing up period and felt isolated and cried at the end of their first day. Within a high school context Rhodes (2008) reported that the young people experienced feeling overwhelmed and concentrated on “getting through” (p. 118) their first day. These studies suggest that children’s experiences may depend upon factors such as the school culture and ethos, the effectiveness of a buddy system and teacher practices (these factors are discussed in section 4.3). This relates to research that has explored the unique differences between primary and high school environments. High school environments are physically larger and more complex than primary school environments (Fisher & Cooper, 1990), have greater emphasis on academic standards and behaviour (Fisher & Cooper, 1990; Scott, Rock, Pollack, & Ingels, 1995) and have less opportunities to build personal relationships with teachers (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). These factors may account for the differences in children settling into primary and high school environments.

In case study 3 Sarah explained that her main anxiety related to prior experiences of being bullied, which she carried through to her new school. This supported the notion that children’s experiences of transitions are affected by prior experiences (Durkin, 2000) and research in New Zealand that suggested mobile pupils were likely to experience some form of bullying (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007).
4.2.2.4. After the First Day at School

4.2.2.4.1. Settled
All the children settled into their new schools. Feeling settled was linked to enjoying school, becoming familiar with the school routines and layout, peer relationships and developing a sense of achievement. For the child who had previously experienced bullying, a major factor of her settling was feeling safe and secure in school and not being bullied.

The pattern of the children being settled into their new schools matched some of the findings from Dixon and Hayden (2008) who reported that it took less than a term for most of the primary school children to feel settled into their new international school. However Dixon and Hayden (2008) also found contradictory findings in that some children reported they had not settled. This mixture of experiences was supported by research that focused on older children who experienced high levels of mobility; some had settled whilst others had not settled and reported feeling like they did not belong in their new school (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007). It is likely that feeling settled in school was dependent upon a range of child and systemic factors that are discussed under research question 2.

4.2.2.4.2. Developing Friendships
The development of friendships was elaborated upon by the eldest child participant. Chloe explained that initially her new friends could be nasty to her and she “held back” from forming a best friend. During the follow up interview Chloe reported that she had learnt who her good friends were and those who were not and had established meaningful relationships inside and outside of school. Chloe’s experience was consistent with research that elicited the views of children who experienced pupil mobility due to immigration; Candappa and Igbinigie (2003) reported that children often experienced a “sizing up” period before they established friendships. The degree of friendships of mobile pupils can vary, with some pupils establishing friendships quickly and others experiencing periods of isolation (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003; MacArthur & Higgins, 2007). The children in this study quickly established friendships, although the nature of those friendships may have developed over time.
4.2.2.4.3. Sense of Loss

Despite settling in to their new school the children continued to experience a sense of loss which centered on missing their friends and family from their old address. For some children these feelings got easier as time passed and for others they were mediated by family support and keeping in touch with their friends, discussed under research question 2. Research on children joining international schools reported similar feelings of loss of friends and family but also the additional loss of language and culture (Mclachlan, 2007). Similarly, high school students were described by Rhodes (2008) to have “mourned” (p. 116) their friends and favourite teachers they left behind.

4.2.2.4.4. Feeling Different

Despite feeling settled in their schools, two of the children felt different from their peers. This was attributed to unique features of the children. For Chloe it was speaking in a southern accent, whereas for Sarah it was speaking in Welsh. Both girls explained that they did not like this difference as it was commented on and joked about in school. Chloe explained that she felt like she was different from “northerners”, whilst Sarah explained that she wanted to stop being able to speak in Welsh as she did not want to draw attention. Feelings of being different have been cited by other researchers in relation to pupil mobility (Rumberger et al., 1999) although, similar to this study, it did not occur for every student (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007). Feeling different from peers can affect a person’s sense of belonging which has been found to be a protective factor when children experience transitions in their lives (Newman & Blackburn, 2002). Despite feeling different, both the girls enjoyed school and had settled. This suggested that positive systemic factors outweighed this negative aspect of their experience. These will be elaborated upon when research question 2 is explored.

4.2.2.4.5. Found Lessons Hard

Sarah and Ruby found their new lessons hard. This related to their existing learning difficulties but also to adapting to the changes in curriculum, styles of teaching and teaching environment. Chloe was also reported to have had below average academic ability and Helen received additional literacy support. These findings match the pattern of findings from quantitative research that concluded that pupil mobility was related to lower attainment which existed prior to the change of schools (Mehana & Reynolds,
2004; Strand & Demie, 2006). Although the observations of two teachers were that the change in accents may have negatively affected the girls’ phonic skills, this warrants further investigation. The children finding their lessons hard links to qualitative literature that cited the challenge of adapting to new styles of learning and gaps in the curriculum negatively impacting upon young people’s experience of pupil mobility (Alcock, 2008; Rhodes, 2008).

4.3. Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experience of Pupil Mobility?

4.3.1. Ecological Systems Theory

The findings across the case studies are organised within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979: 1986) ecological systems framework. Bronfenbrenner (1979: 1986) proposed that child development is influenced by the interaction between the child and the systems that exist around the child’s immediate environment and the “larger physical and social milieu” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 p. 13). These are described in section 1.5.2 of the literature review and consist of:

- The Microsystem
- The Mesosystem
- The Exosystem
- The Macrosystem
- The Chronosystem

The ecological model was suited to the research findings as it has been cited as an appropriate conceptual framework by other researchers who have studied pupil mobility (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004) and by psychologists who had explored children’s experiences during other periods of transition such as between primary and secondary school (Brewin & Statham, 2011; Durkin, 2000). The model also suited the exploratory nature of this study. Bronfenbrenner (1993) summarised the primary goal of his theory as:

“Not to claim answers, but to provide a theoretical framework that, through its application, will lead to further progress in discovering the
processes and conditions that shape the course of human development.”
(Bronfenbrenner, 1993 p. 41)

4.3.2. Individual Factors

The individual factors of the child interact with the systems to affect their experience.

4.3.2.1. Personality

A theme across all the case studies was that the child’s personality impacted upon their experience. Personality traits such as being friendly and easy going were perceived by teachers and parents to aid the forming of friendships and adaptation to the school environment. Ruby was described as being quite stubborn initially and this was reported to have impeded her settling in. The effect of personality is in line with research by Oishi and Schimmack (2010) who found a negative relationship between residential moves and wellbeing in introvert but not extrovert personalities and that the child’s personality was related to the degree of social relationships that were formed. The relationship between wellbeing and personality has been widely documented (Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). Similarly Rutter (2007) and Boon (2010) argue that individual traits such as coping and personality impact upon a person’s resilience to challenging transitions.

4.3.2.2. Academic Ability

Academic ability was related to how the girls adapted to the change in their educational environment, particularly for case studies 3 and 4 who experienced a harder transition. All of the four girls were described as experiencing learning difficulties to varying degrees. For Sarah and Ruby this was compounded by having to adapt to learning in a new language and by the limited communication between schools that is discussed later in this section. Low academic ability is a risk factor during transitions (Newman & Blackburn, 2002) although the children also experienced protective factors that impacted upon their enjoyment of school, such as developing a sense of achievement, that will also be discussed later in the section.

4.3.2.3. Attitude

Despite the academic difficulties experienced by the children, the themes of having a positive attitude and valuing their education were felt to have contributed to their enjoyment of school and to their feeling settled. Newman (2002) argued that being able
to see the benefits of the move whilst recognising the negative aspects, such as leaving friends, was a protective factor during transitions. Each child appeared to understand the reasons why they moved and the positive aspects of the move. For some it was being nearer to extended family, for others it was accessing features of the town and better schooling. Similar findings were reported by Alcock (2008) and Plucker and Yeckie (1999) who reported that the young people cited having a positive attitude as an important factor when changing schools.

The children’s positive attitude was linked to parental support, discussed later in this section, and supports research that suggests that parents who positively role modeled and showed enthusiasm for the relocation helped their children during the transition (Plucker & Yeckie, 1999). This linked to the view that a positive problem solving orientation facilitates performance, whereas viewing problems and challenges negatively inhibits performance (Maydeu-Olivares & D’Zurilla, 1996).

Helen’s teacher noted that alongside her positive attitude, she was assertive in getting her needs met. Similarly Chloe explained that trying hard at school was important. These positive personality traits may relate to children having a feeling of control over aspects of their situation and learning, which Brammer (1992) and Newman and Blackburn (2002) state can be a protective factor during transition.

4.3.3. The Microsystem

The microsystem consists of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations in the child’s immediate environment.

4.3.3.1. Peer Relationships

Peer relationships were a major theme cited by each participant. Leaving and missing friends and the anxiety of forming new friendships were cited as a negative consequence of the move. Making new friends was cited as a major factor in enjoying and settling into their new school.

All the children reported sadness at leaving their friends and family and a sense of loss whilst at their new address. For two children, this was positively mediated through continued contact via social media websites. This provided a continuation of contact and
support through posting pictures and having video conversations that were free of charge. These two children also had family who had remained in their former town which facilitated visits to their friends and family.

The importance of peer relationships has been widely documented within the literature which suggests that residential mobility can have a negative impact upon the number of friends and the degree of friendships (South & Haynie, 2004; South et al., 2007). Rhodes (2008) reported that for high school pupils forming relationships was their first priority before academic progress. Hartup and Stevens (1999) suggested that friendships promote feelings of wellbeing and self-esteem and provide support during transitions.

4.3.3.2. Supportive Peers

The children in both schools described having supportive peers who were pro-active in establishing friendships with them. All the children explained that children approached them to initiate conversations on their first day which reduced their anxiety around forming new friendships, reduced the time they stood on their own and increased their enjoyment of their first day.

All the teachers explained that they prepared the class before the child arrived. This involved prompting them to be approachable, welcoming and helpful. Each teacher organised a “peer buddy” to initially support the new arrivals. These were described as reliable and well behaved members of the class who provided social support and help with the organisational aspects of the school. Some of the children remained close friends with their peer buddies, whilst others gravitated to children with whom they had more things in common. The benefits of a buddy system are widely cited within the literature (DfES, 2003a; DfES 2003b; Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010) although research also suggests that a buddy system can work for some children but not for others (Dixon & Hayden, 2008). Having supportive peers was also related to the culture of the school, which is discussed under the “macrosystem”.

4.3.3.3. Accessing Activities

Each of the children accessed extracurricular activities in the schools and the leisure activities of the town. This increased their enjoyment and provided opportunities to meet new peers and develop friendships. Having regular access to extracurricular activities in
school was important as pupil mobility can have a negative effect on children taking part in these types of activities (Pribesh & Downy, 1999; Rumberger et al., 1999). This finding related to research that explored protective factors with other groups of children. Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, & Blum (2010) reported that accessing extracurricular activities positively impacted upon children of military personnel’s experiences of pupil mobility as did MacArthur and Higgins (2007) who reported that following pupil mobility children who accessed sports clubs had better social networks than children who did not. Accessing activities is viewed as a protective factor during transitions (Newman & Blackburn, 2002) particularly for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Kim-Cohen, Moffitt, Caspi, & Taylor, 2004).

4.3.3.4. Parental Support

All the parents were perceived by the teachers as caring and supportive towards their children. This may have helped the transition as parental warmth has been found to be a resilience factor for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Kim-Cohen et al., 2004).

The parents of the children provided practical support, such as ensuring they had their uniform on their first day, which was reported by some teachers to have prevented the children feeling different from their peers and promoted the message that they belonged in the school. Chloe explained that she found her mother walking with her to school until she felt settled particularly helpful.

The teachers perceived parents as being supportive when they attended school activities and parent afternoons and helped their children with their homework. For the two children who found their lessons hard, the teachers noted that they often did not read at home which negatively affected their progress. In contrast, Helen’s father was trained as a teaching assistant and he took an active role in her homework. Similarly Chloe’s mother and sisters enjoyed “playing school” and supported her reading at home. These interactions may have positively impacted upon their positive attitude to school and learning.
4.3.3.5. **Parent and Child Communication**

Communication between the parents and their children occurred throughout the process of pupil mobility. Initially this consisted of preparing their children for the move by helping them to understand the reasons for the move and giving the parents an opportunity to understand and address their child’s concerns. Helen’s father conducted an activity which supported Helen to talk about the positives of the move but also the negatives. This communication helped him to understand her views and be pro-active in providing reassurance in relation to her concerns. Other parents focused upon discussing the positives of the move with their children. As discussed under the child’s attitude section this interaction may have positively affected the children’s attitude towards the move and their excitement of moving into the town. All the parents talked to their children before and after school. This involved discussing their children’s concerns as well as the positive aspects of their day. This supported the children to problem solve any difficulties and celebrate success. The benefits of the parent-child communication were illustrated by Woolley and Grogan-Kaylor (2006) who reported that parents that were supportive, communicated academic expectations, and took an active role in their child’s education were associated with their children having improved school outcomes during middle school.

4.3.3.6. **Extended Family Support**

Moving closer to extended family was cited as being helpful for Helen and Chloe. For Helen this involved moving into her grandmother’s hotel which provided extra adult support and positively affected her diet and father’s finances. Chloe’s mother explained that having her grandmother and aunts living locally provided her with support and positive activities for Chloe. In addition Chloe’s older sister was proactive in supporting her to talk about and problem solve any issues. Chloe explained that this stopped her bottling up her feelings and helped her to deal with difficulties.

Having a network of supportive adults around the family has been cited as protective factors for children who have experienced other forms of pupil mobility (Mclachlan, 2007). Similarly research has found it to positively influence children’s behaviour and learning (Wentzel, 1999) and relates to Coleman’s Social Capital Theory (1988). In relation to well-being Woolley and Bowen (2007) reported that middle school students
(aged 11-14) “who reported having supportive adults in their lives reported higher levels of psychological and behavioural engagement in their schooling” (p. 92).

4.3.3.7. Quality of Life

All of the children interviewed received free school meals and none of the parents were in employment. This was a potential risk factor as research has found that poverty is linked with lower school achievement (Ofsted, 2002). Each family reported however that the residential move had improved their quality of life. This predominantly related to improved living conditions. All of the families moved into a bigger house and the parents who had more than one child stated that this helped the house to be calmer as it gave the siblings more space. For Chloe moving from a flat to a house meant that she had exciting new opportunities such as having friends round for sleepovers. Similarly Helen moved into a larger room within her grandmother’s hotel which gave her more space to play. The move also helped Helen’s father have improved finances which he explained reduced the stress that was upon him and enabled him to spend more positive times with Helen. Living with her grandmother had also improved Helen’s diet. For Sarah and Ruby, however, although their parents reported the house was calmer Sarah explained that she continued to share a bedroom with Ruby and their older sister which she found tiring due to Ruby’s behavioural difficulties.

4.3.3.8. Developing a Sense of Achievement

A theme across all the child participants was that school practices fostered a sense of achievement for the children. This was a major theme that related to the children feeling settled into the schools. Sarah illustrated this by explaining that even though she found her lessons hard she enjoyed the feeling that she was learning more than when she was in her previous school.

The schools implemented various strategies to foster this sense of achievement. In both schools, a baseline of core academic skills was obtained within the first week. This allowed the teachers to differentiate the curriculum appropriately and ensured the girls accessed additional support if required. For Sarah and Ruby, this was key as they both found their lessons hard due to their learning difficulties and due to having to adapt to the change in environment, including a change in language. The assessments allowed the
teachers to track each child’s progress with guided targets that were reinforced through various reward systems such as verbal praise, team points and certificates. These experiences contributed to each of the children’s enjoyment of school, despite them finding the transition hard.

In relation to psychological literature, Ryan and Deci (2000) argued that humans have an inherent drive for feelings of mastery and success. Achieving a sense of competence and mastery, particularly when associated with feelings of relatedness in the school, can develop motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Rutter (2007) argued that when children overcome challenging events, such as moving into a new school, they develop resilience. This may be especially relevant within a pupil mobility context as children can experience various barriers to achieving success in their school work (Kerbow, 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990) and their school work may be hampered by them initially prioritising developing friendships as opposed to achieving academic success (Rhodes, 2008).

4.3.3.9. Forming Relationships with Staff

The teachers placed great emphasis on the benefit of staff members developing a relationship with the child; this theme was linked to the school culture. One teacher in Oakridge School felt that a particular strength of the school was that the children felt safe and able to talk to a variety of adults within the school. Regular meetings with the induction mentor also helped to facilitate this. Both Helen and Chloe’s teachers explained that they often talked to the girls about their concerns and Ruby’s teacher explained that she used a variety of whole class and individual activities to encourage the children to talk about their emotions and form relationships with their teachers and peers.

Whilst the relationships were forming and the girls were settling into their new class the teachers provided the children with leeway but soon treated them the same as their peers. Chloe felt that this was important as she explained that she did not want to stand out from her peers. As discussed under family support, developing relationships with key adults had been found to positively influence children’s well-being and engagement in school (Woolley & Bowen, 2007) and resilience during transitions (Newman & Blackburn, 2002).
4.3.3.10. Induction Practices

Both schools had structured induction processes. Throughout this process was the subtheme of communication. Other themes that were associated with the induction, such as establishing a buddy system and conducting baseline assessments have been discussed elsewhere within this section.

4.3.3.10.1. Initial Visit

Each of the families visited the school prior to joining. This gave the parents an opportunity to meet the induction mentor/learning mentor and head teacher to discuss their child and to learn about the school systems and culture. Two of the children joined their parents on this visit, Helen and Chloe. The girls were shown around the school and introduced to their class. This was reported to have helped ease their worries about friendships and the school layout, although these continued into their first day. In contrast Ruby and Sarah did not join their parents and missed this opportunity.

4.3.3.10.2. Monitored Settling Period

Each school utilised a system to monitor the children as they settled. In Oakridge this involved the child regularly meeting with the induction mentor to build a relationship and discuss any concerns, monitoring in class by teaching staff, and informal observations by the induction mentor and the teacher. This allowed the teachers to tailor their practice for the girls and provide additional support if needed. The teachers greatly valued these practices and valued the employment of a dedicated worker to facilitate the induction. This supported the recommendations cited in government guidance (DfES, 2003a; DfES, 2003b).

4.3.3.10.3. Dedicated Member of Staff

Both schools employed either a learning mentor or an induction mentor to assist in the children’s transition. Although the roles varied slightly both had similar features that involved coordinating the initial visit, engaging parents, monitoring and supporting the child and liaison with the teacher. The induction mentor had a wider role that incorporated contacting the previous school and conducting academic assessments (which was done by a different member of staff at St. James School). In both schools the induction/learning mentor met with the children to build a relationship that including...
completing a booklet to help them understand each child’s likes and dislikes, their views about changing school and any concerns. Follow up meetings involved monitored the settling in process to ascertain if the worries had resolved. The class teacher was then relayed this information. In Oakridge School the children completed a daily booklet to facilitate the conversations and in both schools the teacher did this through whole class activities which helped the children not to stand out and provided peer role modelling with regards to discussing their emotions.

Research that has focused upon the effect of pupil mobility on schools highlights the additional strain it places on school resources and systems (Fisher et al., 2002; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990) and government guidelines highlight the value of having a dedicated member of staff to facilitate the process (DfES, 2003a; DfES 2003b). The findings support this guidance; a theme across all the case studies was that these workers were highly valued and they were involved in most of the themes that related to supporting the children. The teachers highly valued the time saving benefits of such a staff member and also their contribution to helping them get to know the child and the positive effect they had upon the child. Some of the parents commented on their approachability and role in helping their children settle into the school.

4.3.3.11. Change in Provision
A major theme for Ruby and Sarah was adapting to changes in their classroom environments. The change from learning in English as opposed to Welsh was cited as a major reason for Sarah and Ruby finding their lessons hard and initially impeded their settling into their new school. Adapting to a change in language has been cited as a difficulty for children who experience international moves through parents’ work commitments (Dixon & Hayden, 2008) or due to immigration or refugee status (Oikonomidoy, 2010). This can negatively impact upon the children’s understanding of lessons and tasks whilst they adjust to their new environment (Oikonomidoy, 2010). A unique difference for Ruby and Sarah is that they spoke both Welsh and English so the change in language was not immediately obvious to the teachers and was initially missed. This was linked to a lack of communication that is discussed later in this section.
For Ruby the change also involved moving from a small group environment to a mainstream classroom. It was likely that this negatively impacted on her experience, particularly whilst the school arranged additional small group support for her literacy and numeracy lessons.

The change in provision also positively affected some of the children’s experiences. For Sarah the move from a Catholic school to a non-Catholic school was viewed positively as she was not religious and found this element of her previous school quite “scary”. This experience is linked to the concept of relatedness and belonging; at St Margaret’s School Sarah may not have felt that she belonged as she was not Catholic and moving to a non-Catholic school therefore increased her relatedness with the school’s culture. For Helen the move to St James’ School was positively affected by the new building and features that were not present at her previous school such as having a playground on the roof, having a lift and the availability of laptop computers.

4.3.3.12. Time Out of School
As discussed under Research Question 1, two of the girls had time out of education whilst they waited for a school place to be allocated. This was 6 weeks for Chloe and 16 weeks for Ruby. In contrast the other two girls started school within two weeks of the family arriving in the town. The relationship between pupil mobility and gaps in schooling is widely acknowledged within the literature and was discussed in the literature review as being a contributory factor to low attainment for this group of children (DfES, 2003a). Qualitative research of older children reports pupil and teacher concerns with regards to missing sections of their education due to their school moves (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007; Rhodes, 2008). MacArthur and Higgins (2007) highlight the difficulties school face in identifying the curriculum that had been missed and addressing it in a way that did not increase negative feelings of being different from their peers or negatively impact upon the child’s sense of identity. This theme was linked to the admissions system which is discussed within the Exosystem section.

4.3.4. Mesosystem
The mesosystem represents the interaction between settings which contain the child.
4.3.4.1. Home-School Communication

Home-school communication emerged as an important theme. Each parent met and discussed their child with the head teacher and induction/learning mentor during an initial visit before their child started at the school. This allowed the school to get an understanding of the child’s personality, academic levels and previous support they received. The parents found this useful as it gave them an opportunity to ask questions and learn key information such as school routines and ethos. The information from this meeting was fed back to the teachers who described it as being useful. However, for Sarah and Ruby their experience of learning in Welsh was not passed to the teacher which hindered their transition. It was unclear whether this was due to school processes or if the information was not given to the school by the parents.

Parents being pro-active in contacting school and attending parent evenings were viewed as a positive factor by the teachers. When this did not happen there appeared to be uncertainty in the parents, in that they were unsure how their children were being supported, and in the teachers, as they were unable to triangulate their initial impressions and assessments with how the child was at home. In the case of Ruby and Sarah this was particularly problematic as it delayed the teachers’ understanding of their move from a Welsh speaking to an English speaking school. This was felt by the parents and Ruby’s teacher to have contributed to her finding her lessons hard as she adjusted to the changes to the learning environment. Interestingly in the time between the parent and teacher interview for case study 4 the parents had become more pro-active in communicating with the teacher. This was perceived by the teacher as useful and supportive.

The findings lend some support to Fan and Chen's (2001) meta-analysis that highlighted a positive relationship between parental involvement and children’s education. Similarly government guidelines highlight that forming a relationship and regular communication between home and school is an important factor in supporting children through pupil mobility (DfES, 2003a). This is supported by Newman (2004) who argued that creating home-school links is a protective factor for children that builds parental engagement with schools. MacArthur and Higgins' (2007) ethnographic research highlighted that some parents benefit from additional support to help them engage with school. The findings
across the case studies illustrated several strategies that the schools used to engage parents and improve home-school communication;

- Inviting the parents and the child into the school for an initial visit prior to the start date
- Teachers and head teacher being available in the school yard before and after school
- Text messages of important events and news
- School newsletters
- Parents evenings/afternoons
- Telephoning parents
- Inviting the parents to participate in school activities
- Homework diaries

4.3.4.2. Communication between Schools

A predominant theme across all the case studies was information sharing between schools. Both schools had contacted the previous schools for the information however two of the four teachers reported that the school records were very slow to arrive, whilst the other two teachers reported that they had yet to receive the information. School staff initially met with the families and conducted assessments of the children to generate an understanding of the children’s learning levels and to ascertain whether they qualified for additional support. However, without the school records the teachers explained that it was difficult to generate a holistic understanding of the children and check the accuracy of their assessments. Chloe’s teacher explained that as she was concerned at Chloe’s literacy levels she telephoned the former school herself which helped her understanding and confirmed her assessment.

The delay in receiving school records has been cited as a problem within England (DfES, 2003a) and internationally (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007; Schafft, 2005) and creates a time burden on the receiving school (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990) and uncertainty for teachers. This finding suggests that difficulties cited by the DfES (2003a) that the “gathering of information can be most frustrating for the receiving school if a pupil’s previous school
does not provide information within the recommended 15-day period” (p. 41) was still evident nine years later in 2012.

4.3.5. Exosystem

The exosystem contains the processes between external settings that indirectly affect the child.

4.3.5.1. Admissions System

A theme across two of the three parent interviews was their dissatisfaction at the LA admissions system. This was centrally coordinated within the LA and involved the parents contacting the department to be allocated a school place. Chloe’s mother explained that the system was different to that which she had expected and was a long process. For Chloe it took 6 weeks to obtain a school place and Ruby’s parents reported it took 16 weeks. In contrast, Helen’s father reported that she started virtually straight away and Ruby’s sister Sarah was allocated a school within a week of her arriving in the town. Both parents discussed this as being a stressful time which included placing appeals to the LA and attending meetings before a place was allocated. For Sarah, this process also involved an additional school move so that both sisters could attend the same school.

The time out of school may have negatively affected the children’s experience of pupil mobility as it prolonged the anxiety about starting a new school and making friends. A further factor relates to research that highlighted gaps in children’s learning due to time out of school as being a negative consequence of pupil mobility upon attainment (Kerbow, 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990).

4.3.5.2. Demographic

The LA had high levels of socio-economic disadvantage (Dobson & Pooley, 2004) and both schools had pupil mobility levels above the national average (Anonymous LA statistics, 2012). These factors were likely to have contributed to the schools developing systems and processes to support all vulnerable pupils, including new arrivals, such as by having an inclusive culture, having approachable adults and creating a sense of achievement.

The above average levels of pupil mobility in the schools was likely to have influenced the employment of a dedicated member of staff to support new arrivals to the school.
Similarly the teachers were all experienced in pupil mobility and displayed empathy for the children, utilising various strategies to support the children as discussed earlier in this section.

4.3.6. Macrosystem

The macrosystem contains the wider beliefs and culture of the settings that impact upon the microsystem.

4.3.6.1. School Culture

A theme from both schools was of an inclusive culture. Each child described being welcomed into the school and peers who were supportive and proactive in forming friendships. This was facilitated by teachers preparing the peers for the new arrival and practices such as group activities, extracurricular activities and a buddy system. Both schools strived to promote a safe climate that included the availability of approachable adults for the children to talk to. Whole school activities such as presenting certificates in assembly promoted the culture of valuing children’s effort and achievements. This was cited as a positive factor in helping the children settle into the school. Within Oakridge School each child was presented with a settling in certificate to reinforce that they were welcomed and to recognise their achievement of overcoming the challenge of starting a new school. An inclusive school culture has been cited as supporting young people’s transition into a new school from a variety of backgrounds (Alcock, 2008; Hek, 2005). Similarly, an inclusive culture, positive school experiences and the availability of supportive adults are protective factors for children when they are faced with adversity and also promotes resilience (Newman, 2004).

4.3.6.2. Parents’ Beliefs

Each parent believed that moving into the LA would benefit their children in a variety of ways. This was linked to the children feeling excited about the move, discussed earlier in this section. The fact that all the children were reported to have settled and enjoyed school lends support to research that suggested that families who move for strategic/positive reasons had better outcomes than those who moved for reactionary or negative reasons (Kerbow, 1996; Machin, Telhaj, & Wilson, 2006; Rumberger, 2003).
4.3.7. Chronosystem

The chronosystem contains changes or consistency over time. The nature of this research did not explore systemic factors that changed over time. Please refer to section 4.2 for an overview of how the children’s experiences changed over time.

4.4. Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: How do Children Experience Pupil Mobility?

The findings suggest that the process of moving house and changing schools was a challenging experience for the children. In relation to psychological theory the children experienced a change in their microsystems of home, neighbourhood and school environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). This disrupted the continuity of their friendships, support network and educational environment which led to the children experiencing sadness at the loss of key people and anxiety related to social and organisational elements of their new school. Contrasting with this were feelings of excitement at moving to a new town and meeting new friends. Some of the children settled quickly into their new school whilst other children found the process more difficult and took longer to settle. Despite settling into their new school some children felt different to their peers and all the children continued to experience a sense of loss towards key people from their previous address.

Research Question 2: How do Child and Systemic Factors Affect Children’s Experiences of Pupil Mobility?

The findings support Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) assertion that children are active agents in their development. The children’s experiences were affected by various interactions between the child and the systems around them. Although the systems are presented in a linear, hierarchical manner, in reality the systems overlap and intertwine to affect each child uniquely and to varying degrees. The study agrees with Penn (2005) that these cannot easily be presented in a structured manner and therefore will discuss the interactions that the researcher felt were most pertinent to the research question.

Parental support was linked to helping the children develop positive feelings about the move. This role modeling of excitement and discussing, understanding and reassuring helped provide positive aspects to the move to balance the more negative emotions of
loss and anxiety. It was likely that the parents’ belief that the move would be beneficial for the family positively impacted upon this interaction. For some, prior experiences and expectations increased the anxiety, as was the case for Sarah, in her belief that she would be bullied. All the children reported that they continued to be anxious until they had overcome their anxieties and settled into their new schools. This process was hindered for two girls who had a long wait before they were allocated a school place and who were therefore unable to resolve their anxieties during this period.

Each child had unique characteristics such as their personality, attitude, past experiences and academic ability which interacted with a variety of school practices and family factors to influence how they experienced the transition. Children who had a friendly, easy going personality combined with a positive attitude interacted with the school practices more positively and appeared to find the experience easier. For children with increased risk factors such as learning difficulties or those that had to cope with major changes in their educational environment such as language or type of provision, this was especially difficult. Settling was also hindered for some children by the limited understanding of staff of the children’s prior experiences and learning levels upon their arrival. This was affected by the degree of information sharing between schools and the level of communication between the teacher and the parents.

Alongside the change in educational environment this group of children also experienced a change in their social and home environments. Having an improved standard of living and the availability of extended family support at their new address positively impacted upon the children where this was available. In contrast, those who did not have extended family support and continued to share bedrooms found the transition harder.

An inclusive school culture appeared central to the practices that supported the development of friendships and adaptation to the new school environment. Particular school factors such as fostering a sense of achievement and helping the children feel welcomed and that they belonged in the school positively interacted to influence how the children settled. In line with previous literature these practices placed additional demands upon the existing school system and were a challenging process for the schools (DFES, 2003a; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). This pressure was mediated by both schools.
employing an induction or learning mentor who reduced the pressure upon the teachers and supported the children and families throughout the process.

Despite settling into their new schools the children continued to experience feelings of loss as they adjusted to life away from key people in their lives. This was mediated by the formation of new friendships and via parents facilitating contact through social media websites, the telephone and visits. The use of social media websites was a cost effective method of having video conversations and exchanging pictures and messages from key people from their previous address. This has not been addressed within the current pupil mobility literature and warrants further exploration.

The finding that all the children settled relatively quickly into their new town and school was a novel finding that contradicted previous research that explored the experiences of high school students (MacArthur & Higgins, 2007; Rhodes, 2008) and other forms of pupil mobility (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003; Dixon & Hayden, 2008). It is likely that a number of factors contributed to the differences in the studies. It is possible that the primary school environment was more conducive to the formation of relationships with teachers (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997) and that primary schools were better placed to resolve concerns with regards to the educational environment as they are smaller in size (Fisher & Cooper, 1990). It may also be due to these particular schools having experience of high levels of pupil mobility thus developing an expertise over time. This was evident in the employment of a dedicated worker to co-ordinate the induction process and support the child, the family and the class teacher. The high regard the participants placed upon the induction and learning mentors lends support for DfES (2003b) guidance. Another factor may be the number of school moves the children had experienced. Research suggests that having three or more school moves is associated with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties in children, whereas two or less does not create a significant difference (Simpson & Fowler, 1994).

Overall adapting to the change in social, home and educational environments was a challenging experience for the children. Despite this each child was reported to have settled into their new environment. Newman and Blackburn (2002) argue that the experience of overcoming the challenge of a transition can have a positive effect as it
promotes resilience. This may have been the case in some of the children such as Helen, whose father observed that following the move she appeared more confident and happy; this observation would warrant further exploration.

This research highlighted that children’s experiences are the result of a complex series of interactions between the child and the network of factors that exist around them. These individual factors need to be understood and addressed to support children when they move residential areas and change school at an irregular time.

4.5. Implications of the Findings

Given the exploratory nature of this research the findings provide tentative conclusions of how to support children who experience pupil mobility when combined with a residential move. The implications are particularly pertinent for the Local Authority the research was conducted in and have limited transferability to other Local Authorities and children from different groups of mobility.

This study highlighted that there were many interconnected factors that affect children’s experiences of pupil mobility. These factors varied depending upon the child’s characteristics, family circumstances, school environment and Local Authority practices. As such each child and their family should be viewed as unique and a flexible, holistic approach would be best suited to meeting their needs.

The findings broadly support government guidance for schools with regards to pupil mobility (DfES, 2003a) and the role of the induction mentor (DfES, 2003b) and provide additional implications for the role of the child’s family and the Local Authority.

4.5.1. Implications for Schools

The development of a holistic understanding of the children’s characteristics and the factors around the child is vital to inform the induction process. By engaging with the family and ascertaining their views, concerns and perceptions of their previous educational provision, teaching staff can form the basis of a relationship and a good level of knowledge that would then facilitate the induction process. These views should be triangulated with information shared by the previous school and with teacher assessments and initial impressions. This would allow for any need to differentiate the
curriculum to be catered for and any gaps in learning to be addressed. Given the delay schools face in receiving school records, whilst they wait for the records to arrive, staff should be proactive in telephoning and obtaining key information such as the child’s personality, social and academic skills, alongside gaining an understanding of the educational environment of which the child was a member.

Developing an understanding of the child should be a process that is continually monitored and reviewed as new information and impressions emerge. Forming relationships between school staff, the child and their parents should be given high priority to ensure parents engage with the school and to bridge any gap between home and school to generate a shared understanding of the child and how the family and school are supporting them, and to jointly problem solve any difficulties.

The use of an induction mentor would reduce the time and resource demands upon the school during the induction process and provide another adult to engage the child and family. This role should complement and not replace the class teacher forming a relationship and communicating with the child and their family.

Maintaining an inclusive culture, whereby new children are welcomed into the school and are helped to feel like they belong, provides the foundation for in class and whole school strategies to promote the development of friendships and a sense of achievement for the children in relation to overcoming the challenge of pupil mobility and aiding their academic and social skills. This would support the child’s enjoyment of their new school and help to build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem.

When children leave a school it is likely that they will experience a sense of loss. Schools should be proactive in preparing the child for this and communicating with the family regarding strategies to mediate these feelings. Other key exit procedures should include signposting or supporting the parents in contacting the admissions team in their next LA and providing appropriate records in a timely fashion for the receiving school.

4.5.2. Implications for Families

Prior to the house move parents should be proactive in ascertaining and understanding their child’s views about the move and address concerns that may include a sense of loss
and anxiety and with regards to changes in social and educational environments. Part of this should involve helping the child understand the positives for the move and role modelling a positive attitude.

In preparation for the move it would be beneficial for parents to contact the Local Authority admissions team to understand and speed up the process of accessing a school place. Obtaining relevant school information such as learning levels and Individual Education Plans, if relevant, to share with the new school would help the receiving school to quickly understand the child’s academic level and arrange appropriate support if necessary. Prior to starting school parents should ensure the child has the correct equipment and uniform to minimise a sense of difference from their peers and increase their feelings of belonging in the school.

Communication with the new school is paramount. This should include being proactive in communicating with the teacher to facilitate a shared understanding of how the child is adapting to the change and allowing an opportunity for joint problem solving if necessary.

4.5.3. Implications for the Local Authority

The research findings will be presented in a Local Authority management meeting and an executive summary will be placed on the EPS website and distributed to professionals working within this field, including head teachers of the local schools and LA personnel.

Communication with parents is important and should occur at many different levels. Ensuring there are clear, user friendly guidelines on the LA website would inform parents of the school admissions process and would facilitate the parents understanding. Engaging with families and having regular liaison with the family whilst they are finding a school place would also be advantageous. An improved system of transferring a child’s school records across LAs is evidently something that requires development at a national level.

4.5.4. Implications for Educational Psychologists

Educational psychologists (EPs) are in a position to reinforce and distribute the findings of this research to schools. This can take the form of highlighting the findings when discussing relevant children in termly planning meetings. This would be particularly
relevant when new school staff join schools. The placement of the executive summary on the EPS site will facilitate signposting to the document during consultations.

These findings should be referred to as contextual information when EPs are working in schools and may be relevant during school training and development in schools with high levels of pupil mobility.

The role of EPs as scientist practitioners place them in a unique position to build upon the findings and further develop our understanding of this matter, particularly in relation to providing a psychological contribution to existing and future literature.

4.6. Limitations of the Research

It is important that reviewers are mindful of the study’s limitations when interpreting its conclusions. This section reflects upon the general limitations of the study.

As with all case study designs a limitation of this study was the ability to transfer the findings to a wider population (Coolican, 2009, Yin, 2009 and Punch, 2005). The purposeful sampling method promoted homogeneity of the sample. However the findings are not directly relevant to children who experienced pupil mobility due to different reasons such as military children, GRT children or those who moved schools without changing their residential address or moved within the town. Similarly the study was conducted within a single LA therefore direct comparisons to pupil mobility in other parts of the country should be made with care.

The purely female sample of children should be considered; research that has explored the differences in experiences of males and females in relation to pupil mobility suggests that girls are likely to experience more stress than boys (Raviv et al., 1990) and difficulty with establishing social networks (South & Haynie, 2004). General literature that has explored friendships in relation to gender suggests that preadolescent girls have smaller friendship networks that are more exclusive than boys (Hartup & Stevens, 1999). It is likely therefore that the female sample may not have been fully representative and any generalisation to boys’ experiences should be made with caution.

Children who had experienced domestic violence, had required the involvement of Social Care, or had speech and language difficulties were excluded from the sample. These
children may have had different experiences due to their unique situations and increased risk factors (Newman & Blackburn, 2002) and so the sample of this study may have been a “best case scenario”, although the children in this study each had unique risk factors and were all eligible for free school meals.

The interview guide should also be considered. The semi-structured interviews facilitated an in-depth understanding for each child. However in the child interviews some questions generated richer answers than others. Generally, the playground situations picture and open questions combined well with the follow up probes and visual prompts and generated rich data. In contrast, the more closed questions and activities such as the good things and bad things about changing school activity generated less in-depth discussion and some of the children commented that they had found these questions repetitive, although it did serve to triangulate their comments. This perhaps relates to Lyons and Coyle (2007) and Greene and Hogan (2005) who argue that interview questions should be open ended. The tool box activity, where the child was asked to brainstorm things that would help other children who were changing schools, appeared to confuse two of the children; one child remarked “what has a tool box got to do with changing schools?” The semi-structured interview format allowed this to be rephrased to “what would help someone who is changing schools?”. The age of the child and their degree of learning difficulty may have impacted upon the children’s ability to access this hypothetical question. Overall the data from this question elicited little additional information. Future research may wish to remove these activities from the interview schedule.

Child 4, Ruby’s interview data was removed from the data analysis as she experienced difficulty maintaining her concentration and responding consistently to the interview questions. The parent and teacher data were used to generate an insight into her experience. This increased the trustworthiness of the analysis but ultimately reduced the richness of case study four.

This research did not explore in-depth the impact of more than one school move on children’s experience. This could be important as research has highlighted a negative association between multiple moves and academic attainment (Temple & Reynolds,
1999) and social and emotional wellbeing (Melhuish et al., 2008). Case study three generated some insights although this area would benefit from more in-depth exploration in future research.

4.7. Reflexive Account of the Research Process

The researcher found this research a challenging but rewarding process. It is acknowledged that the nature of this qualitative study meant the researcher could not disentangle himself totally from the research and inevitably the researcher’s values, beliefs and experiences had an impact upon the procedures and interpretations. Please refer to section 2.8 for a discussion with regards to this. This section will focus upon the researcher’s reflections of the research process.

On reflection there was an underestimation of the length of time it took to recruit participants and collect the data. This related to additional time required in approaching, meeting and discussing the research with schools and parents and collecting the data. For the schools the research required releasing staff to identify and approach parents, to accompany the children for the initial interviews and to participate in the interviews. The researcher would like to acknowledge the time and commitment particularly from the induction and learning mentors within the schools. Without their dedication this research would not have been possible and the researcher is grateful for their support.

The researcher’s role as a trainee educational psychologist and background of working in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and in support work with a variety of vulnerable children and adults facilitated the development of an interactionist perspective of the world; this fitted with the critical realist epistemology. The researcher sought to understand each child’s experience and the interactions between child and systemic factors that influenced it. This psychological perspective provided another dimension to literature that had explored pupil mobility from a sociological stance. As the researcher’s experience and knowledge of this subject grew, he came to appreciate how the two perspectives could fit together.

Following the literature review, the researcher had preconceived ideas that the children who moved into the schools would struggle with the transition. The pilot study proved to be highly useful as it elicited that there were initial challenges but that it was generally a
positive transition for Helen. Through accessing supervision the researcher was able to reflect upon this and challenge these preconceived notions during the rest of the research. Part of this reflection involved drawing upon the researcher’s own experiences of pupil mobility as a child, and that of his brother; this highlighted to him the difference in experiences that children could have within the same family. Whilst interpreting the data the researcher was mindful to keep an open mind of the themes and stay true to each case study’s data in relation to the research questions, as opposed to any preconceived themes. The use of peer reflection and supervision supported this.

A primary driver for the researcher was for vulnerable people to have their voices heard and to have an influence upon the processes that affect them. The researcher felt privileged that the families and children shared aspects of their lives in the study. Although at times the interviewees discussed upsetting topics, the children in particular appeared to enjoy the overall process; one girl told the researcher during the member checking interview that talking about it with him had helped her cope with the move. This perhaps reflects the counselling techniques utilised within the interviews but also that within qualitative research researchers cannot fully detach themselves from the data collection.

The use of the research diary developed as the research progressed. Initially it was used to store key dates and times to organise the research. As the researcher’s experience developed it became more of a reflective tool whereby perceptions of events were written down, reflected upon and analysed to generate appropriate next steps.

4.8. Possibilities for Future Research
This study has elicited insights into primary school age children’s experiences of pupil mobility when combined with a residential move into a northern coastal town. It would be beneficial for future research to increase the transferability of the findings. This could involve using the conclusions of this study to form the basis of a mixed method design, such as a survey combined with qualitative interviews, to allow for a greater number of children’s experiences to be researched. By including male and female children within the sample an exploration into whether gender affects children’s experiences of pupil mobility could be made.
Quantitative research highlights that children who experience more than three residential or school moves are particularly vulnerable to negative outcomes (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010; Simpson & Fowler, 1994). The literature review was unable to identify any UK based research that had explored this. This area would benefit from UK based qualitative research to illuminate these children’s experiences within the UK.

Future research may wish to compare and contrast the experiences of children across Local Authorities and within and between the different groups associated with pupil mobility. The differences between experiences of pupil mobility in secondary school versus primary school would also warrant further exploration.

This study could be enhanced by a longitudinal design whereby the key stakeholders’ views are gathered over a period of time. This would highlight if children’s experiences change over time, particularly for children who experience high levels of pupil mobility.

Within the author’s LA, the wait between arriving into the town and children starting at school would be useful to explore further. This could focus upon ascertaining the length of time for children to be allocated a school, the factors that impact upon this process and key stakeholders’ perspectives on the system.

4.9. Contribution to Knowledge

The aim of this research was to generate knowledge in relation to pupil mobility and was informed by background reading and theoretical models identified in the literature review. This enabled the researcher, through the data analysis process, to draw together the tentative findings in relation to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979: 1986) ecological systems theory. This study lends some support to the Bronfenbrenner’s theory in relation to pupil mobility.

Pupil mobility has been predominately researched nationally and internationally by large scale quantitative research designs. There is a paucity of research that has elicited the views and experiences of the children and the key people around them, especially within the UK. This research provided a unique contribution to the literature as it provided an exploration into how primary school aged children experienced pupil mobility when
combined with a residential move and the factors that impacted upon their experiences. The findings were presented within a psychological framework and provided tentative implications for the parents, schools and Local Authorities which had direct relevance to the LA the study was conducted in. The findings of the exploration provide a basis for future research.
References


Appendix

Appendix A: Definitions of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of an Irish Heritage (GRT)

- “Gypsy/Roma – This category includes pupils who identify themselves as Gypsies and or Romanies, and or Travellers, and or Traditional Travellers, and or Romanichals, and or Romanichal Gypsies and or Welsh Gypsies/Kaale, and or Scottish Travellers/Gypsies, and or Roma. It includes all children of a Gypsy/Roma ethnic background, irrespective of whether they are nomadic, semi nomadic or living in static accommodation.

- Traveller of Irish Heritage – A range of terminology is also used in relation to Travellers with an Irish heritage. These are either ascribed and or self-ascribed and include: Minceir, Travellers, Travelling People, and Travellers of Irish heritage. Travellers of Irish heritage speak their own language known as Gammon, sometimes referred to as ‘Cant’ and which is a language with many Romani loan-words, but not thought to be a dialect of Romani itself.”

(Department for Education and Skills, 2008 p. 10)
Appendix B: Overview of Government Guidance on the Role of an Induction Mentor

Table A1: Overview of Government Guidance on the Role of an Induction Mentor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet with parents/carers of additional admissions which may include initial contact with the family, prior to entry. Further meetings with the family as required. Communicating the school’s ethos, values and vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with heads of year and form tutors to ensure effective integration of additional admissions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaise with heads of department and subject teachers to ensure that new arrivals are placed in the most appropriate teaching groups, according to need.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate intervention programmes in collaboration with the special educational needs coordinator, English as an additional language coordinators, learning mentors, learning support unit staff as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a coherent approach to inclusion within the school, through integrated working with other key staff e.g. Learning Support Unit staff, learning mentors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaise with the LEA over admission procedures, particularly in conjunction with new arrivals with significant needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaise with external agencies e.g. Social Services departments to support the new arrivals and their family in integrating into the new environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advise teachers on specific needs of additional admissions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish the need for “catch up” programmes through liaison with all interested parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate appropriate “catch up” programmes, according to Key Stage, and utilising the resources available within the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribute to staff in-service training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather the following information: -Pupil records from last known school (including coursework where appropriate; test data; attendance information; SEN stage; medical needs; social needs; eligibility for free school meals; exclusions; number of previous schools and length of time on last school roll; English as an additional language; date of last school attendance; reason for change etc)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
for moving; and whether the pupil and the family are supported by other agencies.

- Initial assessment of the mobile pupil’s needs which may include:
  - levels of literacy and numeracy; national curriculum levels; gaps in prior learning;
  - attitudinal surveys; learning style survey.

- Planning:
  - Short-term Induction plan.
  - Timetable, pupil planner and site map and lunchtime arrangements are organised.
  - Ensure that the pupil meets their Head of Year/Pastoral Manager.
  - The tracking of pupil progress, attendance and behaviour during the induction period.
  - Utilising ‘buddy systems’ to aid integration.
  - Management of mentoring and progress review.
  - Exit procedures from the induction process.
Appendix C: Systematic Literature Search Strategy

Several databases were systematically searched to locate publications that had elicited the children’s experiences of pupil mobility. The title and abstract of all identified documents were examined in relation to their relevance to the research. Reference lists of retrieved documents were examined to identify additional publications.

A list of key words and phrases was developed based upon children’s experiences of pupil mobility. A summary of the databases and the search terms can be viewed in the tables below.

Table A2: Systematic Literature Databases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Databases:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• PsychInfo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Google Scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ASSIA (including the following databases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Computer and Information Systems Abstracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PILOTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ProQuest Dissertations &amp; Theses A&amp;I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Services Abstracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sociological Abstracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worldwide Political Science Abstracts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A3: Systematic Literature Search Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search terms</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“school mobility”</td>
<td>Children who moved school due to their affiliation with a particular cultural background were excluded from this review. These articles were incorporated into initial search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“school mobility” AND experience</td>
<td>These included:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“school mobility” AND child*</td>
<td>• Military Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“school mobility” AND pupil</td>
<td>• Refugee and Asylum Seeker Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“school mobility” AND voice</td>
<td>• Children attending international schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“pupil mobility”</td>
<td>• GRT families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“pupil mobility” AND voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“pupil mobility” AND child*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“pupil mobility” AND pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“pupil mobility” AND experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“geographic mobility”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geographic mobility AND experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geographic mobility AND child*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geographic mobility AND pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility AND experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility AND child*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility AND pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility AND school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>residential mobility AND voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transience AND school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transience AND voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transience AND child*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans*AND school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans*AND experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans*AND voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trans<em>AND child</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: School Information Sheet

A case study exploring children’s experiences of pupil mobility when combined with a residential move

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

The research will be conducted in two primary schools within XXXX. It is a qualitative study that aims to answer the following research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do children experience pupil mobility?
2. How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection will take place in the autumn term and will consist of:

- Semi-structured interview with parents/guardians
- Semi-structured interview with pupil
- Semi-structured interview with school staff who support the pupil
- School records information

Inclusion criteria

- Experienced a change of school at an irregular time combined with a residential move
- The move took place within six months of data collection

Exclusion criteria

- Changed school without a residential move
- History of domestic violence
- The family are open to Social Care
- Traveller family status
- Military family status
- Asylum seeker status
- Speech and Language Difficulty

Consent process
1. Parents would be approached in the first instance by the school’s pupil mentor/family link worker/class teacher who will read through a script of the aims and rationale of the research and provide parent information sheets that includes their right to withdraw at any time and confidentiality.

2. The parents will be given the option to meet with me or a telephone conversation to discuss the research.

3. Once parental consent is agreed initial consent from the children will be obtained verbally through an initial meeting in school alongside the pupil mentor.

4. Each participant will be given two weeks thinking time between being approached and data collection. The pupil will be offered to be accompanied by a member of staff the interview.

5. Informed consent will be seen as a process, from which the participants can withdraw easily at any point of the research process.

**School records checklist**

- Reason for school move
- Include a residential move
- New to the town
- Eligibility for free school meals
- Previous number of schools
- Details of family
- Joined alongside family member
- Place of previous residence – inside or outside of the Local Authority
Appendix E: Participant Recruitment Procedure

The steps below were used to invite the families to take part in the research:

1. Induction mentor telephoned suitable parents and briefly explained the research and ascertained if the family were interested in taking part in the research.
2. The researcher telephoned each parent and explained rationale, procedure details and confidentiality.
3. The Parent Information Sheets were mailed to each parent. Parents were given two weeks to decide if they would like to take part.
4. The researcher telephoned parents and school to arrange interview times and answer any questions.
5. Once parental written consent was obtained the parent interview took place.
6. Class teachers were invited to take part in the research by the induction mentor and were given the Teacher Interview Sheet.
7. Child participants were invited to an initial meeting with the researcher who explained the research and invited them to take part. Each child was given a Child Information Sheet and given two weeks to decide if they would like to take part.
8. Child and teacher interviews were undertaken.
9. Participants were invited to check themes and have the opportunity to be debriefed of research process.
Appendix F: Teacher Interview Guide

Protocol (Yin 2009)

My aim: Research questions (level 2)

- How do children experience pupil mobility?
- How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility

ECM reminder: Be Healthy; Enjoy and achieve; Economic wellbeing; Positive contribution; Stay safe

- Clarify the participants’ views and perspectives during the interview.
- Questions are as guide – it’s ok to deviate from them

Introduction

Welcome and thanks

Drink

Biscuit/cake

- Confirm confidentiality; names will not be used in anyway nor will information relating to their identity in any way
- Inform participants that at any time can turn recorder off
- Participants can ask for items of the recording to be removed or not reported (only before transcription – afterwards – anonymised)
- Opportunity to discuss information sheet
- Signed consent form

Focus of interview:

- Reminder of the research aim –
  - support children who change schools - explore experiences and what and affected this to help better understand how schools can support CYP and families

To help me explore PM, the research has adopted Every Child Matters’ 5 outcomes as a framework to the questions. Each question has two parts. Firstly what do you perceive the effect upon the children and young people and secondly how the school helps children to achieve the outcome.

Aim: Help teacher remember time of transition (Questions 2-3 Inserted for Case Studies 2,3 and 4)

1. Tell me a little about X?
2. What time of year did X move into your class?
3. How many other children have moved into the class?
4. How has X emotionally reacted to the change in schools?
   a. Prompt – changed over time?
5. What have you done as a school that has helped X’s transition to your school
6. In what way has changing school affected X’s learning?

What do you do in school to help this?

1. How has X been enjoying school?
   a. Friendships
   b. Subjects
2. What do you do in school to help X to enjoy and achieve?
3. In what way has changing school impacted upon X’s friendships?
   a. Prompt:
i. Positive experiences
   ii. Negative experiences

4. Do you think changing schools at an irregular times has affected any feelings safety and security?
   a. This could include any difficulties with peers?

5. What have you done to help X feel safe and secure in your school?

6. Do you think changing schools at irregular times affect her health? This can include emotional or physical?

7. What do you do in school to help them with regards to being healthy?

8. In what ways has X integrated into the school community?

9. What do you do in school to promote being part of the school community?

10. How has X been able to make a positive contribution to your school?

11. Do you think changing schools and house can impact upon children achieve economic wellbeing?

12. What has helped and hindered X settle into school?

13. Is there anything that we have not talked about that you think is relevant to help my understanding of X’s experience of pupil mobility?

Recap ethics:

Anonymity

Right to withdraw

Remove any comments

Contact if needed any further information
Appendix G: Parent Interview Schedule

My aim: Research questions

- How do children experience pupil mobility?
- How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

ECM: Be Healthy; Enjoy and achieve; Economic wellbeing; Positive contribution; Stay safe

- Clarify the participants’ views and perspectives during the interview.
- Questions are as guide – it’s ok to deviate from them
- Explore both what helped and what made it harder

Introduction

Welcome and thanks

Drink

Biscuit/cake

- Confirm confidentiality; names will not be used in anyway nor will information relating to their identity in any way
- Inform participants that at any time can turn recorder off
- Participants can ask for items of the recording to be removed or not reported (only before transcription – afterwards – anonymised)
- Signed consent form

Focus of interview:

- Reminder of the research aim –
  o support children who change schools - explore experiences and what and affects it to help better understand how schools can support CYP and families
  o Very little research that has explored the parent and child’s views.
- This is a pilot for the research so please bear with the questions
- Questions are a guide

Part 1: Background Information

1. Can you describe your son and daughter?
   a. Prompt
      i. Likes and dislikes
2. Do they have any brothers and sisters?
   i. Position in the family
   ii. Joined same school?
3. Who lives at home?
4. Why did X move schools?
5. Are you new to the town?
6. How many schools has X attended?
7. Did they know anyone at the school before they joined?

These questions are intended to help me develop my understanding of your X’s experience and what you think impacted upon it. There are no right or wrong answers.

8. When did X change school?
   - Time of year?
   - Was any other events occurring around that time?
   - How did X learn about the move?
• Who told? Where? When? How?
9. Can you describe how X reacted (emotionally) when she first found out she was changing school?
   a. On her first day?
   b. Now?
   c. Do you think it will change in the future?
10. How did you and school support X with the move? (emotionally, practically?)
11. Has the change affect X’s enjoyment of school?
   • Did these change over time?
12. Has changing school affected friendships?
13. Has changing schools impacted upon your child’s learning?
14. How has moving house alongside changing school impacted upon your son/daughter’s transition to their new school?
15. Do you think changing school more than once has impacted upon the transition and school experience?
16. Are there any out of school factors (such as things that you have done) that have helped your son/daughter adapt to the change?
17. Has there been anything that has made it harder for your son/daughter to settle into school?
18. What things have school done to support X transition to her new school?
19. What things have affected your daughter feel to safe and secure in her new school?
20. What has helped your son/daughter to feel part of the school community?
21. What advice would you give another parent whose child was about to change schools?
22. Is there anything that I have not asked you or we have not talked about that think would help to increase my understanding of your son/daughter’s experience of changing schools and how you and the school have supported the change?

Recap ethics:

Anonymity

Right to withdraw

Remove any comments

Contact if need any further information
Appendix H: Child Interview Schedule

Hi my name is Mike and I am really interested in helping children who move from one school to another.

So that I can do this I first need to understand what it is like for children when they change schools. This means that I would like to talk and do activities with people who have changed schools so I can learn about what it was like for them, what they thought and what they felt before they changed schools, when they came to St. Johns and how they are now.

Would you like to help me and the school by sharing your experience what happened to you?

Some questions you may find hard and some you may find easy but the important thing is that you try your best. If at you do not want to answer a question for any reason, hold up the stop sign, if you want time to think about a question then hold up the “later” sign and we will come back to it.

It is completely fine if you wish to stop at any time.

To help me to remember what we talk about I am going to audio record it with this machine. Everything we talk about will be kept confidential which means that I will not tell what we talk about. The only time I would talk to someone is if tell me anything of concern which would be my duty to speak to someone to make sure that you staff safe.

Materials:
- Emotions pictures
- Visual rating scales
- Visual time line – at old school, now, in six months
- Cards indicate good things about changing school and bad things
- Playground situations picture
- Prompt cards

Warm up activity:

Practice scaling:

I am good at swimming

I am good at singing

Before we start I would like to show some pictures of different emotions. Can you tell me a time when someone would feel...

(present each card explore understanding)

Introduce the blank feeling card – can you think of any other feelings we could draw on this card?

1. Can you tell me about when you first found out you were changing schools?
   a. Where were you when you first found out?
b. Who told you? (Aim: make as concrete as possible)

2. How did you feel when you were first told you were changing school?
   a. How did you feel on your first day before coming to school to your new school?
   b. After walked through the door after first day?
   c. After your first day?

   How do you feel now?

b) Look at this scale, remember we practiced using it last time we met. 0 = not at all and 10 = very much. On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not settled at all in the school and 10 is very settled where would you place yourself today?
   - What would one step more look like?

c) I would like to understand how you think you are getting on with your school work at this school?

   On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not getting on well with your school work at all and 10 is getting on really well with your school work where would you place yourself today? (Use a visual thermometer).

d) Do you think changing schools have effected your schoolwork?

e) What can I write on this sheet of paper the good things about changing school?

f) What are the hard things about changing school?

g) Look at this picture it shows lots of different children playing in the school playground.
   - Which looks like you when you first came to the school?
   - Which one looks like you now?
   - Which do you think you will be like in the future?

h) Do you think moving house and school effected how you experienced changing schools?

Prompt: Friends, family, other

What has helped you when moving school?

i) What has made it harder?

j) This is a tool box. Imagine it is for someone who is about to change schools and they can use the things inside to help them. Anything can go inside the box. The things can be something that someone has said, or changes in the school, what teachers can do or what children and do to help.

Can you think of things that we could put inside that would help the person?

(Prompts: use picture cards if needs scaffolding)

(Family, Peers and School)
Appendix I: Child Introduction Script

Aim of meeting:

- Reset adult-child balance = empower the child to feel like the expert
- Non-threatening
- Participatory
- Explain confidentiality and opt out at anytime
- Important to build the relationship first

Hi my name is XXXX and I am really interested in helping children who move from one school to another.

So that I can do this I first need to understand what it is like for children when they change schools. This means that I would like to talk and do activities with people, their parents and teachers who have so I can learn about what it was like for them.

This will help me and the school to be able to help children they change schools better.

It is up to you if you would like to help me and talk about your experience. If you are interested in sharing your experience then I will talk through this sheet with you (Child Info Sheet).

We are not going to talk about it today as today is about getting to know each other.

Introduce audio recorder. Today it is not turned on but I wanted to show you it so you knew what it looked like.

15 minutes game.

All about me game

Practice scaling on things like/don’t like

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is you hate it and 10 is you love it where would you put yourself in relation to:

- Spaghetti
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Cake
- Mars bar

Emotions cards Why would someone feel....(present each card in turn)
Appendix J: Using Nvivo8 to Facilitate Thematic Analysis

Please note that the pictorial illustrations are taken mid analysis to provide an example of the analytical process. They do not represent the final version of each stage.

Phase 1: Familiarise Self with Data

The field notes were read before listening to the audio recording. The transcript was then checked for accuracy against the audio recording and uploaded into Nvivo8. The transcript was re-read and paper notes were made during an initial search for patterns and meaning in the data.
**Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

The transcripts from the case study interviews were actively read and interesting aspects of the data were initially coded (in Nvivo8 this is called a “free node”). Each code was labelled to signify which participant made the quote (e.g. P2 denoted the parent participant from Case Study 2).

---

**Figure A1: Phase 2 of Thematic Analysis**
Phase 3: Searching For Themes

At the end of stage 2 a list of initial codes were generated. Phase 3 involved sorting these codes into potential themes (in NVivo8 themes are called “tree nodes”) followed by examining how the different themes may combine to create an overarching theme. NVivo8 allowed each code to be reviewed in turn and manipulated into the potential themes. Codes that did not relate to the research questions were placed in a miscellaneous file which was reviewed during phase 4. Paper thematic maps were also utilised at this time to aid the researcher’s conceptualisation of the dataset including the formation of relationships between the codes and themes.

Figure A2: Phase 3 of Thematic Analysis
**Phase 4: Reviewing Themes**

Each potential theme was reviewed for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. At this stage some themes were broken down and the codes reworked and others were combined to create overarching themes. During this stage a thematic map was used to manipulate the themes, aid the researchers thinking and aid generation of associations between the themes.

![Thematic Map](image)

**Figure A3: Phase 4 of Thematic Analysis**

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Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme was organised into a coherent and internally consistent account. Codes and themes that did not fit this account were reworked and analysed by going back to phase 3 of the analysis. Each theme was defined and a narrative was produced to describe the theme.

Figure A4: Phase 4 of Thematic Analysis
**Additional Member Checking Phase**

To promote the trustworthiness of the findings the themes were presented to the participants to check that they represented what they had reported. Additional quotes from these interviews were transcribed and included into the analysis.

**Phase 6: Writing the Report**

This stage involved utilising the thematic maps and transcript data stored in Nvivo8 to write a narrative for each case study in relation to the research questions. Each thematic map was formatted to promote clarity for the reader and presented with the narrative. Please refer to the Results section for further details.
Appendix K: University of Manchester Ethics Confirmation Letter

Dr Caroline Bond  
School of Education,  
6.2b Ellen Wilkinson Building.  
15th August 2011  

Dear Mr Humphreys and Dr Bond,  

Research Ethics Committee 4  
[Humphreys, Bond, Woods: A case study exploring how pupil mobility affects children’s school experiences when combined with a residential house move (ref. 11129)].

I write to thank you for coming to meet the Committee on 27th July 2011 and to confirm that it gave the above research project, after the submission of amendments / clarifications, a favourable ethical opinion.

This approval is effective for a period of five years and if the project continues beyond that period it must be submitted for review. It is the Committee’s practice to warn investigators that they should not depart from the agreed protocol without seeking the approval of the Committee, as any significant deviation could invalidate the insurance arrangements and constitute research misconduct. We also ask that any information sheet should carry a University logo or other indication of where it came from, and that, in accordance with University policy, any data carrying personal identifiers must be encrypted when not held on a university computer or kept as a hard copy in a location which is accessible only to those involved with the research.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached form at the end of the project or by the end of June 2012.

We hope the research goes well.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]  

Dr Deborah Bentley  
Secretary to University Research Ethics Committee 4
Appendix L: Comparison of Themes Across the Case Studies

Research Question 1: How do children experience pupil mobility?

Table A3: RQ1: Comparison of the Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Case Study 1</th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
<th>Case Study 3</th>
<th>Case Study 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(behaviour difficulties + hesitant + found lessons hard + difficult transition)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasting emotions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the residential move</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad leaving family and friends</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(upset + sad + sad leaving friend)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy/excited about the move</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excited + happy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial disbelief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the residential move</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period of uncertainty</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(time out of school/ awaiting a school place + family in limbo + uncertainty)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety about school layout and friends</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(friendship concerns + worried + expected to be bullied)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety about school layout</td>
<td>Anxity about friendships</td>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(initially worried + worried)</td>
<td>(friendship concerns + expected to be bullied)</td>
<td>(upset + missed old friends + sad)</td>
<td>(enjoyed + happy and excited + enjoyment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of loss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(missed friends and family + missed friends)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Research Question 2: How do child and systemic factors affect children’s experience of pupil mobility?

Table A4: RQ2: Comparison of the Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Case Study 1</th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
<th>Case Study 3</th>
<th>Case Study 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Factors</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(social Skills + friendly + talkative + easy going + stubborn)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic ability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(academic ability + learning difficulties + academic attainments + additional support [phonics])</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(valued education + learning more + studious)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic ability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Microsystem</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer relationships</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(developed friendships + made friends)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive Peers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(proactive + inclusive culture + teacher prepared peers + support to)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>develop friendships: peer buddy + friendship support + relationship forming)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular contact with friends and family</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(communication with family and friends + keeps in touch with friends and family)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessing activities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(resort features + accessed activities+ accessed school activities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(uniform and book bag on first day, walking to school, attendance, well presented)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended family support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(family support + wider family support + academic support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(better quality of life + bigger house, improved finances + improved living conditions + housing conditions + grey data – area of social deprivation)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent – child communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(preparation + communication + prepared for move + discussed positive + understand and address concerns)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of achievement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(experience success + recognition of work + recognition of achievements + additional support + differentiated curriculum + classroom support + learning support + academic support + assessments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forming relationships with staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(built relationships + relationship forming + teacher approach)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(additional support + differentiated curriculum + classroom support + learning support + academic support)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial visit</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitored settling in process</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(monitored Sarah + monitored settling + built relationships)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dedicated member of staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(role of the induction mentor +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor + Home-School Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in Provision</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(change in language + change in provision + school features + modern equipment + large school + adaptation + Welsh to English)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Out of School</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Time out of school + dissatisfaction with the admissions system)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Mesosystem**

| Home-School Communication | X | X | X | X |
| (communication + home school + address concerns + limited communication) |  |  |  |  |
| Communication Between Schools | X | X | X | X |
| (school information sharing + school records are slow to arrive, no school records + not received school records) |  |  |  |  |

**Exosystem**

| Admissions System | X |  | X |
| (dissatisfaction at the admissions system + 16 weeks without a school) |  |  |  |

| Demographic | X | X | X | X |
(free school meals + above average levels of pupil mobility + high pupil mobility + experienced members of staff + learning mentor + induction mentor + highly valued induction mentor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macrosystem</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Inclusive culture + supportive environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(moved for better opportunities + reason for move)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronosystem</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendships developed over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of loss</td>
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