School belonging: listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves

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

2016

Holly M. Craggs

School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED)
List of Contents

List of Contents 2
List of Tables 4
List of Figures 4
Abstract 5
Declaration 6
Copyright Statement 7
Acknowledgements 8

Paper 1: Adolescents’ experiences of school belonging: a qualitative meta-synthesis 9
Abstract 10
Introduction 10
Qualitative meta-synthesis 12
Method 13
Inclusion and exclusion criteria 13
Review methodology 14
Findings 15
Synthesis of translation 19
Discussion 21
Limitations of meta-synthesis 24
Conclusion 24
Acknowledgement 25
References 25

Paper 2: School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves 31
Abstract 32
Introduction 32
Epistemological position 36
Researcher positionality 36
Methodology 37
Paper 3: The dissemination of evidence to professional practice

Introduction
Evidence-based practice
The educational psychologist as scientist-practitioner
Idiographic problems
Using research in evidence-based practice
Practice-based evidence
The value of case study methods in educational psychology research
The effective dissemination of psychological research
Impact
Policy/practice/research implications of research and dissemination strategy
References

Thesis Appendices

Appendix 1: Author guidelines, Journal of Youth Studies
Appendix 2: Demographic details of participants in synthesised studies
Appendix 3: Phases of meta-ethnographic review
Appendix 4: Comparison of the interpretations advanced in the synthesised studies
Appendix 5: Author guidelines, School Psychology International
Appendix 6: Ethical approval confirmation
Appendix 7: Participant information and consent form
Appendix 8: Parent/carer information and consent form 103
Appendix 9: Interview schedule 107
Appendix 10: Stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with worked examples 108
Appendix 11: Themes for each participant with links to overall sub-themes and superordinate themes 111
Appendix 12: Summary report for staff of participating schools 116
Appendix 13: Presentation of pilot research findings to Head Teachers 120
Appendix 14: Revised Local Authority Best Practice Guidance on Managed Moves 133

**List of Tables**

**Paper 2**

Table 1: Demographic details of participants 38
Table 2: Stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis 39

**List of Figures**

**Paper 1**

Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the higher order concept, main concept and sub-concepts 20

**Paper 2**

Figure 1: Map of superordinate themes and sub-themes 41

**Paper 3**

Figure 1: Revised EBP model (Satterfield et al., 2009) 65

Total word count: 33,824
School belonging: listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves

Holly M. Craggs
The University of Manchester

Abstract

A sense of school belonging has a powerful effect on students’ emotional, motivational and academic functioning. This phenomenological research synthesized qualitative literature presenting pupil voice on school belonging, investigated how secondary school-aged students who have undergone a ‘managed move’ experience belonging, and sought their views on the role stakeholders might play in promoting school belonging for managed move students. The author discusses policy and practice implications and outlines a dissemination strategy.

The first paper is an interpretative meta-synthesis involving a process of reciprocal translation and synthesis of seven qualitative studies was used to examine secondary school students’ experiences of school belonging.

The second paper is an empirical study investigating how secondary school students who have undergone a managed move experience school belonging, and what they feel would promote a sense of school belonging for other managed move students. This research employed purposive sampling, an interpretative case study design and semi-structured phenomenological interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse data.

The meta-synthesis (Paper 1) generated four main concepts: school belonging and intersubjectivity; school belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity; school belonging and experiences of in-group membership and school belonging and safety/security, and the ‘higher-order concept’ of school belonging as ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’.

Superordinate themes identified in the empirical study (Paper 2) were ‘making friends and feeling safe’; ‘feeling known, understood and accepted as a person in receiver school’; ‘identification of and support for SEN/D’ and ‘supportive/unsupportive school practices/protocols’. Findings indicated that a sense of school belonging for these students resulted from positive social relationships with peers and an attendant sense of safety, security and acceptance. Managed move participants expressed the desirability but also the perceived difficulty of forging relationships in a new school and acknowledged the value of sensitive and subtle support.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
Copyright Statement

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and she has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.

ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.

iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.

iv. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=487), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations) and in The University’s policy on Presentation of Theses
Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to my husband, Mark. I would also like to thank my supervisor, Dr Catherine Kelly, for her kindness, help and support throughout the duration of the study.

This project was funded through England’s Department for Education (DfE) National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) ITEP award, 2013-2016.
Adolescents’ experiences of school belonging: a qualitative meta-synthesis

Prepared in accordance with the author guidelines for the

Journal of Youth Studies

(See Appendix 1)

Word Count: 6450 (including abstract and references)
Abstract

School belonging is associated with positive social and academic outcomes. This meta-synthesis aimed to explore adolescents’ accounts of the experience of school belonging, and to promote their understanding of this experience in order to inform policy and practice. A meta-ethnographic methodology was used; this involved a process of reciprocal translation and subsequent synthesis of seven qualitative studies. The synthesis generated four main concepts: (1) school belonging and intersubjectivity; (2) school belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity; (3) school belonging and experiences of in-group membership and (4) school belonging and safety/security. The synthesis of translation generated the higher-order concept of school belonging as ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’. This concept considers the experience of school belonging for adolescents as a foundational prerequisite of academic engagement and achievement. The implications of these findings for education, social care and mental health practitioners and policymakers are discussed.

Keywords: belonging, school, adolescent, connectedness, relatedness, exclusion

Introduction

Only a very small proportion of the growing body of school belonging research examines the phenomenon from the pupil’s perspective. The current review synthesises findings from the small body of pupil voice research on school belonging. The review uses qualitative meta-synthesis, a cross-disciplinary approach to the integration of research evidence which aims to go beyond meta-analysis in ‘combin[ing] primary studies into a new whole’ (Major and Savin-Baden 2011, 653). Its purpose is the production of what Rose and Cohen (2010) describe as ‘an overarching, interpretative understanding of a phenomenon’ (in this case school belonging). Seven studies offering interpretations of adolescents’ own accounts of this experiential phenomenon were identified, synthesised and interpreted, in order to generate a detailed and holistic understanding of how adolescents experience school belonging. The selected studies were diverse in terms of their participants’ culture, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and school experience. It is hoped that by understanding the factors which young people identify as contributing to a sense
of school belonging, this crucial affective phenomenon can be better promoted within schools (DfE 2015, 8) as well as within wider practice and policy.

**Belonging**

Belonging is a ‘complex and multi-faceted’ affective phenomenon (Cartmell and Bond 2015, 92) and has been defined in many different ways within psychological literature over a period of decades. Maslow (1943) positions ‘belongingness’ as a key psychological need, claiming that individuals whose belonging and love needs are unmet, ‘will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. He will want to attain such a place more than anything else in the world’ (381). Belongingness, for Maslow, is therefore constructed as a potent motivational force which impacts directly on an individual’s social behaviour. Bowlby’s Attachment Theory also considered the need for belonging as fundamental to emotional wellbeing (Bowlby 1969); emphasising the importance of responsive relationships between children and key adults as determining factors in the quality of future relationships. Baumeister and Leary (1995) surveyed the body of literature relating specifically to belonging, which they defined as ‘a hypothesized need to form and maintain strong, stable interpersonal relationships’ (497), concluding: that ‘belongingness is a need (as opposed to merely a want)’ (520).

For adolescents, a sense of belonging may be particularly important, as adolescent development is strongly focused around establishing a sense of belonging within a peer group (Newman and Newman 2001) and attachment to social groups is suggested to start in adolescence (Bowlby 1982). As well as being attracted to social groups for the role they can play in individual identity formation (Tajfel and Turner 1986), recent research suggests that social groups can themselves become attachment objects, providing a space in which individuals can form close interpersonal attachments with others, and through which, in turn, they become attached to ‘the ideological and institutional systems’ that define that group’s identity (Sochos 2014).
School belonging

Research in this area has also latterly focused on school belonging. Department for Education advice in the UK (DfE 2015) identifies ‘a sense of belonging’ as a school-based protective factor in building resilience for children. Studies by Combs (1982) and Finn (1989) emphasise the positive impact on learning and academic engagement of a sense of belonging and connectedness. Goodenow and Grady (1993) define belonging in a school setting in social terms as ‘students’ sense of being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by others [...] in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class’ (60-61). These authors found a direct association between ‘classroom belonging and support’ and expectancy of academic success, intrinsic academic interest and value, general school motivation and self-reported effort (Goodenow and Grady 1993, 60).

More recently, it has been found that in addition to increased academic achievement motivation, students who experience high levels of school belonging also show increases in academic attainment, as well as more positive interactions with teachers and more satisfying peer relations (Osterman 2000; Furrer and Skinner 2003). Osterman (2000) identified a number of key social factors shown to enhance a sense of school belonging for adolescents; these included quality of student/teacher relationships, quality of peer relationships and instructional or organisational strategies promoting positive interactions with peers and other members of the school community. Research by Doyle and Doyle (2003) and Antrop-Gonzalez (2006) into belonging within school communities has emphasised the role of school ethos in promoting a sense of belonging for pupils, advocating schools as caring communities and places of sanctuary for students.

Qualitative meta-synthesis

Qualitative meta-synthesis describes a range of methods of systematically reviewing and integrating qualitative research findings (Kinn, Holgersen, Ekeland, and Davidson 2013). Many of these methods are structurally derived from the meta-analytic approaches used in quantitative research and may not always be appropriate
for the purposes of interpretive qualitative research synthesis (Weed 2008, 14). The interpretative meta-synthesis framework used here, provided by Noblit and Hare (1988), aims to move beyond assimilation of qualitative data to generate new insights and meta-perspectives on the topics considered (Campbell, Pound, Pope, Britten, Pill, Morgan, and Donovan 2003).

Method

A search of the following databases was undertaken to identify relevant qualitative research reports: ERIC, ABI/INFORM Global, ASSIA: Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts; BMJ Journals; ERIC (U.S. Dept. of Education); ABI/INFORM Global; ASSIA: Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts; International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS); MEDLINE/PubMed; Google Scholar. The timeframe of the search activity was July 2015 – October 2015. Search items were a combination of the following terms: ‘belonging*’, ‘connectedness’, ‘relatedness’, ‘perceptions’, ‘experience*’, ‘views’, ‘school’, ‘young people’, and ‘adolescents’. The author used Boolean operators ‘AND’ and ‘OR’. Search parameters were set to include peer-reviewed journal articles published in English in the last twenty years. This initial search yielded a total of 88 articles.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

After initial record screening, 67 studies were excluded. 21 full-text articles were then assessed for eligibility. Studies were included if they: a) presented qualitative data incorporating participant voice b) presented data concerning school belonging; c) presented participants’ views on school belonging; d) presented a ‘rich picture’ of participants’ belonging experiences. Studies were excluded if they: a) did not present qualitative data incorporating participant voice; b) did not present data concerning school belonging; c) did not present participants’ views on school belonging; d) did not present a ‘rich picture’ of participants’ belonging experiences.

18 studies were excluded at this stage. The search provided the author with three articles for detailed analysis. These were Booker (2007), Parker (2010) and Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson (2015). Hand and ancestral searching provided four additional
articles for detailed analysis. These were Yeo (2010); Nind, Boorman, and Clarke (2012); Sancho and Cline (2012), and Cartmell and Bond (2015). Demographic details of the participants for the studies included in the meta-synthesis can be found in Appendix 2.

**Review methodology**

The review methodology was based on Noblit and Hare’s (1988) meta-ethnographic method, which aims to produce interpretations as opposed to analyses of qualitative data. The method also seeks to preserve a sense of both participants’ and study author’s own meaning-making.

Noblit and Hare (1988) advocate a phased methodological process (see Appendix 3), involving ‘repeated reading of the accounts and the noting of interpretative metaphors’ (28), followed by ‘determining how the studies are related’) by ‘creat[ing] a list of the key metaphors, phrases, ideas, and/or concepts (and their relations) used in each account and […] juxtapos[ing] them’ (28). In the present synthesis, this was achieved by completing a table comparing the interpretations advanced in the seven studies (see Appendix 4), before making ‘an initial assumption about the relationship between studies’ (28). The next phase, ‘translating the studies into one another’, involves ‘compar[ing] both the metaphors or concepts and their interactions in one account with the metaphors or concepts and their interactions in the other accounts’ (28), resulting in the production of six sub-concepts and four main concepts. ‘Synthesizing translations’ then repeats this synthesis process using the main concepts to produce a ‘synthesis of translation’ (28), whereby a single, higher-order concept, ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’, was produced. The synthesis of translation represents an overarching interpretation synthesising the main concepts. The final phase (‘Expressing the synthesis’) involves ensuring that ‘syntheses [are] readily intelligible to their intended audience’ (29).
Findings

Four main concepts were generated using the process described above. These were: (1) school belonging and intersubjectivity; (2) school belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity; (3) school belonging and experiences of in-group membership, and (4) school belonging and safety/security. Six sub-concepts were also generated. These were: (1) having friends and being a friend; (2) being able to express yourself without fear of negative judgement; (3) feeling known as an individual; (4) school acceptance and understanding of ethnic, cultural and religious identities; (5) not feeling under threat of exclusion/isolation, and (6) schools valuing the participation of students in a broad range of activities.

(1) School belonging and intersubjectivity

Several of the included studies contained interpretations which positioned school belonging as an intersubjective and relational phenomenon. In particular, positive interactions between peers were a prominent site for the co-construction of a sense of school belonging, as evidenced in Nind, Boorman, and Clarke’s (2012) contention that ‘from the girls’ accounts, it is clear that belonging encompasses the desire for some sort of attachment with people […] that takes place in a relational and contextual way’ (653), in Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson’s interpretation concerning the importance of ‘connectedness’ for the teenage girls in her study (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson 2015, 8), Sancho and Cline’s (2012) interpretation that belonging for their participants was related to relationships with peers or siblings, or in Booker’s interpretation that ‘interactions with peers […] appeared to play a central role in the sense of school belonging for these students’ (Booker 2007, 311, 312). Both Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson (2015) and Cartmell and Bond (2015) also offer interpretations which cite intersubjective support networks as central to the experience of belonging or connectedness in the school environment: ‘girls […] therefore sought support from each other’ (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson 2015, 9); ‘many of the descriptions of belonging referred to the ‘support from others’ International New Arrivals (INA) pupils received; from the teachers, peers and the schools in general’ (Cartmell and Bond 97).
school belonging for participants. Conversely, negative interactions between individuals in the school setting are interpreted across all included studies as detrimental to a sense of belonging at school.

(2) School belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity

The extent to which participants felt known, understood and accepted as an individual by peers and staff within the school context was interpreted in the included studies as closely linked to the experience of belonging. Booker’s (2007) investigation of sense of belonging for African American high school students examines the extent to which her participants ‘felt that they could freely be themselves at their school and at the same time be a welcome member’ (Booker 2007, 310). Responses which addressed this issue indicated a link between sense of belonging and acceptance/tolerance by the school community of individual identity. The freedom to construct individual identities was also significant: a participant who scored low on the belonging instrument used by Booker experienced a conflict between the school’s dress code and his own expression of individual identity. Belonging for Nind, Boorman, and Clarke’s (2012) female participants was also linked with having the autonomy to construct their own identities, rather than accept those constructed for them in the ‘files’ which accompanied them from school to school (651-52). Conversely, Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson’s (2015) interpretations point to the way in which individual identity may be compromised for the sake of belonging or ‘fitting in’ socially. Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson claim that for their participants, ‘the fear of [social] exclusion means that girls sometimes present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson 2015, 3).

Cartmell and Bond’s ‘Understood as a person’ theme ‘specifically relates to descriptions of INA pupils feeling ok to be themselves and school staff actively promoting their feelings of being understood -for example through having background knowledge about them’ (Cartmell and Bond 2015, 97). Positive and accepting responses to other facets of individual identity (e.g. religious and cultural identity) are also interpreted in Cartmell and Bond’s (2015) study as promoting a
sense of school belonging, with one quoted participant citing other people showing ‘manners’ about their religion as important in this regard (Cartmell and Bond 2015, 97). Nind, Boorman, and Clarke’s (2012) study also cites staff knowledge and understanding of pupils as an important facet in promoting a sense of belonging, with one quoted participant stating that one of the ‘best bits’ about her new school (a small special provision for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties) compared to her previous setting is that ‘staff understand us more’ (Nind, Boorman, and Clarke 2012, 646).

Many of Sancho and Cline’s (2012) quoted participants link a sense of belonging with feeling known and accepted as an individual by both peers and staff. The authors assert that ‘all of the children equated a sense of belonging with being accepted’ (69) and draw attention to a quote in which one participant links belonging with being known by staff. Parker similarly suggests that for the participants in her study, the school choral ensemble is ‘a healthy and caring context where they can excel because they are accepted for who they are as individuals’ (Parker 2010, 348). Conversely, Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson’s (2015) study exposes the way in which individual identity can be compromised for the sake of belonging or ‘fitting in’ socially, claiming that ‘the fear of exclusion means that girls sometimes present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson 2015, 3).

(3) School belonging and experiences of in-group membership

All the studies under review associated school belonging with specific experiences of in-group membership. Parker’s (2010) study describes the enhanced belonging experiences of participants in a U.S. high school choral ensemble and her interpretations include that of ‘chorus as an in-group’ (Parker 2010, 345). Parker suggests that ‘student membership in chorus likely acts as a badge in the larger school environment’ and that ‘when members wear their badge, they are recognised not only from the inside of the group as a member, but also from those who reside on the outside […] as belonging to something important to the larger community’ (347).
Similarly, Booker (2007) states that participants ‘felt that they belonged at Jones High School and were accepted [...] because they were not only members of a high profile sports team [the school football team] but also had many friends on that team as well who shared comparable interests and goals’ (Booker 2007, 308), whilst Einberg, Lidell, and Claussen’s (2015) female adolescent participants ‘describe sports activities during leisure time as an opportunity for connectedness’ with peers which in turn promotes a sense of belonging in the school environment (Einberg, Lidell, and Claussen 2015, 5). Quotes selected by Cartmell and Bond (2015) imply that membership of a perceived in-group of students who ‘belong’ at the school is dependent on learning English and being able to make friends (Cartmell and Bond 2015, 98), whilst Yeo’s (2010) study reports that the Asian boarders at St Andrew’s school in Western Australia formed a group based on culture and ethnicity which was situated in diametric opposition to the local Australian boarders in relation to a range of factors, such as sports preferences, dress and attitudes. Yeo claims that accentuation and reinforcement of these differences allowed his participants to assume a position of what he calls ‘sophistication and superiority’ in relation to their Australian counterparts; however, comments made by participants also suggest that membership of this group was the result of necessity rather than choice (Yeo 2010, 65). Sancho and Cline’s (2012) interpretations highlight the centrality of academic group membership (e.g. of ‘tutor groups [...] and other forms of grouping’) to the experience of belonging (70), whilst Nind, Boorman and Clarke’s (2012) participants placed positive emphasis on the small size of the educational provision, describing it as a place where it was easy to talk to people, get to know them and become closer to them as a result (Nind, Boorman and Clarke 2012, 647, 648).

(4) School belonging and safety/security

The relationship of school belonging to feelings of safety and security is also given prominence throughout the studies. For Yeo (2010), the self-segregation of the Asian boarders evidences their sense of threat and accompanying need to create an environment in which they felt secure. The importance of security is also identified as a key theme in the participant interviews conducted by Einberg, Lidell, and Claussen (2015), who say this ‘is about trust in friends and parents but also feeling safe at school and during leisure time’ and that ‘security for the girls entails both
security in their social relationships and also physical security’ (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson 2015, 6). Being able to trust everyone in his new form at secondary school was a factor in the belonging experience of one of Sancho and Cline’s (2012) quoted participants (68). Parker’s (2010) interpretation of her participants’ responses emphasises the sense of security they find in the choral ensemble, which also offers respite and an antidote to the stresses of the wider school environment. Parker suggests that for these participants, the chorus is positioned as a ‘sanctuary’ within the school environment where they are guaranteed to experience a sense of belonging, acceptance, catharsis and relaxation (Parker 2010, 348). The ‘school as sanctuary’ theme is echoed in Nind, Boorman, and Clarke’s (2012) finding that sense of belonging is closely linked to ‘the comfort offered by a communal space inclusive of the whole school community’ (Nind, Boorman, and Clarke 2012, 651).

Synthesis of translation

The overarching higher order concept of ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’ was formed through a process of reciprocal translation (Noblit and Hare 1988, 28) of the four ‘main concepts’ discussed: (1) school belonging and intersubjectivity; (2) school belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity; (3) school belonging and experiences of in-group membership and (4) school belonging and safety/security. The higher order concept of ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’ attempts to capture participants’ interpretations of belonging as a co-constructed, intersubjective phenomenon involving self-identity and acceptance, and promoting feelings of safety and security. The meta-synthesis process (with resulting higher order, main and sub-concepts) is represented in Figure 1.
**Figure 1.** Diagrammatic representation of the higher order concept, main concepts and sub-concepts

**Key**

- **Higher order concept**
- **Main concept**
- **Sub-concept**
- **Contributes to higher-order concept**
- **Contributes to main concept**
- **Inter-conceptual relationship**
Discussion

The Department for Education’s identification of ‘a sense of belonging’ (alternatively termed ‘connectedness’ or ‘relatedness’ (Juvonen 2006, 656)) as a protective factor which builds resilience underscores its centrality to the emotional wellbeing of all children. The aim of the present review was to promote understanding of the ways in which adolescents’ views on school belonging have been represented and interpreted in qualitative research, and to synthesise these interpretations to produce an overarching concept which captures some of the dimensions of school belonging as it is represented in the literature. School belonging emerges from this pupil voice-based literature as a complex affective phenomenon. The higher order concept ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’ places emphasis on its intersubjective, transactional nature, and synthesises a number of key interpretive dimensions, including those described above as ‘main concepts’ and ‘sub-concepts’ (see Figure 1). The higher order concept supports previous school belonging research findings (e.g. Connell and Wellborn 1991; Hegarty, Sauer-Lynch, Patusky, Bouwsema, and Collier 1992; Goodenow and Grady 1993; Furrer and Skinner 2003; Osterman 2003), and suggests a number of ‘key precursors’ to a sense of school belonging. These can be summarised as: feeling safe and secure in the educational setting; being able to form positive relationships with staff and peers; feeling able to express individual identity (enabling pupils to feel safe to be themselves) and having opportunities to experience a sense of group membership.

The synthesised dimensions of school belonging as described in the included studies are closely related to school climate (defined by Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, and Higgins-D’Alessandro (2013) as ‘students’, school personnel’s and parents’ experience of school life socially, emotionally, civically and ethically as well as academically’ (13). It is therefore suggested that a school climate which focuses on developing a caring community, enables facilitation of pupils’ feelings of safety and security and connections with others, and allows them to feel accepted and valued will also help pupils to experience a sense of belonging (Doyle and Doyle 2003; Antrop-Gonzalez 2006). It is acknowledged that schools should be ‘safe and affirming’ places where children can develop a sense of belonging and feel able to
trust and talk openly with adults about their problems’ (DfE 2015, 8), and that pupils feel able to approach teachers when there is warmth in the teacher’s relationship with their pupils and when pupils feel they matter and are listened to (Perry, Lennie and Humphrey 2008; Wade and Smart 2002). However, there is variation in the extent to which teachers feel well equipped to undertake the pastoral aspects of their role (Cleave, Carey, Norris, Sloper, White, and Charlton 1997) and in the extent to which schools focus on both pupil wellbeing and academic outcomes (New Economics Foundation 2004). In the context of increasing performativity in schools, a strong focus on attainment can be perceived to conflict with making time and space for individual children (Ball 2003), with tensions felt between how performance is measured and the investment required to develop trusting relationships between teachers and pupils (Sikes 2001).

The association of adolescent school belonging with membership of extra-curricular groups (such choirs or sports teams) supports Libbey (2004), who found extra-curricular involvement to be a key component of school connectedness, and Gilligan (2000), who suggested the potential of school experiences and spare time activities in developing resilience for children in need. Chanfreau et al. (2016) found that participating in organised sports or physical activity was positively linked to social, emotional and behavioural outcomes for eleven year-old children, whilst sports clubs and ‘other’ extra-curricular clubs were also positively associated with attainment outcomes (Chanfreau, Tanner, Callanan, Laing, Skipp, and Todd 2016, i). It is likely that such extra-curricular activities promote the kinds of informal, non-academic interactions and friendship opportunities which are crucial elements of belonging for children and young people (Pyhältö, Soini, and Pietarinen 2010), and enable children and young people to find something that they are good at, providing a sense of meaningful participation in school life (Rutter 1979). Similar benefits in terms of sense of belonging also appeared to derive from membership of a small school community (Nind, Boorman, and Clarke 2012) or form group (Sancho and Cline 2012) -supporting research which advocates small school sizes or intra-school learning communities (McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum 2002; Cotton 2001). However, participants did not make reference to other measures often considered by schools to promote belonging for pupils, such as school photos, school uniform,
vertical streaming, houses, inter form competitions or assemblies (Flitcroft and Kelly 2016); suggesting a possible discrepancy between schools’ and managed move pupils’ perceptions of how best to promote a sense of school belonging.

The dependence of a sense of school belonging on positive social relationships, knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity and feelings of safety and security also suggests a need to ensure that the socially-destabilising experience of transition (whether between educational phases, between settings, as a result of managed moves, or post-16) is carefully and sensitively managed. The literature suggests that transition experiences are potentially detrimental for CYP (Sancho and Cline 2012) and can have a disproportionately adverse impact on sense of belonging in certain circumstances – for example where transition is a result of threatened exclusion (Bagley and Hallam 2015), or where young people move to high schools which include fewer students who are ethnically similar to themselves (Benner and Graham 2007). As belonging has been shown to have a positive effect on transition (Bulkeley and Fabian 2006; Ebbeck, Yim, and Lee 2010), understanding and promoting the ‘precursors’ to a sense of school belonging can ameliorate transition experiences for all children and young people, but particularly for those whose circumstances make them disproportionately likely to experience difficulties.

Developmental transitions are crucial windows of both vulnerability and opportunity for children at risk (Masten 2014). The present study therefore suggests that schools’ efforts to promote a sense of belonging for adolescent pupils should focus on creating a positive school climate which supports the formation of social relationships, in which diverse individual identities are known, understood and accepted (enabling pupils to feel safe), and in which there are multiple opportunities for group membership, both through school grouping structures and through a rich extra-curricular offer. Implications for social care professionals include maintaining awareness of the importance of school belonging when supporting CYP through potentially socially-destabilising experiences such as school transition, and ensuring that information about the YP is shared effectively and in a timely manner.
Limitations of meta-synthesis

A meta-ethnographic approach was selected for this synthesis as it adopts an explicitly interpretivist stance, focuses attention on experience from a first-person perspective and is congruent with a phenomenological perspective on knowledge-formation. It adopts an iterative approach to data sampling, with additional studies sampled until the analysis is deemed to be ‘saturated’ (Weed 2008, 18). In the present study, a total of seven studies were included, reflecting the limited body of qualitative literature focusing on school belonging from the perspectives of the students themselves.

Rist (1990) has questioned whether meta-ethnographic methods can ‘capture the richness and depth of understanding of natural settings that so characterises the strength of qualitative work’ (Rist 1990, 336). Whilst the process involves ‘metaphoric reduction’, its aim is to achieve ‘both abstraction and complexity, and create translations that preserve the relations between concepts’ (Noblit and Hare 1988, 36). In the present meta-synthesis, the overarching concept was reduced and refined several times to best capture the essence of the main concepts and the relationships between them.

Another possible limitation of the meta-ethnographic approach to qualitative meta-synthesis is the heterogeneity of the socio-cultural and educational contexts within which the participants were situated. However, given their contextual variety, fewer differences than might be expected were found in the constructions of school belonging across the included studies, suggesting that whilst the experience of school belonging is subjective and contextually-inflected, there are also marked areas of commonality in the way in which the phenomenon is interpreted by pupils from the diverse backgrounds represented.

Conclusion

The present meta-synthesis has produced a higher order concept - ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’- which metaphorically represents participants’ interpretations of aspects of the phenomenon
of school belonging (as represented by the authors of the included studies). This higher-order concept suggests that the experience of school belonging for adolescents is associated with being in an environment in which positive social relationships can be forged and sustained, in which individual identities are known, understood and accepted, in which young people feel safe and secure, and in which there is the opportunity to experience group membership through academic group structures and extra-curricular activities.

It is hoped that the synthesis presented in this study will go some way to promoting a more detailed understanding of the precursors of school belonging for adolescents, and therefore of the possible ways in which this affective phenomenon can be promoted in order to enhance their wellbeing and achievement.

Acknowledgement

This project was funded through England’s Department for Education (DfE) National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) ITEP award 2013-2016.

References
*Denotes studies included in the synthesis


Department for Education. 2015. Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Departmental Advice for School Staff. London: HMSO.


School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves

Prepared in accordance with the author guidelines for

School Psychology International

(See Appendix 5)

Word Count: 6629 (including abstract, tables and references)
Abstract

A sense of school belonging has a powerful effect on students’ emotional, motivational and academic functioning, yet there have been few attempts to listen to students’ views on school belonging, or to seek their opinions on how best to promote it.

Managed move protocols were developed in the UK as a positive alternative to excluding students whose school placements have broken down. However, their ‘success’ has been defined in a manner which does not take full account of their affective impact on this vulnerable group of children and young people (CYP). Previous research has identified a need for greater personalisation of the managed move transition process and fuller incorporation of CYP views. This interpretative case study sought to understand how secondary school students who have undergone a managed move experience school belonging, and what they feel would make it easier for other managed move students to experience it. Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). A sense of school belonging resulted from positive relationships with peers and an attendant sense of safety, security and acceptance. Participants expressed both the desirability and perceived difficulty of forging relationships in a new school and acknowledged the value of sensitive and subtle support.

Keywords
Belonging, managed moves, pupil voice, connectedness, relatedness, transition, interpretative phenomenological analysis

Introduction

Defining belonging

The affective phenomenon of belonging is ‘complex and multi-faceted’ (Cartmell and Bond, 2015, p. 92), and has been variously defined within psychological research over a period of decades. The need for ‘belongingness’ was identified by Maslow (1943), who claimed that an individual whose need to belong is not met ‘will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and […] strive with great intensity to achieve this goal’ (p. 381).
Attachment theory also emphasises the importance of responsive relationships between children and key adults, positioning these as determining factors in the quality of future relationships and fundamental to emotional wellbeing (Bowlby, 1969). A sense of belonging has been hypothesised as a need to form and maintain strong, stable interpersonal relationships, and a sense of social exclusion is associated with decreases in self-regulation and pro-social behaviour (Baumeister, Dewall, Ciarocco & Twenge, 2005).

**School belonging**

Department for Education advice in the UK (DfE, 2015) identifies a sense of belonging at school as a protective factor in building resilience for children, and states that ‘school should be a safe and affirming place for children where they can develop a sense of belonging and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems’ (DfE, 2015, p. 8). A considerable body of research, accumulated over a period of decades, highlights an association between ‘classroom belonging and support’ and ‘expectancy of academic success’ and ‘intrinsic academic interest and value’ (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, pp. 60-61; Combs, 1982; Finn, 1989).

More recently, it has been found that in addition to increased academic achievement motivation, students who experience high levels of school belonging show increases in academic attainment, more positive interactions with teachers and more satisfying peer relations (Osterman, 2000; Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Social factors shown to enhance a sense of school belonging for adolescents include quality of student/teacher relationships and peer relationships, and instructional or organisational strategies promoting positive interactions with peers and other members of the school community (Osterman, 2000).

Dynamic and interacting factors identified as promoting a sense of belonging can also be described with reference to features of the school environment and culture, peer group and individual pupil (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Sancho & Cline, 2012). Other accounts focus explicitly on schools as caring communities and places of sanctuary for students (Doyle & Doyle, 2003; Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006).
Although it remains variously-defined in the literature, school belonging therefore seems to be fundamentally predicated on the experience of positive and reciprocal social relationships with staff and peers, and strongly and consistently associated with both the emotional and psychological wellbeing and the academic achievement motivation of children and young people in school settings. For this reason, Goodenow and Grady’s (1993) definition of school belonging as ‘students’ sense of being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by others [...] in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class’ (p. 25) will be adopted for the purposes of this study.

**Pupil voice on school belonging**

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which advocates the need to consult with children about matters which affect them, prompted a range of initiatives centred on obtaining the views and opinions of CYP (Lewis and Porter, 2007). More recently, the revised SEN Code of Practice and the Children and Families Act (2014) have re-emphasised the importance of listening to the voices of CYP and involving them in decision-making around educational provision. SEN Code of Practice guidelines also state that local authorities have a duty to ensure CYP involvement in decision-making which affects them.

Although interest in pupil voice has been ‘mainstreamed’ (Nind, Boorman & Clarke, 2012, p. 643), only a very small proportion of the growing body of school belonging research seeks CYP views. A recent review synthesising findings from this small but contextually-diverse body of research produced four main concepts: school belonging and intersubjectivity; school belonging and knowledge, understanding and acceptance of individual identity; school belonging and experiences of in-group membership and school belonging and safety/security. The synthesis generated the higher-order concept of school belonging as ‘feeling safe to be yourself in and through relationships with others in the school setting’, positioning the experience of school belonging for adolescents as a prerequisite of academic engagement, motivation and achievement (Craggs & Kelly, manuscript submitted for publication).
Defining managed moves

In the UK, managed moves are advocated as an alternative to permanent exclusion for CYP whose educational placements have broken down, providing a ‘fresh start’ in a new school (DfES, 2008). About one-third of local authorities now promote some form of managed move in their schools (Bagley, 2013). Managed moves are described as enabling ‘a child or young person to make amends and to move on to a new placement or programme in a planned way which satisfies the school, the child and family and any individual who has been aggrieved’ (Abdelnoor, 2007), and as ‘a process whereby a collaborating school agrees to accept a pupil at risk of exclusion from another collaborating school’; emphasising a relational and collaborative process at the school level (Vincent, Harris, Thomson & Toalster, 2007, p. 284).

However, Bagley and Hallam (2015) reported that managed moves are perceived by some parents and students to give schools a licence to move children they consider to be a ‘problem’, rather than working with them; that the process takes too long to negotiate and instigate; and that moves can cause stress for families and individual children.

Evaluations of the managed move process have generated mixed results, with some positive outcomes reported to be associated with ‘tailored support’, ‘care’ and ‘commitment’ in receiver schools (Vincent, Harris, Thomson, & Toalster, 2007, p. 295). Personalisation and listening to CYP and families throughout the process have also been identified as key success factors (Chadwick, 2013; Bagley & Hallam, 2015).

Pupil voice on managed moves

Despite recent legislation, active inclusion of the voice of the child with SEN (McKay, 2014) and, more specifically, with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (Nind, Boorman & Clarke, 2012, p. 644) is underdeveloped. The managed move literature to date has largely focused on perceptions of the process from the position of multiple stakeholders, with some including the perspectives of CYP themselves (Chadwick, 2013; Bagley, 2013). A recent study of the experiences
of four students concluded that the experience of a managed move can leave CYP feeling insecure, different, segregated and vulnerable (Craig, 2015).

Previous studies of belonging (e.g. Goodenow, 1992; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Juvonen, 2006) ‘have focused on definition, measurement, and importance of belonging without defining the precursors of the sense of belonging in school settings or its practical implications’ (Allen & Bowles, 2012, p. 113). This gap seems particularly significant in relation to managed move students, since the managed move process, potentially involving the disruption of existing social connections and rejections within receiver schools, seems likely to impact on these students’ sense of school belonging. This study therefore attempts to address this gap in the literature by investigating how secondary school students who have undergone a managed move experience school belonging, and asking what (if anything) would make it easier for them to experience a sense of belonging at their receiver schools.

**Epistemological position**

The current study is undertaken from the epistemological standpoint of critical realism and takes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to knowledge-formation. Hermeneutic phenomenology, derived from the work of Husserl and Heidegger, focuses on interpretation of the nature of lived experience. It is particularly suited to the study of human psychological phenomena, where the object of investigation possesses the same ability to reflect on their experience as the investigating subject (Parker, in Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall (1994), p. 9).

**Researcher positionality**

The author is a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) who has worked with CYP in a variety of roles within secondary, further and higher education and youth justice settings. The author’s decision to investigate students’ experiences of belonging in relation to the managed move process arose out of her experience of direct work with students who have undertaken managed moves, and with young people who have been permanently excluded from educational settings.
Methodology

Design

An interpretative case study design with embedded units of analysis was adopted to explore the way in which belonging is experienced and interpreted by secondary school students who have undergone a managed move.

Participant recruitment

Ethical approval was obtained (Appendix 6). Participants were selected according to predetermined criteria relating to the extent to which their experiences positioned them as able to contribute to the topic under investigation. Senior members of staff from mainstream secondary schools within a North West local authority supplied names of potential participants. It was stipulated that participants should have experienced integration into a new school environment as part of the local authority’s managed move process, and should have been attending the receiver school for a period of at least six weeks. For ethical reasons, it was also stipulated that any potential participants should not have ongoing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) involvement. The first four participants who met all stipulations were selected. Verbal and written informed parental consent and verbal and written informed participant assent were obtained prior to commencement of the study (see Appendices 7 and 8). Table 1 shows the demographic details of the study participants.
Table 1. Demographic details of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Year group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Contextual details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>In receiver school six weeks; still ‘on trial’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>In receiver school nine months; accepted onto roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>In receiver school fourteen months; accepted onto roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>In receiver school ten weeks; still ‘on trial’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual phenomenological interviews (collaborative interviews with an unforced flow of questions (Major & Savin-Baden, 2013, p. 221; p. 359)) were conducted with each participant. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 9. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis

Data were subjected to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) according to the procedure outlined by Smith and Osborn (Smith, 2008, pp. 53-80). This involves the five stages outlined in Table 2.
**Table 2. Stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2008, pp. 53-80)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of analysis</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Close, line-by-line analysis of the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of each participant; identification of emergent patterns (i.e. themes) within this experiential material;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Development of a ‘dialogue’ between the researcher, their coded data, and their psychological knowledge, about what it might mean for participants to have these concerns, in this context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Development of a structure, frame or gestalt which illustrates the relationships between themes; the organization of all this material in a format which allows for analysed data to be traced right through the process, from initial comments on the transcript, through initial clustering and thematic development, into the final structure of themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The use of supervision, collaboration or audit to help test the coherence and plausibility of the interpretation; the development of a full narrative, evidenced by a detailed commentary on data extracts, which takes the reader through this interpretation, usually theme-by-theme, and is often supported by some form of visual guide (a simple structure, diagram or table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reflection on one’s own perceptions, conceptions and processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis was conducted by hand to enable the researcher to get ‘in-amongst’ the data, and develop a more embodied awareness of her own role as an interpreter of it. Appendix 10 shows each stage of IPA and includes worked examples.

**Trustworthiness**

Participants were offered the opportunity to review transcripts for accuracy, and to make any necessary amendments. A section of coded transcript from Participant 1 was analysed by a colleague also conducting IPA-based research before analysis of data from subsequent participants was conducted. No significant coding discrepancies were found. Subsequent coding was not independently checked, however, an audit trail of initial notes on the research questions, research proposal, interview schedule, annotated transcripts, thematic tables, draft report versions and final report was kept and made available for inspection.

**Findings**

Findings highlighted some of the key precursors to and components of a sense of school belonging for secondary school students who had undergone a managed move. Appendix 11 presents the themes for each individual participant, and shows how these link to the overall sub-themes and superordinate themes. Figure 1 presents the superordinate themes and sub-themes discussed and gives an indication of their interrelationships.
Figure 1. Map of superordinate themes and sub-themes

Key

SUPERORDINATE THEME

Sub-theme
‘I’ve got better friends [...] it makes me feel safer’:

MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE

Making friends
Being able to make friends at the receiver school was by far the most prominent theme associated with a sense of school belonging for managed move participants, and was positioned as an essential precursor to this affective phenomenon. Comments highlighting the importance of friendships included ‘I wanted to move school where I could get some friends and be more socialised’ and ‘I’m settled in now ‘cos I already had friends here’ [in receiver school].

Feeling safe
A key way in which making friends in the receiver school appeared to promote belonging was by increasing participants’ feelings of safety. The link between forging successful friendships and feeling safe/secure in the receiver school was both explicitly and implicitly made:

Now I don’t self-harm…I’ve got better friends… most of them [the other students in the receiver school] aint the bullying type…it makes me feel safer.

I got bullied at my old school…that was going on for two years…then whilst I’ve come here [to receiver school], er, I’ve met some new friends and, erm, it’s been really good that I made the move.

One of my best friends now (‘cos I was already friends with him), he introduced me to, like, all my new friends that I have here, and like, I found it comfortable.

Conversely, a significant barrier to school belonging for managed move participants was fear or doubt about their ability to forge positive peer relationships. All had experienced difficulties with peer-group relationships in previous schools, with three out of the four citing problems with bullying. Whilst forging positive friendships was
perceived as fundamental to the experience of school belonging, the process was therefore viewed with trepidation:

*I thought that, like, loads of the students would be the same - like some of them of the bullying type.*

*I was scared if, like, I didn’t meet any new friends or if I would have got bullied*

The prospect of making new friends made participants feel “scared” or “nervous”. Unsurprisingly, participants feared encountering the same difficulties with peers in their receiver schools as they had experienced in previous settings. One participant used a powerful metaphor to describe his sense that the difficulties he had experienced might not change despite his move:

*Well it’s sort of like […] schools are the same…with different doors […] so basically…the things that go on in school are basically the same, like the people in the school, but it’s like the building’s a bit different, if you know what I mean?*

*“Just be yourself”: FEELING KNOWN, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED AS A PERSON IN RECEIVER SCHOOL*

The theme of ‘feeling known, understood and accepted as a person’ described what also seemed to be an important component of school belonging for all managed move participants. This theme was expressed in terms of feeling understood by both friends and staff. Comments included: “I’ve got better friends [at receiver school] ‘cos they all understand me […] most of them understand what other people have gone through” and “the staff here […] understand people more”. One participant made an explicit link between feeling understood and accepted and being able to “be himself”.
However, comments made by two male participants implied that the pressure of conforming to gender stereotypes involving dominance and aggression made it more difficult for them to ‘be themselves’ in their receiver schools:

*I tried to be someone else, like I tried to be all big and hard to start off with, but then I realised there’s no point […] so it’s just better if you do that [be yourself] ‘cos then you’ll fit in with the right group better, and you’ll fit in with people that you want better.*

*Well the thing is a few months ago [in the receiver school] or whatever, like one of them [the other students] tried to start a fight with me and… I just basically said to him “I don’t fight”...and he just…basically trying to keep it going, ‘cos he was, like, one of these people who just look for fights […] and I’m not a fighter.*

*“We could get you counselling to help you”*:  

**IDENTIFICATION OF AND SUPPORT FOR SEN/D**

In addition to making friends/feeling safe and feeling known, understood and accepted, participants recognised the contribution to a sense of belonging of appropriate and timely provision of support for any additional difficulties they were facing. One participant, receiving input from the school’s link psychologist because of identified difficulties with social communication and interaction, spoke about the positive impact of outside agency support in helping him understand his own behaviour:

*Miss [Deputy Head of receiver school] has, erm, invited someone to help me with my behaviour and, erm, to help me, like, ask, like to give me a bit of support and guidance to why, erm, I’m doing this.*

Another, who had used deliberate self-harm to cope with the feelings generated by being a victim of bullying in her previous school, stated that she felt she had received *“loads”* of help for this from her receiver school. She explained:
'Cos the [previous] school wouldn’t put me in for counselling for it and everything so my mum had to go and do that herself and get me counselling…but this [receiver] school is like “if you ever start again we could get you counselling as soon as possible to help you stop before it got worse”.

Arranging outside agency support for managed move students who had experienced or were experiencing bullying was cited by another participant as the single most important thing receiver schools could do to help such students to feel they fit in:

_Making sure that the child is…not getting bullied […] get someone to come in from outside of school and talk to them [about] if you’re getting bullied or not. I found it more easier when someone from out of school, like, came in, but it depends on the person’s confidence and who they want to tell._

_“This is your last chance school”:_

**SUPPORTIVE/UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES**

Participants’ sense of school belonging was also impacted by an array of school-based factors encompassed by the theme ‘supportive/unsupportive school protocols/practices’. This theme incorporated four sub-themes: ‘extra-curricular opportunities; ‘facilitating peer relationships’; ‘management of trial period’ and ‘sole responsibility narratives’.

**Extra-curricular opportunities**

The opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and use existing skills to make a positive contribution appeared to facilitate a sense of school belonging for managed move participants. One gave a detailed account of how she had been supported to apply for the role of peer mentor in her receiver school:

_Now I’m a peer mentor. Yeah. But I don’t think they expected that from me ‘cos I was like new and everything […] They were bringing in applications for it. So I told my form tutor, “Sir, can you help me do this?” He was like, “Is that applying for a peer mentor?” He was like “Oh, that’s good!” And he
was like (‘cos I was one at my old school as well), “you could put that on [the application form] as well, ‘cos that’d help you get the job” […] Like, I think it’s made me a better person because now I know that because I’ve been through things I could help people not go through it.

Another participant, who seemed to be struggling to experience a sense of belonging in his receiver school and had resorted to excessive gaming to cope with the social difficulties he had encountered, described how going to a boxing gym after school offered an opportunity for making friends without having to rely solely on the verbal strategies he found difficult:

Going starting boxing…it’s…taken away playing on the Xbox…It’s just like sort of taken its place instead, and now I’d rather like do a bit of training instead of playing on the Xbox or whatever. […] I think it…well…it helped me out a lot […] All the other lads that go there…like they won’t…they won’t mither you.[…] They don’t…take it seriously. Like, well they take boxing seriously, they just don’t take…talking seriously.

Promoting belonging through facilitating peer relationships
Participants’ comments acknowledged the value of receiver schools’ attempts to promote a sense of belonging by the sensitive facilitation of peer relationships:

Well it’s pretty good for them to, like, pair you up with someone ‘cos you just get talking a bit.

I met, erm, a teacher called [name of teacher] and, erm, she helped me find some new friends; she, erm, she showed me where the place is where other people like stay at break time and lunchtime…I had a good day that day.

Erm, she [a teacher at the participant’s receiver school] introduced me to a boy called [name of boy] and then after that, erm, I think my confidence was increased and, erm, I went out one day and then I met a few friends…
My old Head of House, Miss [name of teacher in receiver school], she put me with some girl called [name of peer], and then me and her have been, like, really close ever since.

Several participants also suggested ways in which schools might help promote a sense of belonging for managed move students:

They [receiver school staff] could direct them [managed move students] in, like, the best way. So, like, help them make friends. So, like, put them with people they think they’ll blend well with and everything.

All the new kids they could, like, have, like, a meeting with them all so then they all get to know each other and everything. So then they’ve got other new people that are mates rather than just people that’ve been there for, like, four, five years.

However, other participants felt there were limits to the extent to which receiver schools could help to promote a sense of school belonging through facilitating friendships for managed move students:

Interviewer: What do you think schools could do to help students on managed moves feel like they can like fit into a friendship group or belong?

Participant: Erm, well I... well first of all I’ll say what they probably couldn’t do...is, err...I don’t really feel as though they could sort of like push someone into, like, a group of friends.

Management of trial period

Participants also spoke about the negative impact on their sense of school belonging of a lack of equity and clarity surrounding the initial ‘trial period’:

And, err, I was off for a few days so they [receiver school]...they err...said that it would be another three weeks or something [on trial], ‘cos my attendance went down a bit because of that.
There was another person that started about a week before me...but they didn’t get put on trial, but I don’t understand that because at my last school I wasn’t...I wasn’t like bad behaved.

What happened was, I broke my leg [...] and then I was in school and, like, and then they said they needed another one [trial period] ‘cos they said they wanted to see me without it [a broken leg]; don’t know why they wanted that, so [it was] six weeks again.

Being ‘on trial’ in a receiver school was characterised by one participant as potentially detrimental to the formation of friendships, and, therefore, to the development of a sense of school belonging:

You probably shouldn’t do a long... period of trial, ‘cos it gives you that kind of [...] anxiety, of, like, worrying all the time in your behaviour and stuff, and [...] if you’re worrying about your behaviour [...] you probably won’t make as many friends.

A counterexample was offered by another participant, whose ‘trial period’ appeared to have been clearly-communicated and positively-managed:

I had an interview with the Head Teacher first, saying, like, how I’ve come here and talking about “is there going to be an improvement on my behaviour and the bullying?” And then I said “yeah” and then, erm, he said to me, “you’re going on a six week trial”, and then after the six weeks had been up, he gave me a card to say ‘Congratulations, you’re now part of the [name of receiver school] team’. And then, err, I said “thanks”’, yeah, and I settled in from there.

“Sole responsibility” narratives
Several participants responded to the question “what could schools do to help managed move students feel like they fit in and belong at their receiver school?” with what could be described as “sole responsibility” narratives. These were
elaborations of the view that there was little or nothing schools could do to help, as responsibility lay solely with the individual pupil:

Well, they [receiver schools] can’t really help you with that [fitting in and experiencing a sense of belonging] because it’s all about how you present yourself to other people.

It’s on you to make friends; it’s on you to do good, it’s on you to do this – they [the receiver school] don’t obviously make that feel that way, but I know it’s that way.

Discussion

*How do secondary school students who have undergone a managed move experience school belonging?*

As with previous research, belonging for secondary school students who have undergone a managed move emerges from the data as fundamentally associated with positive peer relationships (Sancho & Cline, 2012; Osterman, 2000).

Additionally, for the participants in this study, school belonging was connected with a sense of safety, security and comfort contingent on having established positive peer relationships. This finding implies that for adolescents who have undergone a managed move, belonging needs and safety needs may not be as clearly distinguishable as for other, less vulnerable groups. Managed move students may therefore find themselves caught between acute awareness of the need to form protective social affiliations and doubt or anxiety about their ability to do so. Several participants relied on pre-existing friendships with students in the receiver school as a means of entry to their new peer group. Such ‘bridging’ friendships served an important function for participants, particularly in cases where other friendship opportunities did not appear to have been presented.

Narratives positioning the pupil him/herself as entirely responsible for the process of settling in were prevalent in participants’ belonging accounts. These “sole-
responsibility” narratives, which are at odds with the purportedly collaborative nature of the managed move intervention, were most insistently expressed by the two students who had been at their receiver school the shortest time, and whose placements appeared the least securely-established. Such narratives have also been found in debate regarding wider school inclusion, where the impetus for change is placed on students rather than on developing inclusive approaches (see Lloyd, 2001). “Sole responsibility” narratives were absent from the belonging accounts of those participants whose receiver schools had taken steps to help them make friends. These students described ‘light touch’ interventions (e.g. introductions to selected peers and information about places to go at break and lunchtime to meet other students in a safe and welcoming environment) as having a positive impact on their sense of belonging.

In common with other groups of adolescent students, school belonging for study participants was closely associated with a sense of being accepted and able to ‘be yourself’ in the educational environment. Staff and peer acceptance is an important facet of Goodenow and Grady’s (1993) influential definition of school belonging, and is cited as central to school belonging across a range of contexts (Sancho & Cline, 2012; Booker, 2007; Cartmell & Bond, 2015). For two of the male participants in the present study, however, feeling able to ‘be yourself’ was rendered more complicated by tension between individual identity and perceptions of a ‘masculine’ gender role involving aggression and dominance.

School belonging also appeared to be facilitated by appropriate support for any additional needs or difficulties participants were facing, corroborating Bagley and Hallam’s (2015) finding that addressing any underlying difficulties is important to young people who have experienced managed moves. In the current study, participants who had received actual or offered support for social, emotional and mental health difficulties described feeling “safe” and settling in “quite well” as a result. The value of outside agency support was specifically referenced by two out of the four participants interviewed. Conversely, a participant who appeared to be displaying high levels of social anxiety, and who was not in receipt of support, had resorted to ‘keeping himself to himself’ in his receiver school and avoiding peers rather than attempting to make friends.
A range of other support cited as helping participants to settle in illustrates the ordinary (rather than extraordinary) processes of promoting the protective factor of a sense of belonging to build resilience (Masten, 2015). This included head teachers and staff showing curiosity about, supporting and encouraging participants’ individual skills and interests, positively acknowledging the successful completion of the six week ‘trial period’, and acting as advocates for managed move students.

**What do secondary school students who have experienced a managed move feel would make it easier for other managed move students to experience a sense of school belonging?**

The responses of participants who thought it was possible for schools to help managed move students to experience a sense of school belonging were overwhelmingly focused on support for making friends, underscoring the high value placed by adolescents on peer relationships, but perhaps also the particular social vulnerability of managed move students. There was relatively little mention of school staff, but where there was it was in relation to everyday ways that schools actively co-enable resilience processes (Theron, 2016), facilitating the “ordinary magic” of resilience (Masten, 2015). For example, one participant described how the ‘tour day’ organised by his receiver school was “a good day” because staff “helped” him find some new friends, resulting in an increase in his confidence. Another suggested that schools should support the development of a sense of belonging by introducing new students to each other. A third participant identified being paired with a “buddy” on his first day as helpful. That having an effective approach to bullying and a range of channels for reporting it was also viewed as promoting school belonging for students on managed moves suggests that a fear of victimhood based on previous experience can hamper the development of this affective phenomenon. The suggestion made by one participant that a shorter ‘trial period’ would promote belonging was based on his perception that it is hard to make friends (an essential precursor to belonging) when you are “on trial”, as you are “worrying all the time” about your behaviour.
Reflections

The study gave precedence to voices of secondary school students who have undergone a managed move. It aimed to offer insight into how this vulnerable group of young people experience the educationally and emotionally-significant phenomenon of school belonging, and sought to capture participants’ views on what might promote a sense of school belonging for other managed move students.

Students on managed moves are by nature a transient population, making participant recruitment and retention challenging. As a result, although there was homogeneity of experience (all participants had undergone a managed move), the amount of time participants had been in their receiver schools varied, and whereas some had been accepted onto roll, others had not. Whilst it is likely that this may have impacted students’ sense of belonging, such variation does not constitute a significant limitation in IPA-based research, which is predominantly concerned with the interpretative analysis of individual life-worlds.

Summary and implications for professional practice

Findings suggested that a sense of school belonging for these students was a socially-constructed phenomenon dependent upon social interaction of a kind which they appeared to find especially anxiety-inducing. Schools and school psychologists have a role to play in building resilience through promoting a sense of belonging in contextually relevant, subtle, everyday ways, to mitigate the potential risk associated with transition for this vulnerable population.

Acknowledgement

This project was funded through England’s Department for Education (DfE) National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) ITEP award 2013-2016.
References


The Dissemination of Evidence to Professional Practice
Introduction

The role and remit of UK educational psychologists (EPs) remains widely debated (Burnham, 2012). Recurrent issues include diverse practice models; inadequate role explanation; the necessity that the profession adapt to social and political imperatives; that it demonstrate what has been termed ‘a unique contribution’, and the contention that educational psychology practice models are ‘unscientific’ (Burnham, 2012; Kelly, 2008). Stoiber and Waas (2002) describe concerns about a disparity between EP practice and scientific method as ‘legitimate’, and it has been claimed that EPs tend to rely more on their own or colleagues’ experience than empirical knowledge (Nathan & Gorman, 1998). However, the profession’s commitment to promoting effective learning and high achievement makes identifying and implementing ‘what works’ a ‘critical’ objective (Stoiber & Waas, 2002, p. 8).

Evidence-based practice

The concept of ‘evidence-based practice’ (EBP), defined as ‘the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences’ (APA, 2006, p.273) originated in clinical contexts (Frederickson, 2002), where its primary function was the quality assurance of psychological interventions. Its increasing influence across a range of social policy areas over the last two decades has been supported by organisations such as the Cochrane Collaboration and the Campbell Collaboration, which focus respectively on the dissemination of systematic literature reviews of health and social care-based interventions (Frederickson, 2002, p.100). The concept addresses the imperative that psychological practice be safe, appropriate, cost-effective and accountable (Raines, 2008), and EBP is now a standard requirement of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which regulates the UK educational psychology profession.

As it has grown in influence within psychological fields, the concept of EBP has also become closely allied with other conceptual constructions such as psychology’s ‘distinct perspective’ and ‘scientific’ research methods, as can be seen in the following extract from Woods and Bond (2014):
Recent conceptualizations of the scientist-practitioner model emphasize the psychologist’s integration of roles of practitioner, consumer of research, and producer of research in the support of an evidence-based practice which is able to use and produce knowledge which is rigorous, objective, and generalizable alongside that which is subjective, holistic and applicable to the individual (Woods and Bond, 2014, p. 75).

As Woods and Bond’s integrationist perspective implies, despite its positivist, clinical origins, EBP in applied psychology incorporates a range of epistemologies and methodological approaches. Yet the concept also poses fundamental epistemological questions: there is disagreement among researchers and practitioners about whether such a thing as ‘objective’ knowledge exists (Burnham, 2012, p. 28) and (if it does), how such knowledge might successfully be accessed and applied. Whilst phenomenological researchers and practitioners may accept claims of the existence of an objective reality, they may simultaneously question the extent to which this is separable from subjective experience. Practitioner EPs’ responses to the concept of EBP can be seen to vary according to their individual epistemological perspectives and the meanings they attach to the construct. The concept of EBP therefore requires practitioner psychologists to consider the appropriateness of different methodologies and research designs to different purposes in order to be effective consumers of research and to be confident in the evidence base of the interventions they recommend (Styles, 2011). EBP emerges as a complex and potentially problematic construct which poses fundamental questions about the nature of ‘reliable’ evidence, the perspective from which such evidence should be assessed, and the way in which any conclusions drawn can (or should) be practically implemented.

**The educational psychologist as scientist-practitioner**

The British Psychological Society’s website, which defines psychology as ‘the scientific study of people, the mind and behaviour’ (British Psychological Society, 2016), identifies the psychologist’s role as that of ‘scientist-practitioner’. Key functions of the psychologist as scientist-practitioner have been identified as effective judgement, reasoning, and problem-solving; psychologically-grounded
formulation, effective intervention planning and monitoring, and self-evaluation (Lane & Corrie, 2006).

According to Lambert (1993), due to their emphasis on professional practice which represents an integration of science with professional skills, most educational psychologists consider themselves to be scientist-practitioners. However, Lilienfield, Ammirati and David (2012) draw attention to a striking ‘gap’ or disjunction ‘between the scientific evidence regarding the best available assessment and treatment practices on the one hand, and what practitioners—in this case, school psychologists—actually do in their routine practices, on the other’ (Lilienfield, Ammirati & David, 2012, p. 8). They identify ‘a selective list of cognitive errors […] especially pertinent to the everyday work of the school psychologist’ which ‘can lead to suboptimal school psychology practices’ (p.15, 21). These include confirmation bias (tendency to seek out evidence consistent with our beliefs, and ignore or dismiss that which is not); groupthink (preoccupation with group unanimity that impedes critical evaluation of an issue); overreliance on heuristics; bias blind spots; diagnostic overshadowing (a tendency for a dramatic, salient diagnosis to lead clinicians to overlook less obvious diagnoses) and pathology bias (a tendency to over-pathologize relatively normative behaviour) (Lilienfield et al., 2012, p. 15). They also include a list of ‘ten warning signs of pseudoscience’ considered pertinent to school psychologists (p.15) and conclude by asserting the importance of instructing educational and school psychology trainees in positivist scientific methods, and steering them towards specific kinds of decontextualized, ‘scientific’ research ‘evidence’:

All graduate students in school psychology, we believe, must learn about the cognitive errors to which all humans are susceptible, and come to understand why scientific methods, such as randomized controlled trials, are essential bulwarks against these errors. Equally essential, school psychology students must come to understand that their discipline has evolved over time by eliminating errors, and come to see scientific methods as invaluable tools for improving the rigor of their clinical judgments and research endeavors (Lilienfield et al., 2012, p. 29).
Despite these exhortations, it is unclear how far UK educational psychologists aspire to be the kind of positivist ‘scientist-practitioners’ Lilienfeld et al. (2012) describe, or how useful they find the kind of research they endorse. Outcomes of Burnham’s interview-based research into ‘reliable evidence and the role of the educational psychologist’ suggested his participants were ambivalent about both the ‘scientific’ basis of their work, and the contribution of peer-review-based research to their practice (Burnham, 2012, p.19). Burnham characterises his participants as ‘pragmatists’ rather than positivists, and describes their ‘improvised’ and ‘situational’ practices as aiming for relevance as opposed to rigour (p. 26). Kelly (2008) notes that ‘whilst the contemporary educational psychologist’s role can be seen to be derived from a relativist position and to reflect the substance of Critical Realism [as opposed to Positivism], this understanding and transparency is generally lacking or fragmented in the professional literature’ (Kelly, 2008, p.26). To further complicate matters, contemporary psychology utilizes ‘incommensurable’ definitions of science according to context and purpose (Burnham, 2012); from Lane and Corrie’s description of science as contextualised, often chaotic and non-linear (Lane & Corrie, 2006) to the positivist perspectives described by Robson (2002, p. 19) or Lilienfield et al. (2012) as the ‘standard’ view of science. As a result, for the time being at least, ‘it is not clear what psychologists are claiming to have achieved when they call their work scientific, or what they risk losing when they say it is not’ (Burnham, 2012, p. 28). In the absence of any apparent consensus concerning the meaning of the construct ‘scientist-practitioner’, it is difficult to assess its utility or value as a descriptor of professional practice.

**Idiographic problems**

The construct of the educational psychologist as ‘scientist-practitioner’ engaging in EBP also poses a number of idiographic problems. These include, but are not limited to the questions of what constitutes reliable ‘evidence’ in practice contexts and how this is to be accessed and usefully applied by practitioner psychologists going about their day-to-day activities.

The question of what constitutes reliable ‘evidence’ within the social sciences is much-debated. Scott, Shaw and Joughin (2001), addressing a clinical readership of
child and adolescent psychiatrists, posit a hierarchy of ‘research evidence for treatment efficacy’ which places systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) at the top (as the highest quality research evidence), individual opinion at the bottom (as the lowest-quality evidence) and quasi experimental trials and controlled case studies between the two (Scott, Shaw & Joughin, 2001; Woods, McArdle & Tabassum, 2014 p.34). Although it may appear definitive, Scott et al.’s hierarchy is itself inevitably a product of a particular clinical ideology focused primarily on the individual child or immediate family which seeks to address ‘pathologies’ or deficits perceived to be therein located. Unlike educational psychology, paediatric psychiatry (and to a lesser extent, clinical psychology) ‘tends not to acknowledge the determining potential of the wider context so overtly’ and, for both, ‘the child generally remains the focus of referral, investigation and intervention’ (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle, 2008). It might therefore be claimed that whilst Scott et al.’s (2001) hierarchy is a useful indicator of the quality of evidence for individual interventions delivered in clinical contexts, it is not designed to evaluate qualitative or socially-embedded research and is not, therefore, an appropriate means of judging the quality of a significant proportion of educational psychology research outputs. Other potential drawbacks of using Scott et al.’s hierarchy include the potential to undervalue interventions which lack an established evidence base, the underestimation of qualitatively-orientated research, and issues of contextual validity and implementation (Frederickson, 2002, p.99).

For those espousing integrationist perspectives, research evidence on intervention efficacy ‘provides a starting point, rather than the final word, for effective and safe practice’ (Woods, Bond, Humphrey, Symes, & Green, 2011, p. 53). Other types of research are also seen as making an important contribution to an ‘evidence-based’ approach. The hourglass model of psychological therapies research put forward by Salkovskis (2002) illustrates the potential contributions of different types of research to EBP in applied psychology. This model advocates a phased approach incorporating different types of research as being most appropriate in establishing intervention efficacy in psychological practice. Salkovskis’ initial phase (represented by the wide top section of the hourglass) involves clinical observation, exploratory research, theory development and testing through case studies. Randomized controlled trials of interventions constitute the second phase, corresponding with the
narrow middle section of the hourglass. The third phase, represented by the wide bottom section of the hourglass, corresponds to real world research designed to investigate external validity (Salkovskis, 2002). According to this model, EBP relies on a broad range of research methodologies, including case studies, quantitative randomised controlled trials, and qualitative investigations. Salkovskis’ model is congruent with the APA’s definition of ‘evidence based practice’ (‘the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences’ (APA, 2006)), which suggests EBP must go beyond merely identifying ‘what works’, and requires practitioners to use professional judgement in order to integrate high-quality research ‘evidence’ with a range of contextual and subjective factors.

However, there are a number of potential difficulties both with integrationist definitions and perspectives on EBP, and with their application to educational psychology contexts. For example, although the APA definition’s integrative focus acknowledges the idiographic complexity of the practice environment, it nevertheless maintains an implicit dichotomy between ‘best available evidence’ and ‘context’ which may risk de-valuing contextually-based research. From a more pragmatic point of view, the definition also makes the assumption that the impact of individual differences and cultural context (or ‘patient characteristics, culture and preferences’) on the efficacy of interventions can be accurately judged by the individual practitioner, who can tailor interventions accordingly. ‘Integration’ here arguably obfuscates the difficulty of ‘applying’ clinically-developed intervention programmes in real-world contexts (a difficulty to which the proliferation of ‘implementation science’ research amply attests (see Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012)).

Using research in evidence-based practice

The issue of how research should best be located and deployed in EBP is directly addressed in the literature. Clark and Alvarez (2010) offer a staged process to guide practitioners as users of research. This includes assessment of the problem using valid and reliable measures; appraisal of interventions through the use of systematic searches and systematic reviews; consideration of research evidence in relation to context, strength and consistency of results; adaptation of interventions as necessary
according to individual and contextual factors and faithful implementation of adapted interventions and effective outcome evaluation (Clark & Alvarez, 2010). Frederickson has identified the competencies required for using research in EBP as the ability to formulate an answerable question from a clinical or service issue; to search bibliographic databases and find shortcuts to good quality evidence; to be confident in critically appraising research findings; to interpret and apply results according to clinical situation or the development of service provision and to evaluate one’s own clinical practice (Frederickson, 2002, p.102). However, the ‘integration’ of internally valid, decontextualized ‘evidence’, with the myriad cultural and individual particularities presented by each client, remains a complex, subjective undertaking which risks undermining the internal validity upon which the intervention’s value-claims are built.

Satterfield et al.’s (2009) transdisciplinary EBP model moves beyond so-called ‘three circle’ models of EBP to produce ‘a shared EBP conceptual model’ which ‘uses the unique strengths from each profession and addresses the common criticisms of evidence-based practices: for example that the evidence is too narrowly defined; the role and value of practitioners and their expertise are unclear; resources and/or contextual factors are ignored; and not enough attention is paid to the client’s preferences’ (Satterfield, Spring, Brownson, Mullen, Newhouse, Walker and Whitlock, 2009, p. 370). This model is shown in Figure 3.
In relation to this model, the research presented in Paper 2 could be positioned in the intersection of the top and left hand circles, since exploring managed moves using the theoretical perspective of school belonging builds on previous research regarding the importance of a personalised approach to managed moves and the importance of a sense of school belonging (top circle), and exploring how a sense of school belonging can be facilitated from the particular perspective of pupils who have experienced a managed move takes into account the client populations’ needs, values and preferences (left circle).

**Practice-based evidence**

A plausible alternative to seeking, *a priori*, to ‘integrate’ the limited body of ‘decontextualised’ educational psychology intervention research with the individual, cultural and socio-political factors presented by each case, is to consider the value-claims of the kinds of evidence that are produced within practice contexts. Instead of randomised controlled trials, Taylor and Burden (2000) suggest that what is needed is ‘a cumulative series of small-scale in-situ evaluations of single case-studies'
employing an ethically-grounded, replicable research methodology’, since ‘only in this way will a body of knowledge be collected which will apply across a range of different contexts and circumstances’ (Taylor & Burden, 2000, p.2). ‘Practice-based’ evidence of the kind described offers a number of advantages to educational psychology practice: it is able to compensate for the lack of ‘evidence-based’ programmes which are suitable for use by practitioner educational psychologists; it avoids the difficulty of having to adapt clinically-developed programmes to non-clinical settings, it is responsive to local need and can capitalise on practitioner knowledge and experience (Barkham, Hardy & Mellor-Clarke, 2010).

The value of case study methods in educational psychology research

A considerable proportion of ‘practice-based’ research in educational psychology uses case study methodologies, including single-case methods. There is a growing consensus that such methods have something of value to offer in response to the idiographic problems faced by educational psychologists in practice contexts (McMillan & Morley, 2010; Stiles, 2010; van Daal, 2015). Defining features of case studies include their idiographic perspective, attention to contextual data, triangulation, a temporal element and a concern with theory (Willig, 2001). Single case studies can be used to test established theories, to elucidate a unique or exceptional case, or to reveal previously inaccessible data (Yin, 1994). Multiple case study designs, such as that used in the present study to investigate the phenomenon of school belonging from the point of view of managed move participants (Paper 2), can provide the researcher with the opportunity to develop new theories. Exploring managed moves using the theoretical perspective of school belonging builds on previous research regarding the importance of a personalised approach to manged moves and the importance of a sense of school belonging, whilst investigating how a sense of school belonging can be facilitated from the particular perspective of pupils who had experienced a managed move takes into account the client populations’ needs, values, preferences etc. Because it is exploratory in nature, and aims to contribute to theory-building, such research could be located within the wide top section of Salkovskis’ hourglass model (Salkovskis, 2002). Case studies can also be descriptive (seeking to offer a detailed description of a phenomenon within its context) or explanatory (aiming to produce explanations for particular phenomena).
However, whilst case study methods are in many ways well-suited to the real-world context of educational psychology practice, they also present challenges in terms of generalisability; a ‘standard aim in quantitative research […] normally achieved by statistical sampling procedures’ (Silverman, 2000, p. 102). Statistical sampling enables the researcher to study a representative group of a particular population in order to be able to make general claims about that population. However, a representative sample may not always be available to researchers working in educational contexts. In the present study, for example, the participant sample was limited by ethical consideration and difficulties with access to participants. In such instances it is hard to know how representative case study findings might be of all members of the population from which the cases were selected (in the current study, the population of secondary school pupils who have undergone managed moves).

Silverman suggests a number of ways in which the generalizability of qualitative case study research can be enhanced, including combining qualitative research with quantitative population measures (e.g. in mixed-methods studies), or making comparisons with other studies. As Peräkylä (1997) asserts, the comparative approach addresses the question of generalisability by highlighting similarities and differences across a number of settings (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 214). In the present study, the qualitative research studies on school belonging incorporated into the meta-synthesis paper (Paper 1) offered a useful grounds of comparison with the findings from the Paper 2 study of school belonging for managed moved pupils. In this respect, literature review has much to contribute to generalisability (Silverman, 2000). However, case studies do not have to be generalizable to entire populations in order to be useful to practitioners, since as Flyvbjerg points out, contextualised knowledge is crucial to the development of knowledge that can underpin professional practice (Flyvbjerg, 2001; 2006).

The effective dissemination of psychological research

A survey of the literature concerning the effective dissemination of psychological research found little evidence to support a positive relationship between the systematic dissemination of research findings to practitioners and any impact on
policy and practice (Bolam, 1994). Stewart, Wiltsey Stirman and Chambless’s (2012) qualitative investigation of twenty-five clinical psychologists’ attitudes to research-informed practice found that whilst participants had no specific objections to the use of empirical research to inform practice, concerns about generalisability to diverse individual contexts and the belief that ‘manualized treatment is inimical to maintaining a human connection with a patient’ (p. 105), as well as logistical constraints such as time and resources, limited the extent to which practitioners felt willing or able to engage in EBP (Stewart, Wiltsey Stirman & Chambless, 2012). Furthermore, educational psychologists may have ‘very little incentive to access research findings’ due to a perception that the presentation of such findings is not user-friendly, particularly when statistical analysis is involved (Hemsley-Brown & Sharp, 2004, p. 460; Stewart et al., 2012, p. 105-106).

Recent dissemination literature indicates that psychological practitioners may perceive case study-based research which includes clear and practical solutions to operational matters as more useful (and therefore more likely to be incorporated into practice) than decontextualized, clinically based studies. This perspective is congruent with Burnham’s (2012) characterisation of the educational psychologist as ‘pragmatist’ (Burnham, 2012), and implies that researchers should focus their efforts on producing outputs which ‘meet practitioners half-way’, by incorporating case examples and suggestions for practical implementation of findings, as well as by maintaining awareness of the political contexts of knowledge use (Louis, 1996, p. 459).

**Impact**

Successful dissemination of findings facilitates the transformation of knowledge about outcomes into impact. Research Councils UK (RCUK) defines research impact as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy' (http://www.esrc.ac.uk, 2016). The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) emphasises the importance of taking advantage of impact opportunities both during and after completion of research, and of having a ‘robust plan for maximising the likelihood of such opportunities arising and [the researcher’s] capacity for taking advantage of these’ (http://www.esrc.ac.uk, 2016).
Researchers are encouraged to maintain awareness of the nonlinear, unpredictable and multi-layered relationship between educational research and impact (Hemsley-Brown & Sharp, 2004), and to seek to achieve ‘diffusion of innovations’ by the careful identification and targeting of ‘change agents’ and ‘opinion leaders’ (Rogers, 1995). The importance of communicating findings by creating ‘responsive linkages’ at all levels is also highlighted as a means of maximising impact; including the creation of linkages with policy-makers and funding agencies (Hemsley-Brown & Sharp, 2004; Bolam, 1994). For educational psychology researchers, practice networks may provide a supportive framework for research impact (Parry Castonguay, Borkovec & Wolf, 2010). Consideration must also be given to the means by which impact may be evaluated. Possible options relevant to educational psychology practice include benchmarking and case tracking (Lueger & Barkham, 2010; Leach & Lutz, 2010), or the use of flexible outcome evaluation tools such as Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) (Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai & Monsen, 2009).

These findings imply the need for strategic and relational dissemination practices which take full account of output format as well as the contextual pressures which may impinge upon targeted practitioners, policy-makers and organisations. Impact-targeting policy and practice should incorporate consideration of the relative merits of different forms of dissemination and their applicability to the intended impact location(s). The ability to respond flexibly to diverse dissemination opportunities and to identify individual agents of change is also indicated.

**Policy/practice/research implications of research and dissemination strategy**

The current research has implications at the research site, the organisational level and the professional level. At the research site(s) (three secondary schools located in a single North West local authority), it is hoped that the impact of the present research might be felt in changes to policy and practice surrounding pupils on managed moves – e.g. changes in the attitudes of school staff towards this group of pupils, particularly with regard to the kind of support they see as promoting a sense of school belonging for this group; changes in the way in which the managed move process is presented to pupils in initial meetings with school leaders, and changes to
the kinds of individual support offered to managed move students. It is also hoped that the research findings will impact the extent to which the views of managed move pupils are incorporated into the support packages offered by receiver schools. A summary report of the research highlighting examples of practices cited as helpful by participant at the individual level, and including implications for practice, has been circulated to the Head Teachers of participating schools (see Appendix 12). The lead researcher also fed back pilot study findings to a group of local authority head teachers in a PowerPoint presentation to the pre-existing practice network of the authority’s association of secondary head teachers (Appendix 13). As a result of this dissemination activity, several schools in the authority have made changes to the information they distribute to managed move pupils when they arrive at the receiver school, with one school now incorporating the views of existing managed move pupils into this literature. A survey requesting reflective feedback on the research implications and information on any changes made at school level in the light of research findings has also been circulated to Head Teachers within the authority.

At the organisational level, findings also imply that schools should work to facilitate a sense of school belonging for managed move students by attending to the promotion of a positive school climate which incorporates known protective factors such as positive relationships between staff and peers and practice-based evidence interventions to reduce bullying. Impact at this level could be supported by the systemic work of practitioner educational psychologists. Dissemination to the authority’s educational psychology service has therefore been facilitated by the linkages attendant on the study supervisor’s role as Senior Educational Psychologist, and to a regional audience of educational psychologists by means of the presentation of findings at the North West Educational Psychology conference. Dissemination of findings to a wider professional audience will be supported by the publication of the research findings in School Psychology International, an international peer-reviewed journal (impact factor 1.447) which ‘highlights the concerns of those who provide quality mental health, educational, therapeutic and support services to schools and their communities throughout the world’ (http://spi.sagepub.com/). It is hoped that dissemination to education psychology practitioners will raise awareness of the importance of school belonging to the emotional wellbeing of pupils and that, in turn, practitioners will seek opportunities to promote this affective phenomenon.
through their systemic work in schools. The following implications for educational psychology practice are indicated:

- Educational psychologists should be aware of the importance of a sense of school belonging to young people’s emotional wellbeing and academic functioning

- Educational psychologists should be aware of the precursors to a sense of school belonging, and of the particular difficulties pupils on managed moves are likely to face in experiencing a sense of belonging in their receiver schools

- Educational psychologists are well-positioned to raise awareness within local authorities of the particular needs of this group in relation to school belonging, and to advocate for managed move protocols which take account of pupil voice – e.g. in relation to the importance of peer relationships, well-managed ‘trial periods’ and the requirement for and content of ‘support packages’

- Educational psychologists are also well-positioned to conduct evidence-based eco-systemic work focused on creating a school climate which removes potential barriers to a sense of school belonging – e.g. by supporting the implementation of peer support systems to challenge bullying (Naylor & Cowie, 1999)

- Educational psychologists could additionally play a role in eliciting the views and opinions of managed move pupils on an individual basis and in a timely manner in order to inform the planning of tailored support packages

Bolam (1994) recommends that researchers seek ways of communicating findings to policy-makers and funding agencies. The current research was conducted alongside a project investigating the views of senior school staff of school belonging for
managed move pupils. Findings from both studies, including direct quotations from participants on managed moves, have been incorporated into the local authority’s revised best practice guidance on managed moves (see Appendix 14). It is hoped that as a result of this strategic dissemination, best practice guidelines will more effectively promote a sense of school belonging for pupils on managed moves. The impact of the changes to managed move protocols may be evaluated quantitatively by monitoring the number of managed moves which result in pupils being taken onto roll at their receiver schools, but also qualitatively by case-tracking or by conducting a follow-up study to elicit information from pupils currently on managed moves about the extent to which they experience a sense of school belonging, and the school-based factors which they feel have most facilitated this. Educational psychology trainees on placement within the local authority would be well-placed to conduct this impact evaluation work.

References


Economic and Social Research Council (2016). http://www.esrc.ac.uk.


Appendix 1. Author guidelines, Journal of Youth Studies

Journal of Youth Studies

2014 Impact Factor: 0.805
5-Year Impact Factor: 1.140
Ranking: 41/95 (Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary)
©2015 Thomson Reuters, 2015 Journal Citation Reports®

Journal of Youth Studies is an international scholarly journal devoted to a theoretical and empirical understanding of young people’s experiences and life contexts. Rapidly changing socio-economic circumstances have had important implications for young people: new opportunities have been created, but the risks of marginalisation and exclusion have also become significant. Launched in 1998, the Journal of Youth Studies has established itself as the leading multidisciplinary journal for academics with interests relating to youth and young adulthood.

Journal of Youth Studies is focused upon young people within a range of contexts, such as education, the labour market and the family, and highlights key research themes such as the construction of identity, the use of leisure time, involvement in crime, consumption and political behaviour. The journal particularly encourages the submission of articles which highlight interconnections between the different spheres of young people’s lives (such the transition from school to work) and articles which offer a critical perspective on social policies which affect young people.

As the leading journal in the field, the Journal of Youth Studies brings together social scientists working in a range of disciplines. These include sociology, psychology, education, social policy, political science, economics, anthropology and social geography. Although the scope cannot be defined chronologically, the core interest of the journal is on the second and third decades of life and while there is an interest in policy, it is important that papers are able to draw out implications that have international significance.

Peer Review:
All review papers in this journal have undergone editorial screening and double-blind peer review.

Instructions for authors

This journal uses ScholarOne Manuscripts (previously Manuscript Central) to peer review manuscript submissions. Please read the guide for ScholarOne authors before making a submission. Complete guidelines for preparing and submitting your manuscript to this journal are provided below.

Use these instructions if you are preparing a manuscript to submit to Journal of Youth Studies. To explore our journals portfolio, visit http://www.tandfonline.com, and for more author resources, visit our Author Services website.

Journal of Youth Studies considers all manuscripts on the strict condition that
• the manuscript is your own original work, and does not duplicate any other previously published work, including your own previously published work.
• the manuscript has been submitted only to *Journal of Youth Studies*; it is not under consideration or peer review or accepted for publication or in press or published elsewhere.
• the manuscript contains nothing that is abusive, defamatory, libellous, obscene, fraudulent, or illegal.

Please note that *Journal of Youth Studies* uses CrossCheck™ software to screen manuscripts for unoriginal material. By submitting your manuscript to *Journal of Youth Studies* you are agreeing to any necessary originality checks your manuscript may have to undergo during the peer-review and production processes.

Any author who fails to adhere to the above conditions will be charged with costs which *Journal of Youth Studies* incurs for their manuscript at the discretion of *Journal of Youth Studies*’s Editors and Taylor & Francis, and their manuscript will be rejected.

This journal is compliant with the Research Councils UK OA policy. Please see the licence options and embargo periods here.

Manuscript preparation

1. General guidelines

• Manuscripts are accepted in English. Any consistent spelling and punctuation styles may be used. Please use single quotation marks, except where ‘a quotation is “within” a quotation’. Long quotations of 40 words or more should be indented without quotation marks.
• A typical manuscript will not exceed 8000 words including tables, references, captions, footnotes and endnotes. Manuscripts that greatly exceed this will be critically reviewed with respect to length. Authors should include a word count with their manuscript.
• Manuscripts should be compiled in the following order: title page; abstract; keywords; main text; acknowledgements; references; appendices (as appropriate); table(s) with caption(s) (on individual pages); figure caption(s) (as a list).
• Abstracts of 200 words are required for all manuscripts submitted.
• Each manuscript should have 3 to 6 keywords.
• Search engine optimization (SEO) is a means of making your article more visible to anyone who might be looking for it. Please consult our guidance here.
• Section headings should be concise.
• All authors of a manuscript should include their full names, affiliations, postal addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses on the cover page of the manuscript. One author should be identified as the corresponding author. Please give the affiliation where the research was conducted. If any of the named co-authors moves affiliation during the peer review process, the new affiliation can be given as a footnote. Please note that no changes to affiliation can be made after the manuscript is accepted. Please note that the
email address of the corresponding author will normally be displayed in the article PDF (depending on the journal style) and the online article.

- All persons who have a reasonable claim to authorship must be named in the manuscript as co-authors; the corresponding author must be authorized by all co-authors to act as an agent on their behalf in all matters pertaining to publication of the manuscript, and the order of names should be agreed by all authors.
- Biographical notes on contributors are not required for this journal.
- Please supply all details required by any funding and grant-awarding bodies as an Acknowledgement on the title page of the manuscript, in a separate paragraph, as follows:
  - For single agency grants: "This work was supported by the [Funding Agency] under Grant [number xxxx]."
  - For multiple agency grants: "This work was supported by the [Funding Agency 1] under Grant [number xxxx]; [Funding Agency 2] under Grant [number xxxx]; and [Funding Agency 3] under Grant [number xxxx]."
- Authors must also incorporate a Disclosure Statement which will acknowledge any financial interest or benefit they have arising from the direct applications of their research.
- For all manuscripts non-discriminatory language is mandatory. Sexist or racist terms must not be used.
- Authors must adhere to SI units. Units are not italicised.
- When using a word which is or is asserted to be a proprietary term or trade mark, authors must use the symbol ® or TM.
- Contributors should bear in mind that they are addressing an international audience. Jargon should be avoided where possible.
- In empirical reports the breakdown of the research sample (e.g. class, race, ethnicity, sex, age and disability) should be clearly stated and acknowledged in the discussion. Authors should define their choice of terms clearly.

2. Style guidelines

- Description of the Journal’s article style.
- Description of the Journal’s reference style, which is based on the Chicago Author-Date style.
- An EndNote output style is available for this journal.
- Guide to using mathematical scripts and equations.
- Word templates are available for this journal. If you are not able to use the template via the links or if you have any other template queries, please contact authortemplate@tandf.co.uk.
- Authors must not embed equations or image files within their manuscript

3. Figures

- Please provide the highest quality figure format possible. Please be sure that all imported scanned material is scanned at the appropriate resolution: 1200 dpi for line art, 600 dpi for grayscale and 300 dpi for colour.
- Figures must be saved separate to text. Please do not embed figures in the manuscript file.
- Files should be saved as one of the following formats: TIFF (tagged image file format), PostScript or EPS (encapsulated PostScript), and should contain all the necessary font information and the source file of the application (e.g. CorelDraw/Mac, CorelDraw/PC).
- All figures must be numbered in the order in which they appear in the manuscript (e.g. Figure 1, Figure 2). In multi-part figures, each part should be labelled (e.g. Figure 1(a), Figure 1(b)).
- Figure captions must be saved separately, as part of the file containing the complete text of the manuscript, and numbered correspondingly.
- The filename for a graphic should be descriptive of the graphic, e.g. Figure1, Figure2a.

4. Publication charges

Submission fee

There is no submission fee for Journal of Youth Studies.

Page charges

There are no page charges for Journal of Youth Studies.

Colour charges

Colour figures will be reproduced in colour in the online edition of the journal free of charge. If it is necessary for the figures to be reproduced in colour in the print version, a charge will apply. Charges for colour figures in print are £250 per figure ($395 US Dollars; $385 Australian Dollars; 315 Euros). For more than 4 colour figures, figures 5 and above will be charged at £50 per figure ($80 US Dollars; $75 Australian Dollars; 63 Euros).

Depending on your location, these charges may be subject to Value Added Tax.

5. Reproduction of copyright material

If you wish to include any material in your manuscript in which you do not hold copyright, you must obtain written permission from the copyright owner, prior to submission. Such material may be in the form of text, data, table, illustration, photograph, line drawing, audio clip, video clip, film still, and screenshot, and any supplemental material you propose to include. This applies to direct (verbatim or facsimile) reproduction as well as “derivative reproduction” (where you have created a new figure or table which derives substantially from a copyrighted source).

You must ensure appropriate acknowledgement is given to the permission granted to you for reuse by the copyright holder in each figure or table caption. You are solely responsible for any fees which the copyright holder may charge for reuse.
The reproduction of short extracts of text, excluding poetry and song lyrics, for the purposes of criticism may be possible without formal permission on the basis that the quotation is reproduced accurately and full attribution is given.

For further information and FAQs on the reproduction of copyright material, please consult our Guide.

6. Supplemental online material

Authors are encouraged to submit animations, movie files, sound files or any additional information for online publication.

- Information about supplemental online material

Manuscript submission

All submissions should be made online at the Journal of Youth Studies Scholar One Manuscripts website. New users should first create an account. Once logged on to the site, submissions should be made via the Author Centre. Online user guides and access to a helpdesk are available on this website.

Manuscripts may be submitted in any standard editable format, including Word and EndNote. These files will be automatically converted into a PDF file for the review process. LaTeX files should be converted to PDF prior to submission because ScholarOne Manuscripts is not able to convert LaTeX files into PDFs directly. All LaTeX source files should be uploaded alongside the PDF.

Click here for information regarding anonymous peer review.

Copyright and authors' rights

To assure the integrity, dissemination, and protection against copyright infringement of published articles, you will be asked to assign us, via a Publishing Agreement, the copyright in your article. Your Article is defined as the final, definitive, and citable Version of Record, and includes: (a) the accepted manuscript in its final form, including the abstract, text, bibliography, and all accompanying tables, illustrations, data; and (b) any supplemental material hosted by Taylor & Francis. Our Publishing Agreement with you will constitute the entire agreement and the sole understanding between you and us; no amendment, addendum, or other communication will be taken into account when interpreting your and our rights and obligations under this Agreement.

Copyright policy is explained in detail here.
Free article access

As an author, you will receive free access to your article on Taylor & Francis Online. You will be given access to the *My authored works* section of Taylor & Francis Online, which shows you all your published articles. You can easily view, read, and download your published articles from there. In addition, if someone has cited your article, you will be able to see this information. We are committed to promoting and increasing the visibility of your article and have provided guidance on how you can help. Also within *My authored works*, author eprints allow you as an author to quickly and easily give anyone free access to the electronic version of your article so that your friends and contacts can read and download your published article for free. This applies to all authors (not just the corresponding author).

Reprints and journal copies

Corresponding authors can receive a complimentary copy of the issue containing their article. Article reprints can be ordered through Rightslink® when you receive your proofs. If you have any queries about reprints, please contact the Taylor & Francis Author Services team at reprints@tandf.co.uk. To order a copy of the issue containing your article, please contact our Customer Services team at Adhoc@tandf.co.uk

Open Access

Taylor & Francis Open Select provides authors or their research sponsors and funders with the option of paying a publishing fee and thereby making an article permanently available for free online access – *open access* – immediately on publication to anyone, anywhere, at any time. This option is made available once an article has been accepted in peer review.

Full details of our Open Access programme

Last updated 19/12/2014

Visit our Author Services website for further resources and guides to the complete publication process and beyond.
### Appendix 2. Demographic details of participants in synthesised studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Focus of Study</th>
<th>Ages of participants</th>
<th>Gender distribution of participants</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Additional details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booker (2007)</td>
<td>Sense of school belonging in African American high school students</td>
<td>6 x 10th graders (15-16 years)</td>
<td>7 male; 6 female</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>An urban high school with approximately 1,600 students located in a moderately sized city in the south-eastern United States. The school racial composition is majority White [65%] and the school serves primarily lower to middle class African American students and middle to upper-middle class White students.</td>
<td>Participants were all African American students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 x 11th graders (16-17 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 x 12th graders (17-18 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus of Study</td>
<td>Ages of participants</td>
<td>Gender distribution of participants</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Additional details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeo (2010)</td>
<td>The lived experiences of Southeast Asian boarders in a private all-boys boarding school in Perth, Western Australia</td>
<td>13-18 years</td>
<td>44 male; 0 female</td>
<td>Malaysia (17)</td>
<td>A private all-boys’ boarding school in Perth, Western Australia.</td>
<td>Participants were all southeast Asian boarders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Korea Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker (2010)</td>
<td>Adolescent singers’ experiences of belonging within one urban</td>
<td>10 sophomores (15-16 years)</td>
<td>9 male; 17 female</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>A pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade independent school, with fewer than 1000 students located in a large north-eastern city of the USA.</td>
<td>Participants were all members of the school choral ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 juniors (16-17 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus of Study</td>
<td>Ages of participants</td>
<td>Gender distribution of participants</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Additional details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nind, Boorman and Clarke (2012)</td>
<td>The voices of girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in a special, girl-only secondary provision in the south of England</td>
<td>7 seniors (17-18 years)</td>
<td>8 female</td>
<td>UK (south of England)</td>
<td>A special, girl-only secondary provision in the south of England</td>
<td>Participants were all female and had behavioural, emotional and social difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus of Study</td>
<td>Ages of participants</td>
<td>Gender distribution of participants</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Additional details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sancho &amp; Cline (2012)</td>
<td>Pupils’ experiences of school following transfer from primary to secondary school; how pupils view and experience a sense of belonging following transfer</td>
<td>10 Year 7 pupils (aged 11-12 years)</td>
<td>6 male, 4 female</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Three mainstream UK primary schools; mainstream UK secondary schools (number unspecified)</td>
<td>Two participants were described as being popular in primary school, one described herself as unpopular, one boy was seen by himself and others as mixing mainly with girls and another as resisting doing so, two described themselves as having special educational needs, two as having dual heritage ethnic background,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus of Study</td>
<td>Ages of participants</td>
<td>Gender distribution of participants</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Additional details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einberg (2015)</td>
<td>The phenomenon of teenage girls’ everyday lives, as experienced</td>
<td>3 x $7^{th}$ grade (12-13 years)</td>
<td>0 male; 8 female</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Public and private schools located in urban and rural areas in the southern part of Sweden.</td>
<td>Participants’ backgrounds varied: girls lived with single parent, both and one had joined the primary school only a few weeks before transfer to secondary. Eight pupils were from White British families and two had a dual heritage background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Focus of Study</td>
<td>Ages of participants</td>
<td>Gender distribution of participants</td>
<td>Nationality of individual participants</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Additional details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartmell &amp; Bond (2015)</td>
<td>The development of belonging from the perspective of INA students</td>
<td>Years 8, 9 and 10 (12-15 years)</td>
<td>5 pupils; gender not stated</td>
<td>Nationalities not stated</td>
<td>Two UK high schools</td>
<td>Parents, parents born in Sweden, and foreign-born parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

by the girls themselves

Participants were all International New Arrivals to the UK, and had been living in the UK for less than 12 months
### Appendix 3. Phases of meta-ethnographic review (from Noblit and Hare 1988, 26-29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Getting started</td>
<td>‘identifying an intellectual interest that qualitative research might inform […] reading interpretive accounts […] finding something that is worthy of the synthesis effort’ (26-27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest</td>
<td>‘developing an exhaustive list of studies that might be included’ (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reading the studies</td>
<td>‘the repeated reading of the accounts and the noting of interpretative metaphors’ (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Determining how the studies are related</td>
<td>‘creat[ing] a list of the key metaphors, phrases, ideas, and/or concepts (and their relations) used in each account and […] juxtapos[ing] them. Near the end of phase 4, an initial assumption about the relationship between studies can be made’ (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Translating the studies into one another</td>
<td>‘compar[ing] both the metaphors or concepts and their interactions in one account with the metaphors or concepts and their interactions in the other accounts’ (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Synthesizing translations</td>
<td>‘the various translations can be compared with one another to determine if there are types of'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Expressing the synthesis</td>
<td>translations or if some metaphors and/or concepts are able to encompass those of other accounts’ (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ensuring that syntheses are ‘readily intelligible’ to their ‘intended audiences’ (29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 4. Comparison of the interpretations advanced in the synthesised studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘If students felt uncomfortable […] they were less likely to express a sense of belonging in the interviews’ (p. 311)</td>
<td>‘Part of this adaptation process [to new boarding school environment] required them to find refuge in a group immediately’ (p. 58)</td>
<td>‘While the open enrolment [in chorus] creates a sense of equality in the classroom, the elective nature of the ensemble contributes to a sense of group purpose’ (p. 345)</td>
<td>‘themes of space, identity, relationships and community’ (p. 643)</td>
<td>‘Peer acceptance emerged as an especially salient factor for participants’ (p. 64)</td>
<td>‘The essence of teenage girls’ everyday lives as they experienced them can be described as an awareness of […] the importance of connectedness and security’ (p. 3)</td>
<td>‘Many of the descriptions of belonging referred to the ‘Support from Others’ INA pupils received; from the teachers, peers and the schools in general’ (p. 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘My sense was that most of these students had close friends who were of the same ethnic background’ (p. 312)</td>
<td>‘the area that the Asian boarders occupied [in the dining hall] or, as the Australian boarders labelled it, ‘Chinatown’’ (p. 59)</td>
<td>‘Sectional bonding has similarities to individuals functioning as a team’ (p. 346)</td>
<td>‘the girls voiced strong messages about belonging and not belonging, situating their learning in the context of relationships with the self and others’ (p. 654)</td>
<td>‘relationships with peers […] was a central theme in all of the accounts (p. 68)’</td>
<td>‘In the connectedness of family and friends, the opportunity is given to receive support and relief from demands’</td>
<td>‘Understood as a person’ theme […] specifically related to descriptions of INA pupils feeling OK to be themselves and school staff actively promoting their feelings of being understood for example through having background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersubjectivity; In-group membership</td>
<td>In-group membership</td>
<td>In-group membership</td>
<td>Intersubjectivity; Individual identity</td>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The themes that materialized from these interview questions highlighted individual students’</td>
<td>‘Gabby’s experiences suggest that chorus singers comprise an in-group, one where ‘Group’ and ‘Staff’ are important’ (p. 69)</td>
<td>‘relationships in which ‘we all look out for each other’ and ‘staff’ (p. 69)</td>
<td>Knowledge/ understanding/ acceptance of individual identity</td>
<td>Knowledge/ understanding/ acceptance of individual identity</td>
<td>Knowledge/ understanding/ acceptance of individual identity</td>
<td>Knowledge/ understanding/ acceptance of individual identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table compares interpretations from various studies on the topic of belonging and related concepts.*
sense that they were accepted, welcomed and liked at their school […] extra-curricular activities […] helped students define their sense of belonging’ (p. 313)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity;
In-group membership

‘[…] their views that group identity is important to living in a boarding school’ (p. 55)

In-group membership

‘Zach, a boarder I had a good rapport with, made this statement after beckoning me to join them: ‘Wee, you belong here’. His statement implied that our shared ethnicity naturally included me into his group orientation’ (p. 59)

Knowledge/understanding/

‘chorus as safe space’ – where participants become ‘relaxed and relieved’ (p. 348)

Safety/security

‘I think [teachers at Kahlo school] got to know me for me’ (p. 649)

Knowledge/

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)

Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity

‘Julie was selected for interview because she had described herself as unpopular in primary school. She recalled experiences of being bullied and of not being viewed as cool by her peers there. One might have expected a secondary school setting to have been challenging for her. Her account demonstrated that instead she experienced a sense of belonging to her secondary school. It seemed that for her to have that sense of belonging it was as important for her to feel part of the present false images to their peers in a quest for belonging’ (p. 3)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding/acceptance of individual identity</th>
<th>In-group membership.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>feelings of acceptance and belonging were facilitated when students felt that others in the school environment accepted and appreciated them</em> (p. 313)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity; Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>importance of extra-curricular activities</em> (p. 313)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-group membership</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>the issue of peer relations is especially critical to belonging and achievement</em> (p. 315)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>understanding/acceptance of individual identity; In-group membership.</th>
<th>Intersubjectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sport has the propensity to provide the cultural content and context for expressing ethnic diversity rather than similarity</em> (p. 61)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity; Safety/security</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Asian boarders pointed out qualities such as ‘hard-working’, ‘diligence’, ‘honesty and integrity’, ‘humility’, loyalty’, ‘driven to succeed’ and ‘family-oriented’, underlining them as cornerstones that made up an Asian</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding/acceptance of individual identity</th>
<th>In-group membership.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>the girls stressed the relational component of their educational experience</em> (p. 649)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersubjectivity</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersubjectivity</th>
<th>In-group membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>‘The internet is experienced primarily as something positive, with reference mainly to the ability to connect with friends’ (p. 6)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/security</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>‘The internet is experienced primarily as something positive, with reference mainly to the ability to connect with friends’ (p. 6)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersubjectivity</th>
<th>In-group membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>‘Security is an important factor in the girls’ lives. It is about trust in friends and parents but also feeling safe at school…’ (p. 6)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/security</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>‘They [female participants] talk not only about the security that close friends can provide but also about experiencing difficulty having confidence in their peers’ (p. 6)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersubjectivity</th>
<th>In-group membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>‘[..] comments made [..] related to INA pupils being included and feeling part of the school community. Many of the comments related to aspects of the school environment that enabled the INA pupils to ‘fit in’.</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/security</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>‘I’m happy that I can be part of this school and learn what they are learning and learn their language’ (p. 98)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intersubjectivity</strong></td>
<td>individual’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions with peers ‘critical to these students sense of belongingness’ (p. 311)</td>
<td>Knowledge/understanding/acceptance of individual identity; In-group membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Student peer crowds and cliques […] appeared to play a central role in the sense of school belonging for these students’ (p. 312)</td>
<td><strong>Intersubjectivity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intersubjectivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-group membership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5. Author guidelines, School Psychology International

School Psychology International

2014 Impact Factor: 1.447
2014 Ranking: 26/55 in Psychology, Educational
Source: 2014 Journal Citation Reports ® (Thomson Reuters, 2015)

10. Manuscript style

10.1 File types
Only electronic files conforming to the journal's guidelines will be accepted. Preferred formats for the text and tables of your manuscript are Word DOC/X, RTF, XLS. Please also refer to additional guideline on submitting artwork and supplemental files below.

10.2 Journal Style
SPI conforms to the SAGE house style. Click here to review guidelines on SAGE UK House Style

10.3 Reference Style
SPI adheres to the APA reference style. Click here to review the guidelines on APA to ensure your manuscript conforms to this citation and reference style. The journal’s editorial team is especially mindful of the critical nature of accurate citations and references to the dissemination of useful science; references must be primary and in accord with APA format (6e). The use of EndNote is particularly encouraged since this software tool expedites cross-checking of citations and references.

10.4 Manuscript Preparation

The text should be double-spaced throughout and with a minimum of 3cm for left and right hand margins and 5cm at head and foot. Text should be standard 12-point, preferably prepared in Times New Roman font with ragged-right margins and no hyphenation. Spelling may conform to either UK-English or US-English, but must stay consistent throughout. Punctuation should conform to British orthographic conventions, including the use of single rather than double quotation marks except for quotations within quotations. Footnotes should be avoided since they are not supported in this publication. The text should be organized conventionally: A typical experimental report is divided into Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion/Implications. Review articles require a different structure which depends upon the nature of the findings being discussed. Apart from the details mentioned above, the style of manuscripts should follow the guidelines described in the American Psychological Association’s Publication Manual (6e).

Each of the following parts of the manuscript file should begin on a new page in the order shown: (a) Abstract, not exceeding 200 words, and up-to-10 keywords or key phrases; (b) Text with appropriate headings; (c) Tables; (d) Figure captions; and (e)
Figures. Two separate files should also be included in the submission: (a) A title page including the manuscript title, author(s) name(s)/affiliations(s), and the postal address and e-mail for all authors, and (b) Author biographies of 75-100 words for each contributor prepared in author-order [presented in a common format, to include affiliations, full postal address and e-mail address]. It is important that the last two documents are not included within the manuscript itself, in order to ensure a blind review. Addresses, titles and affiliations should not be shortened (e.g., ‘St.’ for ‘Street’, etc.) and should be carefully checked with each author before submission. Authors are strongly recommended to review the formatting and style of a recent issue of SPI to acquaint themselves with the general organization within articles in this journal.

Tables: Tables should be numbered consecutively and given titles which are comprehensible without reference to the text. Each table should be double-spaced, on a separate page, and its approximate location should be indicated by a separate, centered-line in the text [e.g., ‘Table 1 about here’]. Tables should not serve as an archive for data which is unaddressed within the article, and wherever possible information that can efficiently be incorporated into text should not be displayed or duplicated in a Table. There should be no duplication of information across Tables and text. See 9.4.4 for a discussion of a means for attaching Supplemental Materials to the online version of your manuscript, hosted at the SPI/Sage website without charge.

Illustrations: Graphs, diagrams, and other illustrations on separate pages should be numbered consecutively ‘Figure 1’, ‘Figure 2’, etc., and their approximate location in the text indicated in the manner described above for Tables. Supply all artwork as an electronic digital file. Only high quality artwork can satisfactorily be reproduced. Figure captions should be typed on a separate page.

10.4.1 Keywords and Abstracts: Helping readers find your article online
The title, keywords and abstract are key to ensuring readers find your article online through online search engines such as Google Scholar or Baidu. Please refer to the information and guidance on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords by visiting SAGE’s Journal Author Gateway Guidelines on How to Help Readers Find Your Article Online.

10.4.2 Corresponding Author Contact details
Provide full contact details for the corresponding author including email, mailing address and telephone numbers. Affiliations are required for all co-authors. These details should be presented separately to the main text of the article to facilitate anonymous peer review (i.e., title page).

10.4.3 Guidelines for submitting artwork, figures and other graphics
For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures and graphs in electronic format, please visit SAGE’s Manuscript Submission Guidelines. Figures/Artwork should be provided in an ‘editable’ format (in TIFF format or in MS Word, MS PowerPoint, etc.). This is helpful, both for the copyeditor (if any changes are required) and for the typesetter (to resize them, if required, or to turn them into grayscale if provided in color).
Figures supplied in color will appear in color online regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in color in the printed version. For specifically requested color reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from SAGE after receipt of your accepted article.

10.4.4 Guidelines for submitting supplemental files
This journal is able to host approved Supplemental Materials online, alongside the full-text of articles. Supplemental materials typically include text/Figures/Tables which are supportive of the article yet not essential for understanding the Results and Implications. Thus, Supplemental Material serves as an ideal archive location for data sets, previously unpublished protocols for data gathering, extended display of statistically non-significant results, and such other materials as might supplement a fuller analysis of the articles basis but which are not essential to a reading of the ‘stand-alone’ article. There are no length restrictions on Supplemental Materials. Supplemental Materials are accessible to researchers indefinitely. Supplemental files will be subjected to peer-review. For more information please refer to SAGE’s Guidelines for Authors on Supplemental Files.

10.4.5 English Language Editing services
Non-English speaking authors who would like to refine their use of language in their manuscripts might consider using a professional editing service. Visit English Language Editing Services on our Journal Author Gateway for further information.
Appendix 6. Ethical approval confirmation

Subject: FW: Ethics Approval Application - CONFIRMATION for Medium Risk

Dear Holly

Ref: PGR-5640838

Project Title: A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on secondary school students’ sense of belonging.

I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has now been approved by the School Research Integrity Committee (RIC) against a pre-approved UREC template.

If anything untoward happens during your research then please ensure you make your supervisor aware who can then raise it with the RIC on your behalf

This approval is confirmation only for the Ethical Approval application.

Regards

Georgia Irving
Appendix 7. Participant information and consent form

A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a student project.

The aim of the research is to understand how moving schools on a managed move affects the way students feel about belonging or ‘fitting in’.

The study forms part of the research required for the University of Manchester’s Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and talk it through with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will carry out the research?

Holly Craggs, a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Manchester School of Environment, Education and Development.

Title of the Research

‘A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging’

In other words:

A study of how students who have moved schools on a managed move experience belonging or ‘fitting in’

What is the aim of the research?

This research aims to find out how students who have moved schools on a managed move feel about these issues. The purpose of the research is to help Local Authorities and schools to understand more about how ‘managed moves’ affect students, so that they can develop managed move policies which are as helpful and supportive for students as possible.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you have had a managed move and so you will be able to help me to understand how this affects your feelings about belonging or ‘fitting in’ at school.
What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you agree to take part, I will come into school to talk to you and find out about how things have been for you. I will not ask lots of questions, but I would like to hear about your experiences.

If you agree to take part in the study, we will meet for about 30 minutes to talk about what is involved. During this time we will look at an information sheet together and you will be able to ask me any questions you have about it. Then on two other days I will come into school and spend about 30 minutes each time interviewing you about how you feel about moving from one school to another, and how this experience has been for you. These interviews will not be like a job interview and you are not being ‘tested’. They are just a chance for me as a researcher to find out about what it is like for students to move schools on a managed move.

What happens to the information collected?

The second and third sessions will be tape recorded. I will listen to the tape recordings and type up everything that we both said. This typed up document is called a ‘transcript’. If you like, you can check the transcript to make sure I have got it right. If you don’t think I have got it right, I will change it. I won’t use your real name or the school’s real name. I will also change any other names we mention. Once I have typed up the transcript, the interview tapes will be destroyed.

I will keep the transcript on my computer which no one else has access to. It will be stored on an encrypted data stick which only I can access. I will then look carefully at what you have said and write about it. I will quote what you have told me but no real names will be used. You can read what I have written. My University tutors and my placement supervisor will also read what I have written.

I have chosen to find out about and write about this subject so that people can read it and understand better what it is like to move from one school to another on a managed move. I hope that this will help schools and Local Authorities make things better for students like yourself.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

If you feel upset at any stage during the interview process, we will stop the interview. If you want, I will also be able to give you information on where you can get support for any issues that come up during the interviews.

What will it involve?

You will be asked to take part in three 30-minute sessions. In the first one I will explain more about the research and you will be able to ask questions. In the second and third session we will spend some time talking about how moving schools has been for you.
Where will the interviews take place?

The interviews will take place in school.

Criminal Records Check

I have had a criminal records (DBS) check. This means that I have a certificate saying that I do not have a criminal record and that it is ok for me to work with children and young people.

Contact for further information

If there is anything else you would like to know, you can email me. My email address is H.M.Craggs@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

My supervisor is Dr. Catherine Kelly. She can be contacted at Catherine.Kelly@manchester.ac.uk

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with me or my supervisor, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
Study Title

A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to think about the information and to ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant    Date    Signature

Name of person taking consent    Date    Signature
Appendix 8. Parent/carer information and consent form

A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging

Parent/Carer Information Sheet

Your child is invited to take part in a research study. The study aims to help Local Authorities and schools to understand the impact of the managed move process on students. The research will contribute to the research requirements of the University of Manchester’s Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. This information sheet explains more about why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the information and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you give consent for your child to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Holly Craggs, a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Manchester’s School of Environment, Education and Development.

Title of the Research

‘A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging’

In other words:

A study of how a students who have moved schools on a managed move experience belonging or ‘fitting in’

What is the aim of the research?

This research aims to find out how students who have moved schools on a managed move feel about these issues. The purpose of the research is to help Local Authorities and schools to understand more about how managed moves affect students, so that they can develop managed move policies which are as helpful and supportive for students as possible.

Why has your child been chosen?

Your child has been chosen because he/she has had a managed move and so will be able to help me to understand what (if any) impact this has had on his/her experience of belonging or ‘fitting in’ at school.

What would my child be asked to do if he/she took part?
If you give your written consent for your child to participate in the study, and your child gives his/her written assent to take part, I will come into school to talk to your child and find out about how things have been for them in relation to their managed move. I will not ask lots of questions; the emphasis will be on listening to them tell me about their experiences.

If you give consent for your child to take part in the study, I will initially meet with him/her for about 30 minutes to talk through what is involved. During this time we will look at an information sheet together, and your child will be able to ask me any questions they might have about it. If they wish, they will also be able to look at the questions I will be asking during the two interview sessions, so that they know what to expect. Then, on two more days, I will come into school. I will spend about 30 minutes each time interviewing your child about how they feel about moving from one school to another, and how this experience has been for them. These interviews will not be formal and your child will not be being ‘tested’ in any way. They are simply an opportunity for me as a researcher to find out about what it is like for students to move schools on a managed move, and to hear about this directly from the students themselves.

**What happens to the data collected?**

The interview sessions will be tape recorded. I will listen to the tape recordings and type up a transcript of what was said. Your child will be offered the opportunity to check the transcript to make sure it is a true representation of what they said in the interviews. If they don’t think I have got it right, or they would like something to be expressed differently, I will change it. All names will be changed to preserve anonymity (your child’s real name will not appear anywhere in the transcript). Once I have typed up the transcript, the interview tapes will be destroyed.

The anonymised transcript will be kept on an encrypted data stick which only I can access. I will then analyse what has been said in interview and write a report about it. I will quote what your child has told me but no real names will be used. You and your child are most welcome to read what I have written. My University tutors and my placement supervisor will also read what I have written.

I have chosen to find out about and write about this subject so that educators and policy makers can understand better what it is like to move from one school to another on a managed move. I hope that this will help to inform schools and Local Authorities so that they in turn can improve the process for students.

**What happens if I do not want my child to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not you are happy for your child to take part. If you do decide to give consent for your child to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you do give consent for your child to take part you are still free to withdraw your child from the study at any time without giving a reason, and without any detriment to yourself or your child.

**What happens if my child changes his/her mind?**

If your child does not wish to continue with the interview at any point they can withdraw their assent without giving a reason and the interview will be stopped. If
your child decides they do not want to continue to be part of the study, they are free to withdraw, without detriment, and any interview data collected will be destroyed.

If you or your child would like more information about where to get support with any of the issues raised in the course of the study, this can be provided.

**Will I or my child be paid for participating in the research?**

No payment will be given for participation in this research study.

**What is the duration of the research?**

Three 30 minute sessions (the first session to be used for information-giving/opportunities for questions; the second and third sessions to be used for informal interviews).

**Where will the research be conducted?**

At your child’s school.

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The outcomes of the research may be published. No real names will be used.

**Criminal Records Check (if applicable)**

The researcher has undergone a criminal records (DBS) check, in accordance with legal requirements for those working with children and/or vulnerable adults.

**Contact for further information**

If there is anything else you would like to know, please feel free to email me. My email address is H.M.Craggs@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

My supervisor is Dr. Catherine Kelly. She can be contacted at Catherine.Kelly@manchester.ac.uk

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with me or my supervisor, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to ‘The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL’, by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093.
A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy for your child to participate please complete and sign the consent form below.

5. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

6. I understand that my child’s participation in the study is voluntary and that both I and they are free to withdraw consent at any time without giving a reason.

7. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded

8. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers

6. I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books or journals.

I give consent for my child to take part in the above project

Name of parent/carer Date Signature

Name of person taking consent Date Signature
Interview schedule

A case study investigation into the impact of managed moves on students’ sense of belonging

1) Can you tell me a bit about how you came to be at [name of school]?
   Possible prompts: what happened next?

2) What were things like for you at your old school?
   Possible prompts: How did that feel? How did you cope? How did that affect you? How did you see yourself then?

3) What was it like to move schools?
   Possible prompts: What was that like? How did you feel about moving? How did the move affect you?

4) How are things now?
   Possible prompts: How do you feel now? [Depending on response]: What has made the difference? Or What has stopped things from being different?

5) What could schools do to help students on managed moves feel like they ‘fit in’ and belong at their new school?
   Possible prompts: Can you explain a bit more about that? In what ways would that help?
Appendix 10. Stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with worked examples

Analysis of data transcripts was conducted on a case-by-case basis, following the procedure outlined by Smith and Osborn (Smith, 2008, pp. 53-80). This involved the following five stages:

1) Close, line-by-line analysis of the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of each participant; identification of emergent patterns (i.e. themes) within this experiential material;

2) Development of a ‘dialogue’ between the researcher, their coded data, and their psychological knowledge, about what it might mean for participants to have these concerns, in this context;

Worked example of stages 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent themes</th>
<th>Original Transcript</th>
<th>Exploratory comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended period of suffering in previous school</td>
<td>Participant: I told my mum what’d been going on and then she told me that, erm, just if it keeps carrying on we’ll, we’ll just, erm, make some decisions about what’s going to happen. Then, then, erm, about two to three months later, erm, I came home one night and then I told my mum that it keeps happening and then she said do, do you want to move school? So I explained to her why I wanted to move and she said it’s a really good decision what you’re doing and then I said, and then I, I, erm, I like, I took...</td>
<td>Difficulty articulating these past experiences (repetition of ‘erm’) Traumatic experiences but also potentially reflective of student’s social anxiety? ‘keeps carrying on’; ‘keeps happening’ – suggests extended period of bullying in previous school? Participant can recall the detail of this conversation with his mum – suggests that it was a very emotionally significant moment (telling someone else about the bullying) – also reinforces sense that this participant does not always...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

108
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unauthorised absence</th>
<th>find it easy to connect emotionally with others – link to social communication difficulties?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steps taken by school to support belonging for new students</td>
<td>‘Tour’ of new school experienced as helpful by participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School supporting student to form new friendships – subtle support</td>
<td>Practical, low-key support to form new friendships – seems well-matched to needs of participant. Finding some new friends and knowing where to go at unstructured times important in making this ‘a good day’ for this participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New friendships facilitating belonging</td>
<td>Sense of belonging starting to be tangible at this point?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) The development of a structure, frame or gestalt which illustrates the relationships between themes; the organization of all this material in a format which allows for analysed data to be traced right through the process, from initial comments on the transcript, through initial clustering and thematic development, into the final structure of themes
Worked example of stage 3: Thematic table (excerpt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Key word/ phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPERORDINATE THEMES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making friends</td>
<td>She helped me find some new friends and she, she, erm, she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
<td>showed me where the places where other people like stay at break time and lunchtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating peer relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTIVE V/ UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) The use of supervision, collaboration or audit to help test the coherence and plausibility of the interpretation (see p. 40); the development of a full narrative, evidenced by a detailed commentary on data extracts, which takes the reader through this interpretation, usually theme-by-theme, and is often supported by some form of visual guide (a simple structure, diagram or table) (see p. 41).

5) Reflection on one’s own perceptions, conceptions and processes (see p. 36 and p. 52).
### Appendix 11. Themes for each participant with links to overall sub-themes and superordinate themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Key words</th>
<th>Linked overall <em>sub-themes</em> / <em>superordinate themes</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of social relationships</td>
<td>“...I have got friends”</td>
<td>Making friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>“well I was being bullied”</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty with social communication</td>
<td>“I just like sort of...like shut up”</td>
<td>IDENTIFICATION OF AND SUPPORT FOR SEN/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>“I think it’s up to you if you’ve like made a good move”</td>
<td>‘Sole responsibility’ narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What schools can/can’t do to help</td>
<td>“like I don’t think teachers could really do much”</td>
<td>‘Sole responsibility’ narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of clarity around trial period</td>
<td>“Well, erm, they said first that it’d be six weeks, and then after that first six weeks there’d be a meeting, and”</td>
<td>Management of trial period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
then they said err it’d be another six weeks and now they’re having a meeting”

Extra-curricular activities “Going starting boxing has sort of like it’s... it’s sort of like taken away playing on the Xbox”

Feeling overwhelmed “Everything decided to get on top of me”

Bullying “‘cos I’m not being bullied here”

Social/Emotional/Mental Health needs “some girl decided to spread round school that I tried to kiss her when I didn’t which then led to self-harm and everything”

Making friends “I’ve got better friends cos they all understand me”

Feeling understood
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling safe through feeling supported</th>
<th>Feeling safe</th>
<th>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE; FEELING KNOWN, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED AS A PERSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling known, understood and accepted as a person</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Making friends</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating peer relationships</td>
<td>Facilitating peer relationships</td>
<td>SUPPORTIVE/UN SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Feeling known, understood and accepted as a person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It’s made me who I am today”</td>
<td>FEELING KNOWN, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED AS A PERSON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying</th>
<th>Feeling safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I was getting bullied at my old school”</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling upset/scared</th>
<th>Feeling safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I was pretty upset and scared of what was going to happen to me as soon as I walked through the door”</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wanting friends</th>
<th>Making friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Get more friends and be more socialised”</td>
<td>MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School facilitating friendship formation</th>
<th>Facilitating peer relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A teacher called Mrs Jones helped me find”</td>
<td>SUPPORTIVE/UN SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trial period and belonging

“After the six weeks [trial period] had been up, he [Head Teacher] wrote me a card to say ‘Congratulations, you’re now part of the [receiver school] team!’ […] and I settled in from there”

Teacher perceptions

“You meet teachers that you don’t like and then you don’t like them cos they don’t like you”

Importance of friendships

“moving schools and making new friends”

Frustration/anger

“One of my best friends now cos I was already friends with him, he introduced me to, like, all my new friends”

Anxiety/fear

“You are very nervous cos you don’t know what to expect”
| Importance of existing friendships | “I knew people in [receiver school], so I thought I’d go to [receiver school]” | MAKING FRIENDS AND FEELING SAFE |
| Trial period – lack of clarity/impact on belonging | “I broke my leg, and then they said they needed another one [trial period] cos they said they wanted to see me without it [a broken leg]” | Management of trial period SUPPORTIVE/UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES |
| Feeling able to be yourself | “I tried to be someone else, like I tried to be all big and hard to start off with, but then I realised there’s no point” | FEELING KNOWN, UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED AS A PERSON |
| Importance of communication | “It’s down to yourself like how you [...] talk to people and all that stuff, like, counts towards, like, what you do and how you make friends with people” | ‘Sole responsibility’ narratives SUPPORTIVE/UNSUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS/PRACTICES |
Appendix 12. Summary report for staff of participating schools

‘School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school pupils who have undergone managed moves

Holly M. Craggs (Trainee Educational Psychologist) & Catherine Kelly (Senior EP)

Introduction

Department for Education advice in the UK identifies “a sense of belonging” at school as important in building resilience for children (DfE, 2015, p. 8). A sense of school belonging has also been associated with increases in academic attainment and motivation, more positive interactions with teachers and more satisfying peer relations (Combs, 1982; Finn, 1989; Osterman, 2000; Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

Transitions can be a challenging time and creating a sense of belonging for vulnerable pupils can mitigate the risk involved in changing schools. This case study research sought to understand how secondary school pupils who have undergone a managed move experience a sense of school belonging, and what they feel would make it easier for other managed move pupils to experience this. In-depth interviews were carried out with four participants attending mainstream secondary schools in a North West Local Authority. All had experienced integration into a new school environment as part of the Local Authority’s ‘managed move’ process, and had been attending the receiver school for a period of at least six weeks.

Findings

The following themes were identified with a sense of school belonging for pupils who have had a managed move:

- ‘making friends and feeling safe’;
- ‘feeling known, understood and accepted as a person’;
- ‘identification of and support for SEND’;
- ‘supportive/unsupportive protocols/practices’

-Making friends and feeling safe

Making friends in the receiver school appeared to promote belonging by increasing participants’ feelings of safety. For example, one participant commented:

“Now I don’t self-harm...I’ve got better friends... most of them [the other students in the receiver school] aint the bullying type...it makes me feel safer”.

A significant barrier to school belonging for managed move participants was fear or doubt about their ability to forge positive peer relationships. Whilst forging positive friendships was perceived as fundamental to the experience of school belonging, the process was viewed with trepidation:
“I was scared if, like, I didn’t meet any new friends or if I would have got bullied”

- **Feeling known, understood and accepted as a person**

Feeling known, understood and accepted as a person by both staff and peers was an important component of school belonging for all managed move participants. One participant made an explicit link between feeling understood and accepted and being able to ‘be himself’. Other comments included:

“I’ve got better friends [at receiver school] ‘cos they all understand me [...] most of them understand what other people have gone through”

“the staff here [...] understand people more”.

- **Identification of and support for SEND**

In addition to making friends/feeling safe and feeling understood, participants recognised the contribution to a sense of belonging of appropriate and timely provision of support for any additional difficulties they were facing.

One participant, receiving input from the school’s link psychologist, spoke about the positive impact of outside agency support in helping him understand his own behaviour:

“Miss [Deputy Head of receiver school] has, erm, invited someone to help me with my behaviour and, erm, to help me, like, ask, like to give me a bit of support and guidance to why, erm, I’m doing this”.

A participant who had struggled to cope with the feelings generated by being a victim of bullying in her previous school stated that she felt she had received ‘loads’ of help for this from her receiver school. She explained:

“[…] because they’ve, school’ said that if, ‘cos the [previous] school wouldn’t put me in for counselling for it and everything so my mum had to go and do that herself and get me counselling…but this [receiver] school is like if you ever start again we could get you counselling as soon as possible to help you stop before it got worse.”

Arranging outside agency support for managed move pupils who had experienced or were experiencing bullying was cited by another participant as the single most important thing receiver schools could do to help managed move pupils to feel they fit in.

- **Supportive/unsupportive practices/protocols**

Participants’ sense of school belonging was also influenced by an array of local authority and school-based factors encompassed by the theme ‘supportive/unsupportive school practices/protocols’. This theme incorporated four sub-themes:

- ‘Extra-curricular opportunities’
- ‘Promoting belonging through facilitating peer relationships’
- ‘Management of trial period’
‘Sole responsibility narratives’

‘Extra-curricular opportunities’

One participant gave a detailed account of how she had been supported by her form tutor to apply for the role of peer mentor in her receiver school.

‘Promoting belonging through facilitating peer relationships’

Comments also acknowledged the value of receiver schools’ attempts to promote a sense of belonging by the sensitive facilitation of peer relationships:

“Well it’s pretty good for them to, like, pair you up with someone ‘cos you just get talking a bit”.

“I met, erm, a teacher called [name of teacher] and, erm, she helped me find some new friends; she, she erm, she showed me where the place is where other people like stay at break time and lunchtime. And then erm, erm, I, yeah, I had a good day that day”.

Several participants also suggested other ways in which schools might help promote a sense of belonging for managed move pupils:

“They could have, like, like, all the new kids they could, like, have, like, a meeting with them all so then they all get to know each other and everything. So then they’ve got other new people that are mates rather than just people that’ve been there for, like, four, five years”.

‘Management of trial period’

Participants also spoke about the negative impact on their sense of school belonging of a lack of equity and clarity surrounding the initial ‘trial period’. Being ‘on trial’ in a receiver school was characterised by one participant as potentially detrimental to the formation of friendships, and, therefore, to the development of a sense of school belonging. A counterexample was offered by another participant, whose trial period appeared to have been clearly-communicated and positively-managed:

“Well, the Head Teacher said that, ‘cos when I had an interview on the tour day, erm, I had an interview with the Head Teacher first saying like how do, like, how I’ve come here and talking about, erm, like, “is there going to be an improvement on the, erm, on my behaviour and the bullying?” And then I said “yeah” and then, erm, and then, er, he said to me, erm, “you’re going on a six week trial”, and then after the six weeks had been, like, up, he wrote me a card. Like, he gave me a card to say ‘Congratulations, you’re now part of the [name of receiver school] team’. And then, er, I said “thanks”, yeah, and I settled in from there [...]. I felt more proud of myself ‘cos I’ve made, like, a change in the way that, erm, in the way that I’ve come to this school and settled in”.
‘Sole responsibility narratives’

Several participants responded to the question “what could schools do to help managed move pupils feel like they fit in and belong at their receiver school?” with what could be described as ‘sole responsibility’ narratives. These narratives were elaborations of the view that there was little or nothing schools could do to help, as responsibility lay solely with the individual pupil:

“I’m, erm, a stranger in that school; it’s on you to make friends; it’s on you to do good, it’s on you to do this – but they [the receiver school] don’t obviously make that feel that way, but I know it’s that way”.

Implications for school and local authority staff

Findings indicated an opportunity for a variety of educational psychology involvement, including systemic work in schools and individual work with managed move pupils; accurate, timely and holistic assessment of Special Educational Needs; development of person-centred transition plans for managed move pupils and a role in the development and implementation of Local Authority managed move protocols:

- Raise awareness of the importance of a sense of school belonging to young people’s emotional wellbeing and academic functioning, and of the particular difficulties pupils on managed moves are likely to face in experiencing a sense of belonging in their receiver schools. Create school climates which remove potential barriers to belonging.

- Elicit the views and opinions of managed move pupils on an individual basis and in a timely manner in order to inform the planning of tailored support packages using person centred approaches. Advocate for managed move protocols which take account of pupil voice – e.g. in relation to ‘trial periods’ and the requirement for and content of ‘support packages’

We would be interested to hear your views on these implications, and on any implications you feel the above findings may have for the way in which your school and other services support pupils on managed moves.
Appendix 13. Presentation of pilot research findings to Head Teachers

Slide 1
Overview of study
- Title: "I'm not here." The experience of belonging for a secondary school pupil who has undergone a managed move
- Single case study design
- Participant: male Y10 pupil in mainstream high school
- Managed move due to incident (fight)
- Attended receiver school for approx. 3 months
- 2 x 30 minute semi-structured interviews
- 2 research questions:
  - How does a secondary school pupil who has undergone a managed move experience belonging or "fitting in"?
  - What would make it easier for secondary school pupils who have undergone a managed move to experience belonging or "fitting in"?
Interview schedule

1) Can you tell me a bit about how you came to be at [name of school]?
2) What were things like for you at your old school?
3) What was it like to move schools?
4) How are things now?
5) What could schools do to help students on managed moves feel like they ‘fit in’ and belong at their new school?

Findings

- Factors contributing to/influencing participant’s sense of belonging or fitting in at school:
  - Social relationships
  - Feelings about language /communication
  - Self-image / mental and emotional wellbeing
  - Coping strategies
  - Feelings about managed move
  - Feelings about school

- These factors revealed to be strongly interactive
Social relationships

- Single most significant ‘precursor’ of sense of belonging for this participant
- Influenced choice of receiver school
- Problematic: peer groups perceived as potentially hostile or judgemental
- Experiences of bullying; anxiety about bullying
- Difficulties in this area perceived by participant to be strongly connected with language and communication

Social relationships - quotes

1) "...Well I've not...I'm not being bullied...but it's sort of like erm...like...I have got friends but I've not got that many friends"

2) "Well the thing is, like a few months ago or whatever, one of them [other students at receiver school] tried to start a fight with me and...I just said basically to him "I don't fight" and then whatever and he just...he were like...basically trying to keep it going, cos he...like [was one of] these people who just look for fights"

3) "But like from...from... school I like... at school altogether I think like I never really try and sort of make friends"
Social relationships - quotes

4) “Like, say, if they’re in a classroom and they’re working and like they get asked to go in groups...well, to the single person that was moved, it’d be a bit...well, not scary, but like I don’t know if they’d actually want to just go into like four or five people that they don’t know like in a group of them, because they don’t know ‘em,...and the four or five people might judge them a bit and the person that’s moved might panic a bit...and say the wrong things...and then like they might start getting bullied or whatever, I don’t know...”

Language / communication

- Extremely prevalent theme
- Fundamental importance of communication acknowledged
- Anxiety-inducing for participant—especially initiating verbal interaction
- Social interactions which do not centre on verbal communication less anxiety-inducing
- Appreciation of ‘buddy’ system as means of initiating communication on first day
- Strong link between problematic communication and fear of being bullied
- Interaction between feelings about language and communication and social relationships inform participant’s self-image and mental health and wellbeing
Language / communication - quotes

1) "I just think the fact that I'm getting on better... is because I'm not being like stupid in the things that I say to people... like I'm watching what I say"

2) "...there already is the friend groups... and... well, I feel as though I can't really just go in and say 'hello' like 'what's your name' and all this, like 'where do you live'... Cos I'm not that sort of person... to do that... so I'd rather just like... like leave them be..."

Language / communication - quotes

3) "...well they got someone else to show me round and... well it's pretty good for them to like pair you up with someone, cos like you just get talking a bit"

4) "...at the end of the day I think it's up to you if you've like made a good move... cos you're the one like speaking to people like not the teachers"

5) "they're all right [the lads at boxing] like you can have a laugh with them. They're not like... they don't... they don't take it seriously. Like, well they take boxing seriously, they just don't like take... talking seriously..."
Self-image / mental health and wellbeing

- Participant keen to separate himself from identity of 'troublemaker' - stressed that he does not act out in class
- Doesn't see self as academically gifted (though displayed highly developed reflective skills)
- Negative self-concept: feels 'stupid'
- Has experienced depression in the past as a result of difficult peer relationships and social isolation

Self-image / mental health and wellbeing - quotes

1) "like when I was with my dad I was always a bit...a bit depressed cos like people from my old school got me down"

2) "to be honest I just...I feel a bit stupid..."

3) "I'm not like clever, erm, academically, like maths, science and whatever..."

4) "I think the reason why I would want to...like drop out of school for boxing is cos like... I could make something out of it...and like...err... if I never...started boxing...I just did school... I think I wouldn't really get a good job or whatever cos like my grades might not be that good"
Coping strategies

- Numerous and had complex functions
- Many were responses to experiences which challenged a sense of belonging
- Directly informed by feelings of threat, anxiety or depression resulting from exclusion
- Some helpful (promoted experience of belonging)
- Some problematic (prevented experience of belonging)
- Most a mixture of both – e.g. Xbox; boxing; non-attendance; deliberate self-isolation; remaining silent in class

Coping strategies - quotes

1) "my attendance was going down [at previous school] because I didn't want to go into school, cos I didn't want to go into school because I was getting bullied"

2) "I used to bring in a football and I always get...got used...to...like the other people to play with a football with me..."

3) "as soon as I got home and if I didn't...If I wasn't actually in school I'd just...I'd just be always on my Xbox. Cos...sort of like...well, like...metaphorically that was sort of like a drug for me... Like it's sort of like, go on your Xbox to chill out... and it obviously it wasn't a drug [laughs]...erm it was just like sort of getting away from everything..."
Coping strategies - quotes

4) "Well... like there're people on...like you can talk to people on the Xbox... not like we're talking now, like... As mates... like you can talk to people... like not people that went to my school, you just talk to people..."

5) "My sleeping pattern got really bad, like I used to be awake until about five in the morning and then like if I was going to go into school the next day I was too tired... I'd been up so late, and then err, well, I just thought err I need to stop this"

6) "Going starting boxing has sort of like it's... it's sort of like taken away playing on the Xbox if you know what I mean like... it's... it's... I don't know the word... erm... well it's just like sort of taken its place instead"

Coping strategies - quotes

7) "There always are them sort of people [who are always looking for fights] but I just try and like, stay away if you know what I mean. It depends what sort of like friend group you've got I suppose. Cos if you sort of hang around with people that well... you just don't hang around with them people... But I suppose you've got to get on the like right side of them..."

8) "I just like sort of... like, shut up in lessons and like just keep myself to myself...... I don't like create trouble. I do my homework and whatever, I don't... go in isolation... I just try and, like, keep my head down and then... hopefully... get some good grades"
Feelings about school

- Coping strategies informed and were informed by participant's feelings about school
- These tended to be negative: school as maze; battlefield; courtroom; prison
- Two options: escape / endurance
- Participant grappled with question ‘are all schools the same?’
- Question with particular relevance for managed move pupils

Feelings about school - quotes

1) “first time you come here it sort of looks like a bit of a maze”

2) “I think one of my teachers said... schools are the same... with different doors... the things that go on in the school are basically the same, like the people in the school, but like it's just the building's a bit different if you know what I mean? But I would agree to that...”

3) “school is sort of divided into two, like fifty percent of it is learning and then fifty percent of it is socialising. So I don’t think you could take like the bullying away, because on a lunchtime and at... at break there’s always so much going on around the school... so teachers can’t really go around then, and like find this, and so most of the time the students that are being bullied have to come to a teacher...”
Feelings about school - quotes

4) “This school’s pretty...well...it’s not perfect ...but... for me this school is better, because I’ve been to the other school and...they know what I’m like...like they already know me so for me...for me...erm...this school is better because like I’m a new face and it’s a new start, but say if you had a pick, then that school erm [name of previous school] would probably be better...”

5) “cos like once school...once the school day’s over I just like can’t wait to go home...”

6) “as soon as you’ve left school, then you don’t have to go back, so I’m just trying to get through it if you know what I mean”

Feelings about managed move

- Strongly linked to participant’s feelings about school
- Participant felt success of managed move entirely his own responsibility
- Participant did not appear to feel that school staff could do much to make the experience easier for him
- Some uncertainty about protocols – e.g. length of probationary period; criteria for being accepted on roll; equity of implementation
- Clear recognition that personalised approach is appropriate as each managed move is a unique experience
Feelings about managed move - quotes

1) "at the end of the day I think it’s up to you if you’ve like made a good move”

2) “I don’t really think anyone else apart from the person that is actually moving can do anything... because...at the end of the day it’s down to them...”

3) “my experience could be a lot different to someone else across the country... You know when I said like a school is different...err...is the same with different doors......well that's sort of like true, and not true, cos like you get some schools that are proper rough, and then like this school’s not so bad but it...it sort of depends on the area”

4) “the trial’s there for me to...like...improve from my last school so...well I’ve not done anything bad and...my attendance is good...so they’ll probably accept me, but if I’d like messed up then they’d just send...well...kick me out...well not kick me out cos I’m not here, but...I’m not actually accepted yet but err...I think we’re having a meeting soon”

5) “Well, erm, they said first that it’d be six weeks, and then after that first six weeks there’d be a meeting, and then they said err it’d be another six weeks and now they’re having a meeting but ...because erm I had some absences cos the like the other week... err... month ago I had a chest infection, so I was off... And err...erm...I was off for a few days so they...they...err...said that it would be like another three weeks or something, cos my attendance went a bit down cos of that”
Summary

- Need to belong = fundamental motivating drive for participant
- Vast majority of data gathered related to nature of social interactions; the relation of these to the participant's perceived individual difficulties (esp. around language/communication); and strategies designed to pre-empt social rejection and avoid potential peer group hostility
- Participant feels solely responsible for success of move

Summary (continued)...

- Absence of secure sense of 'being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by others [...] in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class' (Goodenow, 1993) has generated development of set of coping strategies
- These are complex in nature and effect
- All offer some form of protection
- Some may also compound sense of isolation, prejudice mental health /wellbeing and further undermine possibility of participant experiencing sense of belonging or fitting in at school
Appendix 14. Revised Local Authority Best Practice Guidance on Managed Moves

Best Practice in [Local Authority] for Managed Moves

Summary of recommendations
The recommendations are arranged in four sections

1. Preparation for managed move
   - Share information - so the new school can make preparations
   - Share information - new school to family
   - Identify and plan support for any additional needs the pupil may have
   - Plan an induction calendar

2. Making a Fresh Start
   - Make the initial welcome positive
   - Present as a ‘fresh start’ and an ‘opportunity’ rather than a ‘trial period’
   - Build the expectation that it can work
   - Allow some initial flexibility in rules and procedures

3. Building Belonging
   - The ‘need to belong’ can be very motivating for pupils
   - Social relationships and making friends are key components of a feeling of belonging
   - Identify a key adult with whom the pupil can build an initial relationship
   - Identify a buddy who will be a positive role model and who is likely to become a friend
   - Use positive language and refer to ‘our school’
   - Recognise that change is potentially anxiety inducing for pupils and staff and feeling safe and understood is important for pupils to feel they belong
   - Add pupil’s name/ picture to form/ school displays etc

4. Monitoring support and progress
   - Hold regular and frequent positively framed meetings with pupil and parents to monitor progress
   - Have an agreed end point of the ‘fresh start’ period and clarity about the process.
   - Set achievable and realistic targets, i.e. not 100% attendance or behaviour
   - Judge the balance between offering support and stepping back

Background Context
The purpose of this guidance report is to provide practical guidance constructed from the evidence base and local expertise to help schools share best practice in supporting managed moves and increasing positive outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

The guidance draws on a literature search and investigation of pupil views and views of [Local Authority] Head Teachers, Deputy Heads and
Introduction
A sense of belonging is linked to positive pupil outcomes such as higher academic interest, motivation and engagement (Osterman, 2000) and lower levels of inappropriate behaviour (Demanent & Van Houtte, 2011). A sense of belonging can also have a positive impact on transition (Ebbeck, Yim & Lee, 2010).

School belonging can be defined as when pupils: ‘feel close to, a part of and happy at school; feel that teachers care about students and treat them fairly; get along with teachers and other students and feel safe at school’ (Libbey, 2007, p.52).

A managed move facilitates a move to another school to enable a pupil to have a ‘fresh start’. How a move proceeds and develops ultimately influences its success rather than the move itself, with positive outcomes being linked to the inclusive ethos of the school and pupils feeling they were genuinely cared about, wanted, listened to and supported (Vincent, Harris, Thomson & Toalster, 2007). Abdelnoor (2007) summarises that a pupil is most likely to succeed in a managed move if they are able to feel a sense of belonging and motivation. It would seem then that a key element of the ‘fresh start’ offered in a managed move is developing a sense of belonging to the new school.

Effective practice

1. Preparation for managed move

Preparations for the individual

School staff described advance preparations the school could make for managed moves such as an induction calendar (planning the first day/week/month), having a starter checklist for pupils and staff being made aware of the arrival of a new pupil to their classes. School staff also referred to ensuring preparations for pupils are individualised as each pupil will have different reasons for their managed move and the school will need to adapt according to the pupils’ background and any additional needs.

School staff discussed giving information to the pupil and family such as a welcome letter, school brochure and information regarding GCSE options. One school has worked with pupils to produce a leaflet for new pupils with an introduction from the head and key information about the school.

School ownership was discussed as core to creating a sense of belonging, for example: "What worked well for one of our girls who was a school refuser when she had been given a place at the school prior to the meeting, was the school wrote to..."
her and you know a welcome letter prior to even having the meeting, we are really looking forward to meeting you, this is a copy of our options coz she was going into year 10 …”

**Parent-Pupil-School Partnership**

Many descriptions centred around developing partnerships between pupils, parents and staff and the impact of school’s ownership on developing these partnerships. School staff viewed their partnership with parents as key due to the influence of parents on their children’s attitudes to school.

Another aspect of preparation was clarifying if the school was suitable for the pupil. This was voiced as the impact of managed move on current pupils and schools needing to be convinced that they were the right place for a pupil. This was balanced with the need for schools to show pupils that they were taking ownership of them as key to creating a sense of belonging for managed move.

**Knowledge of Individual Pupils**

School staff identified various information and knowledge they needed to make relevant preparations for pupils to show them they belonged in the school. For example, health issues, issues with other children, support strategies, knowledge of child’s home life, knowing their previous GCSE options and reasons for move. School staff also talked about having interviews with pupils and developing a pupil profile to develop and facilitate sharing of information. Pupils also highlighted the importance of understanding their needs and appropriate and timely support for any additional difficulties.

Pupil B

“At [name of old school] I like had no friends and couldn’t talk to no one. I’m not getting done no more…I’m not getting into trouble…my behaviour’s changed. [At previous school] I was scared and then I used to get into trouble for getting into fights… but the teachers didn’t know I was being bullied cos I thought if I tell them then they’re gonna like bully me even more.”

2. **Making a Fresh Start**

School staff identified the process around the school transfer as central to creating a sense of belonging. Preparing the pupil before meeting staff at the new school was thought to be key as the pupil’s attitude could act as a facilitator to the attitudes of those at the new school. The initial welcome from the head teacher and other staff was also identified as a facilitator to this process as the message given determines if a sense of belonging can be created.

**Induction**

School identified planning an induction programme as an effective strategy. Having a key adult and a buddy, helping pupils develop initial relationships with peers and being given useful information and support were highlighted in pupil interviews:

Pupil A

“[on the first day day] They gave me some leaflets to show you, like, what the rules were. I asked the teacher where do I go, and then JH showed me where to go and then I told him thanks, for like, showing me where I go.”
“Miss R [in the student support room] helped me do like some of my homework because I didn't understand it and then last lesson was Media and that went well, and then I came home and I said “Mum, I really like the school” and then she's like “I'm really proud of you”... it felt good like to have a bit of praise.”

**Friendships**
Making friends in the new school appeared to promote belonging by increasing pupils’ feelings of safety.

Pupil A – “[On the first day] I met a teacher called Miss S and she helped me find some new friends. She showed me where the places where other people stay at break time and lunchtime, yeah and... I had a good day that day. She introduced me to a boy called JH and then after that I think my confidence then was increased and I went out one day and I met a few friends.”

Whilst pupils saw making positive friendships as important, the process was viewed with some trepidation:

Pupil C
“I can't really just...I ...well, I feel as though I can't really just go in and say ‘hello’ like ‘what's your name’ and all this like ‘where do you live’. I just like sort of...like shut up in lessons...and like just keep myself to myself..”

**Building the expectation of success**
Showing new students around the school, pointing out for example the year 11 form photos and suggesting they will be involved at the end of their time at school was one suggestion for creating the expectation that the move will be successful.

**Balancing belonging with ‘being on trial’**
Tensions were highlighted with viewing the move as a ‘trial’ as this may mean the move is not permanent and so does not allow pupils to feel like they belong, instead participants felt ‘fresh start’ would act as a better facilitator for creating a sense of belonging.

Pupil A
“[I was on a] six weeks trial. The head teacher said that - cos when I had the interview on the tour day erm- I had an interview with the head teacher first saying about how I’ve come here and talking about, like, is it going to be an improvement on the erm behaviour and the bullying and I was saying yeah and then erm and then he said to me err "you’re going on a six week trial" and then after the six weeks were up like he wrote me a card—he gave me a card - saying like congratulations, you are part of the [name of school] team. And then, err, I said thanks. Err yeah, and then I settled in from there. I felt like...I felt more proud of myself that I’ve made a change in the way that I’ve come to this school and settled in.”

3. Building Belonging

**Positive Language and Attitude**
School staff discussed positive language and attitude of all those involved acting as a facilitator in creating a sense of belonging. These included: teaching staff, parents, pupils, peers and school management. An example of positive language was ‘did you know you don't wear your shirt like that here’ as opposed to ‘the rule here is you tuck your shirt in’.
A key adult with whom the pupil could build a relationship and who could act a link between home and school was identified as a key facilitator. Understanding the emotions of people involved was also highlighted. It was recognised that making a new start can be an anxious time for pupils and parents and school staff may be worried about how they can best support a pupil.

Pupil C
"Cos like first time you come here it sort of looks like a bit of a maze"

**School Integration**
Different processes to integrate pupils into school life were discussed by staff and pupils. For pupils social integration was a key aspect of belonging, as was feeling understood and accepted as a person

Pupil B
"the staff here [...] understand people more"

A further general aspect of school integration identified was school staff empathising with pupils. General examples given were being flexible with rules for year 7 pupils for the first couple of months and making allowances for pupils that are going through a difficult time at home. A consistent approach to all pupils was also discussed and was identified as important in developing a sense of fairness.

4. **Monitoring support and progress**
School staff identified that it was important to monitor pupils’ progress through regular meetings with the pupil and follow up meetings after their move. Pupils were not necessarily clear about the managed move process.

Pupil C
"And err...erm...I was off for a few days so they...they...err...said that it would be like another three weeks or something cos my attendance went a bit down cos of that”

The also seemed to be some variability in how much the pupils felt supported in their transition to the new and how much responsibility for the success of the move rested solely with them.

Pupil C
"...at the end of the day I think it’s up to you if you’ve like made a good move cos you’re the one like speaking to people like not the teachers”

**Suggested Changes to the Managed Move System**
Ideas were generated by School staff were based on changes that could be made at school level and LA level. At school level, school staff discussed developing pupil and parent voice to learn about how they felt about the process and what they could do to improve the process and one school reported that feedback is now regularly sought from PP pupils. At LA level a suggestion was for separate panels to discuss managed moves and placing permanently excluded pupils so more focus could be given to the managed moves developing consistency between the schools and making the procedure more transparent for parents.
Conclusions
The views of [Local Authority] pupils and school staff echo the findings in the literature regarding the need for pupils to be allowed to make a fresh start, develop new relationships with peers and staff and have the opportunity to escape previous reputations (Harris, Vincent, Thomson, & Toalster, 2008). A summary of research publications highlighted the following factors as promoting belonging in schools: school staff dedicating their time, interest, attention, and emotional support to students; a stable network of peers; a belief that school is important to students’ future and perception that adults at the school are invested in their education and a physical environment and psychosocial climate which sets the stage for positive student perceptions of school (CDCP, 2009). It would seem that these are also recognised as effective practice in [Local Authority].

Additionally, it is recognised that the nature of the pupils’ needs can mean that they require tailored support to enable them to be able to make use of the trusting relationships required to facilitate and maintain a successful fresh start. However, facilitating a sense of belonging where pupils feel that in the new school they are genuinely cared about, wanted, listened to and supported is often balanced against the notion of the pupil being on a ‘trial period’ and concerns from staff in the receiving school regarding the impact of the pupil’s presenting social and emotional difficulties.

References


With thanks to the pupils, school staff and LA staff who gave their time as participants.