

**What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole
school attachment-based approach?**

A Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Sorcha O' Dea

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate in Child, Community, and Educational
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Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

University of Essex

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Abstract

Research demonstrates that supporting children's emotional needs promotes better learning outcomes (Geddes, 2018). In the United Kingdom, hundreds of schools are trained in whole school approaches that have a basis in attachment theory. These approaches emphasise the relational needs of pupils and prioritise their sense of safety. They are often referred to by schools and in the limited literature as 'attachment aware' approaches.

The current study took place in a deprived inner East London borough. It has one of the highest proportions of children with social, emotional, and mental health needs in the country. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) was used to provide an answer to the following research question: "What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?" Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted in three schools with a range of staff including senior leaders, teachers and support staff. The researcher constructed five overarching themes to organise 13 themes that reflected patterns in participant experience. These five overarching themes were 'Context Affects Delivery', 'Training Must Resonate', 'Scope and Remit of School and School Staff Widens', 'Permission to Feel' and 'Not Running Alone with Them'.

In the current climate, emotionally focused "approaches could be referred to as an add-on to the real business of education" (Parker & Levinson, 2018: 9). This research argues that emotionally focused approaches such as whole school attachment-based approaches are well placed to meet the needs of the entire school community and

promote increased pupil engagement. This study adds to the exponentially growing body of research on whole school attachment-based approaches. The research has implications for local and national practice due to the priority given to trauma-based approaches in recent government guidance.

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Abbreviations

AAS	Attachment Aware Schools
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences
AP	Alternative Provision
CSF	Compassionate Schools Framework
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
LA	Local Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SEN/D	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TA	Teaching Assistant
UK	United Kingdom
WSABA	Whole School Attachment-Based Approach / Approaches

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1 Introduction

1.1 Mental Health Issues in Children in the United Kingdom

1.1.1 Rising Mental Health Issues

The Centre for Mental Health (2021) stated that there has been an ‘alarming rise’ in mental health problems in school-aged children in recent years. A recent survey by the Department of Health and Social Care, the best source of data on trends in child mental health (Ford, John & Gunnell, 2021), compared the rates of mental ill health from 2017 and 2020. It revealed that the rates of probable mental disorders in children aged five to sixteen years is now one in six (16.0%) compared to one in nine (10.8%) in 2017. This report explored the mental health of young people in July 2020 during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children with probable mental health issues are more likely to have experienced difficulties during the COVID-19 restrictions. The report concluded that policies emphasising the needs of children and young people are likely to play an important part in preventing future mental illness (Pierce et al., 2020).

1.1.2 Impact of Mental Health Issues on Children

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are vital to our ability to thrive throughout life. “Childhood emotional problems are commonly associated with poor academic, occupational and psychosocial functioning” (Ogundele, 2018 p. 9). Children with mental health issues face unequal opportunities throughout life (Jayman, 2019). The causes of childhood mental health issues are complex and contested but adversity in childhood is being increasingly linked to mental and physical health issues across their life span (Nelson et al., 2020). “Multiple adversities and multiple experiences of abuse

have strong evidence of causing many very serious social and psycho-social consequences affecting individuals, families and communities, and must be considered among the most important potentially preventable 'causes' of psychiatric disorder throughout life” (Fryers & Brugha, 2013, p. 13). One of the earliest potential childhood adversities is an insecure attachment as outlined in attachment theory.

1.2 Attachment Theory

1.2.1 Outline of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory has been described as “perhaps the most important developmental construct ever investigated” (Sroufe et al., 2005, p. 51 as cited in Duschinsky, Greco & Solomon, 2015). Attachment theory has its beginnings with John Bowlby who revolutionised thinking about the bond between mother and child with his first formal statement of attachment theory in 1958, bringing together concepts from ethology and developmental psychology (Bretherton, 1998). Bowlby termed the affectional bond that occurs between infant and mother as ‘attachment’.

The primary experiences of early development that Bowlby identified were attachment, separation and loss. “During the infant’s first year, the experience of being held, noticed, understood and reassured when afraid are critical to a child’s emotional development – these early experiences will affect the development of trust in others, self-awareness, managing uncertainty and developing the capacity to think and communicate when challenged or afraid” (Geddes, 2017, p. 39). The primary caregiver or ‘secure base’ represents the ‘safe haven’ where the infant can return to when they need comfort. “Caregivers who respond positively, sensitively and predictably to their infants' distress provide a secure environment in which children learn that their feelings

are attended to and that they have control over their environment” (Hardy et al., 2004, p. 493).

This sense of control provides a foundation from which the child can explore the world and engage with challenges. A child that experiences ‘good enough’ nurturing is “likely to ‘possess a representational model of the attachment figure as being available, responsive and helpful’ and a working model of himself or herself as “a potentially lovable and valuable person” (Bowlby, 1980, p. 242, as cited in Geddes, 2017). If the everyday experiences of attuned relating are lacking, there can be a tremendous impact on the child.

1.2.2 Link Between Mental Health Issues and Attachment Insecurity

Attachment issues are linked with a wide variety of mental conditions ranging from mild to complex (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). The current study is focused on how schools can help to address attachment insecurity in children. “In recent years, schools have increasingly been targeted as appropriate sites for mental health promotion and teachers are considered to be well placed to identify issues concerning their students’ social and emotional wellbeing” (Graham et al., 2011: 480). The 2016 DfE guidance, ‘Mental health and behaviour in schools’ states that “schools are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approaches that is tailored to the needs of their pupils” (2016, p. 8).

1.2.3 Attachment Behaviours and Categories

The infant displays a variety of behaviours in response to their caregiver. These behaviours serve to signal their need for proximity when they are in distress. Such behaviours include following, clinging and crying. As the child grows, this becomes an established pattern of relating, which is recognised as attachment behaviour, or their attachment style. These can be broken down into secure, insecure avoidant, insecure ambivalent and disorganised (Geddes, 2017). “Bowlby describes the attachment system as a machine dependent for its emergence upon and only effective through the feedback provided by the contingencies of the experience of caregiving” (Duschinsky, Greco & Solomon, 2015, p. 177). It is key to note that there are varying perceptions of the usefulness of these discrete attachment categories. Some research uses the categories of secure or insecure and some use a continuum of security (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Others prioritise the interactions between the variables under study. For example, recent research states that “attachment theory is a psychology of the interplay of dynamic forces – even though in practice the field has largely spotlighted attachment classifications” (Duschinsky, Greco & Solomon, 2015, p. 180). ‘Attachment disorder’ can be used to denote a general concept, while reactive attachment disorder and the disinhibited type termed disinhibited attachment disorder, or disinhibited social engagement disorder (DSED), are the two attachment disorders described in the DSM-5 (Lehmann et al., 2016). In school, students with reactive attachment disorder (RAD) often display significant intrusive behaviours and need specific behavioural, social-emotional and academic support. However, there is a lack of research to support behavioural approaches to RAD in the classroom (Embury, Clarke & Leaver, 2020). These conditions are considered ‘trauma and stressor related disorders’ in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric

Association, 2013). Relational trauma and attachment-related trauma are used interchangeably (Tresiman, 2016) and synonymously, for example in the Gold Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Award (ATSS, n.d.) or the Attachment and Trauma Network.

1.2.4 Impact of Insecure Attachment for Children in School

Children's readiness to learn and engage with the school environment and the adults within it is profoundly affected by their early relationships with their primary caregivers. Geddes (2018) argues that attachment is a core aspect of the issues that affect learning and performance in the classroom. All cognitive processes are profoundly affected by emotion, particularly those demanded of children in schools – learning, attention, memory, decision making and social functioning (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). It is clear that school is an incredibly demanding environment for an insecurely attached child. Geddes (2006) states that research has long shown there to be a link between attachment, school readiness and school success – citing Bion's linking of attachment and containment to learning and thinking (1967) and Ainsworth et al. (1978) stating that attachment and cognition are intertwined. Bomber (2016) suggests that insecure attachment can result in developmental vulnerabilities in regulation, psychological development and executive functioning. Specifically, 40% of children are deemed to be insecurely attached (Moullin, Waldfogel & Washbrook, 2014). "Children who have developed insecure attachment strategies may demonstrate behaviours in school that are viewed as disruptive, controlling or withdrawn" (Webber, 2017:314). However, these behaviours can be understood through an attachment lens as adaptive survival strategies rather than 'disruptive'.

1.2.5 Criticism of Attachment Theory

Farnfield and Holmes (2014:5) caution that although enthusiasts of attachment theory see it as a powerful way of understanding human interactions and psychological development, “it is not a theory that explains everything” - there can be uncertainty about where the boundaries of behaviour influenced by attachment processes should be drawn and what would be better understood using another lens. Smith, Cameron and Reimer (2017 p. 1606) state that it has “reached a point where understandings of human relationships have become totalised within an attachment paradigm; it has become the ‘master theory’ to which other ways of conceiving of childcare and of relationships more generally become subordinated.” Slater (2007) concurs that attachment theory has established one of the most significant frameworks for comprehending risk and protective elements in social and emotional development, however he thinks that a developmental pathways approach is more appropriate and less deterministic.

1.2.6 Relevance of Attachment Theory to the School Setting

Numerous factors across different domains contribute to mental health and wellbeing, and school experiences are a consistently important contributing factor (MacLeod, 2020). In schools, one of the areas of mental health promotion is attachment. Research has found that infants can develop attachments to multiple caregivers early on in life (Umemura et al., 2013 as cited in Duschinsky, Greco & Solomon, 2015), so the potential is there for school-aged children to balance less positive attachment relationships with strong attachment relationships at school. This application of attachment theory to the school setting is not new; it dates from 1970 and the introduction of nurture groups (Harlow, 2020). Effective attachment therapies promote

dependable relationships and alter children's perceptions of themselves in relation to their caregivers (Haney, 2021).

1.2.7 NICE Guidelines on the School's Role in Addressing Attachment Issues

In recent National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines (2020), schools are key in the management of attachment difficulties. The recommendations state that “schools and other education providers should ensure that all staff who may come into contact with children and young people with attachment difficulties receive appropriate training on attachment difficulties” (NICE, 2020 p.46). The National Institute of Clinical Excellence reports that a multitude of cross-cultural research demonstrates that attachment is a vital influence on children’s academic success and wellbeing at school (Carpenter et al., 2017). However, “very few teacher training programmes currently address attachment and the effects of trauma, despite knowledge and understanding of this now being a requirement in the teaching standards” (Dingwall & Sebba, 2018, p. 24). Although the impact of emotional issues on pupils’ performance in school is outlined in DfE documentation and a recommendation for such issues is included in initial teacher training (DfE, DfH, 2018), many of those engaged in initial teacher training are not aware of this focus and expressed “a severe lack of confidence in addressing attachment needs in schools and felt that their training had not prepared them” (Dingwall & Sebba, 2018, p. 24). Ubha and Cahill (2014) state that attachment-based approaches, focusing on the quality of the teacher–child relationship, are a neglected factor in the adjustment to school.

1.3 Levels of Support for Addressing Attachment Issues in School

Attachment approaches offered in schools can be on an individual, group or whole school basis.

1.3.1 Individual Level

On an individual level, counselling can be often offered to children in schools. In counselling, attachment theory is sometimes used to understand the development of coping patterns or relationship patterns and the underlying dynamics of a person's emotional difficulties (Wei, 2008). Another individual approach used in schools is 'Theraplay' which is based on attachment theory. Structure, engagement, nurture, and challenge are the key components of effective parent-child relationships, and Theraplay is a play-based technique that enhances attachment (Weaver, 2021).

1.3.2 Group Level

Nurture groups are a well-known approaches using attachment theory in relation to the six principles of nurture. These groups are a short-term, inclusive, focused approaches at the proactive and preventative level. The merit of nurture groups in addressing the emotional development and behavioural issues in vulnerable children was demonstrated in large-scale, controlled research (Reynolds, MacKay & Kearney, 2009). Developed from the six principles of nurture, nurturing schools are school-wide approaches that focus on emotional needs and development as well as academic learning (nurtureuk, n.d.). However, nurture schools do not encompass a whole school

approach as per the Department for Education guidance below, which is the focus of this study.

1.4 ‘Whole School’ Mental Health Promotion

1.4.1 The Department of Education ‘Whole School’ Definition

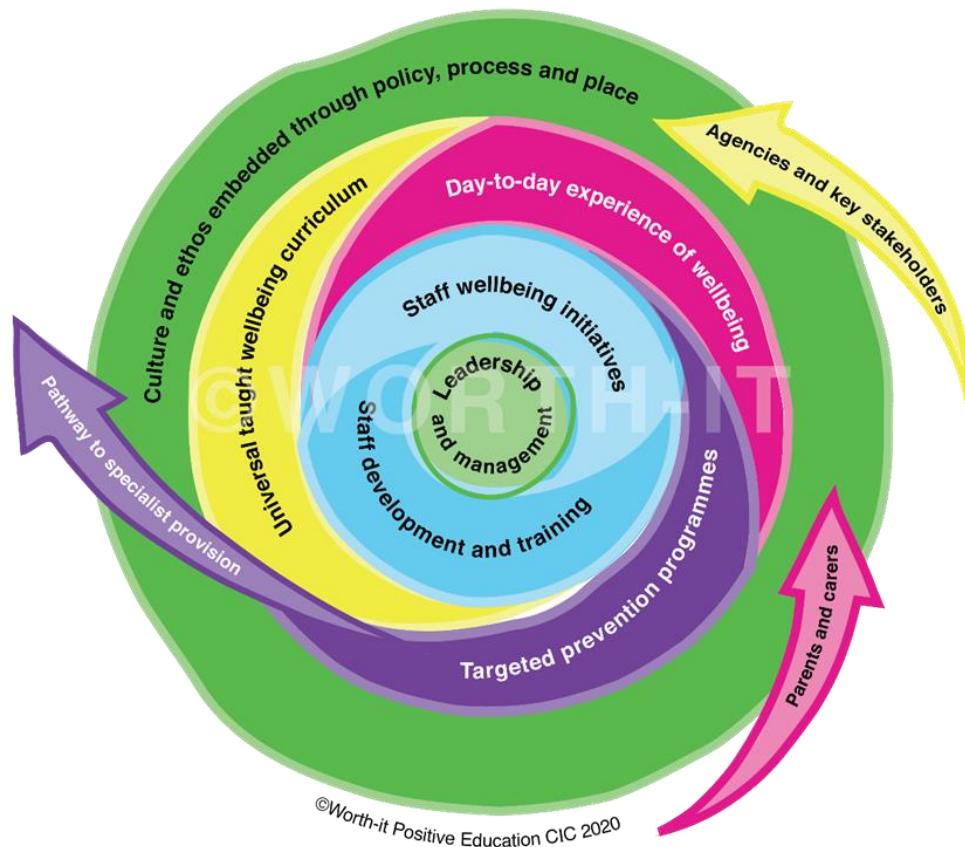
The Department of Education (2016, p. 9) defines a whole school approach to promoting a mental health as having eight principles with ‘leadership and management that support and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing’ at the centre; It also includes curriculum teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning, enabling the student’s voice, staff development to support their own wellbeing and that of the students, identifying need and monitoring the impact of interventions, working with parents and carers, targeted support and appropriate referrals, and finally, an ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity.

Recent guidance from the National Children’s Bureau (Stirling & Emery, 2016) and Public Health England (Lavis & Robson, 2015) also reflect a shift towards whole school approaches to mental health. However, whole school approaches are complex and challenging to implement and very few are truly whole school in nature, even when they are universal and involve multiple components (Demkowicz & Humphrey, 2019). Patton et al. (2000) describes schools as complex systems undergoing continuous and simultaneous changes. According to Weare (2015), a complete whole school commitment and attitude, as opposed to piecemeal interventions, are crucial to improving students' mental health. Below in Figure 1 is a visual representation of the elements of a whole school approach for positive mental health.

Figure 1

Elements of a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing

WHOLE SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



1.4.2 Rationale for the Focus on Whole School Attachment-Based Approaches in the Current Study

The current study is focused on whole school attachment-based approaches. Such approaches have been recommended in the recent legislation. In “The Government Response to the Consultation on Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper and Next Steps” (from DfE, 2018), whole school approaches are emphasised. When stating that schools will be expected to develop

whole school approaches that foster a mentally healthy culture emphasising the importance of emotional development, attachment issues are mentioned. It also lists whole school trauma and attachment awareness-based approaches among its recommended organisations (DfE, 2016, p. 31). Long (2022) states that although this could be seen as a positive development, details of training and support for education staff and information about how such approaches are to be structured and resourced are less clearly defined.

1.5 Overview of Training Providers

1.5.1 Training Providers of Whole School Attachment and Trauma-Informed Practice

Currently, the providers of trauma-based professional development in the UK offer different levels of training for selected school staff. In 2018, Harlow specified that there were eight third sector organisations training staff members on the ways in which schools can become “attachment aware.” Table 1 below lists these attachment and trauma awareness training providers in the United Kingdom (Harlow, 2018). The training providers cited were contacted and the evidence that the providers based their trainings upon was discussed. No new literature was uncovered as will be seen in the literature review. Some of the providers were not providing the training at the time of the study. The extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted this was unclear. One provider also discussed funding issues related to post-adoption support and funding the overlap with internal school funds which could impact the feasibility of buying in such training.

Table 1: List of whole school attachment and trauma awareness training providers in the United Kingdom (Harlow, 2018)

1.	Adoption Matters: www.adoptionmatters.org.uk
2.	After Adoption: www.afteradoption.org.uk
3.	Braveheart Education: www.bravehearteducation.co.uk
4.	Hope Attachment Training and Therapeutic Services: www.hopeattach.co.uk
5.	KCA Training: www.kcatraining
6.	PAC-UK: www.pac-uk.org
7.	Touchbase: www.touchbase.org.uk
8.	What about Me? Training Ltd: www.wamwhataboutme.co.uk

1.5.2 Definitions of and Distinctions in Whole School Attachment and Trauma Awareness Training

Evidence suggests that there are numerous providers of training in whole school attachment-based approaches (Harlow, 2018) with providers growing exponentially and many EPS services and virtual schools leading on whole school training, such as in Birmingham’s Trauma-Based Attachment Aware Schools programme. The key question is how are these training programs similar to and distinct from one another? Kelly et al. (2020, p. 335) stated that although the label ‘Attachment Aware school’ is a well-known term and used by a number of different local authority areas, “it is important to recognise that it is not a licensed training product or prescribed programme that is delivered in the same way by any of those using this term.” There is no instruction manual for introducing a whole school attachment-based approach as the aims of the approach are bespoke to the needs of the whole school. Aspland et al. (2020, p. 13) state that “as a core tenant of trauma-based practice is empowerment, it is crucial

that each school should be actively encouraged to implement the approach to suit their community, staff group and challenges”. However, a major national research project on ‘Attachment Aware’ schools states that the taught content of the initial training can be considered ‘broadly comparable’ across the training organisations. The Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme works with 300 schools across 26 local authorities in England. The participants of this study have received training in attachment and trauma organised through their virtual school or EPS. Regarding the inclusion and exclusion criteria, their study states the following:

“The content of the training and identity of the trainer varies between areas, based on the local needs identified. Examples of training from each local authority have been observed and while there are some minor differences of scope, emphasis and delivery, the training is broadly comparable between areas” (Harrison, 2020)

1.5.3 Description of Whole School Attachment Training From the Largest Training Provider in the UK

KCA, the biggest whole school attachment training provider in the UK, states that a ‘whole systems’ approach is fundamental in creating sustained, systemic change and that in their training, they “promote social enquiry, experiential learning and skill development, through connected learning” (kca, n.d, p. 1). They state that a shift develops in the organisational culture and structures through developing a shared understanding and knowledge in addition to a shift in practice. This shift is continuously reviewed (kca, n.d., p. 1).

1.5.4 Criticism of Attachment-Based Approaches in Schools

There are vocal critics of school approaches with an emotional focus. For example, in “The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education”, Ecclestone and Hayes (2019, p. 1) argue that therapeutic education is “turning children, young people and adults into anxious and self-preoccupied individuals, rather than aspiring, optimistic and resilient learners who want to know everything about the world.” Parker and Levinson (2018) refer to the criticism that centres around the proliferation of ‘psycho-emotional approaches’ derived from popular culture which promote emotional literacy and wellbeing but may create an ultimately disempowering dependence on such approaches. Martindale (2018) states that staff should not assume that attachment is always the only reason for very disruptive behaviour, pointing out the need for a diversity of approaches to support mental health in schools including those that consider complex systemic inequalities. In the same vein, attachment-based approaches in schools have also been criticised for ‘catch-all’ explanations that over-interpret the impact of attachment, ignoring other influences on children’s development such as socio-economic or cultural factors (Parker & Levinson, 2018). These criticisms shall be returned to within the discussion section.

1.6 Needs of the Local Context in the Current Study

This study was conducted in a culturally diverse and significantly deprived inner city borough of East London. The borough ranks as having one of the highest proportion of children in the country with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) at 17%. Social emotional mental health (SEMH) ranks second in terms of primary SEN/D need. This is an area of poverty and stark wealth inequality which “have direct and indirect effects on the social, mental and physical wellbeing of an individual” (Murali &

Oyebode, 2004, p. 216). It is the most overcrowded London borough as well as the fastest growing, with the school aged population expected to rise 28% by 2026. It is a community that poses challenges for schools, with more to come.

1.7 Attachment-Based Provision in the Local Context

The current researcher was made aware that there were whole school attachment-based approaches taking place in schools in the local borough by the EP that worked with one of the schools carrying out such an approach. The local offer of the borough in which this study was conducted was examined for any mention of whole school attachment-based approaches in schools. None were found. An informal enquiry within the EPS team (see section 3.8 on recruitment) clarified the four schools that were carrying out such an approach. All settings, bar one, were trained by the same organisation, KCA, which is described above. Details on the participating schools will be further outlined in Chapter 3.

1.8 Current Study Rationale

There is a stark challenge to mental health systems in the United Kingdom at present. Whole school mental health approaches have been recommended by the DfE (2016) to address the impact of these challenges in the school environment. Meta-analyses demonstrate that whole school mental health approaches produce small – but nonetheless meaningful – changes in pertinent outcomes that can have important consequences for the broader school environment (Demkowicz & Humphrey, 2019). Research has long supported the importance of attachment in the school environment (Geddes, 2006). Whole school trauma and attachment awareness-based approaches are among the list of DfE recommended organisations DfE (2016, p. 31). Together, these

evidence-based findings and the DfE recommendations present a case for research into whole school attachment-based approaches. This research aligns with a major national research project that is currently ongoing by the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford. This study will explore what issues school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach. Pragmatically, hundreds of schools across the UK are engaging in whole school approaches based in attachment theory. This study aims to support this practice through the production of a robust reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) report that will interpret patterns in the data regarding elements that the school staff deem important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach. Schools are imbued with healing potential, and available to every child, on every school day. “Students spend at least one-quarter of their waking hours in schools, most of it in classrooms, the most proximal and potentially powerful settings for influencing children and youth” (Pianta, Hamre & Allen, 2012, p. 366). This study will argue that schools are ideally placed to engage in the early detection of and approaches regarding mental health issues using a whole school attachment-based approach.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter Summary

The chapter begins by outlining the process of formulating the literature review question. The systematic search strategy is described and justified as is the process of identifying and evaluating the existing research that is relevant to the area of whole school attachment-based approaches. The relevant empirical research studies have been reviewed and critiqued, and their credibility considered. A synthesis is then provided. A summary is then presented about what can be known from the included papers and what is unclear from the extant literature. The aim and rationale for the current study will be presented, and the research positioned within the current literature. A discussion of the limitations of the review will be presented at the end of the chapter.

2.1 Purpose of the Literature Review

Booth et al. (2021) have concluded that a systematic review reduces the potential for bias within a review and increases its clarity, validity, and auditability. Reviewing research systematically involves engaging in three central activities: identifying and describing the relevant research, critiquing the research systematically and finally merging the findings into a synthesis or statement (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2013). Ridley (2012) states that the review should provide a historical background for the research and illuminate the current context. It should present the relevant terminology, theories and concepts, and describe related research in the field, as well as provide evidence for the existence of the issue which the current research is addressing. The current author asserts that a number of the aims listed above were realised in the introduction where a comprehensive overview of attachment theory and its use in

schools was provided. As we will see below, owing to the school-based and relational nature of the field of whole school attachment-based approaches, there was a wide range of unpublished ‘grey’ literature that did not meet the inclusion criteria due to the absence of a peer review, a major indicator of quality in academic publishing. The purpose of the literature review was to locate trustworthy high-quality research that could provide a plausible answer to the specific literature review question.

2.2 Formulating the Literature Review Question

A literature review is shaped by the review question(s) posed which directs the scope of the literature search. These questions guide the structure of the review and impact key decisions about the types of studies to include, how to assess their quality, and how to merge the findings (Gough, Oliver & Thomas, 2013). It was clear from the amount of ‘grey literature’ that there was a lot of interest in the approaches under investigation and numerous studies ongoing. However, are known issues with the quality of research in schools (Mackenzie & Williams, 2018). The research question was broad so as to capture all research in the field and then to screen it according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The literature review question is: *‘What can be known about whole school attachment-based approaches?’*

2.3 Review Protocol

A systematic search requires multiple techniques across the distinct phases of the search process and an iterative approach to the search, which could include conducting focused searches on electronic databases in addition to employing additional search techniques, such as citation searching, reference list checking, snowballing and hand-searching (Booth, Sutton, Clowes & Martyn-St James, 2021).

In an effort to perform a systematic search, the current review utilised all of the above methods which are detailed below.

2.3.1 Search Strategy

In the first search, three electronic databases were searched for articles pertinent to the literature review question via EBSCOhost - PsycINFO, Education Source and ERIC. The first, PsycINFO, was chosen for the breadth of psychological research covered. Two more specialist education databases, ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre) and Education Source, were also selected. These journals focus on research in educational settings and would enable the search of key UK educational psychology journals. These systematic searches were carried out on 2nd April 2022 and 28th July 2022 via the Tavistock & Portman Library website.

2.3.2 Search Terms and Terminology

A broad range of search terms were utilised in an effort to ensure that all literature had been located. Key words were searched based on their relevance to the subject area and their capacity to contribute to a broad yet focused search. As well as key words, combinations of these words and efficiently used logical operators were used to search the key databases, which is central to an efficient search (Ridley, 2012). The Boolean operators of quotation marks positioned around the search term were used to limit what was searched by narrowing the search to the exact phrasing of the search term. The justification for wanting to limit the search to this exact term was to locate literature that used this terminology. There were a number of reasons for this. The label 'Attachment Aware' is a well-known term used to describe whole school attachment-based approaches such as those being reviewed in the current study. The term

‘Attachment Aware’ is used by a number of schools in different local authority areas within the UK. It is likely that the term is used colloquially by school staff nationwide to describe such approaches. The phrase ‘Attachment Aware’ is also associated with specific approaches, e.g. ‘Attachment Aware Schools Bath Spa University’ or ‘Derbyshire Attachment Aware Schools’. The key words were combined into groups of searches done in stages focusing on different elements of the whole school approach such as ‘mental health’ and ‘learning’. These were combined using the Boolean Operator ‘AND’ to maximise the search results while specifically focusing on the school context. Attachment theory is one of the most commonly studied subjects in psychology today (Lee, 2003), so the precision of the search terms was important. This focus on the school context was able to limit the plethora of irrelevant results that would follow a general search using the term ‘attachment’. For each search, limiters were applied as per the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The search combinations utilised in the search strategy are illustrated in the table located in Appendix A.

2.3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were formulated prior to commencing the searches to set the boundary of the review. The inclusion and exclusion criteria strove to ensure a level of quality in the literature. They also attempted to establish a level of similarity in the socio-cultural landscape. Papers published before the year 2000 were excluded due to the differences in the schooling system between then and the present day. Studies conducted outside of the UK were also excluded due to the difficulty generalising across schooling systems internationally. This search strategy aimed to produce a broad yet focused search that identified pertinent literature. Below table 2 outlines the

inclusion and exclusion criteria of the literature review alongside the justification for each criterion.

Table 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the literature review

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Justification
Schools in the UK (aged 5-17)	Nursery settings	School-aged children are the participant population
Whole school attachment-based approach as per the DfE definition (2016)	Non-school wide attachment- based interventions, e.g. nurture group/nurture schools/ Theraplay. Emotion Coaching when a whole-school attachment-based intervention is not specified.	Limitation of attachment-based interventions to whole school interventions so then the interventions are comparable
Studies where the primary data was collected using a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods design	Papers with no empirical data	Empirical data needed to assess the impact

Article written in English	Based on a non-UK population	Non-UK populations are less comparable in terms of the present-day context
Published 2000–2020	Prior to the year 2000	Anything prior to the year 2000 is less comparable in terms of the present-day context
Peer-reviewed	Not accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed publication	To ensure the research meets a level of appropriate quality that maintains the integrity of the research by filtering out poor quality research

2.3.4 Search Returns

The search terms and results are located in Appendix A. The initial search resulted in 84 results, of which there were 38 duplicates, resulting in 46 papers for screening. In an effort to confirm that all research had been located, the researcher conducted another narrower search on 27th July 2022, cognisant from their initial scope of the literature that there was on-going research being conducted. This search resulted in 41 articles of which 28 were duplicates, resulting in 13 articles for screening. In total, the combined results of both searches was 59 articles located for screening using the above search strategy. Three articles were eligible for inclusion from this initial search. The 56 that

were excluded are listed in Appendix B alongside the reason for their exclusion and also listed in Appendix B are the 3 articles included.

2.3.5 Additional Search Methods - Hand searching of theses and practice manuals, the universal library search, alternative library database and 'snowballing'

The Tavistock & Portman universal library search engine 'Discovery' searches all library resources at once. This will include grey literature and also the literature published outside of the three specialist journals searched above. This was considered to be a central strategy due to the plethora of grey literature on the current topic. Literature that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria could potentially be sourced from these publications. Discovery was searched on 27th July 2022 using the below terms. At this stage, the same key terms were used to search the University of Essex general search engine due to its significantly greater breadth of literature.

Using these search engines, 95 publications were located, of which 35 were duplicates. A total of 60 articles were screened and 56 were excluded as they did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Each article alongside the justification for its exclusion is outlined in Appendix C along with four additional papers sourced. Three of these papers were sourced from the larger library collection of Essex University. These are located in Appendix A. Sayers (2007) outlines a methods of locating additional papers referred to as 'snowballing' and 'reverse snowballing'¹. In the current review, two articles were sourced using the former method, and one using the latter. These are

¹ The former involves utilising reference lists to identify cited research, and the latter checking what newer research has been cited in the initial article which can be examined in academic search engines such as 'Google Scholar' Sayers (2007).

outlined in Appendix D alongside the articles from which they were sourced. In addition to the systematic search of journal databases, a hand search of published theses was conducted using the British Library Ethos database so then the peer reviewed literature could be cited from these theses. No new literature was uncovered in this way. Practice manuals were also hand searched. This was to learn more about the practical application of the approach in schools, as well as being an effort to locate empirical studies². Such manuals seem to be based on research in child development, attachment theory and the author's typically extensive experience in schools or as a therapist rather than empirical research studies.

2.3.6 Search Verification

Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2013) state that a useful strategy is to approach experts in the field regarding literature. If the researcher has located studies that were not shared by the topic experts, that is a sign of a good search. The eight UK training providers cited by Harlow³ (2018) in the introduction were contacted by the current researcher regarding the evidence base of their training. The companies that replied directed the researcher to articles and resources that were already included in the review. The researcher was aware of additional recent literature that had been published that was not indicated by the training providers, indicating that the current review had been comprehensive. All of the extant literature alludes to the fact that thus far, there is limited available research on whole school attachment-based approaches. Mears (2020)

² Such well-known practice manuals include 'Inside I'm Hurting' (Bombèr, 2007), 'Attachment in the classroom' (Geddes, 2017), 'Working with relational and developmental trauma in children and adolescents' (Treisman, 2016) and 'When the Adults Change, Everything Changes: Seismic Shifts in School Behaviour' (Dix, 2017).

states that such approaches are a recent whole school development in the UK with the first identified implementation taking place in 2013-2014.⁴

2.3.7 Screening Process

By undertaking a systematic screening procedure, titles, abstracts and whole papers were filtered based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The majority of articles excluded at this stage were because they were from a non-UK context, typically the US. The articles from the US were also often not located within a school setting. Of those that were, few were related to a whole school attachment-based approach. These articles are listed in Appendix B and C along with the reason for their dismissal. In total, across the different searches after removing duplicates, a total of 131 publications were located. Additionally, 113 records in total were excluded. These can be found in the relevant appendices with the reason for their exclusion. 18 were read in their entirety to discern whether or not they met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Nine were excluded at the full text analysis stage and can be found in Appendix E. The nine eligible for inclusion are located in Appendix F. A Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) flowchart (Moher et al., 2009) was utilised to illustrate the levels of filtering that took place after retrieving the publications using the search method outlined above. This is contained in Appendix G.

⁴ Mears (2020) identifies the first evaluations of the Bath & Spa Attachment Aware Schools programme being completed in 2018 by Dingwall and Sebba (2018a). This evaluation did not meet the peer review criteria for inclusion in the current review.

2.3.8 Critical Assessment of Quality

Booth et al. (2021) state that the validity or “appropriateness” of the tools, processes, and data (Leung, 2015) is a key concept in quality assessment. The included studies were assessed to judge their validity and relevance in relation to addressing the review question. The quality of the execution of the methods used was considered to determine how much weight could be placed on the evidence of each study’s findings (Gough, 2012). The papers selected in the current study all utilise a mixed methods approach and contain a variety of methodologies, including case studies and action research. Due to this range of methodologies, the researcher appraised the quality of research in two ways. A quality and relevance assessment using an established checklist was used. The mixed methods appraisal tool (Hong et al., 2018) was utilised to appraise methodological quality (see Appendix H) in all but the position paper, as its reported empirical data did not give enough information to be evaluated critically. The MMAT can be a useful critical appraisal tool since it provides, within a single tool, methodological quality criteria for a variety of research designs (Hong et al., 2018). In addition, Ridley (2012) offered seven key questions to consider when judging the weight of the evidence which were considered.⁵

2.4 Research Synthesis

To direct the initial synthesis, a Literature Review Matrix (see Appendix I) was compiled to provide an overview of the key details of the included literature. This matrix captured the theoretical and conceptual framework, research question(s),

⁵ The seven questions offered by Ridley focus on the context, assumptions and conclusions of the literature.

analysis, results, conclusions, and implications for future research and practice. Table 3 below details the literature included in the current review.

Table 3: Included literature in the current review in chronological order

Title / Author/ Date
Webber (2017). A school’s journey in creating a relational environment which supports attachment and emotional security.
Parker & Levinson (2018). Student behaviour, motivation and the potential of attachment-aware schools to redefine the landscape.
Fancourt (2019). Looked after children: embedding attachment awareness in schools.
McGuire- Snieckus, Gilbert & McInnes (2019). Attachment Aware Schools: The Impact of a Targeted and Collaborative Intervention.
Kelly, Watt, & Giddens (2020). An Attachment Aware Schools Programme: A Safe Space, a Nurturing Learning Community
Aspland, Cameron & Strelitz (2020). Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools: The iTIPS Pilot.
Quinn Mollet & Dawson (2021). The Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring a Values-Driven, Hope-Filled, Relational Approach with School Leaders.
Sparling, E., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2022). Evaluation of an ACE-informed whole-school project development.
MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022). An Evaluation of Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study.

In the current review, the qualitative data will be summarised in the form of themes. The choice of synthesis method was determined by the balance between the need to aggregate and the need to interpret the findings from the nine studies whilst weighing up the strength of evidence. This synthesis will involve an overview in order to provide some understanding of the state of knowledge in this area while providing an answer to the literature review question.

2.4.1 Approach to ‘What can be known about whole school attachment-based approaches?’

An essential first element of the literature review was to investigate the trustworthiness of the methodology of the studies. This review then examined the utility of the approaches and how staff experience them. The conceptually important factors for the school staff link to the current research question.

2.4.1 Limitations in School-based and Relational Research

The limitations that exist when conducting research in schools are well-known (Mackenzie & Williams, 2018). There is a myriad of issues as to why the research on school-based relational approaches is complex and challenging. Gus et al. (2015) state that relational models have been characterised as “ways of being” that are open to great levels of interpretation and are less amenable to measurement. Kelly et al. (2021, p. 250) state the following: “measurement of the changes in schools of the type outlined in this work are inherently difficult to measure in a standardised manner and consequently, this may affect the results in ways which are currently unknown.” Beyond the inherent issues assessing relational interventions, Ireland (2019) states that

research in schools typically includes small sample sizes, solely qualitative methodologies and research designs lacking a control group.

2.4.2 State of the Evidence Base

The relatively meagre search results reflect the lack of research into whole school attachment-based approaches in the UK generally, and more specifically, the lack of studies that meet the quality indicator of being peer reviewed. In the selected literature, numerous studies (Parker & Levinson, 2018; MacLochlainn et al., 2022) state that there is evidence of the impact of these approaches, however the studies cited were not eligible for inclusion in the current review due to lacking the quality indicator of being peer reviewed. It was clear from the scale of ‘grey literature’ that there is a lot of interest in these approaches. Examples include policy publications and working papers from ongoing research. However, the quality of these publications is erratic and often the papers contain scant details. This hinders their reproducibility, which is a key facet of ensuring research integrity. This paucity of UK research was echoed in the literature. A 2022 study stated, “to our knowledge, within the UK and Ireland, only one study has been published on whole-school trauma-based approaches within educational settings” (MacLochlainn et al., 2022:2). Sparling, Woods and Ford (2022) echo the concern regarding the limited evaluation studies on trauma-based practices within the education system. This has also been voiced by other authors in the US where trauma-based education has been growing over the last two decades. In the UK, there are several well-known practice manuals in this area. These manuals were perused and found not to cite an evidence base in terms of whole school attachment-based approaches but rather presented the evidence base for attachment theory and educational interventions separately.

2.4.3 Methodological Robustness of the Selected Literature

Across the selected literature, practical, ethical and funding issues restricted the design of the studies. However, in recent years, the research shows a clear upward trend in terms of quality. A particularly robust study by MacLochlainn et al. (2022) utilised a quasi-experimental wait-list control pre-post approach design to evaluate the efficacy of trauma-based professional development training⁶. Internationally, despite over twenty years of research, this is one of the first studies to utilise a control group in the field of trauma-based practice in schools. In the UK, the current review did not locate any literature beyond this 2022 study that utilised a control group. It could be argued that this lack of experimental design impacts the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the previous research. There has not yet been a Randomised Controlled Trial, the ‘gold standard’ of research that reduces bias and examines cause-effect relationships between approaches and outcomes (Hariton & Locascio, 2018).

A significant methodological issue that pertains to the complex systems of schools is that there is potential ‘cross-fertilisation’, due to other similar approaches taking place at the same time. In their action research, Kelly et al. (2021) state that it may have been beneficial to add questions or measures to help schools identify how much of the impact they saw was due to the Derbyshire Attachment Aware Schools programme, as opposed to other school developments. Quinn, Mollet and Dawson (2021) also acknowledged that there are methodological challenges associated with measuring and evaluating change at the whole school level given the difficulties identifying specific elements and the interactions between them.

⁶ A waitlist control group was chosen compared to a control group that receives no approaches as ethically it was important not to deny participants access to the trauma-based workshop ((MacLochlainn et al, 2022).

MacLochlainn et al. (2022) posed clear and novel research questions investigating the benefits of professional development training in trauma-based approaches and ascertaining whether such training would have a positive effect on staff attitudes and lessen compassion fatigue. Their research was rigorous - the details regarding control group matching are robust and the samples appropriate. Although the study had a relatively small sample (98 and 118), the participants had a wide variation in ages as well as varied lengths of practice in terms of their work in schools. Regarding the specific trauma informed approach, MacLochlainn et al. (2022) utilised a workshop called the Compassionate Schools Training Programme (CSP). This programme is comprised of psychoeducation surrounding the nature and impact of trauma along with the nature and impact of compassion. It uses instructional material grounded in evidence-based findings from existing resources and findings from programs already completed. Standardised measures were collected directly following the approach and again at a six-month follow-up. There was also a management consultation in the schools. This comprised of several meetings which cumulated in a strategy to modify and adapt the schools' student behaviour management policies, procedures and practices towards a more trauma-based approach (MacLochlainn et al., 2022). The consultations remained ongoing for one full academic year. The study also conducted two focus groups three months after the training. This provided an interval following the intervention which made it possible to ascertain which aspects had stayed with the school staff. In sum, this study measured the impact of the programme over time using a variety of methods. Therefore, the positive results demonstrated have a high level of trustworthiness.

2.4.4 Issues with Measurements and Replicability in Published Research

In the UK, a significant issue with the evidence base is that much of the earlier research demonstrates a lack of clarity, hindering its replicability. Some of the more recent publications (Aspland et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2020; Quinn et al., 2021; MacLochlainn et al., 2022) provide more information, potentially facilitating replicability. Although Rose et al. (2019) very clearly defined their study aims, there is a lack of procedural detail and lack of further details regarding the demographics of school and staff participants. The participant schools were drawn from a convenience sample of the local authority and samples lacked cross-cultural and socio-economic representation. This hinders the generalisability of the findings. Rose et al. (2016) reported a positive impact in their three different methods of assessment which included pupil outcomes on both academic and behavioural indices using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and pupil exclusions and sanctions. Practitioner outcomes were also gathered based on an ‘exit questionnaire’ regarding the impact of the approach on their professional practice, confidence self-regulation and behaviour. However, there was scant detail provided regarding these questionnaires, which did not appear to be standardised.

2.4.5 Outcome Measures Not Yet Agreed

A fundamental issue when assessing the effectiveness of these approaches is that acceptable outcome measures to demonstrate effectiveness have not been universally agreed on. Relational interventions are challenging to measure and research. Aspland et al. (2020) and Sparling et al. (2021) acknowledged the difficulty of finding the right

tool to measure, for example, 'ethos change'. In addition, implementation factors are a challenge to measure in the context of a school. In the work of Sparling, Woods and Ford (2022), the headteachers completed an audit to identify existing systems which supported 'ACE' (Adverse Childhood Experiences) based practice. An action plan based on this audit then identified the school priorities in this area. The audit consisted of eleven statements to be rated, containing statements that could be seen as indicators of commitment to becoming ACE-based. However, there were no details regarding the composition of the audit nor any information on its standardisation. This is an area where outcome measures are challenging to define (Parker & Levinson, 2018), so more information is necessary to analyse the robustness of any measures used. The research by MacLochlainn et al. (2022) utilised a standardised tool which seems to be less common across the evidence base. The Professional Quality of Life Scale measures both compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. The second measurement used, Attitudes Related to Trauma-Based Care (ARTIC), is the measurement of attitudes applicable to working in this area. It has been shown to have good internal consistency. These scales were measured at three points in time and robust statistical analyses carried out on the data. Additionally, the focus group data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's six phase RTA framework in a trustworthy and transparent manner. A deeper knowledge of the challenges associated with Compassionate Schools Program's implementation arose with this usage of a mixed methods approach. MacLochlainn et al. (2022) reports that the quantitative and qualitative data supported the positive impact of Compassionate Schools training on teacher attitudes towards trauma-impacted students. The quantitative findings revealed the two-day workshop had an immediate, positive and significant effect on attitudes related to trauma-based care in schools.

2.4.6 Challenges Measuring Reported Positive Shifts in Ethos

A number of studies (Fancourt, 2019; Kelly, 2021) state difficulty in assessing attainment and attendance trends due to changes in recording. This is a potentially informative and robust quantitative measure that is lacking. Another issue in some studies is that some of the measurements were open to bias. For example, some of the Bath & Spa Attachment Aware Schools data sets relied on subjective self-reporting. There were no third-party observations of practice. Sparling, Woods & Ford (2022) state that their study was essentially retrospective, which limited them in tailoring data gathering to inform the implementation of the approach. They report that their analysis has credibly identified the strengths and required improvements of the programme. However, the sample size of four headteachers is small and they conclude that a larger sample size including other sites would likely provide more detailed and useful information. The DAAS project (Kelly et al., 2020) reported a fundamental shift in the ethos of all 77 participant schools. This is a large sample of whole school communities that engaged in action research bespoke to their setting. The main positive impacts were reported to be transformed policy and systems, environment, staff and pedagogical development, a positive impact on pupils and more positive relationships with parents and carers. A single case study also reported a positive impact on ethos. Webber (2017) described a school where, after the approach, there was greater peace, greater connectedness, a changed atmosphere and the children could name their feelings and communicate in a new way.

Across the literature base, these approaches show promising results when it comes to both qualitative and quantitative measures. Kelly (2020) cites a ‘seismic shift’ in the participating schools. The approaches had a positive effect on ethos, pedagogy and

practice and impacted the language used, prompting a more holistic approach to children (Kelly, 2020) rather than just a focus on standardised expectations. The most significant change related to the ethos of the school. By its nature, a change to ethos is not a standardised thing, therefore it challenging to measure. In the 77 schools evaluated by Kelly (2020), the ‘attachment awareness of the whole school community’ had the most significant shift. There was a shift in pedagogical position that placed a greater emphasis on the emotional landscape of the students (Kelly, 2020). Across all of the studies, empathic, attuned interactions and the significant or ‘key’ adults in school that the pupils trusted were the central factors that impacted the pupils’ wellbeing (Rose et al., 2019). In the Bath & Spa AAS research, schools have also reported their whole school ethos has shifted. An ethos of care and consideration resulted in people being more empathic with each other (Fancourt, 2019). Kelly et al. (2020) state that an attachment-based approach equips adults with greater knowledge and understanding as well as practice that is better attuned to all children and young people, resulting in improved relationships. Parker and Levinson (2018) stated that the utilisation of emotion coaching as an attachment-based strategy was the main universal strategy adopted by all participating schools and that it appears to have been particularly effective, correlating with similar research elsewhere.⁷ Webber (2017) outlines how using PACE⁸ helps to develop relationships and reduces behavioural incidents in school. This school focused on shame-reducing conversations with its pupils. Webber (2017) states that is this response, rather than a reinforcement of the

⁷ Emotion coaching helps to develop relationships by helping adults to accept the pupils’ emotional experiences with increased empathy and to manage their own emotional reactions (Rose, 2019).

⁸ The PACE model utilises Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy to promote acceptance and empathy in response to the children’s experiences in order for relationships to grow and thrive (Webber, 2017).

pupils' feelings of worthlessness, that reduces negative behaviour. Webber (2017) concluded that all of the different strands of the school approach have had an impact and there is now evidence of a new, more peaceful and nurturing atmosphere. This positive conclusion also emphasises a difficulty across the research – that of how to isolate the positive impact of these approaches from the many other similar approaches going on in schools, without the use of a control group.

2.5 Important factors Across the Literature When Introducing Whole School Attachment-based Approaches

2.5.1 It is a Process, Not A One-off Event

There were many practical barriers that have impacted the introduction of these approaches. The Compassionate Schools Framework study by Quinn et al. (2021) stated that school leaders reported challenges when attempting to ensure that an integrated approach was implemented consistently across both practice and policy. This integration is complex and complicated by issues of staff capacity. Webber (2017, p. 15) states that “becoming attachment based is not just a one-off event, but a whole school ethos that embraces the training and participation of all stakeholders, including staff, parents or carers and wider professionals to address root level issues that may present as barriers to learning or accessing the school community”. As such, the approach requires ongoing strategic management, training and support. What the included papers have in common is that rather than ‘strategies’, they focused on the process over time of developing the attachment-based approach. There seems to be a danger in a passive training model that the participants do not have a chance to

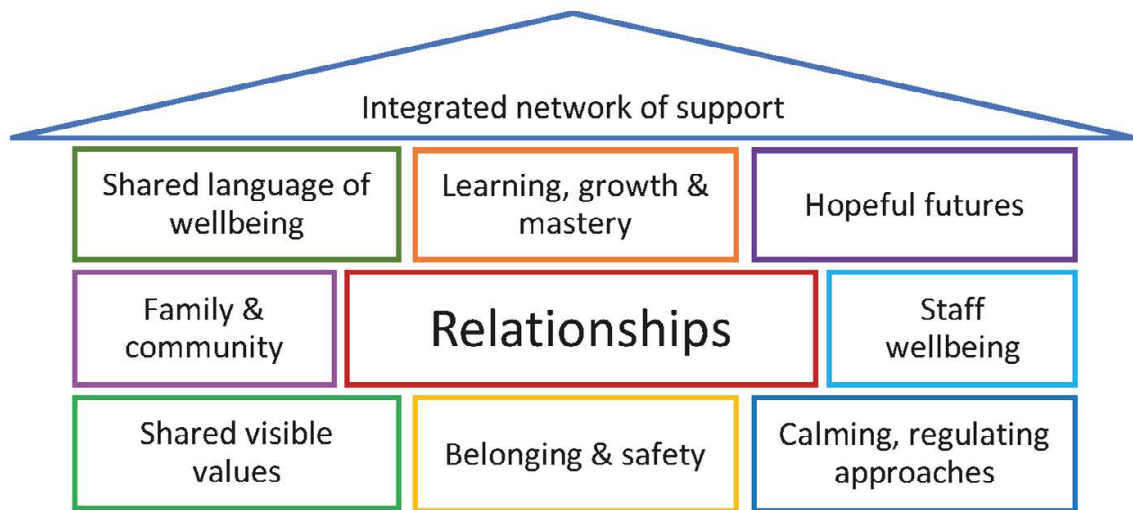
internalise the model through reflective practice and providing input to its design over time.

2.5.2 Importance of Shared Visible Values

Across the literature, there is a recognition that relational approaches may be more of a shift in value and mindset rather than a set of strategies. Quinn et al. (2021) highlight that shared and visible values across the school community that reflect compassion and connection are vital to the approach to ensure that the school environment promotes a sense of safety, belonging, connection and trust. Particular areas that have been raised for further research include how the individual teacher values and school values align and how this relates to how adults interpret and respond to children's behaviour. All four SLT members reported on the mindset shift that the training had facilitated, as highlighted by Sparling, Woods, and Ford (2022); in addition to adopting a more relational approach that prioritised compassion and empathy they were more emotionally responsive and more empathetic to the possible causes of challenging behaviours. Below Figure 2 displays the building blocks of the Compassionate Schools Framework (CSF) which reflect this integration of values, such as 'hopeful futures' and more action focused building blocks, such as 'calming regulating approaches'.

Figure 2

The 10 building blocks of the Compassionate Schools Framework (CSF)



A key element common to all studies is the emotional availability and wellbeing of the staff. The question of how the approach relates to the shared relational values and relational quality of the school is still to be explored (Quinn et al, 2021). One part of the CSF data collection focused on how individual and collective values align. They explored the link between values and behaviours and how to explore these ideas respectfully and openly with the school community. For example, the value shift in accepting the CSF principle of it being the adult that needed to change, rather than the child, was difficult for some of the staff to embed. In sum, the impact in terms of both shared and individual values on the CSF is still unclear. Parker and Levinson (2018, p. 9) assert that the complexity of power relationships and the human interactions which lie between the stated policy positions and everyday classroom practice cannot be ignored. School leaders have also highlighted the importance of exploring school values embedded within the school systems and policies (Quinn et al., 2021) and reported challenges in this. The issue of consistency of language across the different channels of communication in the school also highlighted complexity related to shared

values. One study referenced schools having wall displays and micro-scripts on cards for staff as reminders to use the language of emotion coaching in their daily interactions (Quinn et al., 2021).

2.5.3 Systemic Barriers to Change

The key barriers systemically were ownership of the approach, school staff capacity and practical considerations, and integration of the framework across the diverse elements of the school community. Sparling, Woods, and Ford (2022) report that an obstacle to change was some school administrators and staff members' lack of motivation, as some staff members still take a very traditional attitude and are averse to change. Quinn et al. (2021) highlighted that school leader discussions were one important part of a much bigger picture that needs to involve the entire school community. Aspland et al (2020, p. 21) emphasised SLT developing a clear vision and maintaining momentum, as other priorities emerge and indicated that there is “increased recognition that standard behaviour policies are not typically responsive to the needs of trauma-impacted young people due to their ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach”. According to Sparling et al. (2022), impediments included perceived programme complexity and the need for a "quick fix". Aspland et al (2020:22) made a number of recommendations for schools when beginning to introduce WSABA. They advise bringing partners together to provide a range of expertise, perspectives, support, and reach across the local systems; to find committed school leaders that recognise the need to find time for reflection and to secure some funding for training materials and continuous consultation support.

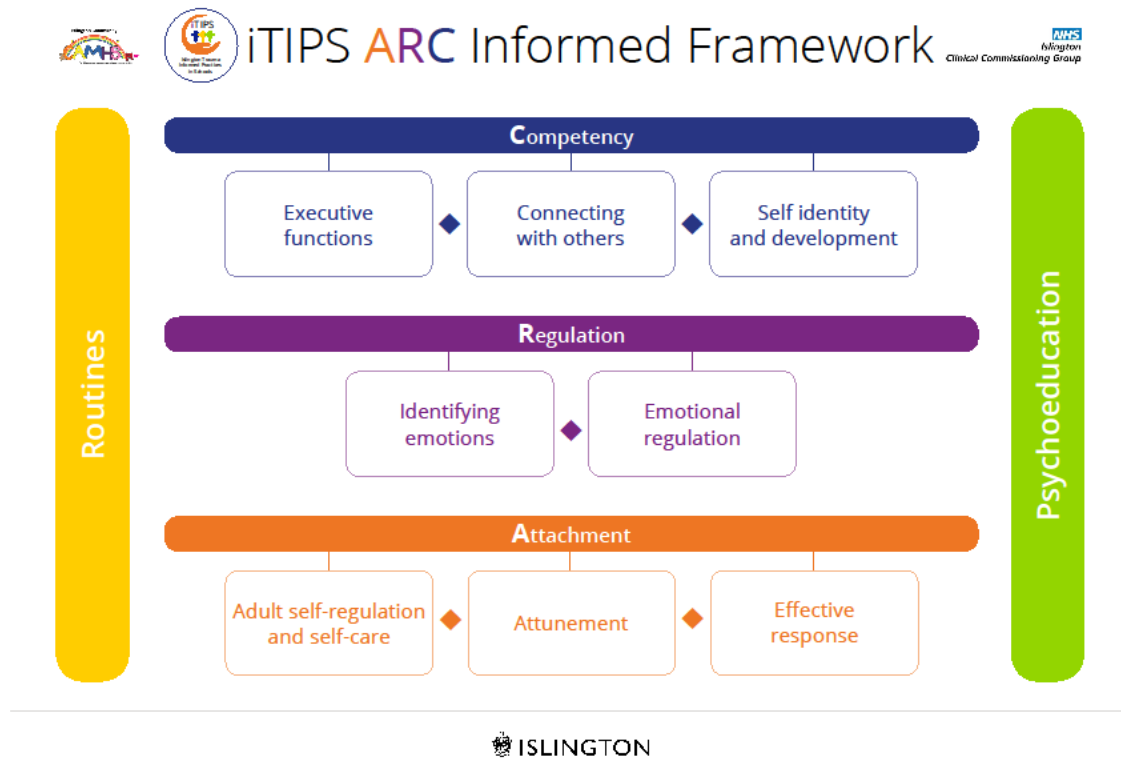
2.5.4 Issues of School Empowerment and the Coherence of the Whole School

Framework

The research has highlighted the tension between school empowerment and the external delivery of the approach. Sparling et al. (2022) reported that schools were required to designate champions whose responsibility it was to support organisational transformation. However, the participants schools did not appoint any active champions. It was clear that the schools needed more support to sustain these systems than perhaps external systems had anticipated. Aspland et al. (2020) stated that complex whole school initiatives are unlikely to be implemented in a rigid manner due to their nature. Each school runs differently in terms of leadership and competing demands. Consequently, a flexible strategy is required. However, there was also a real benefit to the iTIPS coherent framework reported the school staff utilising it. Based on Attachment, Regulation, and Competence, the ARC framework was tailored to individual people and situations around these three key areas. Figure 3 below outlines the framework.

Figure 3

The iTIPS research ARC framework



2.5.6 Not 'One Size Fits All'

Across all of the studies, unique approaches were needed to address the systemic factors or those found in the individual approaches with children. All approaches referred to the importance of this person and system centeredness. The provision in the single case study school was bespoke for each child using a multitude of strategies rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach (Webber, 2017). Kelly et al. (2020:334) state that "developing a better understanding in schools led to a more empathic, person-centred approach where the depth of learning has gone far beyond the implementation of any particular 'strategy'". A person-centred approach, by its very nature, is counter to a standardised approach. Fancourt (2019) states that reframing 'difficult' pupils as 'troubled' pupils will provide space to reconsider the most conducive response to

managing the behaviour of the most vulnerable pupils in school. This individualised approach implies that the expectations are child-centred and not uniform.

2.5.7 Importance of Person-Centred Adaptations to the Environment

In the DAAS research (Kelly et al., 2020), school had the need to "re-evaluate" and build policies, systems, and physical spaces in the schools has arisen as a result of expanding awareness of attachment needs. In the work of Quinn et al. (2021), the leaders referred to the importance of the environment offering different spaces for children to regulate, play and connect such as a chill zone and sensory garden. They had also devised opportunities for mechanisms for children to share their worries such as 'check-ins' and 'worry boxes'. Rose et al. (2019) also found that a key factor in the pupils' wellbeing was the school providing spaces in which children could calm down and self-regulate. Fancourt (2018) also gives the example of the use of a specific 'safe' place developed in school that the pupils knew they could go to calm down and be given time and space in which to process their feelings. Reflecting on their study, Kelly et al. (2020) report that there are now many more safe spaces and nurturing environments in the participant schools that are well integrated into the overall design of the school. The participants commented on the simplicity of the innovations that were made by slightly 'tweaking' things that might already be in place. Aspland, et al (2020:20) also noted the impact of minor changes in the environment such as "increasing pupils' sense of safety by changing fencing in the playground so passers-by cannot see in". In their action research study conducted in 77 schools, Kelly et al. (2020) found that the commonality was that small changes reaped significant rewards across their participant schools. It seemed that the deployment of resources in a more person centred and flexible way led to practical and pragmatic solutions that often-re-

used the materials and resources that the schools already had in a different place, different time or in an existing structure (Kelly et al., 2020). Reference was made to the importance of regulatory activities also being relational, for example, building connections with key adults upon arrival at school and using grounding activities when transitioning to the classroom.

The key element in adapting the environment seems to be that the changes are person-centred rather than rigid. An example given was the timetables and working patterns being changed so then key staff could greet named students at the door in the morning. This is a simple shift that could have great effect for this child. Aspland (2020) illustrated the example of altering staffing arrangements over lunchtime to ensure that teaching assistants are interacting with the students. The DAAS noted the significant impact that altering the physical environments had on pupils, and also assisted schools to identify key persons for vulnerable students at all levels within the staffing structure, affecting staffing in some schools by allocating staff in a more inclusive and person-centred way (Kelly et al., 2020). According to Webber (2017), school regulations may need to be adjusted to support adopted or looked-after children in different ways and policies should be adjusted to accommodate those with attachment needs.

2.5.8 Systemic Change Which Operates at Multiple Levels Needed to Embed WSABA

“To embed the approach, systemic change that operates at multiple levels within the ecosystem of school and wider society is necessary with a commitment by the senior leaders effecting the whole school engagement in the process” (Rose et al., 2019, p. 182). This type of systemic change is clearly a process over time. Attachment theory

was used to inform the wider school decision-making in participant schools, for example, regarding academic and pastoral issues (Kelly et al., 2020). Many of the participating schools in the DAAS project have had to "re-evaluate" and develop policies and systems as a result of the changes and challenges to the ethos brought about by a growing understanding of attachment needs. Kelly et al. (2020) cite the introduction of vertical tutoring for all students in Years 7 through 11 as an example of a minor adaptation. According to them, "this reflection on protocols has resulted in greater monitoring, documentation, and action; many of the efforts currently in schools are directly tied to attachment awareness" (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 344). To modify the environment to fit the needs of all students, a space for reflection appears essential. Such reflection will affect procedures and policies and embed change over time.

“A lack of shared understanding and expectations within educational settings, and poorly co-ordinated leadership from setting level to government, can diminish the impact and act as a barrier to sustainability” (Pearson et al., 2015, as cited in Rose 2019, p. 177). The AAS framework (Rose et al., 2019) lists the key elements needed to support effective implementation and highlights the collaborative partnerships with the wider community as a vital element that is not yet developed in the participant schools. Attachment-based practises were integrated with the school ethos and maintained with the help of supportive managerial structures and policies (Rose, 2019). Aspland et al. (2020) emphasise the need for school empowerment when embedding such approaches while recognising that external services are likely to continue to play an important role in introducing WSABA. They also highlight the need to develop models of reflective

practice in schools. Rose (2019) asserts that the input of all stakeholders is key to establish a shared understanding and expectations within educational settings.

2.5.9 WSABA Needs to Involve the Whole School Community

A key theme of participation across the whole school community emerged across the studies. This participation from all stakeholders in the school community was supportive to the staff and therefore helpful when implementing the approach. In the DAAS study, the largest impact was seen in the overall attachment awareness of the whole school community. The positive findings from the project reflect the importance of the whole school input to successfully implement the approach. Fancourt (2018) emphasises the importance of support from the senior leadership for the systemic reframing of children from ‘troublesome’ to ‘troubled’. Such a shift would require ongoing support due to implications for the school’s behaviour management policy. Staff pointed to the continuing concerns among staff when trying to balance these two elements of organisational culture. Ultimately, sustainable whole school change came about through changing the staff perceptions of such behaviour. In initial research for the taught section of their WSABA programme, Kelly et al. (2020) found that although practitioner intuition regarding attachment in schools was often present for staff, it needed to be developed. This was particularly so in relation to understanding the role of adults in school as secondary attachment figures.

2.5.10 Staff Capacity Issues and the Need for More Support

MacLochlainn et al (2022, p. 935) stated that “some staff felt disempowered in the face of relentless austerity imposed by educational policy and the pressures teaching staff

were operating under, whereas others alluded to the perceived lack of support from senior leadership in implementing the behaviour management policy”. Aspland (2020) too noted many staff frustrations; these included issues regarding resourcing and the pressure of information-sharing, the extent of the need for sustained investment in the approach, capacity issues and the lack of time to have individual relationships with children. Their research emphasises the case for the school staff to receive regular supervision from CAMHS. Quinn et al. (2021) reported a number of initiatives to support staff wellbeing, including formal reviews of stressors and workload, the appointment of wellbeing leads, prioritising discussion time during meetings, having access to pertinent training, recognising accomplishments, and allocating funds for both formal and informal wellbeing as well as intra-staff support. Parker and Levinson (2018) argue that “there is a need to consider affective, or feeling aspects, and how they affect the educational process, not simply for children and young people, but for teachers and other adults involved” (2018, p. 12). Aspland et al. (2020) state that schools should give careful thought to how they help staff members to cope in this challenging role with students that have experienced trauma, and how staff support one another. Concerns were raised regarding the challenges of prioritising time for these activities due to the competing demands in schools.

2.5.11 Need for Communities of Practice and Intra-staff Support

Kelly et al. (2020) stated that continued training, input and support grounded in attachment theory was central to the model of the DAAS study, for all staff. The paradigm of action research and reflective practice was instrumental in the school’s sense of ownership over the approach (Kelly, 2020). The active nature of the action

research versus a passive ‘training delivery’ model was reported to be much more impactful for the schools. A lack of clear direction or a follow-up was cited by SLT participants as a barrier as the school felt that the approach petered out over time. The on-going process of becoming attachment-based and in particular the ongoing support external to the school was beneficial when it came to supporting the staff practice. This ongoing support, or community of practice, was highlighted across many of the studies as being of vital importance for support and learning (Sparling et al., 2022; Kelly et al. 2020; Quinn et al., 2021).

One important aspect of the research was the lack of clarity regarding what should be done after the training (Sparling, 2022). This lack of clarity emphasises the need to have a thorough implementation strategy with clearly defined priorities, achievable techniques, and success indicators. Sparling et al. (2022) state that the approach emphasises staff development, empowerment, and capacity building, all of which need to be fostered by skilled coaching and mentoring. The evidence suggests that training sessions without a clear strategy containing adequate planning and support are unlikely to become embedded. Kelly et al. (2020, p. 335) state that “the 77 schools in their research became communities of inquiry and hubs of excellence through the process of practice-as-research, where the cyclical nature of action research enhances the complementary relationship of theory and practice.” Rather than an approach that was ‘done to’ schools, it was a journey of ‘development with’ the schools, with the intervention tailored to their particular setting over time. The DAAS study demonstrated the need for continued training, input and support grounded in attachment theory with teachers and colleagues in other schools. This was instrumental in the design of the programme which concluded that the support the staff received from the

reflective practice and action-research elements of the programme was the key to its successful implementation. The ‘community of inquiry’ of the participating schools also provided ongoing support and contributed to the success of practice. In the taught sessions, group discussions and reflective practice were key to embedding understanding and exploring how to bring theory into practice in their individual settings (Kelly et al., 2020). Fancourt also identifies ongoing professional support (2019) as central to the AAS approach.

In the DAAS model (Kelly et al., 2020), problems are seen of as part of the process. A key facet of this model is a community of practice across the schools, that solve problems together. By establishing this community, the researchers gave vital support to the participants, particularly when other schools had encountered similar issues in their setting. There were common shared dilemmas which were faced by the group that was facilitated by the DAAS programme leads. In this way, reflective practice helped to provide support for the practical issues. To deepen understanding and share learning on implementation and impact within a supporting network, Quinn et al. (2021) also stress the need for continued collaboration through a multi-agency community of practise. They make specific reference to schools needing to further understand vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and the impact on the adults who are supporting children with complex emotional needs.

2.5.12 Person Centred Adaptations to the Environment

This literature review concluded that adaptations to the existing school space based on individual need is key. Webber (2019) emphasised the importance of the physical environment to support the child’s sense of comfort and safety. Adjustments brought

rewards. The biggest commonality across the literature is the need for person-centred planning. In the extant literature, there was a common theme of adjusting things that were already in place and using them in a flexible, more person-centred way. For example in Aspland et al. (2020) the playground barriers were adjusted so that onlookers could not see in. This gave the children a higher sense of safety and security while playing outside and reduced the number of behavioural incidents that occurred.

2.5.13 Emotion Coaching

Rose et al. (2019) pointed out that emotion coaching has a place in supporting the universal mental health and wellbeing of the entire school community. Parker and Levinson (2018) refer to the use of emotion coaching as an attachment-based strategy and specified that it was the main, universal strategy adopted by all schools referenced within their paper. They state that the approach appears to have been particularly effective, correlating with similar research elsewhere.

2.5.14 Practical Issues

Across the studies, obstacles emerged to the WSABA including practical aspects of capacity to attend training such as working hours, locations, and personnel availability. Aspland et al. (2020) detailed the practical challenges of coordinating and releasing staff and uncertainty regarding how to make the best use of the schools CAMHS time. An integrated approach implemented consistently across both practice and policy will be faced with many challenges such as size and organisational complexity of some schools, tensions with the current systems of behaviour management and the different beliefs and values of the staff members (Quinn et al., 2021). This complexity in terms of what happens in real-life practice and in the classroom is a key issue. Mediators on

the impact of the training on ‘in the moment’ practice is a key area for future research. A strong existing commitment to the WSABA was needed. This can be demonstrated in early and effective planning supported by staff training and the consistent monitoring of outcomes. Parker and Levinson state that isolated mental health-focused approaches in school are limited in their effectiveness. They caution that such approaches “could be seen as an add on to the real business of education” (2018, p. 9).

2.5.15 Limitations and Areas of Uncertainty

Despite the relatively large number of records screened in the systematic search, just nine were eligible for inclusion in this systematic review of the literature. The bulk of the literature located was published in the United States where trauma-based practice was developed over twenty years ago. However, much of this research referred to non-school services as well as school-based models rather than the whole school (Sweeney et al., 2016). It is clear from the scope of the grey literature that there is a wealth of enthusiasm for these approaches and an enthusiasm to get the findings released into forums where they can be shared with schools, such as conferences and educational magazines. In recent studies, the increased methodological rigour is welcomed as the findings can be interpreted less cautiously.

There are a number of elements that are unclear from the recent literature:

- What can we know about establishing outcome measures of effectiveness for whole school relational interventions in school such as WSABA?
- In terms of the positive results found from the more robust studies and in light of the broad scope of WSABA – what is working and why?

- How does the training need to be posed to staff in terms of complexity and duration to be relevant to staff?
- Is emotion coaching the main, universal strategy that has been particularly effective across other research, as the Bath Spa Attachment Aware Schools model has found?
- Are there appropriate resources and capacity to provide ongoing support for the approach to embed and sustain such approaches internally in schools?

2.6 Conclusions of the Literature Review

The diffuse literature base has helped to identify, define, and explore the overall research problem in more depth. This literature review has provided input into the conceptual and theoretical framework of the current study. There is a considerable practice-based evidence base to support WSABA but it tends to be evidence informed rather than evidence-based (Parker & Levinson, 2018). The available literature, which is relatively limited, has lacked methodological rigour. There has been a substantial uptick in quality in recent years. There are promising results across all papers. Aspland et al. (2020) stress that iTIPS research will continue to build the evidence base to understand what is having the most effect within their framework, as of that is yet unclear. Once there is clarity around the most effective elements of such approaches, their impact can be maximised. The model can be adapted to empower schools to embed these approaches internally and become less reliant on external support. The next chapter will present the methodology of the current study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Chapter Overview

This chapter will begin with establishing the research purpose and a restating of the research question. The conceptual framework of critical realism will be established, and the ontological and epistemological foundations of the study will be clarified. A nuanced description of reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) as a method will be presented. The author will outline how the research was held to the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) at all stages. The process of the data collection and the recruitment strategy are described along with the demographics of the eight participants of the study. The process of data collection through semi-structured interviews will be described along with a discussion of researcher reflexivity. The analysis of the data using RTA will be illustrated and supported with examples. The trustworthiness of the research will be considered and steps taken to ensure that high quality and ethical qualitative research will be outlined.

3.1 Research Purpose

This research has sought to paint a rich picture of what issues the school staff describe as important during the process of introducing a whole school attachment-based approach. As seen in the review of the literature, the area of whole school attachment-based approaches is relatively novel. Exploratory research involves investigating a problem that has not been studied thoroughly before. A richness of detail was required to provide a plausible answer to the research question. This aim was well suited to the qualitative exploratory type of research method.

3.2 Research Question

All research needs a question to guide the inquiry and the way that the question is posed has important implications for the study (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). The research question serves as a boundary for the study in terms of the scope of its exploration. The current research aimed to elicit staff views about issues that they describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach. To gather the staff views, perceptions and representations, a broad exploratory research question was fitting. This exploratory research aimed to highlight more nuanced themes for future research as it identified repeated patterns of meaning across the data set. The research question was formulated as follows: “What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?”

3.3 Conceptual Framework of the Current Research

3.3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a set of commonly held beliefs and assumptions within a research community about the ontological, epistemological and methodological concerns (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014, p. 167). Aliyu, Singhry and Adamu (2015) state that paradigms differ in their assumptions about how one sees the world. This is also referred to as ontology, thinking about the world, or epistemology, acting in the world, or axiology. The assumptions of this research will be clarified below. In addition to being instrumental in shaping every aspect of the research strategy, the paradigm was key in locating the conclusions extrapolated from the findings. Below in Figure 4 the elements of a research paradigm are illustrated.

Figure 4

Elements of a research paradigm



3.3.2 Critical Realist Paradigm

This researcher adopted a critical realist paradigm. Critical realists are pragmatic in their approach to the methodology and methods (Haigh et al., 2019). A critical realist paradigm enables the exploration of multiple realities and the experiences of the participants. Reflexive TA (RTA) explores the truth or truths of the participants' contextually situated experiences, perspectives and behaviours and it is typically underpinned by some form of realist ontology (Braun & Clarke, 2021). RTA is described "as a situated and interactive process, reflecting both the data, the positionality of the researcher and the context of the research itself" (Braun & Clarke, n.d. p. 15). This sits well in the paradigm of critical realism, as we will see below.

3.3.3 Ontology and Critical Realism

Ontology refers to the process of enquiry into the form and nature of reality; clarifying one's ontological position is the starting point in a chain of conceptual decisions

(Fleetwood, 2014). Critical realism was the ontological stance of this study. Realism, in a gross simplification, is the idea that something is real or an objective reality. “Ontological realism claims that at least a part of reality is ontologically independent of human minds” (Niiniluoto, 1999, p. 1). “Critical realism is a contemporary uptake of the realist ontological perspective that reality exists independent of the human mind regardless of whether it is comprehensible or directly experienceable” (Lever, 2013, p. 2). Critical realism posits that reality is “stratified, emergent, transformational, systemically open, becoming processual and often relational” (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 191).

3.3.4 Epistemological Position in Critical Realism

Epistemology is the study of knowledge. Critical realism assumes the position of epistemological relativism – the idea that there are many ways of knowing. As Oliver (2012:373) states, “what is thought of as reality is mediated through the filters of language, meaning-making and social context”. It is not possible to divorce ourselves from our singular perspective which is formed from a myriad of mutually interacting factors. Critical realism posits that ‘facts’ are not neutral but a product of knowledge and as such, are historically, culturally and socially situated. There is no ‘neutral’ position from which to assess reality. “There is no way of knowing the world except under more or less historically transient descriptions” (Bhaskar, 2009, p. 99 as cited in Rutzou, 2015). Our perception of reality is context dependent. Fletcher (2017) posits that the ‘critical’ tenet of critical realism relates to the fundamental point that ontology is not reducible to epistemology or that statements about the world (ontology) are not reducible to statements about our world knowledge (epistemology). This would

constitute an ‘epistemic fallacy’. There is a recognition of the tenuous nature of knowledge and a subordination of epistemology to ontology.

3.3.5 Critical Realism in Practice

Critical realism asserts that there is a real social world that we can attempt to understand or access through philosophy and social science (Danermark et al., 2002). ‘Judgemental rationality’ asserts that theories can be more or less ‘truth like’. Within critical realism, there are four ‘modes’ of reality. Fleetwood (2004) outlines these as including things that are ‘materially’ real and can exist independently of what people say, do or think, for example, the ocean. Things that are ‘artefactually’ real are conceptually mediated, for example, cosmetics. ‘Ideally’ real refers to purely conceptual entities such as language. Finally, something that is ‘socially’ real relates to social structures, for example, gender. These are dependent on human activity for their existence. Bhaskar’s (1978) ontological conceptualisation postulated three ‘layers’ of reality – real, actual, and empirical. In practice, while critical realism can mean a great many things, the universally accepted element of this approach is that of a stratified reality. “Natural and social reality should be understood as an open stratified system of objects with causal powers” (as cited in Morton, 2006, p. 2). For example, a leaf falls – the ‘actual’. This occurs whether humans experience or interpret it. This event can be experienced in different ways as it is filtered through the individual’s interpretation – the ‘empirical’. A leaf falling is governed by various causal mechanisms which affect events as we experience them, for example, gravity – the ‘real’. A critical realist framework recognises that culture and society are generated by humans. As such, it is in a constant state of flux. These societal ‘open structures’ are culturally situated; therefore they cannot be predicted.

Critical realists posit that the social world can be understood if people develop an understanding of the structures that generate events. These ‘generative mechanisms’ are key when offering at least part of an explanation for all phenomena. Critical realist theory seeks to formulate a deep understanding of complex social situations and social processes which goes much deeper than the observable. A ‘thick’ exploratory model of social events will reference causal mechanisms – processes by which an outcome occurs. Oliver (2012, p. 374) states that “in our complex social world, multiple causal mechanisms, including the interpretations of each situation made by each individual, constantly interact with, negate, and reinforce each other.”

3.3.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is used for identifying, analysing, organising, describing and reporting the themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It is the most popular analytical method in psychology. Braun and Clarke are considered to be the central version with many iterations (2006; 2016; 2019a; 2019b). TA is most accurately described as an ‘umbrella term’ or a family of methods that share some common elements. However, there are substantial divergences in philosophical assumptions, conceptualisations of key constructs and analytic procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2021). TA is a pattern-based qualitative analytic approach that explores and interprets patterns across a data set, so it was a good fit with the exploratory aims of this research that sought to identify and interpret what was important for a diverse staff population. When selecting the TA, a choice must be made between “a diverse range of approaches that can differ considerably in their underlying (but often implicit) conceptualisations of qualitative research, meaningful knowledge production, and key constructs such as

themes, as well as analytic procedures” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 3). Braun and Clarke (2021) now identify the three main “schools” of TA as coding reliability, codebook and reflexive.

3.3.7 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The TA approach outlined in the seminal paper ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that evolved over the years is now referred to by the authors as Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA). Byrne (2021, p. 1) states that “Braun and Clarke have repeatedly iterated that researchers who choose to adopt their approach should interrogate their relevant publications beyond their 2006 article and adhere to their contemporary approach.” Braun and Clarke (2019) construe RTA as a methodology that is more aligned with the constructivist vein. A single analyst is typical in RTA as ‘bias’ is not assumed to be an issue or a problem but rather the primary tool. As the central aspect of RTA is the subjectivity of the researcher, a high level of reflexivity and insight around this subjectivity is needed for quality RTA. This reflexivity should include their considering of the impact of their assumptions and the theoretical grounding. Pre-existing theory is used as a lens through which to understand the data. Reflexive TA is not about “testing” a pre-existing theoretical framework or hypothesis (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 8) but acknowledging the impact of the same upon analysis. The current research aimed to represent the participant’s views faithfully while being self-reflexive of their interpretative analysis throughout.

3.3.8 Critical Realism and Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Oliver states that critical realism “marries the positivist’s search for evidence of a reality external to human consciousness with the insistence that all meaning to be made

of that reality is socially constructed” (2012, p. 372). This study attempted to uncover the causal mechanisms and complex social processes that form the issues that staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach. Such an approach can be described objectively and compared across different settings. However, the participants’ viewpoints on the social processes that come to be important when introducing them will be subjective and nuanced. Braun and Clarke describe the scope of an RTA “as extending beyond experiential phenomena to social processes and the social construction of meaning” (2021, p. 8). This would facilitate the exploration of the multiple realities and allow for the experience of underlying social processes while extracting the commonalities and themes that were relevant to the research question.

Critical realism does not offer a specific procedure for the conducting of research, nor is it associated with any one set of methods. Since it is not constrained by a specific theoretical framework RTA can be applied broadly throughout the epistemological and ontological spectrum and is theoretically flexible (Braun and Clarke 2021). RTA can be carried out in several different ways including from a realist perspective (Clarke, 2021). As we shall see below, reflexive TA is more in line with the ‘big Q’ approach whereby qualitative methods are seen as inseparable from the wider methodological process, comprising of such aspects as interpretivism, relativism and constructivism (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). This ‘big Q’ approach is in line with the assumptions of critical realism regarding how reality is mediated. Therefore, a Reflexive Thematic Analysis within a critical realist framework was deemed to be an appropriate paradigm within which to conduct the study.

3.9 Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke outline a recursive six-phase process when undertaking RTA. The authors caution that these phases are a tool to guide the researcher rather than a rigid dictum. Analysis in RTA is described as a subjective process. The ever-changing impact of the researcher upon the process is held in mind at all stages. The phases that the authors outline are described sequentially, however they emphasise that RTA typically involves a recursive process between the different phases; it is a coiled approach rather than a linear one (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Braun & Clake (2019) encourage a rigorous process of data interrogation and engagement with the data in a creative way. They explain the stages as practice-oriented "tools" that drive the analysis. However, emphasise that "creativity is central to the process, within a framework of rigor" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 9).

3.9.1 Phase 1: Familiarising Oneself with the Data

The first phase of the process of RTA is familiarisation with the dataset. In the current study, this phase began during the interviews and continued during the lengthy process of line-by-line transcription. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher shortly following the interview. During this stage, although there was no explicit coding, the researcher was deeply immersed in the data and continuously reflected on the tone and the verbal content of the interview. During the process of transcription, the researcher reflected on the meaning of the words as they had received them in the interview versus the meaning conveyed through the words on the page, free from non-verbal cues. This process prompted a deeper reflection about what the content might represent conceptually. After the transcription process, the researcher took a lengthy break from the research. When they actively read each interview at a later stage it helped to give

them a renewed sense each interview as a whole, as well as a sense of patterns across the dataset. Brief notes regarding analytic observations were written on the documents as the transcripts were examined. These notes included potential initial codes and comments on tone, pauses and emphasis. The researcher also underlined segments that illustrated the use of specific phrasing that struck the researcher as potentially significant. Therefore, the researcher's reflective capacity was deepened by this ongoing scrutiny of the data through careful reading and re-reading prior to explicitly coding the data.

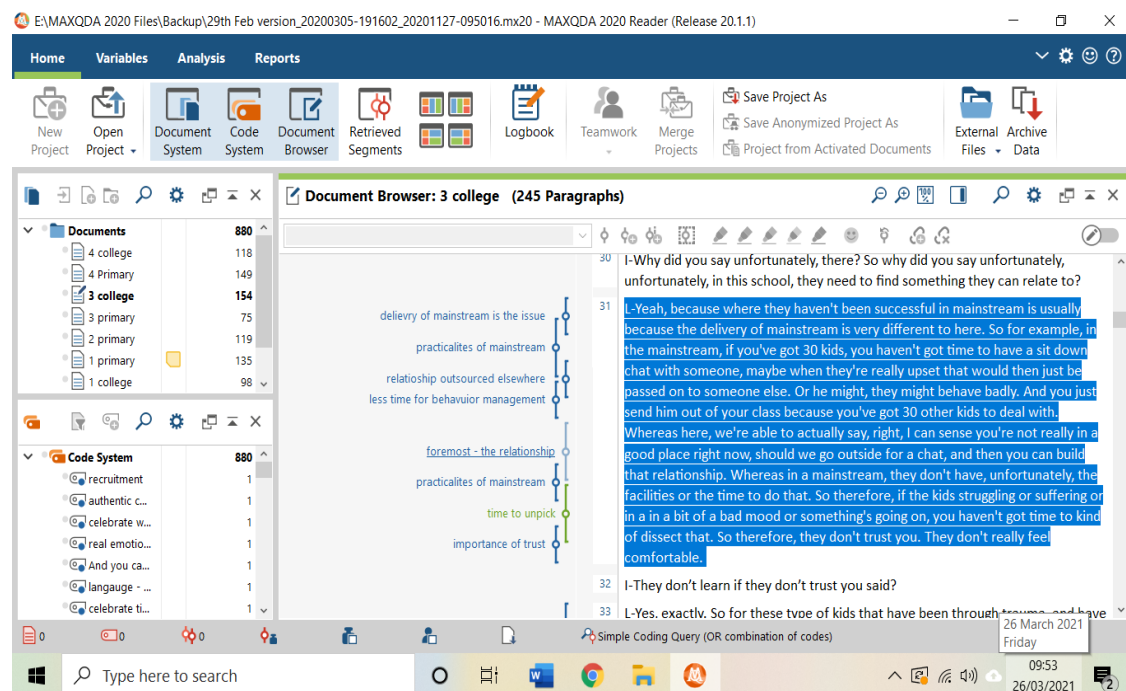
3.9.2 Phase 2: Generating the Initial Codes

Coding is a process of interpretation by the researcher. Braun and Clarke (2019) state that nuanced coding only occurs from immersive and lengthy engagement with the data over time. In the current research, the interview transcripts were uploaded to MaxQDA 11. This was done so then the initial coding could be completed using the programme to facilitate ease of access to the coded segments for repeated analysis. The current research focused on both semantic and latent coding (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Semantic refers to the explicit content of the words used, whereas latent coding refers to capturing the ideas being conveyed underneath the actual words spoken. The researcher engaged in line-by-line coding. This was done to capture all possible data from the interviews. Codes were grouped together over several lines, if necessary, to reflect complete sentences as they were spoken. Coding labels were given that captured the key aspects of the data. The researcher often used 'in-vivo' codes. In-vivo codes emphasise the actual words of the participants which is helpful when researchers interact with participants from a micro-culture such as a school (Strass & Corbin, 1998). This helps to highlight how the participants use specific words and phrases, and what these

specific words and phrases mean to them. In-vivo codes also highlight the participant voice and allows the participants themselves to give meaning to the data. In the initial stages of coding, incidents of a similar nature were noted and compared against other similar incidents to determine the similarities and differences. Codes were provisional and evolved in an organic way during the recursive coding process as researcher insight developed. Some individual coding labels were refined as the researcher's interpretation of the data developed over multiple rounds of coding and reading of the dataset. The codes often overlapped across a text segment. In sum, the eight interviews resulted in 523 unique codes. Below in Figure 5 is an example of the initial coding of a 13-line segment of text. 8 initial codes were generated from this segment.

Figure 5

Example of the initial coding of a segment



3.9.3 Phase 3: Generating Initial Themes

The next phase is the researcher actively generating initial or candidate themes. Codes are the building blocks of themes. When themes are produced the focus of analysis shifts from the interpretation of individual data items to the interpretation of aggregated meaning throughout the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Themes are conceptualised as patterns of shared meaning based on a central organising construct (Braun et al., 2014). A theme captures a frequently occurring pattern across a dataset that is clustered around a central organising concept. A theme describes different facets of the central organising concept, thereby demonstrating the theme's patterning across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Braun and Clarke suggest a maximum of three theme levels to avoid the risk of fragmentation and an under-developed analysis; these are overarching themes which are often used to structure and organise the data, themes which are organised around a central concept and subthemes which capture and highlight a central facet of a theme (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). These patterns of meaning are generated through the researcher's analytic engagement with the dataset. In thematic analysis, meanings are understood as contingent upon these specific contexts (Finlay, 2021). The researcher actively co-constructs meaning with the participants during the interviews as well as in the construction of the themes. In the current study, the codes and coded data were reviewed in an interpretive fashion. This was done by printing all of 523 unique codes onto paper and cutting them out. The researcher could physically move the cut-out codes on a large space. Initially, the codes were moved into domain summaries that related to broad topics in the data. Examples of such broad topics were 'SLT' or 'training'. Following this, contrasts and commonalities were assessed within and across these broad domain summaries. Following this, interpretations of patterns of meaning were tested out by physically

moving the codes into preliminary themes in a recursive fashion. The 523 codes were clustered together into 41 preliminary themes.

3.9.4 Phases 4 and 5: Constructing and Reviewing Potential Themes

Braun and Clarke (2012) caution about engaging in an overly complicated or fragmented analysis. They suggest some key questions to consider as the potential themes are reviewed. These are, what is the quality of the theme? What is the utility of this theme in terms of interpreting patterns in the dataset to answer the research question? Is the theme coherent? What are the boundaries of the theme and is there enough data to support it? These questions were considered throughout analysis. The reviewing and construction of themes best happens over time as this prolonged exposure to the data will lead to a depth that goes beyond the superficial. Finlay (2021, p. 09) states that “the process of coding requires a continual bending back on oneself – questioning and querying assumptions we are making in interpreting and coding the data”. Themes are a result of the interplay of the data, the researcher’s subjectivity, theoretical and conceptual understanding, training and experience (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The 41 preliminary themes initially formed in the current research were more descriptive in nature. In a working document these preliminary themes were refined conceptually. This refinement involved four initial themes being amalgamated into two during the process of their central organising concepts being clarified. The first theme amalgamated was ‘culture of school’ and ‘ethos’ and the second ‘mainstream and AA’ and ‘mainstream hinders delivery of AA approach’. One theme was also discarded in this phase. Braun and Clarke (2020) caution that not every theme is important to the story. Qualitative research is not about giving a complete and final total picture but rather about telling a relevant, important, key and rich story in relation to the research

question. Considering this guidance, one candidate theme was removed, 'Parents', as it did not contribute to a pattern in the dataset.

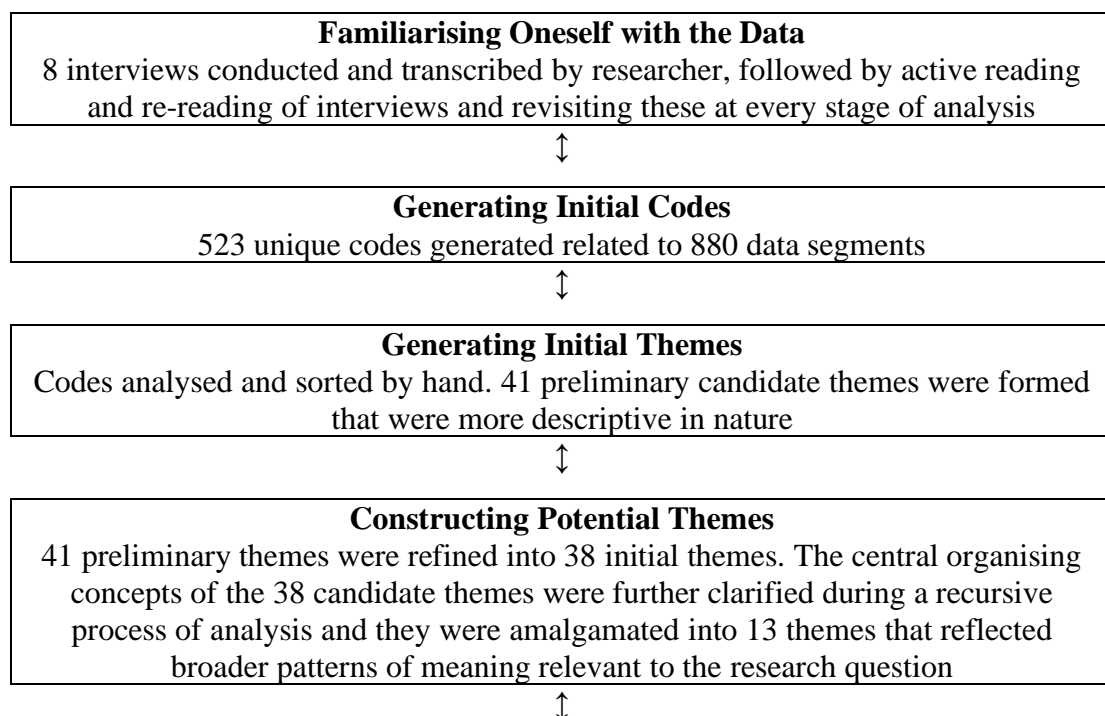
The central organising concepts of the 38 initial themes were considered. The researcher engaged in a recursive process of analysis. This was done by cutting candidate themes out of paper. In this way the themes could be moved around, and different interpretations tested. The 38 themes were amalgamated into 13 themes that served to reflect broader patterns of meaning. Each of these 13 themes underwent a detailed analysis of its scope and focus to ensure that they were pertinent to the research question and that there was minimal overlap between them. In doing so, the boundaries of the theme were established, and the central concept of each theme was clarified. Themes and subthemes were checked against both the coded data and the entire dataset to ascertain if there was coherence. The 13 themes were assessed then for commonalities and connections that would organise them into a broader story relevant to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2015). In a recursive, non-linear process of analysis the 13 themes were organised under 5 overarching themes. The overarching theme captured an idea that underpinned the themes. Overarching themes “tend to organise and structure an analysis; they capture an idea underpinning a number of themes but are rarely analysed themselves in any depth” (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016: 12). There was limited overlap between the 5 over-arching themes and the distinctions between them were clear. Finally, the overarching themes and themes were named. Braun and Clarke (2021) state that the name given to each theme should capture the key idea and relate to the central organising concept in some way. Over time, the names of the themes were continually refined and assessed for best ‘fit’ in terms of their contribution to the analytic narrative. Ultimately the names were a mixture of more

descriptive titles and ‘in vivo’ quotes that attempt to illustrate the ‘story’ of the theme by directly utilising the participant’s words. See Appendix J for an illustration of overarching themes, themes, subthemes and codes.

3.9.5 Phase 6: The Write-Up

This final phase is the writing up of the research. This involves weaving together the analytic narrative into a coherent story with supporting data extracts. The narrative or ‘story’ of the entire dataset was considered as well as the coherence and plausibility of the answer that it was providing to the research question. The narrative was continually compared to the codes and interviews to ensure that the pattern analysis was faithful to the participants’ narratives. Figure 6 below summarises the recursive process of analysis and write up.

Figure 6 Recursive Process of Analysis



Reviewing Potential Themes

5 overarching themes were constructed to structure and organise the 13 themes. The 5 overarching themes were confirmed and named. Overarching themes, themes and subthemes were continually assessed for fit and relevance to research question



The Write Up

Narrative constructed outlining the 5 final overarching themes, 13 themes and 38 subthemes. Thematic map constructed to illustrate the analysis

3.10 Alternatives to the Thematic Analysis

An alternative that the researcher considered in the initial stages of the research was interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA appealed to the democratic values of the researcher. IPA has a focus on personal meaning and sense making in a particular context, for example, people that share a particular experience (Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009). It allows the participants to express their stories the way they see fit without distortion (Alase, 2017). This was in line with the exploratory research aims. However, IPA did not have the power to interpret patterns across large datasets, so it was deemed to be unsuitable for the aim of this research which was to paint a rich picture of what issues the school staff describe as important during the process of introducing a whole school attachment-based approach.

3.11 Ethics

3.11.1 Ethical Principles and Permissions

In recent years, the premise that we should primarily think of ethics as something that can be stated in principles and rules has been questioned (Willig & Rogers, 2017). The BPS “Code of Human Research Ethics” states that no code can replace the need for psychologists to use their professional and ethical judgement. Fundamentally, thinking

is not optional (BPS, 2014). The ethical spirit of the code is what should guide thinking. The code is underpinned by four guiding principles: respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities, scientific integrity, social responsibility, maximising benefit, and minimising harm (BPS, 2014). These principles were kept in mind across all stages of the research project. Ethical approval was sought from the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC) which was granted on the resubmission attempt in May 2019 (See Appendix K). Permission from the local authority was obtained through the Research Board and informally through the principal educational psychologist sanctioning the project via email. The devices used to record the interviews were password protected and to ensure that the recordings remained confidential, each file name was anonymised. The Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance currently states that data should normally be preserved and accessible for 10 years. This study was also kept in line with the fifth principle of the Data Protection Act (1998) which states that personal data shall not be kept for any longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it was collected – therefore all electronic data will undergo secure disposal after 10 years.

3.11.2 Risk

Risk as it relates to research is defined as the potential for physical or psychological harm, discomfort, or stress to the human participants (BPS, 2014). The proposed research involves no anticipated risks to the participants that were greater than those encountered in everyday life. Interviews were undertaken at the participants' usual place of work, specifically within their school in the local authority. The researcher was available to the participants following their interview if they needed to voice any concerns relating to any area of the research. This did not occur.

3.11.3 Consent

Based consent was sought from the participants. The information sheet (see Appendix L) and consent forms form clearly outlined the demands of the study regarding the participants and contained detailed information about the process of the research and how their data would be used. Following this, based consent was sought through a participant consent form (see Appendix M). The participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any point during the study and they were also reminded that they could have their data removed from the analysis if they so wished. Due to the prospective participants being employed in a teaching capacity in their respective school, all participants had sufficient spoken and written English to access the written information and to give based consent. There was no form of payment or incentive available or offered to the participants of this research.

3.11.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was assured as much as was practical. The responses gathered in the data collection phase were anonymised. Information identifying the local authority, the participants and other staff and the schools in which they work was removed from the data at the point of transcription. All of the data collected was stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), Essex University's Data Protection Policy and GDPR, ensuring that only the researcher, director of studies and examiners had the data of the fully anonymised transcripts.

3.11.5 Competency

The BPS statement of values in respect to competency (2018, p. 6) states “psychologists value the continuing development and maintenance of high standards of competence in their professional work and the importance of working within the recognised limits of their knowledge, skill, training, education and experience.” The researcher reflected on their competence throughout and any issues regarding this were brought up in supervision as needed.

3.11.6 Trustworthiness

Establishing a universal standard of quality for thematic analysis (TA) is complicated by the existence of numerous iterations of the TA that differ paradigmatically, philosophically, and procedurally. Many of the common problems seen in the literature are underpinned by an assumption of homogeneity (Braun & Clarke, 2020). This author set out to outline their understanding of RTA as opposed to other methods in the ‘family’ of TA and to outline the impact of the RTA method as part of their research design. In attempting to establish trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba’s “four-dimensions criteria” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was also considered. The authors created stringent criteria that encompasses four factors as indicators of quality – credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. This study will outline its attempts to meet these criteria.

3.11.7 Credibility

Credibility relates to the level of confidence in the research findings being a reasonable interpretation of the participants’ original contribution (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) and this depends on the ability and effort of the researcher. To demonstrate this, the

researcher solicited feedback from all eight participants which was used to guide further refinement. Likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting school closures, there was a relatively low response rate of 50% but all participants responded positively to the analysis of the researcher. Nowell et al. (2017) argues that the recording and disclosing of systematic methods of analysis with sufficient detail is important in helping the reader to determine whether or not the research is credible. Examples of the analysis are contained within Appendix J. Additionally, the MaxQDA USB containing the study data is available on request.

3.11.8 Transferability

Transferability relates to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Many qualitative researchers de-emphasise the aim of transferability (Misco, 2007). The current study aimed to richly describe and interpret patterns across staff experience. Transferability was achieved through engaging in ‘thick description’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and making the context explicit, thereby more easily enabling any conclusions to be drawn as to the transferability of the current research.

3.11.9 Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of the findings over time regardless of time, researcher and analysis technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study holds that their interpretation was reasonable as per the feedback received that fed into further refinement of the analysis, as described in section 3.11.7. The examples of analysis in Appendix J can be evaluated by an outside observer (Sikolia et al., 2013).

3.11.10 Confirmability

“Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but clearly derived from the data” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This is supported by the full transcripts and initial codes that are available on request. This thesis also includes coding examples in Appendix J. In addition, the participant feedback gathered regarded the initial analysis as a fitting reflection.

3.11.11 Power

Power can shut down topics or open them up. The interviewer “sets the stage, controls the setting, controls the script and initiates the questionings in accordance with his or her research interest” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2005, as cited in Anyan, 2013, p. 4). A potential pitfall is the interviewer consciously or unconsciously influencing the data gathered. In line with the reflexive thematic analysis methodology, the researcher adopted an open and expansive presence to encourage the interviewees to share their experience openly. However, ultimately the power lay with the participants who could choose not to engage authentically in the interviews. This is beyond the control of the interviewer. Power between individuals in an interaction is ever shifting and negotiated. In each participant school, the initial interview held was with the instigator of the approach. In only one case was that a professional from an external agency, a school counsellor that worked in the school. In this instance, there seemed to be a notable difference in terms of the lessened sense of ownership over the execution of the approach. In every other case, a member of the SLT was the instigator and therefore the participant first to be interviewed in the school. The fact that the majority of the participants were from the senior leadership teams was noted. In two schools, no

support staff or teachers were interviewed. The impact of the level of authority of the participants will be explored in the discussion.

3.12 Reflexivity

In Reflexive Thematic Analysis, the researcher is the instrument. Researchers bring biases, beliefs, and assumptions into the research; therefore reflexivity is paramount. Braun and Clarke (2012) define reflexivity as a critical reflection on the research process and on one's own role as researcher. This reflexivity statement will be split into data collection and analysis, as well as the researcher's position and politics.

3.12.1 Reflexivity in Data Collection and Analysis

It is not possible to ask questions without making assumptions and often, these assumptions are unwittingly made. Gardener (2006, p. 261) states “each encounter or interview, even if it is concerned with the same topic and conducted with the same participants will produce different data, since it is a product of the unique circumstances operating at the time...the more the researcher tried to act as a ‘witness’ who should ‘fix’ the world view(s) of the research participant, the more he/she is in danger of ignoring the co-constructedness of research encounters.” Rather than trying to remove the impact of the researcher from the data collection and analysis, a researcher should make their impact as visible, transparent and open as possible. As an advocate of attachment-based approaches, the researcher reflected at length around the extent that their positive bias towards this approach was impacting on the results of this study. The researcher was open about their interest and positive regard for attachment-based approaches. However, throughout the interviews, the researcher also attempted to pursue negative evidence to balance their potential positive bias insofar as possible.

They did this by explicitly seeking alternative viewpoints to elicit fewer dominant narratives. This was discussed under supervision routinely throughout all stages of the project.

3.12.2 Reflexivity Statement

The current researcher had a strong interest in the potential of using attachment theory at a systemic level to promote positive outcomes for both children and families. The researcher had worked previously in an attachment-based service that had a systemic mentalisation-based approach. This approach was often successfully used to engage complex families. The semi-structured interview outline of the current study was in part based on their interest in systems theory such as AMBIT, an approach that was developed by the Anna Freud Centre to engage with whole systems working across a range of settings which they accessed as part of this team. The researcher had also completed the Solihull approach training and numerous other training within their doctorate that had an attachment focus. The researcher was mindful through all stages of this research about their interest and positive regard for attachment-based approaches as well as their interest in systems theory. In the interviews, the researcher showed mainly a non-verbal interest in the approach that the schools were using. This seemed to help the interviewees feel more comfortable and it also seemed to encourage them to share their experience of introducing challenging approaches. The researcher has an active interest and engagement in the wider social and political context. The researcher discussed this with their supervisors and adapted parts of the final write-up of the research so as not to overwhelm it with contextual factors that, although relevant, were likely not to be the key factors that will go on to provide a plausible answer to the research question.

3.13 Sampling

In the current study, a purposive sample was used. Rather than recruiting by type of school, the schools were selected based on their use of the whole school attachment-based approach. The sole criterion was that the school was based within the borough of East London where the researcher was completing their doctoral placement. Thereby, the inclusion criterion was any staff member in a school that was using a whole school attachment-based approach. A whole school attachment-based approach was defined as any school that received training on how attachment impacts child development and learning, and that this attachment framework is used to understand and respond to the behaviour of children at a school wide level.

3.14 Distinctions in the Attachment-based Approaches Included in this Study

In the current study, all schools, bar one, were trained by the same organisation – KCA. This organisation identifies that a key part of successful programmes is co-creation, which they define as working together to develop bespoke solutions to meet the local context and need (kca, n.d.). The research question of the current study looked broadly at any whole school approach that had a basis in attachment theory. Differences between the organisations that delivered the approach were not deemed relevant to this study as the taught content of the initial training can be considered to be ‘broadly comparable’ across the training organisations (Harrison, 2020). The adaptations in each school because of this training are bespoke and adapted to the context.

3.15 Recruitment

3.15.1 Recruitment Process

All 70 maintained schools in the LA were approached via email to ask if the school was practicing a whole school attachment-based approach. None of the responses stated that their schools practiced such an approach. Many stated an interest in such an approach and that they would like to learn more. All schools in the LA had an educational psychologist (EP) linked to the school. Two weeks later, the researcher emailed the EP team, asking them to contact the researcher if any of their schools were carrying out a whole school attachment-based approach. This yielded a list of five schools. The EP from each of the five schools agreed to contact the schools to introduce the researcher and the project. Two of these schools did not respond to the introductory email from the EP linked to them. It transpired that one was in the process of closing and later declined to participate in the study. The other school did not respond to the efforts to seek their participation. Three out of the four schools in the borough that were currently practicing an attachment-based approach agreed to participate in the study. The three participating schools were an alternative provision and two single form entry mainstream primary schools.

3.15.2 Participants

Following the introduction by the EP linked to the schools, an initial meeting was set up with the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and the researcher. In this meeting, the researcher explained the purpose of the study. The SENCo was given the information sheet, consent form and a formal verbal invite to participate in the research study. It was requested that the member of staff who was responsible for introducing the whole school attachment-based approach (WSABA) be asked to participate in the

initial interview. This ‘introducer’ would help the researcher to form a broad picture of the context of how the school came to be practicing an attachment-based approach. Following the consultation with the schools’ senior leadership team (SLT), the SENCo confirmed the participation of their school via a consent form sent by email.

Table 4 below reflects the details of the eight participants from the three participating schools. Six of the interview participants were recruited purposively for pragmatic reasons. Following interview number six, the purposive sampling of two participants took place due to the emerging patterns in the interviews. In this table, the attachment-based approach that was being implemented in each school is stated. As can be seen, all but one school was trained by KCA as outlined. This study collected the data in the participants’ place of work. This enabled ease of participation for the interviewees.

Table 4: Participant demographics

Participant pseudonym	Role	Type of school	Type of WSAB Intervention
Mary	School counsellor	Mainstream primary A	SCP
Beth	SENCo	Mainstream primary B	KCA
Jo	Student journey lead (support staff)	Free schools alternative provision	KCA

Sam	Director of SEND (and designated safeguarding lead) & member of SLT	Free schools alternative provision	KCA
John	Associate principal (and designated teacher for looked after children)	Free schools alternative provision	KCA
Sue	Headteacher	Mainstream primary	KCA
Ann	Headteacher	Mainstream primary B	KCA
June	Teacher	Free schools alternative provision	KCA

3.16 Data Collection

3.16.1 Recording and Transcription

The audio for the interviews was digitally recorded using two devices concurrently – a Lenovo SmartPad laptop computer and an Android smartphone. The program Otter was initially used to provide a structure to transcribe the interviews. Due to the poor accuracy of this programme, the researcher reviewed the recordings and transcriptions line by line to ensure that there were no errors.

3.16.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview structure was utilised in this research. Due to the aim of developing themes from the subjective participant experiences regarding what they personally deemed to be important in relation to introducing the whole school approach, the interviews were not standardised or formulaic but rather kept fluid, flexible, and interactive. Potential themes emerged during the interviews and were developed by the interviewee according to what was most meaningful to them. However, there were broad areas that were pursued by the interviewer as outlined below. These aspects were based on the researcher's prior knowledge of the training content of the KCL 'Attachment Aware' approach. The researcher had been given access to the training materials of the programme for one of the schools in the borough. The flexible semi-structured interview outline (see Appendix N) was also founded in their interest in systems theory. The interview started with a general question to develop rapport, asking the participant to share with them information on the type of WSABA that was practiced in the school. As the primary research instrument is the interviewer, the current researcher focused on developing a warm relationship so then the participants would feel safe and comfortable to share their viewpoints. Kvale (1994) states that the use of the interviewer as an instrument is demanding when it comes to their level of empathy and competency. The current researcher noted the reflections of Bryant and Charmaz (2019) who stated that novices tend to work through extensive interview schedules in a rather mechanistic manner, which they refer to as an interview error. The researcher noted this and focused on developing a warm and empathetic relationship with the interviewer and allowing the discussion to develop as naturally as possible. There were several themes that the interviewer pursued following the lead of the interviewee. These were the impact of SLT, specifics of the training, staff

engagement, support of the staff and the strategic management of the approach. To conclude the interview, the staff were asked what their recommendations would be to other schools that wanted to introduce the approach. The interviewee was encouraged to elaborate on what was meaningful to them, as per the research question. Nunkoosing (2005, p. 698) defines the interview as “a method of data collection that enables individuals “to think and to talk about their predicaments, needs, expectations, experiences, and understandings”. The interviewer deemed that they were competent enough to elicit such content and judged that they had been generally quite successful in doing so due to the apparent authenticity and emotional content that was often shared. The interviewer used their previous experience in interviewing for research and the inter-personal skills from their clinical practice to create a secure container in which to hold the participant’s experience.

3.16.3 Max QDA 11 Procedure

The data was organised and partially analysed using MaxQDA 11 (VERBI Software, 2012). The retrieval function of MAXQDA was useful when it came to helping to illustrate the codes and their collected data as this aided in the ongoing process of refining the codes. After coding, the researcher then copied all codes from MaxQDA and printed them on paper for the next stage of the analysis which was to be done by hand.

3.17 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the assumptions inherent in critical realism have influenced the selection of Reflexive Thematic Analysis as a methodology that could be used to provide a plausible answer to the research question. This chapter has detailed

the procedure undertaken during the research and provided a detailed description of the analysis to establish trustworthiness. The ethical considerations of the study were outlined. The following chapter details the findings from the analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

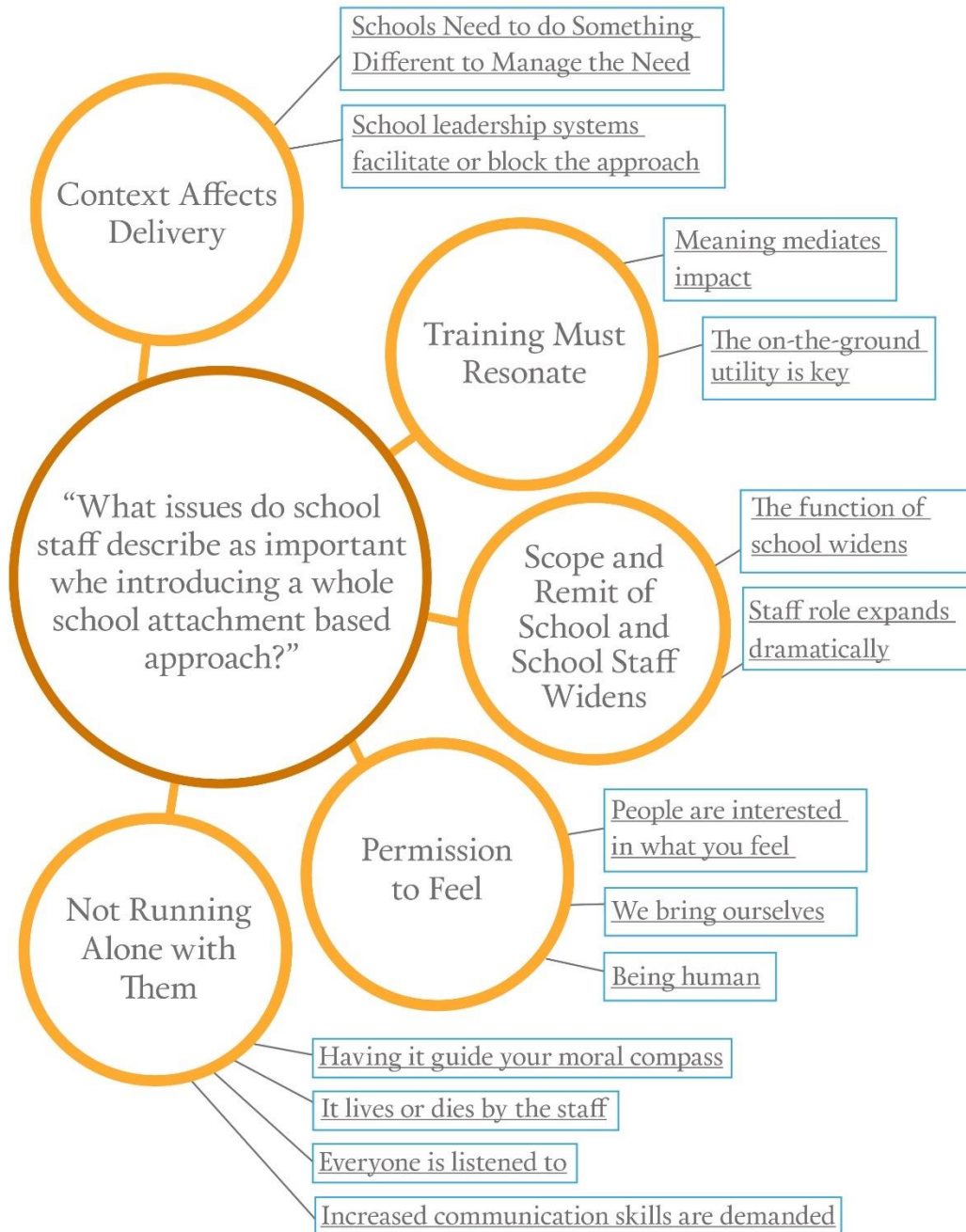
This chapter presents the findings following Reflexive Thematic Analysis of eight interviews with a spectrum of school staff across three settings. The findings are presented using a visual thematic map demonstrating the overarching themes and themes. Overarching themes were used to organise and structure the analysis as they captured an idea underpinning a variety of themes. Themes represented meaning related to a central organising concept and were supported by subthemes which capture and develop an important facet of the central organising concept of a theme (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016). The subthemes were illustrated with excerpts from the interview transcripts. This analysis aims to provide a plausible answer to the research question “what issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?”

4.1 Overview of the Reflexive Thematic Analysis

This Reflexive Thematic Analysis, an interpretation of the patterns in the data that reflect the key aspects that staff described as important when considering a whole school attachment-based approach, resulted in 5 overarching themes and 13 themes. Please see Appendix J for the corresponding overarching themes, themes, subthemes and codes. Below in Figure 7 is a visual representation of a thematic map representing the overarching themes which are represented by circles and their supporting themes in rectangles.

Figure 7: Thematic Map

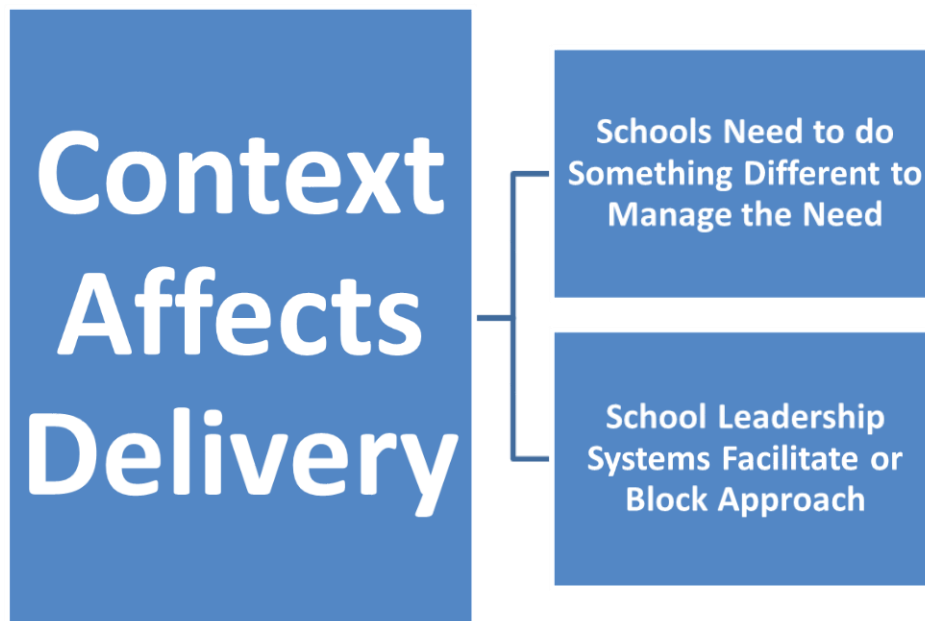
THEMATIC MAP



4.2 Overarching Theme 1: Context Affects Delivery

Figure 8

Context Affects Delivery



The first overarching theme ‘Context Affects Delivery’ is represented above in Figure 8. It what participants highlighted about how the context both inside and outside the school is important when introducing a WSABA. This overarching theme first focuses on the factors external to the school in the theme, ‘Schools Need to do Something Different to Manage the Need’. This theme details how the scope and scale of the pupils’ needs in the context of the local community are important to consider when introducing a WSABA. It also represents participants views about the difficulties of meeting these needs in the typical mainstream provision. The second theme ‘School Leadership Systems Affect Approach’ relates to the pivotal impact of the school

leadership team (SLT) on the strategic systems that can block or facilitate the approach. These themes were conceptually similar due to the significant influence of wider socio-political systems on this approach in which “every interaction is an intervention” (Treisman, 2016).

4.2.1 Theme 1: ‘Schools Need to do Something Different to Manage the Need’.

4.2.1.1: Local Needs

This theme encompasses the level of need in the local community, the pressures on schools and teachers, the impact of reduced services, the diverse needs of the pupils and the difficulties of mainstream provision in meeting these needs. Located in the borough with highest level of child poverty in the UK, the sample schools were faced with the far-reaching impacts of inter-generational cycles of poverty. The children in the participant schools were vulnerable in terms of their mental health and vulnerability to criminality and exploitation. The local community was described by June as a challenging place for children to grow up:

Related to gangs but also just kind of exploiting them for sex and stuff like that. And then there’s obviously the boys that are involved in a lot of gang crime. And they’re...they don’t realise they’re being exploited, but they are. (p. 11, line 5)

Headteacher Sue spoke of it being imperative to do something different to address the needs of their pupils, who were presenting with a “*host of barriers*” (p. 2 line 1) to learning. She reported that pupils were chronically under-stimulated outside of school, as they were “just staying in and watching Telly, every weekend, so we don’t do the diary stuff anymore. What do you do at the weekend? Because so few of them

do anything” (p. 8 line 29). Therefore, the school needed to provide holistic care to meet the children’s needs.

Our deprivation index is in the top 10%... we’ve got a picture of a very vulnerable, deprived area, which with it brings a lot of mental health, a lot of anxiety, poverty, sometimes poor parenting going on in a cycle generation after generation. (Sue, p. 1 line 24)

Participants stated that often the children’s parents’ capacity was reduced due to chronic stress. Jo (pg. 8, line 19) recounted the impact of financial stress on pupils:

Quite a lot of the parental stress that the children are absorbing is, you know, Mom's got a bill. Another bill came in, the telephone bill. So now, you know, today was a happy day, but then she opened that letter and I'm now being ignored - Mom's angry.

4.2.1.2: Impact of Financial pressures in schools

The socio-political context of austerity had resulted in dwindling resources, particularly in one of the mainstream participant schools. A school counsellor spoke about her time in school being reduced due to funding cuts, thereby limiting the potential impact of the work.

So, at one point I was here two days because we managed to get some extra funding the school, which isn't there at the moment, and so, back to one day, but it really helped me being around a second day. I felt like, oh, she's here so we can ask her questions, we can know that I'm available then to be sort of seeing more, work more with children, working more with the teachers. (Mary, p. 13, line 6)

Budget cuts limited the school in responding to the overwhelming levels of need that they were seeing in the pupils. Sue (p. 1, line 6) described this in context; “*and so you know, we're a small school, 220 children. We've got 16 children with EHC plans. Some*

classes have got five children in there with EHC plans". Mary (p. 12, line 14) described "so much stress and pressure" for the staff. Sue, a mainstream Headteacher, alluded to the difficulty of recruiting to inner city schools and how she advised staff of the challenges before they joined; "I tell them about the challenges and about the deprivation and the special needs" (p. 3, line 17).

4.2.1.3: Mainstream Education Setting as a Barrier to a WSABA

The wider system could pose a barrier to meeting children's attachment needs as related to the mainstream delivery of education. Participants voiced that they had received little to no input on the impact of early childhood adversity in their teacher training. In the interviews with AP staff, participants reported that in mainstream schools there were far more practical barriers to delivering a WSABA. A key obstacle is that there isn't time to develop individual relationships with the children. June reported that there is a lack of time in a mainstream classroom to explore the meaning of 'misbehaviour'. Without this time to explore with the child it was not possible to find out what the behaviour was communicating. Therefore, it was not possible to deepen the understanding of, and relationship with, the child. Less time resulted in less capacity for relationship building with children. One teacher in the AP stated that mainstream schools excluded children for behavioural reasons as their academics were often not the issue. The children in the AP recognised stark differences between their current school and their previous experience of mainstream.

When we, when we started to make changes here, the one thing that young people used to shout in times of distress was, you're going to turn into mainstream, you're going to turn into mainstream...that meant that we were not going to listen, we were going to put rules in, one rule fits all... (June, p. 10, line 23).

A staff member from the AP stated that in mainstream the curriculum could take priority over developing relationships with the children. This staff member reported that often the size of the classes prohibited teachers from effectively responding to a child's behaviour as it happened - "*and you just send him out of your class because you've got 30 other kids to deal with.*" (June, p. 3, line 18). Therefore, this opportunity for exploring the behaviour was lost, and the "*relationship outsourced elsewhere*" (June, p. 10, line 23). The behaviour may be managed by someone other than the person responsible for the child's academic progress, their teacher. Therefore, a pivotal tie between emotion, behaviour and learning was missed. This was a key barrier for teachers to practice in a relational and holistic attachment informed way.

In sum, the wider system impacted the approach in practical aspects of implementation such as staff capacity. It also affected the WSABA in terms of the pronounced needs that the school staff were seeing in the pupils. The schools had to attend to these needs before formal learning could take place effectively.

4.2.2 Theme 2: 'School Leadership Systems Facilitate or Block the Approach'

This thick theme related to school leadership systems that helped the WSABA to flourish or blocked its effective introduction. Elements of this theme included financial, strategic, policy and practical considerations.

4.2.2.1 Financial Burden of WSABA

The cost of a WSABA could be seen as a prohibitive factor. Two of the three schools in the current research were given the whole school training free of charge in exchange for participation in a research study. The AP was given further financial support to

embed the approach from the local authority's virtual school who support Looked After Children (LAC) due to the high number of LAC children in their provision. The one school that did pay for the training, a mainstream primary, worked with an organisation that provided counselling services in the school. This organisation also provided training and consultation on attachment as part of their package of support. The training they provided was deemed to be valuable and worth paying for by a participant from the school. A member of SLT stated, *"I would definitely recommend it in an expert in like X who can actually do the INSETs...yeah, you need an expert"*. (Ann, p. 21, line 23) Although frequent, consistent and expertly delivered training was seen as key, the financial implications of its delivery could be a significant burden. One of the schools that received the whole school training for free spoke of its high cost. In the context of the discussion regarding the meagre budget of the school, the interviewer took this to imply that they may not have been able to afford to buy it in otherwise. A participant Headteacher shared - *"I think it costs a lot of money this, if you pay for it."* (Sue, p. 1, line 26). The resulting cost in terms of the overall school budget was described as an important factor by the staff when introducing the WSABA as it affected their perception of its value when it was considered in terms of the competing priorities of the school.

4.2.2.2 SLT Support Needed on a Multitude of Levels

Participant data illustrated the need for a thoughtful systemic introduction of the WSABA that is prioritised and driven by SLT. As well as strategically and financially, the approach needed visible and vocal support from SLT. This engagement from SLT to advocate and champion the approach was vital to defend it against those who did not 'get it'. The confidence of SLT also helped to encourage and inspire others. One headteacher spoke about the struggle she had experienced when seeking to embed

attachment-based practice. She spoke of conflicts that existed within SLT in relation to it - *“there are some people who actually think is a load of eh hippy dippy...one of them – it’s really hard because it’s actually a member of the senior leadership team!”* (Ann, p. 19, line 26). Across the participants, the importance of meaningful school leadership in the process of introducing the WSABA was emphasised. This applied to leadership around school policy and setting the agenda to drive the approach. The relationship between leaders and followers was also important.

I don’t think leadership is about dictating, it’s about sort of, taking your school on a journey, but bringing everybody along with you, but that’s again about relationships, isn’t it? It is about how you go, you know, it’s absolutely about the relationships I have with the staff and sort of my my role and how I listen, listen to them, but whilst also maintaining, like no but this is what we’re doing as a school. (Ann, p. 9, line 27)

A culture of responsive and respectful leadership seemed to be key when introducing the approach. It was unclear whether this was due to the WSABA or whether it preceded the approach. In the AP the staff felt listened to and supported by the leadership to manage the many challenges they faced when introducing attachment-based practice. One assistant head spoke of the high level of SLT support for the practice and emphasised that it was led by two members of SLT in particular who were very interested and quite experienced - *“we’ve been on a lot of training and we’re very passionate. We drive it and we disseminate it amongst the staffing group.”* (John, p. 7, line 25). A staff member in the same school discussed how the SLT enthusiasm enabled the whole system to support the WSABA.

We know that if SLT, if they are pushing this, then I don’t have to have this struggle down the down the line with possibly conflicting ideas with a member of staff, or ways

of working... everybody is bought into it. And that is solely because SLT have fronted it. (Jo, p. 7, line 9)

Another participant echoed that SLT support was a central factor of importance for the approach.

I definitely was up against a bit of a battle to get them through to go and get it on school development plan, and get it as part of our INSETs to sort of, you know, and when I'm, when I'm, competing against English and Science and Math... (Ann, p. 2, line 8)

The above quote echoes the concern of another SLT member around the fact that there is no 'score' to reflect progress in this area. Keeping the approach visible and 'alive' in the school system in the school could be challenging when there was a host of competing demands that were amenable to measurement and therefore better able to reflect progress, a key demand in today's educational system. The early 'wins' were useful to keep the successes of the approach visible - *"and it's that, I think, because we had such a successful first round of ... that that that's remembered, like in their heads."* (Beth, p. 3, line 25). Starting with a small number of cases was thought to be a positive way to start as it was more manageable and therefore more likely to be successful.

You know, and I think anything that's like when you implement anything, if you start small, it tends to be successful. You know, so that's why I feel like even if this year, we can just focus on doing four children every term. That's an achievement. (Beth, p. 7, line 21)

4.2.2.3 Impact of SLT on School Behavioural Policy

The impact of SLT on the school behavioural policy and the associated terminology were also common factors that may block or facilitate the introduction of the WSABA. There was a sense that the same children were being ‘sanctioned’ all the time. Staff spoke about this as being demoralising and frustrating, as well as ineffective. A primary school headteacher, Ann, spoke of “*low-level*” challenging behaviour that resulted in the frequent penalisation of the same children – “*then that’s the worst, because it’s not very clear cut, and they’re just always in trouble.*” (p. 17, line 11). She also spoke of the responsibility that she felt to the children who were displaying ‘naughty’ behaviour: “*we owe it to them really to sort of find out why they may be displaying that behaviour, as opposed to them just sort of becoming that self-fulfilling prophecy of like, they’re just the naughty one...*” (p. 2, line 2) John a member of SLT in the AP, acknowledged that the language relating to discipline in mainstream settings could trigger a negative emotional response from the child and further disenfranchise them; “*my guess even the terminology and the idea of the word sanction has negative connotations to it.*” (John, p. 2, line 2). John then reflected on the ineffectiveness of this recurring approach; “*and that sanction doesn’t work, another sanction, another sanction, but not doing anything differently.*” (John, p. 2, line 4). This ineffective and punitive behavioural approach did not enable learning from the child. There was no opportunity for discussion and learning with the child with regards to behavioural boundaries. A teacher shared their view that when the child is being punished, the opportunity for the child to learn and to take responsibility is gone; “*I feel it if he had been punished for that, would have – that wouldn’t have helped him in any way.*” (June, p. 10, line 31) This shift from responding to behaviour with ‘sanctions’ to responding with understanding relied

largely on SLT support. Without this and supporting policy it seemed that the WSABA would struggle in the face of more traditional behaviour management strategies and more ‘measurable’ interventions. The idea that behaviour means something and is an attempt at communication was important for the staff when introducing a WSABA as over time this considered response to children’s behaviour helped the students feel safe. Eventually, this sense of safety changed the students’ mindset, allowing them to be more regulated and to learn from their mistake. This recognition that punishment leaves no space for teaching was shared by several participants. A less punitive approach would help the child to take responsibility and learn from their mistake in the context of a relationship with a safe adult. In the example below Jo details a staff member grappling with shifting from a position of a punitive ‘*justice seeker*’ to a position of trying to understand what was behind a child’s behaviour, to ‘*just*’ understand them.

We have staff here who at the beginning was like no way. Like, no way. That’s not you know, that’s not good enough, we’ll have mayhem. That person would be...like, you know, like you’re like, if you, if we just understand them.... (Jo, p, line 12)

4.2.2.4 Strategic Management of WSABA

Another central impact of SLT was on how the approach was strategically managed. This applied both to the strategic planning and the strategic processes put in place to manage the approach. Strategic issues were varied and included funding, the sustainability of the approach, succession planning, prioritisation of the approach within the school development plan, staff capacity, time capacity, quality management, documenting and monitoring, and revisiting the approach. On-going management processes were employed such as developing a steering group and employing change management techniques. A headteacher spoke about using a change management

framework to encourage staff support. This included a case study model for implementation in the form of a small number of cases that demonstrated the benefits of the approach; *“It’s about how you sort of, you know, you get a small group, you conquer them, and then it will sort of flood.”* (Ann, p. 2, line 24). A SENCo spoke of the consultation that took place with SLT and the external trainer to decide upon the best strategy to manage the approach; *“so we sort of said together that we think the steering group is a good way to do it. And we need to look at how often we want to review.”* (Beth, p. 3, line 15). One headteacher spoke about a ‘check-in’ being helpful.

The other thing we thought about in terms of carrying it forward is having that lady come and visit again say once a year or like a drop in just to check like how we’re doing and stuff because we thought that would be quite useful. (Beth, p. 5, line 5)

Monitoring included strategically providing support to their children at prescribed intervals. A member of the steering group on the whole school attachment-based approach spoke of the vital importance of planning.

I would say they have to plan time. So plan it in well. Like I would almost have it as a year plan so that they know clearly how they’re going to implement it. And also have a really clear vision for what they want out of it. (Beth, p. 6, line 21)

Systemically, on a managerial level, the success of the initial cases encouraged enthusiasm for the approach. Ann (p. 19) told me that *“wins make it an easy sell”* and the *“changes are huge.”* However, Beth spoke of the number of initiatives that are foisted upon school staff, and how this can result in a lack of motivation to engage in new initiatives - *“there’s so many initiatives in schools that are you know, yeah, we should be doing this or yeah, this is the new buzzword...”* (p. 6, line 24). Mary (p. 16, line 6), a headteacher, echoed the challenges described by other participants on prioritising a WSABA, despite the will being there:

It's just trying to fit it in when you have like one INSET day here, I'm going to cover this stuff. We've got to cover that stuff. Yeah. But it is something you want, but it's just trying to...time, money, resources....

A SENCo spoke about the importance of keeping the approach as a standing agenda item in staff meetings so that it would retain visibility amid competing demands. In this regular forum, support for the approach could be built amongst the staffing group. This could be done by sharing examples of good practice and successes with specific children. Beth, (p. 2, line 20) spoke about this being a meaningful way to review progress and plan future interventions:

I think something that's manageable is we could dedicate a staff meeting to reviewing these children once every term, which is very doable. And then modelling like how to do the next child. So the planning element is not just a paper filling exercise.

This strategic management of the approach was key to making the most of the limited resources available. A consistent and planned approach helped to embed the training and practice in the school system. The importance of adopting a strategic overview of children's progress with the monitoring and tracking of vulnerable children helped the school to ensure that the school was utilising the right approach at the right time. There was an impact on the behaviour and academic progress of the students. Headteacher (Ann, p. 19, line 11) noted how "*ahead of other [comparable] schools*" they were. This positive and periodically measurable progress encouraged engagement from other members of SLT who were more cynical about the approach.

Strategic planning and management seemed to be key in helping the approach to be introduced most effectively. These pivotal elements increased the likelihood of the

approach being sustained in the longer term. The sample schools were all early in their whole school attachment-based journey. Generally, structures embed the WSABA in policy and practice had not yet been formed. This approach required the staff to have a long-term view as it was not a short-term ‘fix’. The participants from SLT in the AP likened the process of embedding their attachment-based approach into a journey. One headteacher described the training that their school had completed as an introduction.

And I don't think...I think my, that's our next step to go more into actually, when you were saying before about a staff member being a, you know, an attachment, attachment person, what was it? Attachment trained? I don't think...yeah, no, I don't think we're there. I think people have an awareness of it... (Sue, p. 14, line 10)

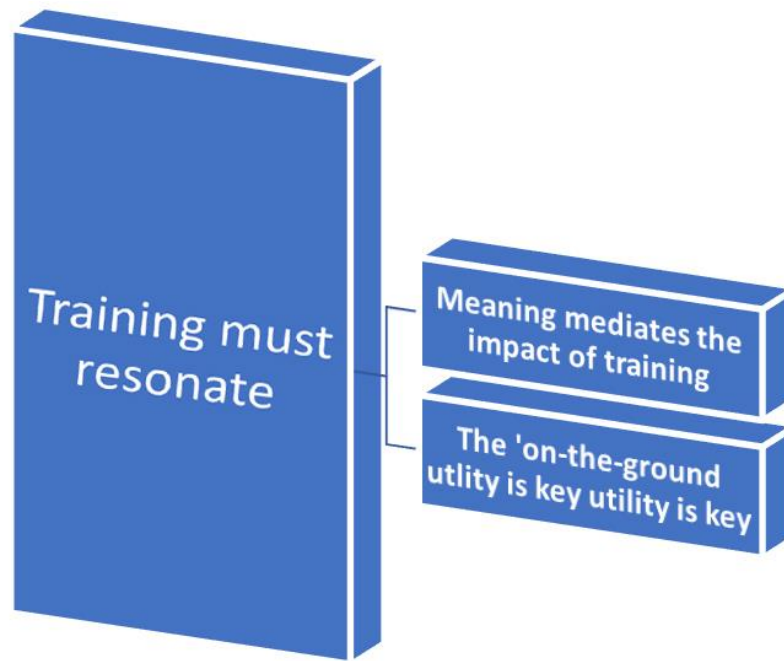
Sue makes an important distinction between having an awareness of attachment and having someone leading the WSABA, and this encapsulates a key issue in how the WSABA will be introduced and maintained.

In sum, internal school leadership systems had a far-reaching impact on the approach due to the central importance of effective and thoughtful planning and implementation. This was especially important to support the WSABA in the face of considerable external systemic pressures. This thick theme underlays several different aspects of the dataset that staff deem important when introducing a WSABA.

4.3 Overarching Theme 2: Training Must Resonate

Figure 9

Training Must Resonate



The second overarching theme shown above in Figure 9 captures an idea underpinning two themes with its focus on the importance of resonant and impactful training. These were 'Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training' and 'On the Ground Utility is Key'. In the context of this study, 'resonance' was conceived as the emotional impact or convergence of the training with staff interests and motivations. This resonance also related to the day-to-day practical applications of the approach. Both themes include challenges when introducing the training and the elements that added or detracted from the impact, clarity and emphasis of the message. They tell a rich and complex story about participant perceptions as related to the training experience and are multifaceted with diverse observations that constitute to form the boundaries of the themes.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training

4.3.1.1 Challenges and Opportunities of Training Diverse Staff

This theme refers to the need for the training to cater to a large spectrum of staff in terms of their interests, knowledge and professional backgrounds. Sue (p. 3 line 17) elaborated:

You see, the thing about it is that for some staff, they might have heard a lot of this before...other staff, it was completely new. So there was a wide spectrum of staff. And I knew that and I that's why I made sure it was tailored to what we needed and it didn't waste people's time...

This was both an opportunity and a challenge. The staff contributed differing knowledge which could be an advantage when it comes to the dynamics of training a diverse group. However, there was also a significant challenge when training a wide range of knowledge and experience. In the reflective sessions that some of the settings received in their training, there was the opportunity for staff to contribute knowledge from their different backgrounds, and to learn from one another's diverse experiences, which staff found really helpful. Sue shared the structure of these sessions - *it was just case studies of one child where everyone could bring their experience and learn from each other as well.*” (p. 4, line 5)

Most often, the participants had generally not been exposed to attachment theory during their teacher training. A significant pattern in the data was the challenge of training staff that were either unaware or unconvinced regarding the concept of attachment and trauma. The implication was that the staff that had not received any prior training may not have the awareness that such approaches are needed. John, a member of SLT in the

AP described knowledge of attachment as “*essential.*” He stated that a lack of previous knowledge was an important factor to consider when pitching the training. He reflected on his own experience - “*it’s not that I didn’t believe an attachment aware approaches or a trauma-focused approach, it’s just hadn’t come across it.*” (John, p. 1, line 19) John later spoke more generally about a total absence of awareness and training on attachment and trauma in mainstream schools; “*I’ve worked in six or seven mainstreams over 14 years, and not once have I come across trauma, attachment awareness, anything in any incarnation on any CPD session, let alone one person who champions it.*” (John, p. 8, line 8). Sam, another member of the SLT in the AP shared that they were constantly encountering a lack of awareness and understanding among new staff that came to work in the specialist provision. They had little knowledge in the area of attachment, and Sam felt that they were having to ‘persuade’ staff that such a thing exists.

I’m always at the beginning and having to persuade someone that there is such a thing as attachment, there is such a thing as trauma, that attachment and trauma have physiological impact, they have a psychological impact, and they have an emotional impact. (Sam, p. 1, line 6)

Sharing the science that underpinned attachment theory was described as a way to increase staff understanding about the brains of children that had endured trauma. Using diagrams to demonstrate that these children were ‘different’ helped to ‘persuade’ staff as to the veracity of attachment theory. Additionally, having this scientific understanding helped the staff to buffer themselves against the challenging behaviour that they encountered.

Learners with adverse childhood experiences could be...em...could have the same brain development as soldiers who have done tours of duty in a war, that they’ve

got exactly the same kind of brain scans in some situations...So again, it's not making excuses for learners. It's trying to hit home to staff as well, in terms of science, and in terms of scientific diagrams as well, that look, this is a medical issue. It is not an excuse.

(John, p. 4, line 29)

4.3.1.2 Importance of Meaningfulness in Training

Participants indicated that the training was most successful when it was geared towards the individual staff members' interests and motivations as much as possible. The level of meaningfulness in the training appeared to be a key aspect of what made the training impactful for staff. Meaningfulness is the opposite of the 'tokenistic' or 'tick box' initiatives participants reported they often experienced in schools. A staff member spoke about the lack of capacity and therefore motivation of staff to engage in these tokenistic endeavours.

What's the new thing this week? Oh they're all talking about trauma, oh. And then when you actually get an opportunity to take something and not just run with it for an hour when you're all tired after work, no one wants to be there... (Joe, p. 13, line 5)

In this sample, staff valuing the initial and continued training seemed to be a key element that affected their continued engagement with the approach. This engagement seemed to be mediated by the level of meaningfulness the staff member found in the training. This meaningfulness appeared to be affected to some degree by the emotional impact of the training on the staff. The emotional impact of the training on the staff was described and ways were suggested to make it more effective and persuasive. This was the key point that affected its success when it came to changing staff thinking. Another element was the convergence of the training with staff interests. The staff felt

that as they all have their own diverse individual reasons for working with children, the training should speak to an element that the individual staff member was interested in.

We don't all find the same bit interesting, some people are absolutely, you know, mind blown about the smell of trauma a little baby would have, you know, and they're like I'm going to look into that neuroscience...you can get into the bits you're into...

4.3.2 Theme 2: 'On the Ground' Utility is Key

4.3.2.1 The Need for Clarity in Approach

In the sample schools, there were differences in the attachment approach used, the frequency of the training and the use of hallmark strategies such as emotion coaching. Examples of techniques used include strategies to connect with a child such as greeting them at the door, 'drops ins' for both children and staff, attachment focused pedagogical strategies, and class 'cementing' to establish positive relating in the classroom. There seemed to be varying levels of knowledge in regards the attachment principles such as 'flip your lid'. In one school, it seemed very well developed. Mary (p.1 line 10), the school counsellor elaborated:

It does come as part of working with our service. So we say you know that we would -yeah, like to train up the staff in this way of thinking about things. So we also include whole brain child – Dan Siegel – flip your lid sort of stuff? So we have a whole chain of understanding. So I teach that to staff, parents and children so that we have a consistent language around mental health and what's going on for us in our minds and heads”

Ann (p.4 line 30) voiced a ‘gap’ and a need for practical and clear classroom strategies that they could use when faced with an insecurely attached child in the classroom:

Those four areas of attachment, and then actually about how that might present itself in the classroom. That was really helpful, because I think before when we've had, we talked about attachment, teachers, said, but yes, what does that mean? What, what's a child who's ambivalent? Who's going a bit ambivalent, and what does that look like in the classroom? How do they present? And then the other people used to say is well what will I do then with that attachment? So there was definitely a gap...

The impact of the WSABA on pedagogy and the potential conflict with the curriculum was a central concern for staff. Questions about what compromised high-quality schooling and the importance of the relationship in learning were raised by staff who had not encountered this perspective on teacher training.

4.3.2.2 All Staff

A significant pattern in the data was the need for every single member of staff to be trained as part of the WSABA. This was deemed integral as there was a recognition that all staff play a critical role as any person in the school system may be the key adult for a child. Beth gave an evocative example - *“the child doesn't want to speak to anyone but the caretaker – just spends half his time with the caretaker in school.”* (p. 8, line 14) Therefore all staff being trained, and flexibility of staff role was important. A participant in the AP stated that the lack of a consistent response from staff could have a major impact on a child's sense of safety, a cornerstone of the approach. All staff being trained would be able to provide the benefits of a consistent response to

these children. John stated, *“it needs that consistent approach, every single time for every single interaction, that that learner has every day to enable you to make the huge gains.”* (p. 5, line 15). ‘Mixed messages’ were acknowledged to be distressing to the pupils in the AP, who were reported to have a low tolerance for inconsistency. Many of the ‘incidents’ in school occurred in the less structured time outside of the classroom. This reinforces that all staff being trained in the WSABA was vital. Eating was recognised by participants to be an important part of the school day. Lunchtime supervisors were given as an example of a contingent of staff in schools that could be excluded from training due to not being based in a classroom. However, their role during the unstructured times in the school day was one in which it was vitally important to have an understanding of attachment and how it may relate to any ‘incidents’ that may occur.

And the midday meal supervisors need that training. Because a lot of the incidents that come up, where you having to calm children down or whatever is in the playground or at lunchtime, so I feel like they’re an integral part of that and they haven’t had that training yet... (Beth, p. 2, line 26)

4.3.2.2 Potential Pitfalls

Practically, there were several potential pitfalls when facilitating meaning and practical impact in the training. These included a lack of consistency in the training, as well as a lack of clarity in the content. There was uncertainty around emotion coaching from one participant, a SENCo who was heavily involved in the WSABA and on the steering group of the approach, who stated that it could seem ‘*abstract*’. Beth (p.4 line 10) reported that some staff felt like *“we do that already”* and didn’t seem to fully

understand the difference between emotion coaching and speaking to the children about their emotions. She spoke of needing to have “*a script in your back pocket*” to be fully confident to practice emotion coaching with children routinely. Although it was a part of their training, Sue, a headteacher stated; “*I don’t think...in terms of emotional coaching...I think X will do that with the children. But that’s not something that we’ve done as a staff.*” (p. 14, line 10) This lack of clarity added to the challenges around this for the school staff in terms of embedding the WSABA. Another potential pitfall was that the training is not a ‘one off event’ but a process. This sense of process was seen as key to embed the changes into practice over time. The AP had weekly training in the form of CPD. Therefore they received far more frequent input than the other participant schools. However, a member of SLT spoke of the challenging process of embedding the approach:

We’ve been doing it now for two years. By no means are we fully there. It’s not fully embedded. It’s...we’ve got the main key people on board and involved and we’re doing a drip-feeding approaches, not just through CPD, but also through our interview approaches now, making sure that we only appoint professionals who are attachment aware, or who have got the, the mentality to take on the attachment approaches as well. (John, p. 1, line 26)

Although the participants recognised that embedding a WSABA did not have an end point, there were indicators that the process was becoming embedded when attachment became ‘*part and parcel*’ of the conversations that happen about children (Ann, p.21 line 30).

4.3.2.3 Practical Timing of Training

Participants outlined how important it was that the training was revisited, in a more formalised and meaningful fashion that gave space for the staff to absorb its emotional impact. Positioning of the training in the school day was important so as not to be just another thing for staff 'to do'. A SLT participant stated that the timing and frequency of the training were vital.

It needs to be timed right. It needs to be you know, it's not an hour. It's not maybe an hour a term, you know, like that, okay, because we now have decided to become a trauma-based attachment school...it needs to be a project almost ongoing, an ongoing project frequently. I would say in your, in their own faculties weekly, until it's there. Whether that is you and your faculty do an exercise on your own school journey... (Jo, p. 14, line 1)

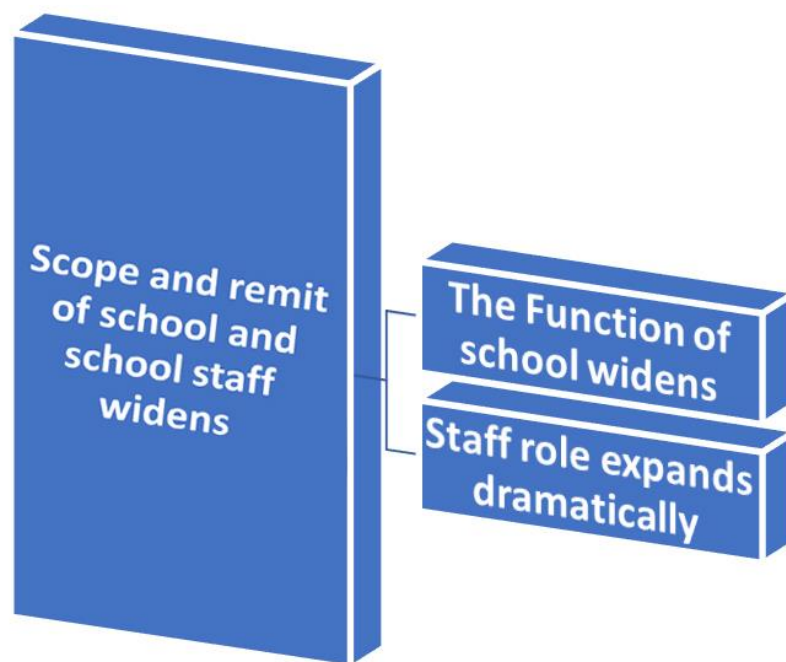
Sam, a SLT member believed that the staff needed a level of experience with children with attachment difficulties before they could understand and internalise the content of the training. Therefore, the timing of training was deemed to be key.

What we're actually talking about the fact that these kids cannot manage their lives, cannot manage, can't even manage themselves physically, let alone psychologically and emotionally. Someone I feel has to be at that point of awareness before the training actually has any impact. I do notice that the ones that haven't recognised that, or haven't got to that point where it's almost undeniable to them – then they listen, and then they're on board, and then everything else from then onwards becomes common sense. (p. 2, line 5)

4.4. Overarching Theme 3: Scope and Remit of the School and School Staff Widens

Figure 10

Scope and Remit of School and School Staff Widens



Overarching theme three is ‘Scope and Remit of School and School Staff Widens’, demonstrated above in Figure 10. This overarching theme underpins two themes with its focus on the widening boundary and function of school and the role of staff. It details a change from a traditional model of schooling to a more progressive one that caters to the individual and holistic needs of the child. As the boundaries of the school increase to an almost ‘quasi-parent’ function, the role of staff expands dramatically as illustrated in the second theme.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Function of the School Widens

4.4.1.1 Task of the School

Theme one referred to a shift in the understanding of the function of a school as one that goes beyond the traditional model of schooling as knowledge delivery and instead is centred around holistically developing the whole child. In the local context of deprivation, the school staff seemed to have a broader understanding of what the role of a school is in developing a child. June told me, *“you know what, what we’re doing here is trying to build them up. Give them the confidence. You know, believe in them, which is essentially trying to, em, heal that damage really that’s been done for however many years.”* (p. 12, line 15) The role of school in developing the child holistically was a key one, as it was central that the wider systemic needs were addressed to enable learning. The narrative of the school in adopting a quasi-parent role and being a secure base for these children was pervasive across participant accounts. John alluded to there being an impact due to gaps in the child’s experiences of attachment-informed care - *“but if we can imagine that a learner goes home for twelve hours plus a weekend, there’s going to be a lot of time there where they don’t get that attachment therapy. And so that’s that part gone...”* (p. 7, line 3) Jo expressed to me that the ‘traditional’ model *“was not working for those children”*. She elaborated (p. 19) stating that there needed to be variability as *“one size doesn’t fit all”*. She further outlined that students needed a mix of flexibility and structure. Their individual needs needed to be considered, as the role of the school was as a *“mini world”* where children could test boundaries, make mistakes and challenge beliefs. Mary spoke of a mismatch between the mainstream schooling environment and children that have an insecure attachment; *“the schools are built for secure*

children.” (p. 32, line 10). Participants stated that there is a need for a revised model of schooling to meet the diverse needs of children with attachment issues. A key one of these needs was emotional regulation. Following the children being regulated to sit and focus, the academic learning needed to be tailored to the child and their triggers kept in mind by staff, as this was something that could impact their learning at any time. The participant recognised that the traditional model of schooling was inefficient for their pupils, as the children could not regulate their emotions sufficiently to engage. One headteacher spoke about the pivotal part that emotional regulation plays in success in life. They reflected that learning this is a key task for children in school:

It's absolutely about making progress in core subjects, but if a child can't solve a problem with that, without going into a meltdown, if they can't, you know, use their manners or they can't, you know, emm know what it is to...know what a good healthy relationship is, then, you know, that's a worry, isn't it going on in, you know, going into their, and the next chapter in their lives... (Ann, p. 4, line 8)

The staff spoke of helping the children to develop real-world coping skills. This resilience would go on to prepare them for the next chapter of their lives. June (p. 12, line 42) described the pupils as a ‘*work in progress*,’ and stated that they were healing and developing in a supportive space.

4.4.1.2 Not One Size Fits All

This new conception of school does not have a uniform approach to children. Staff described the need for individual differences to be acknowledged when introducing the attachment-based approach. Ann spoke more standardised, traditional elements of school functioning that a WSABA completed with. The combative language that Ann

used conveyed her passion for the approach. She stated that the battle was made all the more difficult because there was no tangible way to demonstrate that this new function of the school had been a success:

So I do I feel like I know there's a few times that I definitely felt a bit against a barrier of pushing about attachment because it was oh, like it...because it's not tangible is it, it's not, it's not, it's not, you know, Maths and English score is it, it's not a test (p. 2, line 10)

A child-centred relational approach is not very compatible with standardised outcomes. This poses a substantial challenge for school leadership systems in the current education system, especially in the face of less supportive SLT colleagues. A 'one size fits all' approach is not child-centred or attuned and therefore goes against the principle of child-centredness that is at the heart of the WSABA. This personalised approach is applied to the impact of the child's life experiences and triggers, as well as any potential neurodiversity:

But most of them can't, can't function in a classroom setting. With everything that's going on in their life – and just sit there listening to someone repeating their self. You know, and that might work for someone that can kind of maintain their behaviour or they haven't got ADHD or something like that... (June, p. 5, line 8)

Flexibility in responding to individual needs was a foundation of the teaching in a school practicing a WSABA:

It's getting teachers to realise that we need to understand our learners first and foremost and it's only where we've understood where they've come from, that we can understand where they're going to, and that that's completely different as an aspect to teaching and learning. (John, p. 2, line 13)

In the AP, the '*completely different*' aspect to teaching and learning that John refers to is based on knowing the child. This means knowing that individual child's story and tailoring the educational delivery to them as much as is needed while working around their trauma responses. This would help the pupils to engage in the learning more often and help them learn to manage their triggers.

Although the young people we have here are presenting with their here and now behaviours, issues maybe emm, things that trigger them, we actually try to support them in giving us their story, which will then allow us to identify possible early trauma and attachment issues which we then can tailor make their learning experience around that. (Jo, p. 1, line 12)

The staff in the AP reported that they thought of the school as a place where they could respect the process. The 'process' was the child learning to feel safe. The child would 'change' when they were ready to, rather than the school demanding the child must be a certain way.

And in the in the process, the young people feel that they're safe to change. And that's what they need to do. They need to be safe to change. but like I always say – just sit back. Sit back and you know, sit back. Wait, let me...let's not all panic. We're not here to correct behaviour...wait for the change... (Jo, p. 17, line 26)

Knowing the specific individual needs of the learners was the key to having a holistic understanding of the child. Rigid rules around behaviour that were 'one size fits all' resulted in policy that does not consider the child's individual differences. It was recognised that children with attachment issues need firm boundaries and structures, but also flexibility and transparency. Participants stated that the WSABA needed to be responsive and flexible, but also have the right amount of structure that would help the children feel safe.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Staff Role Expands Dramatically

This theme involved the expansion in the role of school staff in a system with increased functions. There was a significant widening in the boundaries of staff role.

4.4.2.1 Reflexive Capacities Demanded

One of the key demands was for school staff to have the reflective capacities to unpick what a child's challenging behaviour was communicating. This demanded an awareness of trauma and specific knowledge related to the child's background.

It was my duty to sort of champion, champion children, I suppose, where teachers could get frustrated with children actually, I would look at it another way to think, what is it about that child that, why they're displaying these behaviours... (Ann, p. 1, line 17)

The staff also needed to recognise and acknowledge the impact of their emotional state upon the child. This was a new and significant challenge in relation to the role of the teacher.

We recognise it in our relationships with the young people as well you know...that, why is this young person pissing me off today? You know, I mean why why am I you know, why am, I why am I having certain relationships with certain people and not the others? Why is it not across the board? So it's really opened a massive dialogue. (Jo, p. 2, line 28)

This shift to reflexivity also depended on them being mindful of how full up they were with their personal stressors. Jo stated the need to be reflective about staff stress not spilling over onto students; *"we all have our own lives, and we don't want to reflect that on any way we behave with the young people"*. (p. 3, line 10) This level of reflection could pose a significant challenge for staff. There were some references to

the impact of a staff member's attachment style or trauma. It was a significant demand on the staff to engage in reflectivity of this level when they had received little to no prior training. Staff in the AP received supervision to help them to manage this demand.

Because of all the secondary transference and that takes place also, they are aware that they bring all of their stuff to it and being able to unpick ...there's lots of stuff, that's happening, in that very intense relationship... they need to be supported to unpick that and identify where it's going working and where it's maybe be becoming a bit unhealthy for both parties... (Sam, p. 3, line 13)

4.4.2.2 Additional Challenges in Widened Role

One SENCo participant spoke about an additional challenge that attachment-based practice brought to her role. Beth described an internal conflict over information sharing. She was conflicted about what sensitive information she was allowed to know about a child in order to meet their needs best.

And you're not challenging a story but you're asking about it and especially when, you know, it's just been accepted or oh, well that's the way it's always...you know, when I asked staff, there's always been like that there I don't know. And you're like, why has no one ever asked that question? (Beth, p. 10, line 25)

There was also a widening of the role practically. A headteacher spoke about her role out of the classroom as being compatible with taking on the role of trusted adult for a child due to her physical availability:

It's not about me being a headteacher, it's about having somebody regular and a regular, you know, regular intervals that they can come and speak to... I've got

the time – well I don't have the time. But again, I'm not in class, I'm here, you know.

(Ann, p. 18, line 12)

This fluidity of role was important for the approach. It offered the children more choice about whom they could engage with relationally. This emphasises a key shift in the role of staff from a traditional role of knowledge delivery to one that operates from a relational model.

4.4.2.3 A Shift in Teacher Role

Participants spoke about the need for something different for the children who were not engaging in the classroom. June, a teacher in the AP spoke about the relationship between the teacher and pupil as being paramount for any learning to take place; *so, kids, if they've not got a good relationship with you, the reality of it is they're not really going to learn from you. That is the fundamental baseline.*” (p. 2, line 28) This reflected a pattern in the data, that children with attachment issues need to feel that there is a mutually respectful relationship with their teacher before learning can take place. John described this as ‘a new kind of learning’ to ‘feed’ this attachment-based approach thinking into the teaching. A teacher participant shared that as the teacher is academically responsible for the child, they must take ownership of the relationship and the relational strategies related to the learning used in the classroom. Participants viewed that a nurturing child-centred relationship was vital for this approach to promote engagement and learning, a significant expansion in task and role.

Participants spoke of the importance of finding meaning in their work in these challenging environments. One participant spoke of finding meaning in different aspects of teaching in their role as a teacher in the AP compared to if they were a

teacher in a mainstream school. This teacher stated that their meaning may not come from the academic results the pupils attained as there may not be a substantial improvement in this area. Instead, the successes were measured in the relationship formed with the child and how the child responded to this. This reflects the shift in role as well as the shift in indicators that the teacher was performing successfully in their role. If that sense of meaning was not there, it could impact the work; *“you’ve got to find meaning in your job....and I think that maybe once a teacher starts losing the meaning, then it can reflect in their practice.”* (June, p. 15, line 15)

Staff valuing their widened role as it related to the development of relationships was important. One teacher discussed how some teachers just wanted to ‘do’ the teaching, implying a perhaps more traditional view that teaching occurs separately from the relationship.

Emm, and some people just want to do to the teaching. They just don't want to have to understand or or deal with it. They just want to teach a subject that they love, and they just want people to listen, because that's what they enjoy. And that's fine.” (June, p. 23, line 15)

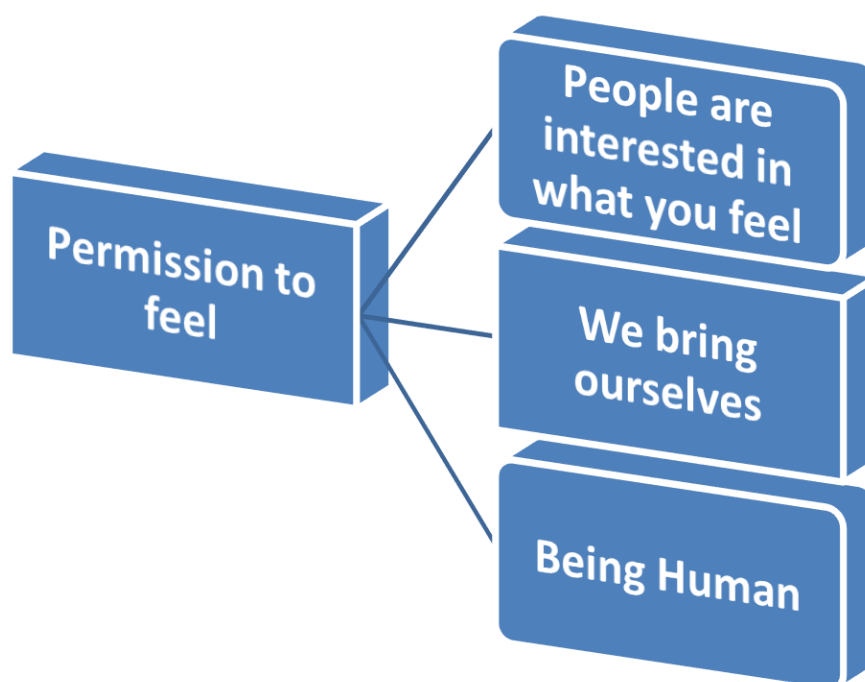
In a WSABA, staff spoke of a shift in their thinking about pupils and their behaviour. This resulted in a shift in staff role to one of increased compassion and understanding towards the pupils. With this perspective, staff could better understand the children’s challenging behaviour and have more empathy for them. June reflected *“you're going to be more patient, and you're going to kind of see where maybe that child's coming from. Which will kind of set a good foundation for teaching.”* (p. 22, line 21) June spoke of her role using an attachment-based approach as responding to the child themselves rather than the child’s behaviour; *“they might want to abuse you, they might want to lash out at you, they might want to say things or whatever. So learning how to not take*

that personal and deal with it.” (June, p. 22, line 22). This detachment from the child’s behaviour and focus on their emotional experience reflected a significant and demanding shift in teacher role.

4.5 Overarching Theme 4: Permission to Feel

Figure 11

Permission to Feel



This overarching theme demonstrated in Figure 11 underpins three themes with its focus on the extent to which emotions were expressed authentically in the school and the resulting impact on relationships across the school community. A culture of authentic relationships where emotions are welcome was important when introducing

the WSABA on a multitude of levels. The themes highlight the impact of authentic emotions on relationships with students, staff and the general ethos of the school. The themes are coherent across the participant accounts and related to different experiences of emotional relating across the school community.

4.5.1 Theme 1: ‘People are interested in what you feel’

This theme referred to the impact of the expression of authentic emotions on relationships with children. Trusted and empathetic relationships were the bedrock of the approach. The space, emotionally and practically, for the staff to form relationships of this level with the children is what the approach is built on. This sense of the children’s emotions being welcome was a core element of the approach.

4.5.1.1 Authenticity

The staff reported that the children seemed to feel heard and seen when their emotional landscape was responded to authentically rather than only their behaviour. Staff also reported a sense of real feeling in their relating with children. These real feeling and authenticity were key to the approach. (Jo, p. 9, line 5) told me “*and the changes in this place. I’ve been here for 4 years. Absolutely astounding. Amazing. The change is just great*”. The sense of it now being safe to trust was constantly reinforced for the child.

And they trust you, and they understand that even though you’re a teacher to them, you still kind of not going to abandon them and leave them and just to kind of, I guess, continuously, like, reinforce that, that you’re there for them and that they can trust you and rely on you. (June, p. 1, line 14)

The children in the AP, many of whom have attachment needs, seemed skilled at detecting if there was authenticity in the adults around them and they were aware when

this was missing. June stated “*they can sense that you're just here for a job or whatever, they'll also sense that, and they won't trust you.*” (p. 12, line 22) June further elaborated that genuine and authentic caring and relating helped relationships to form; “*and they can...the kids are not silly. They can sense when someone cares about them. And when they know that, that's when it also works well...*” (June, p. 12, line 20) When this authentic engagement was lacking, the approach would not work; “*you don't really have much passion for it. They're going to sense that as well., and they're going to play up more, because they want to kind of test the buttons* (June, p. 5, line 15) June spoke of the depth of the authentic feeling she had for her students; “*they might play up, and test the boundaries. But I do believe that they know that they are loved here and I looked after...yeah, they are loved. I love them all.* (p. 12, line 23)

Another participant in the AP spoke of finding meaning in their authentic relationships with children:

And you can celebrate the smell of a daffodil before you pick it. The beauty of it. You can smell the little successes. We do that lot here, in my little team. I call them my team, not my caseload because they are not cases! In my little team, which we call it tiny triumphs. We're going to have a tiny triumph. There's a big picture. But today, we're going to have a tiny triumph. (Jo, p. 17, line 5)

Jo spoke of this sense of hope and positive belief in the children being a key element of their relationships with children, “*what this person is giving you today is their best. It's their best and maybe you could find one thing today to, or in this moment, to say you know I hear you. I hear you.*” (Jo, p. 12, line 9) This positive belief and a sense of hope was encouraging to the children and helped to give them a sense of their possibility in the eyes of a trusted adult.

4.5.1.2 Trusted Adult

Although the specific approach differed from setting to setting in their delivery, the implementation of a trusted key adult was common to all settings. The relationship with this key adult was pivotal to the whole school attachment-based approach.

And really then they're their key attachment figure, and all the kids call them "this is my second Mom my second Dad" or whatever. In fact, I don't know where the second comes in because in most instances its first time they've ever had functional parenting... (Sam, p. 3, line 15)

4.5.2 Theme 2: 'We bring ourselves'

This theme regards the impact of authentic emotions on staff relationships. The WSABA was described as having a fantastic impact on staff teamwork, and participants reported that it helped with relationships across the whole school community and staffing team. Jo (pg 10, line 40) elaborated.

I would say it's it's small steps, but very, very, very noticeable. And without it being a one-minute wonder, the changes are huge. And the changes are huge with relationships with the peers and themselves, the changes of relationships within staff member to peer, staff member to staff member. Feeling happy in your own workplace is one of the biggest things....

Improved staff relationships were deemed to be important when introducing WSABA as the staff felt more supported and therefore more resilient emotionally. Staff worked better as a team when these authentic supports were present. Relationships between the staff were improved due to an increased sense of unity and camaraderie. In the AP, staff had a role-specific collective voice where they had group supervision and could

access support easily. Role-specific group processes were discussed in a way that was supportive, further supporting staff intra-communication; *“you're not running with this young person, just you and them you know that you've got a team, a team around this young person that, you know, it gives you hope.”* (Jo, p. 12, line 28) This sense of supportive teamwork increased staff capacity. Jo elaborated; *“you're heard, you talking about...it's not a demand. It's not a one-person demand. We are a whole school. We are working as a whole school on this. You are supported on this...”* (Jo, p. 16, line 6) Jo further elaborated that staff gave each other the *“gift of strength.”*

The staff supported each other which helped when things were challenging - *“instead of this, you know, storming out or reaching your capacity and melting down. You know, you take your... we as a staff team can support each other with that...”* (Jo, p. 5, line 6)

6) Participants spoke of the importance of these meaningful staff relationships. These were deemed to be essential as part of replenishing the staff to better support the children.

When it gets the end of the term, you feel like the children have been like really annoying and you just feel like you haven't got your work done and it can really, like you can feel like you're a rubbish teacher, you can feel like you're not, you know, you're tired and you just can't...you can't do it. And so we have to, like get that sort of strength and resilience from each other... (Ann, p. 13, line 1)

Staff supported each other by talking openly together which increased their ability to cope and manage stressful situations; *“you need to have a laugh, cause otherwise you will go a bit crazy. So kind of have a little bit of a debrief rant with your colleagues helps”* (June, p. 17, line 1) Another participant called the changes in staff relationships *“huge”* since the introduction of the approach and said that the WSABA was great for

staff morale. Support from colleagues was transmitted via emotional expression and authentic relating. This support increased staff capacity and resilience and better equipped them to manage the demands of introducing a WSABA.

4.5.3 Theme 3: ‘Being Human’

4.5.3.1 Impact on Ethos and Culture

This element of the theme is related to a shift in the culture and ethos of the schools to one that embraced authentic emotions. The WSABA further developed the “emotional intelligence” of the system to a point where “emotions are honoured.” A participant alluded to a different atmosphere in the school and noted that emotions had a central part; *“I guess you might notice [about the atmosphere] that the people listen to you. I guess you might notice that people are interested in what you feel.”* (Mary, p. 11, line 6) The staff spoke of the school culture and ethos as an important element when introducing and embedding the approach, especially in the face of the competing demands of the school system. Headteacher Ann told me: (p. 12, line 8)

I say to teachers is that school is you know, we’ve got to think beyond...we can get so caught up in OFSTED and data and what we have to do that you know, to prepare for tests, and it’s about...and it’s so easy for staff to get lost in that, I’ve got to get this...and actually lose the focus of like these little people are in your, in your class and and they’re not all meant...as much as you’re unique they need to be unique...”

In this mainstream primary school, the school counsellor helped to develop a culture of emotional awareness. The school counsellor was a visible reminder of a culture that valued emotions. Ann elaborated on this (pg, 8, line 10):

And so I think having a counsellor in school, and it raises awareness, it raises

awareness, just having XX in on a Thursday, is, is part and parcel of the school. So I think it's not an add on, everybody knows why XX is there. And I think that's a good sort of, and I think that's good for people's mindset.

This 'community' culture where relationships are prioritised was one of hope and fairness, where people were welcome to bring their real selves. Authentic relating was dependent on seeing each other on a human level, seeing the person. One principal spoke about the importance of the staff knowing each authentically other as people. Another staff member spoke about the importance of humanistically relating to children; *"letting children be human. And children be children."* (Mary, p. 22, line 18) Staff spoke of the school culture and ethos as important elements when embedding the approach. A culture of respect for emotions from both staff and pupils seemed to help everyone feel safe enough to authentically relate. Improved relationships and communication with the children across the school system contributed to a warmer atmosphere in the schools. One school talked about their vision being to provide the children with a feeling of safety as well as a positive emotional experience that they may lack outside of school.

What can we do for the children to make them feel first of all at home safe, happy and welcomed and then included here. And then within the budget of course what, what more can we do to inspire and motivate them to want to learn and be happy, really... (Sue, p. 8, line 12)

A member of SLT stated that the ethos and culture was one of respect and support for staff in the schools; *"there is respect for them and us... yeah, I think there's, I think that there's a lot of respect for us. And in turn, I think we support them."* (Sue, p. 16, line 22) There was a culture of empowerment in the schools, both as related to the pupils and the staff. It appeared to be related to the warm, hopeful and positive

environments that had been fostered in the schools, both towards pupils but also related to how staff seemed to feel in their role.

4.5.3.2 Strong Foundation

The cultures of the participant schools seemed to be quite aligned with a relational approach before the introduction of the WSABA, which in all cases built on other similar initiatives. The parallel approaches taking place that also informed the cultures of the schools provided a strong basis for the attachment-based approach:

Yes [the school had a strong foundation anyway]. Which is why I felt this would move us on to the next level in terms of upskilling with the staff around attachment awareness and emotional coaching. I felt that...I didn't think we were, no...we weren't at the beginning. (Sue, p. 14, line 10)

This 'strong foundation' related to the similarity of the approach with other approaches embedded in the school. The ethos and culture of respect for emotions seemed to help everyone feel safe and to engage in the positive risk-taking that it took to do something different. A culture of respect for emotions from both the staff and pupils seemed to help everyone feel safe enough to authentically relate. Headteacher Sue spoke of the other support working in tandem with the approach:

You know we're not a punitive school at all. I mean we're very patient and – because we have to be, and we're very we've got loads of pastoral support here, we've got a counselling service, we've got a learning mentor, we've got 2 TAs trained as ELSAs, we've got a SENCo who's amazing...all of us have had this [training]...we're all aware of the community we're working. We're not judgmental, you know, we're not like that (p. 5, line 20)

4.6 Overarching Theme 5: 'Not Running Alone with Them'

Figure 12

Not Running Alone with Them



The overarching theme, demonstrated above in Figure 12 is structured and organised to reflect four themes. These themes convey the high demands on staff and the need for staff to be adequately supported when introducing and embedding the approach. The WSABA demanded high engagement from staff, the value system of the staff to coalesce with the approach and greatly increased communication skills. It was optimum if the value system of the staff and the wider system coalesced with WSABA.

4.6.1 Theme 1: Increased communication skills are demanded

4.6.1.1 How the pupils communicate

A high level of skill in communication was demanded from the school staff. Staff spoke about needing to be adept at interpreting the children's communication and recognising what is 'normal' for them. A member of SLT, John, stated that the children do not disclose the painful elements of their life through words, especially not before they have a trusted person in the school. John gave the example of a child being physically abused at home; *"the way that they will communicate that is through shouting, running around the corridor, swearing, as a kind of way in."* (John, p. 2, line 12) Staff interpreting children's communication was central to the approach and a key demand. As Jo (pg. 6 line 8) told me, *"on my caseload, I have a couple of young people who don't, in their words, deal with people very well"*. Looking behind the pupils of communicating required reflective and emotional space. The challenges of this are clear in an overwhelmed school environment. In the AP, the staff were better equipped to understand the child's communication as a strength of theirs was information gathering:

What we are good at, is understanding and getting all the background information about the learners. And so we have a very clear double A3 sided sheet on every learner, which goes through their triggers, background information, everything we could possibly know to understand them... (John, p. 3, line 5)

An important part of the approach was improved communication and sharing between professionals to embed more child-centred practice. This sharing often related to facets of the approach that worked well for a pupil. This helped to contribute to the efficient functioning of the WSABA.

4.6.1.2 Multi-Agency Working and Communication

Communication and multi-agency working was a key demand on staff. Well-functioning communication across large networks helped to promote joint working. This mainly occurred in network meetings where information was shared across the services. When working with children from complex backgrounds that were often involved with multiple services, there was a need for understanding and contribution of knowledge from diverse professions. A key element in terms of communication that was referenced in the AP was the ‘key adult’ having a thorough knowledge of the child. They were then able to advocate on their behalf to the wider system. The key adult could also communicate the needs of the system to the child and through epistemic trust, help to build the child’s relationship with the system.

The staff wants and needs are verbalised and so are the child’s, which makes the child feel heard and listened to, so the relationship can be built from there kind of thing.... I explore different ways of allowing the young person to kind of express themselves how they need, but with some guidance... (Jo, p. 7, line 25)

Concerns could also be shared by school staff as well as pertinent or sensitive information. In the AP, there were regular multi-agency meetings in school. As well as these external multi-agency network meetings there were check-ins between the relevant internal professionals. A participant discussed the communication between the TA, teacher and SENCo around planning for a particular child. June, a teacher stated; *“and that’s why I think it’s important to have more sharing sessions, because you can say what works well with that person. So then the other person can, you know, try and take that on board as well.”* (p. 21, line 28). The TAs were often the professionals spending the most time with the students with additional needs. It was important for a

coherent approach between professionals when supporting a child. This coherence would in turn affect the child's sense of containment in the school system.

Even if it's the teacher greeting that child in the morning in a very welcoming way and acknowledging them often throughout the day, irrespective of if they're with a one-to-one TA or not, the teacher is actually playing more of a role in acknowledging that child is showing that child that they're welcome, they're included, they're liked... (Sue, p. 3, line 28).

4.6.2 Theme 2: 'It lives or dies by the staff'

4.6.2.1 Staff Passion Drives Approach

A participant from SLT shared that the level of engagement of the staff team as a whole was central to its success; *"I think it's a double-edged sword that your attachment aware approaches either lives or dies by the staff."* (John, p. 6, line 9) Another SLT participant stated that there needed to be uniform support across the various levels of the school; *"you've got to create a vision that everybody buys into so it – they've got ownership of it and they understand why they do it..."* (Sue, p. 16, line 17) The staff that authentically embraced the approach seemed to inspire a lot of support for the approach itself, namely securing support from other staff members, by sharing good practices and thereby further cementing it in the school system. Authentic 'buy in' was pivotal and would affect the approach if it was or was not present. Influential staff members that developed a passion for the approach were key when it came to building support on the ground as they built enthusiasm and goodwill towards the approach and encouraged it amongst other staff. Vocal SLT support was a key driver; *"we're very passionate. We drive it and we disseminate it amongst the staffing group"*. (John, p. 7,

line 25) As well as SLT support, John noted the value of having an influential staff member ‘on the ground’ advocating for the approach.

It's often very good to have a very vocal person as well. I mean, we're quite lucky that one of one of our consistently good strong teachers, who is so well respected and well liked is that they are an advocate of the approaches as well. And so often, what you can take half an hour trying to push from an SLT perspective, one or two words to the correct person on the ground is a lot more effective. So we're quite lucky... (John, p. 9, line 27)

The staff with passion and enthusiasm were key in the introduction and embedding of the approach. The language used to describe those who advocated for the approach was evocative; “*X is an experienced SENCo, who has done the Master’s training. And this is her passion.*” (Sue, p. 15, line 4) The use of the word “passion” conveys the enthusiasm that the staff have for the approach. One member of SLT reflected on the staff who had left their setting in a period of “staff churn.” They stated that after an intense 12-month period of embedding a WSABA, staff were going on to become the attachment leads in their new setting.

The reason they felt that they were getting the jobs was because of what they done over that 12-month period. So that was actually quite exciting to recognise that there's people out there with all of that expertise, and that there are more people recognising that as a valuable asset on their CV. (Sam, p. 1, line 14)

4.6.2.2 ‘Style’ of Teacher

Participants spoke about “a clear divide” between the staff who either ‘buy in’ or “get” attachment-based practice. There seemed to be a trend in the participant data in that more authoritarian, teachers dismissed it.

What we don't want is someone that I guess you would call maybe an old-fashioned teacher through want of a better phrase, but someone who sees just bad behaviour and then wants to punish that bad behaviour. And as soon as it comes again punish, punish, punish. We don't want someone who's got that fixed mind set, who's not able to change their opinions and beliefs. (John, p. 1, line 10)

The participants linked this 'fixed mindset' and an 'old school' belief that lay the blame for children's bad behaviour at the teacher's door. This blame would be on the teacher due to a lack of planning or preparation. A participant also thought that there could be an element of 'old school' teachers not needing to change what was perceived to work for most children. The professional style of the staff seemed to have a large impact on whether they did or did not embrace the approach.

4.6.3 Theme 3: 'Everyone is listened to'

4.6.3.1 Staff Wellbeing is Pivotal

This theme reflects the immense support that the school leaders need to provide to staff to be able to deliver as WSABA. The staff being meaningfully and compassionately supported is vital when facilitating this approach. There were different avenues of support offered to staff, both formal and informal. An 'open door policy' was described by one SLT member who was available to offer support to staff whenever it was needed. This SLT member put the well-being of staff at the forefront of the school's priorities, aware that the staff could not carry out the support needed without adequate support themselves. These avenues of support seemed to really 'fill the cup' of the staff and helped to guard against them becoming drained by the challenges of their working environment. A SLT member also discussed the importance of realistic demands being

asked of the staff and developing an infrastructure to invest in the staff to support their learning, to invest in them and to “create a vision that everyone buys into.”

So we have coaching here. So all teachers are in a team, and TAs. And they meet with their coach once a week, who's a senior leader and to go through behaviour planning or anything else they want to bring up, which could be behaviour. (Sue, p. 11, line 14)

A participant from SLT spoke of the importance of meaningful support for their staff on their journey of introducing a WSABA. Impactful support provided to the staff was key as this approach requires the staff to exercise different skills such as emotional literacy, therefore they need to be meaningfully supported to do so. This support is vital to replenish the staff and develop their resilience in the face of the challenges they encounter in their daily work.

I made a timeout space for staff, so that if they are having a moment that is triggered, you know, we all have our own lives. And we don't want to reflect that on any way we behave with the young people. (Jo, p. 3, line 9)

Informal support centred around the staff spending time together as people.

Every half term we have a breakfast club and stuff, we bring food together and we all join in together. Like having that time together. That's not necessarily...where basically we can just get together as professionals or friends and have a chat and it's just, you know, we're not going to talk about school work... (Ann, p. 12, line 8)

4.6.3.2 Supervision for Staff

The AP had secured clinical supervision for the student journey leads and described the long battle to secure that.

That is absolutely crucial giving them the time giving them the space, allowing them some reflective practice time [with clinicians from CAMHS] ...that's something that I was arguing for for years and I finally got the funding or approval to pay cause that's externally provided and we have to pay and provide that but I felt that was crucial... (Sam, p. 3, line 13)

A headteacher spoke of the importance of monitoring their staff's emotional capacity in order to ensure the wellbeing of the child.

I've got to understand that actually, that teacher could have, you know, got really worked up like they could be emotional. Yeah, if a teacher is emotional about a child, I've got to sort of do something about that because it is not good for that staff member and it's not good for the child. (Ann, p. 20, line 5)

A participant from SLT described the investment in staff support as important due to this being a relational approach. The staff capacity to engage in WSABA is not static and participants indicated that capacity was dependent on their own space and capacity, practically and emotionally. A responsive person-centred system needs continued investment in the approach. The level of support needed would change with the needs of the staff, the children and the needs of the system as a whole.

4.6.4 Theme 4: 'Having it guide your moral compass'

4.6.4.1 Values of Staff

Motivated, interested and caring staff that bring themselves authentically into the role is a significant demand. In the AP, a teacher reflected that this demand is not always met by the staff who may have less motivated reasons as to why they want to work there, such as because the classes are smaller. Participants reported that the congruence

of the staff values with the approach was an important factor. This seemed to go beyond engagement or ‘buy in’. A member of SLT vocalised the difference; *“there’s that differentiation between being on board and being truly passionate and having it guide your moral compass as part of what you do.”* (John, p. 8, line 1). A headteacher spoke of how her personal value of looking behind the children’s behaviour had directed their work; *“I do think it’s a, it’s almost like a value and personal thing as well, that I, I am just the type of person that would look.”* (Ann, p. 1, line 17)

Participants reported the need for the values of the staff to be in accordance with the wider system when promoting attachment-based practice. Headteacher Sue recounted that the values of the wider system were *“going above and beyond”* to meet the holistic needs of the children and to embed positive relationships with them. This *“passion from within”* as June (p. 18, line 20) referred to it, bolstered the staff when they were experiencing challenges and helped them to remain enthusiastic about the approach.

4.6.4.2 Democratic System Supports WSABA

The wider value system of the school was also key when introducing the WSABA. A staff member in the AP spoke about the democratic system that allowed them to learn and reflect freely: *“I think that here, it’s okay to question. It’s okay to not handle that day as well as you could.”* (Jo, p. 3, line 6) A headteacher echoed this, stating: *“I mean, we are obviously...senior leaders are in charge as it were, but we listen to everybody!”* (Sue, p. 17, line 16) This lack of an authoritarian system or hierarchy between staff seemed to be important when introducing the WSABA. A staff member in the AP spoke of the “astounding” changes due to the impact of a democratic system where everyone in the school community has a voice.

That's down to people being listened to. And when I say people I mean staff and students being listened to, being heard. Being open to...being open to take people's views. It's really difficult here because you feel like there's, you said...SLT, but there's not, you know, we can go in, or you can say if you don't feel that that's your position, there is somebody here who will go in and say like, look, you know, we we've been finding this difficult... (Jo, p. 8, line 11)

This reduced hierarchy was important for the approach as the staff felt listened to and more comfortable asking for help and support. There was an element of democratic decision-making as people's views were considered and it was acceptable to question things to further learning and reflection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings following the Reflexive Thematic Analysis of eight interviews conducted across a spectrum of school staff that aimed to provide a plausible answer to the following research question: "What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?"

These overarching themes, themes and subthemes will be synthesised and contextualised within the extant literature in the discussion section that follows.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The discussion section will begin with a restating of the research question. It will propose the reflexive thematic analysis as a potentially plausible answer to the research question. The chapter will then locate the findings within the literature on WSABA. It will discuss where this research concurs with and diverges from the extant literature. It will include an outline of what the implications of the current study are for the practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in schools. The chapter will then detail how EPs can help schools to introduce a WSABA most effectively. The limitations of the current study will be outlined, and recommendations for future research presented.

5.1 Synopsis of the Findings as a Proposed Explanation of the Research Question

This exploratory study proposes a plausible answer to the research question “What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?” The five overarching themes will be explored individually and situated within the context of the extant literature.

5.1.1 Context Affects Delivery

The overarching theme ‘Context Affects Delivery’ represented what participants highlighted regarding how the context both inside and outside the school affected delivery of the approach. It was formed of two themes, both of which are supported by the existing literature.

5.1.1.1 Impact of The Wider System

External factors had a significant and complex influence on the WSABA in the current study. Quinn et al (2021: 24) mirrored this finding, stating “the issues facing children and families are complex, systemic and multi-layered...and complexity is crucial in thinking about the role of schools”. Patterns reflecting the impact of the inner East London local context were found throughout participant accounts. In the

borough with highest level of child poverty in the UK, schools were faced with the impact of inter-generational cycles of poverty. The far-reaching impacts of deprivation demanded the schools ‘do something different’ to manage the considerable needs of their pupils. Research in the neighbouring borough by Aspland et al. (2020) specifically refers to the context in the title; ‘Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools’ and the authors mirrored these concerns. These were related to ACEs, complex trauma and behavioural or emotional issues. Aspland et al. (2020) outlined the challenges schools face, and the potential role schools can play in ameliorating, but also potentially exacerbating, the impacts of trauma. The schools in the current study mirrored both of these concerns. In the current study, a participant stated: “schools are for secure children”. This sentiment alluded to the barriers that prevent pupils engaging successfully with a mainstream school setting. A wider spectrum of need was being encountered due to the considerably challenged context. An awareness of this was key when planning and introducing a WSABA due to the widened scope of educational opportunities that the schools needed to provide, as outlined in Overarching Theme 3, ‘Scope and Remit of the School and School Staff Widens’. In the current study pupils lacking the emotional regulation skills to engage in formal learning was a key concern. This is mirrored by Aspland et al. (2020). These challenges in emotional regulation needed to be considered in a child-centred way rather than responded to rigidly.

Participant schools noted the negative impact of the typical mainstream setting on the educational trajectories of children with behavioural needs. Ineffective behavioural policy and a lack of awareness or willingness to consider what behaviour may be communicating were significant barriers to WSABA. Staff in the current study reported that previous to the WSABA they had little to no awareness of the impact of early childhood adversity as they had not received any input on this in their teacher training. MacLochlainn et al., (2022:2) mirror this finding. They report that “omitting adequate instruction from training programmes may result in teachers having a deficit in knowledge and skills and consequently developing challenging relationships with their students, who are assumed as being problematic, delinquent, or truant rather than vulnerable and in need of additional supports”.

The wider context also affected the WSABA in the sample schools in the practicalities of securing the necessary specialist input to embed and support the approach effectively. This echoes the research by MacLochlainn et al., (2022), that referred to the disempowerment staff could feel in the face of ‘relentless austerity’, which they described as “a challenge outside of the school’s sphere of influence that put the whole organisation ‘in survival mode’”. This organisational stress has a significant and negative impact on the capacity of school staff to engage in a WSABA. Treisman (2016:32) asks “how can children be held by safe hands and within thinking minds if the people delivering the services themselves are not held in the same way?” The importance of meaningful SLT support was demonstrated in MacLochlainn et al. (2022:11) where a staff member indicated “support from her peers but alludes to feelings of abandonment when she implies that senior management were not taking self-care of their staff seriously”. In the current study, this impact of organisational stress was referenced by participants quite often but indirectly via practical considerations regarding time capacity that impacted opportunities for staff and pupils to build relationships.

5.1.1.2 Impact of School Leadership Systems on Policy, Planning and Strategic Implementation

The second theme referred to the impact of the internal context of the school leadership system. This was of pivotal importance when introducing a WSABA. To embed the WSABA meaningfully, it needs to be enshrined within the long-term strategic plan of the school and reflected in the school’s school development plan and policies such as demonstrated in Aspland et al. (2020). This was not yet the case in the majority of the sample schools. The current researcher was told that behaviour policies did not explicitly reflect the WSABA in some participant schools. MacLochlainn et al., (2022) reported that one of the important impacts of their project was schools’ recognition that to embed and sustain this approach across the school meant changing how they approach policy and practice in relation to behaviour. As the approach was relatively new in all participant schools, this does not necessarily demonstrate a lack of

commitment to the WSABA. However, policy is a vital area that directs school development, and it may affect the success of the approach if it is not embedded adequately.

The level of prioritisation the WSABA was afforded by SLT directly affected its introduction and maintenance via practical and financial issues such as strategic planning. Long (2022: 349) states that “achieving whole-school trauma-informed change is a challenging and complex task. Key to its successful implementation is system-wide investment in terms of attitudes, beliefs, resources and practice to embed the whole school approach”. The current study concurred that leadership needs to be responsive and strategic when introducing and embedding a WSABA. Kelly et al., (2020) echo the idea voiced by participants in the current study that described engaging in a WSABA as a journey. This concept of a ‘journey’ is important for schools as it emphasises the idea that the approach is not something that is just ‘done to’ via training as a stand-alone, ‘one-off’ event. Rather, it is a dynamic process which centres on the school taking consistent and strategic ownership of the approach. Aspland et al. (2020) identify one of the core tenets of trauma-informed practice as empowerment; they state that it is crucial that each school should be actively encouraged to implement the approach to suit their community and take internal ownership of the approach to minimise the reliance on external professionals. This principle of empowerment could also apply to the individual staff member, as reflected in the current study that described democratic and empowering systems within the sample schools.

The extant research mirrors the complexities involved in the implementation of the programme. Due to this, a coherent framework was found to be useful in the extant research, such as by Aspland et al., (2020) as well as Quinn et al (2021). A framework had not yet been developed across the sample schools. A key issue is that the WSABA framework needs to be used in a flexible way that is matched to the local needs; this increases the complexity of implementation. The effective planning and monitoring of outcomes was also lacking across the sample schools. Parker & Levinson (2018) state that whole-school, flexible

approaches, supported by staff training and monitoring of outcomes, are more likely to be supportive of emotional well-being than discrete approaches. However, outcomes have not been determined, as will be outlined below. This presents a significant challenge for schools to evidence the effectiveness of the WSABA.

5.1.1.3 Management Processes and ‘Attachment Thread’

Management processes were employed in all schools, to varying degrees of effectiveness. These included developing a steering group and employing change management techniques. Issues that impacted these strategic structures included funding and the prioritisation of the approach within the school development plan, or lack thereof. Treisman (2016) refers to the importance of the ‘attachment thread’ that runs across policy and practice; attachment-based concepts that are embedded and interwoven into the whole system of everyday school life. In the majority of the participant schools, it could be argued that this attachment thread was not yet established. This thread should run through recruitment, induction, supervisory and disciplinary procedures, as well as the language used and the displays on the walls (Treisman, 2016).

In the participant schools, there was an attachment thread throughout the recruitment and induction processes for new staff to some degree, but it seemed to lack formal and systematic embedding. In interviews to recruit staff in one of the sample schools, there were specific questions asked about behaviour. This headteacher shared that they were seeking a curious perceptive, a willingness to look behind the behaviour at what was really happening under the surface for the child. This informal and open approach to the question likely reflects the complexity of the subject area, as well as the lack of a formal systemic structure demonstrating the attachment thread. This mirrors other elements of the school systems; although there seemed to be enthusiasm in terms of the attachment-informed practice, the formal structures were not yet embedded. Perhaps this is due to the approach in the sample schools being

in its infancy. This author contends that making these efforts explicitly intentional and enshrined in policy will boost the approach and perpetuate its success.

5.1.1.4 Sustainability Issues

The sustainability of the approach hinged on succession planning, staff capacity, quality management and monitoring. These issues were mirrored across the literature (Aspland et al., 2020, Quinn et al., 2021, MacLochlainn et al., 2022). Practically, Treisman (2016) states that the structures put in place to support practice could include steering groups, training, supervision, consultation, debrief meetings, best-practice reviews, conferences, and reflective practice groups. Some of these approaches were used in the sample schools. Continual monitoring and evaluation are highlighted in the research as essential. These were present to some degree in the sample schools as related to pupil progress but not as related to the WSABA as a whole.

The many other competing demands on the schools made it a challenge to devote the extensive time and resources needed to the approach. Day-to-day capacity issues impacted both the practical and mental space it demanded. Aspland et al. (2020) echoed the need for strong existing commitment to the WSABA as it relates to releasing staff for continued training and input; they reflected that these issues remain a barrier where school leadership were more tentative about the approach. In the participant schools of the current study, there seemed to be issues around the frequency of training and on-going support due to capacity and funding issues. This was a significant barrier to effective introduction of the approach. Another issue was succession planning due to staff turnover. ‘Staff churn’, as mentioned by a participant in the current research, is an all too frequent issue for schools due to high levels of staff ‘burnout’, a key issue for schools in the UK currently (Aspland, 2020). This directly affects the sustainability of the

intervention - the staff that ‘get it’ may not remain in post. The WSABA cannot rely on the enthusiasm of individual staff for its sustenance.

“In the name of ‘therapy’ or ‘emotions’, there is much well-intentioned but insufficiently thought-out faddism in schools” (Mintz, 2009: 633). In the participant schools of the current study, the WSABA were in its relative infancy. In other schools, staff reported that they had experienced new initiatives frequently as uncoordinated, piecemeal or incomplete (Parker & Levinson, 2018). It appeared that the introduction of the latest ‘fad’ in a tokenistic fashion can lead to a lack of shared understanding and resonance among the staff on whose authentic engagement the whole approach depends (Quinn, 2022). The participant staff were advocates of the WSABA and therefore reported that they did not experience the WSABA in a tokenistic way. However, it was clear that there was some way to go before the approach was embedded strategically. School leadership is vital in the introduction of the WSABA. Investments such as time and reflection will only happen if senior leadership believe that the approach and framework may have something really useful to contribute. The AAS model states that schools should be required to have a minimum of two staff that are actively engaged in the full training in order to ensure long-term sustainability of the action plan, one of them from SLT. This was the case in the participant schools, and it was deemed central to its successful introduction. The AAS model recommends that an attachment lead or champion is appointed from SLT to continue leading the school’s training and to support the further development of attachment practices. The participant schools did not have a formalised lead or champion, although in one school there was a steering group.

This study contends that staff engagement with the WSABA is mediated by the support and strategic leadership that is delivered by SLT. Aspland et al. (2020) state that SLT need to become strong internal advocates and experts for the work to take the mantle over from the external organisation that initially led the development of the WSABA. This ‘ownership’ of the approach is a key issue. Treisman also (2016) emphasises the importance of the process being “owned” by all staff from the governors down.

The literature points to the need for the school to be empowered, ideally within a community of practice that will self-sustain without the need for external professionals such as detailed in (Kelly et al., 2020). This key aspect of a WSABA community and peer support was not the case in any of the sample schools. In the current climate, emotionally focused approaches could be referred to as an add-on to the real business of education (Parker & Levinson, 2018). This overarching theme suggests that if the WSABA training is not meaningful and the concepts not enrooted in daily policy and practice in schools, the approach runs the risk of becoming tokenistic and devalued by staff. An effective way of embedding the WSABA is via the on-going peer support provided by community of practice as detailed in Kelly et al (2020).

Without prioritisation and planning, the WSABA will not be successful. It was clear from the sample schools that the approach requires commitment and visibility from the highest levels of leadership. Rose et al. (2016) stated that an attachment-based approach, if inappropriately applied, may be counter-productive. It appeared from the current participants that WSABA will not be effective if it is half-heartedly implemented. If what is true of other 'fads' holds for these approaches, cynicism among the staff implementing the approach will be rife and the impact of the approach weakened. A lack of strategic planning in its introduction will detract from the success of this approach. The WSABA is not only a change to practice but a change to the organisational fabric. MacLochlainn et al. (2022) acknowledge that changing complex systems is challenging work, however a WSABA can result in changes in staff knowledge and understanding that results in more effective working with vulnerable children as evidenced by improvements in behaviour and fewer exclusions. This complex yet impactful work needs thoughtful and strategic support from the highest levels of management.

5.1.2 Training Must Resonate

The specific qualities of the initial and ongoing training on the WSABA were found to be key. This overarching theme represented the importance of the training resonating with the staff. It had two themes within it that related to different aspects of this resonance and both themes are supported by the extant literature.

5.1.2.1 Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training

In the current study, prior to the WSABA most staff were unaware of the relevance of attachment theory to a school setting. Participants needed to be supported to understand the value and purpose of the training. Scientific knowledge seemed helpful to ‘convince’ or ‘persuade’ the staff that the brains of children with attachment issues and trauma were ‘different’. These scientific descriptions, diagrams and analogies seemed helpful for staff to believe that “it was not just excuses”. This scientific foundation bolstered the meaningfulness of the training. This was important due to the amount of ‘tokenistic’ or ‘tick box’ training that staff reported having had experienced in schools. The DAAS model (Kelly et. al, 2020) found that the active paradigm of action research and reflective practice was far more impactful for embedding the WSABA in schools. They found that this paradigm led to an increased sense of ownership over the approach, compared to solely taught modules. The group discussions in the sessions were paramount in embedding understanding and exploring how to bring the theory into practice (Kelly et al., 2020). This conflict between theory and practice is a key area for staff reflection, due to potential conflicts around the balance of a nurturing approach the more boundaried elements of behaviour management (Little & Maunder, 2020). The current study supports active and experiential learning for a WSABA and adds a focus on personal meaningfulness. Patterns in the data indicate that the resonance of the training would increase if the knowledge and skills around the WSABA were brought together with the authentic interests and values of the staff members. This would increase the meaningfulness of the training thereby increasing staff engagement with it. This is central as authentic staff engagement is

a crucial driver of the approach being successful. The participants recognised that becoming an attachment-based system is a process rather than a goal, or a “journey with no end point”. This commitment to learning, reflecting and growing with the approach was central to the effective introduction and embedding of the WSABA. Such a commitment seemed to be increased by the meaningfulness of the initial training and on-going input, as is demonstrated in the communities of practice described by Kelly et al (2020). The sample schools did not have such communities in place at this point on their journey.

5.1.2.2 On the Ground Utility is Key

A key demand in the fraught context of schools was that the attachment-based content had direct utility to the school setting. This is mirrored by Aspland et al. (2020); who reported that schools found the training contained jargon. Others felt the information was not clearly applicable to their school setting and wanted a greater number of school-specific examples. That was echoed by a SLT member in the current study who described their training as missing specific examples of intervention with children with specific attachment styles as a “gap”. A key theme that emerged from the current study was in relation to the participation of all stakeholders in the school community in the WSABA. The findings of the current study echo Dingwall and Sebba (2018a) who state that every single person on the staff team needs to engage in training and on-going input. As a participant in the current study stated, the “huge gains” were not made when a child received mixed messages from different staff members, as safety is not achieved if the student cannot expect a consistent response from the adults around them. As the central tenet of this approach is safety, this observation is consistent theoretically. Treisman (2016) states that students often struggle more with the unstructured time outside of the classroom. Lunchtime was raised by a participant as a time where there were more likely to be behavioural incidents. Less ‘qualified’ staff are likely to be with children at these times. Therefore, it seems logical that these lunchtime staff need to be working with the same level of knowledge as other ‘qualified’ staff members, if not more.

However, this was not the case in the mainstream schools. The paradox of the least qualified staff in schools being placed with the most challenging pupils is well-known (Blatchford, 2007). An example was given in the literature (Aspland et al., 2020) of the staffing structures being adapted so that staff members were outside with children at lunchtime, which helped them to regulate. This is an example of a minor adaptation that could potentially have a big impact. This research concurs with Parker and Levinson (2018) who argue that whole-school flexible approaches are likely more effective than discrete approaches. In a WSABA this means that every conversation, be it with the receptionist, the caretaker or the cleaner, needs to be in line with attachment-based principles. The goal is that every interaction that a child has is in line with the whole-school approach.

5.1.2.2.1 Emotion Coaching

In the current study, the participants voiced confusion regarding emotion coaching, which is a key ‘in the moment’ relational intervention. There was a distinct lack of clarity around this. The Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) framework promotes emotion coaching as a universal relational-based practice approach and was the key attachment-based strategy adopted by all participating schools in their research. In the current study, engagement with the emotion coaching element of attachment-based practice was inconsistent. One staff member in the current study found it to be “incredibly useful.” Another was confused about the link that it had with attachment but spoke of the utility of the staff having a “script in their back pocket.” Both of these participants were members of the SLT attachment steering group in the same school. Consequently, both were invested in the approach. Yet both had internalised very different messages regarding emotion coaching. In another school, there appeared to be some confusion around emotion coaching with a highly engaged and attachment-focused teacher stating that another staff member ‘does that’. Research agreed with a participant statement that outlines the need for a ‘script’ to remind staff to engage in relational techniques, ‘in the moment’. The ambivalence that participants reported over emotion coaching the most widely supported attachment-based strategy (Rose & Gilbert, 2017) is an area to explore.

5.1.3 Scope of the School and Staff Role Dramatically Widens

This overarching theme represented a shift in the understanding of the function of a school. This dramatic shift resulted in a significant expansion in the role of staff and the demands they were faced with. The scope of the staff role and the need for adaptability in their role was a key feature of the current study and of the extant literature.

5.1.3.1 The Function of School Widens

This theme represented the significant shifts in the function of a school that was reported by the sample schools. This model of schooling in a WSABA is one that goes beyond the traditional model of schooling as knowledge delivery. Instead, it is more centred around holistically developing the whole child. This mirrors the findings by Aspland et al. (2020) detailing their ARC model, with its holistic focus on Attachment, Regulation and Competency. The participant schools of the current study also needed to offer a more holistic curriculum that focused on regulation and emotional development. Without these key skills the children did not have the necessary foundation to learn. Participants in the AP reported that the needs of their cohort were at odds with the mainstream ‘one size fits all’ model of education. The teaching and learning in the participant schools was cognisant of the individual needs of the child and their relationship with the teacher and supporting staff. In a WSABA, although there are adult(s) that are key, child-centred planning was essential. This ensured that all staff had a comprehensive knowledge of the child and are aware of what may trigger them. This is paramount when it comes to addressing issues before they happen. The extant literature concurs that knowledge and planning ahead are the bedrock of a successful attachment-based approach (Treisman, 2016). However, this is a significant expansion in the function of a school. In the current study, the importance of adopting a strategic overview of the children’s progress was repeatedly emphasised. Monitoring and tracking the children who are “missed all the time” would help to ensure their needs are recognised and the right support given at the right time.

The WSABA hinged on a responsive and flexible system, but one that gave the children the structure that they needed in order to feel safe, which will vary child to child. This is a demand for staff and the system.

5.1.3.2 Staff Role Expands Dramatically

5.1.3.2.1 Increased Emotional Demands

In the current study, a school-wide ethos of compassionate relating and respect appeared to be the cornerstone of the successful introduction of the WSABA. Treisman (2016) states that each moment can be positive or negative, ‘a snake or a ladder’, trauma inducing or trauma reducing. These day-to-day relational moments are the fabric of the approach. Attachment-based practice is not made up of ‘strategies’. Although strategies may be used, as a relational approach this runs deeper. A relationship is bi-directional and unique to the people in it. For staff practicing a WSABA, it involves the people behind the role relating authentically with each other and with the students. However, this also increases demand on the staff exponentially and emphasises the need for staff to be reflexive and warmly relational in their interactions with pupils.

The scope of the staff role and the need for adaptability in their role was a key feature of the current study that echoed the literature base (MacLochlainn et al., 2022, Carpenter, 2017). This presents both a demand and opportunity for development. In the literature, a notable expansion in terms of demands on staff was a focus on values. This is a significant expansion of the role. Another key demand for staff in a school practicing a WSABA is the need to really ‘know the child’. All pupils are unique, and the participant schools recognised the need to understand their learners, first and foremost. This knowledge also contributed to more effective maintenance of the environment to help to facilitate stability of the child. The ‘thinking minds’ of the adults would help to anticipate triggers for the child, a significant expansion to staff role. Across the literature there was a shift in role and demands on staff; this ‘role

adaptation' (MacLochlainn et al., 2022) was a challenge for staff. In addition, the pivotal role of 'key adult' required support to be effective for pupils and sustainable for staff. In the sample schools, the caretaker or principal acted as the 'key adult', an expansion in their role. Such person-centred practice is key in a WSABA where the relationships that the child has with the individual is central, rather than the role that the adult has in the school.

5.1.4 Permission To Feel

This overarching theme was structured to convey the impact of the approach on the extent to which emotions were expressed authentically in the school and the resulting impact on relationships. These authentic relationships across the school were the bedrock of the approach. The four themes illustrate this concept in varying ways, including the impact of the emotional authenticity on relationships with students, staff and the general ethos of the school. A focus on emotions and relating is reflected in the extant literature.

5.1.4.1 'People are interested in what you feel'

This theme represented the impact of an emotion validating environment on students. In the participant schools, the children were adept in knowing if the feelings portrayed by the school staff were authentic or not. This meaning and authenticity directly impacted on the relationship that was formed with the child which in turn directly impacted on the success of the approach. Evaluating the impact of developing positive relationships with children is less researched in the literature on trauma-informed teaching (Brunzell, Stokes & Waters, 2018). The author contends that the quality of the relationship is the key ingredient in supporting WSABA and effective pedagogy with the sizable minority of children that have experienced trauma. "The whole subject of pupil–teacher attachments and relationships is one which teachers often find difficult and even threatening to contemplate, and one which is generally underplayed in schools" (Jackson, 2002: 133). In the context of a WSABA, authentic emotions are recognised and

responded to. The pivotal role of the ‘key adult’ was reported to be likened by pupils “my second Mum or Dad”. The participants spoke of their relationships with the children in terms that demonstrated professional love (Page, 2018) with statements such as “loving them all”, or “appreciating the smell of a daffodil before picking it”. It was clear that in a WSABA, real feelings are welcome and pivotal to the role of ‘key adult’ particularly. A positive belief and a sense of hope was conveyed to the children and through the eyes of a warm relationship with the trusted adults in school.

5.1.4.2 ‘We bring ourselves’

‘We Bring Ourselves’ represented the significant support that staff offered to each other in the current study. For the participants, staff social time together was a central aspect in how the staff provided support to one another. Staff social time gave staff members the opportunity to express their authentic selves in a social sphere. This was central in developing their relationships and therefore their team capacity. The relationships between staff helped them to respond effectively to their challenging work. This importance of this key element of intra-staff support emerged very strongly, as it did in the extant literature; teachers providing collegial support to each other is a common theme both related to trauma informed schools and mainstream schools. Waters (2018) found that intra-staff relationships are a key vehicle when it comes to developing a sense of meaning when working in a trauma-based environment. Similarly to this study, Rosso et al. (2010) support the finding that relationships with colleagues can have a strong influence on an individual’s sense of meaning at work. Parker et al. (2019) state that practice that is truly trauma informed promotes healthy, caring, and supportive relationships across the entire school community, including between students, teachers, and support staff. This whole school nature of supportive relationships is key. The author contends that the authentic and supportive relationships staff developed with their colleagues promoted their resilience which helped them introduce and embed the WSABA more effectively.

5.1.4.3: 'Being human'

This theme referred to a shift in the culture and ethos of the schools to one that valued authentic human relating and emotions. The participant schools were 'not starting at the beginning' as the cultures seemed to be quite aligned with a relational approach already. The WSABA built on other similar initiatives that were linked to emotions and respectful relating with children. The participant schools spoke of a 'community' culture where adults were hopeful for the children and encouraging. Humanistically relating to children and each other was key. Improved relationships and communication with the children across the school system contributed to a warmer atmosphere in the schools and an increased sense of safety. Attachment was 'part and parcel' of the conversations about children. A member of SLT stated that the culture was one of respect and support, for both adults and children. This caring culture welcomed real emotions. Aspland et al (2020:22) described this culture shift; "if there's a scenario where pupils are being difficult, the way they approach the scenario is different. They're thinking more as caregivers now, which underpins the ethos of the school". This 'thinking as caregivers' in the WSABA emphasised the focus on emotions and relationships as the vehicles for change.

5.1.5 Not Running Alone with Them

The overarching theme is structured and organised to reflect four themes that convey the high demands on staff and the need for adequate support when introducing and embedding the WSABA. The themes magnified themes found across the extant literature.

5.1.5.1 Increased Communication Skills are Demanded

The communication skills demanded by the WSABA are sizable. In the sample schools, communication was reported to be proactive rather than reactive. It involved "looking beneath" and interpreting behaviour from children that at times could seem senseless. In a relentlessly busy school system, the challenges to reflection are clear. MacLochlainn et al., (2022) describe problems that children who

experience toxic stress show in communication and state that difficult relationships that can occur between students and teachers may in part be due to miscommunication stemming from the staff members limited understanding of a child's lived experience. The current study showed that participants had little to no knowledge of the impact of past adversity on current behaviour. Staff learning that challenging behaviour communicates an unmet developmental need was vital. The extant literature pointed towards increased staff resilience in the face of challenging behaviour when they were equipped with knowledge about how the child's adversity may be impacting their behaviour. Treisman (2016), states that increasing staff understanding of attachment would reduce the possibility of viewing the behaviour as personal, rather than as a taught survival technique. In the sample schools, this knowledge enabled the staff to see the child behind the behaviour and motivated them to seek to find what need the behaviour was communicating. When teachers are supported in understanding such behaviour and seek to reframe it not as naughtiness or defiance but as an expression of profound fear and helplessness, then they can respond with strategies other than punishment and exclusion (Geddes, 2016). This reframe was an effective outcome of the WSABA for the participants interviewed. Schools need to be supported to understand what 'misbehaviour' is expressing. Nash et al. (2015:178) state that between educators and psychologists, "much work needs to be done, urgently, to establish a shared knowledge base, founded on a mutual respect and a mutual understanding of what disruptive behaviour in the most troubled pupils is telling us." The findings from the current study support that there is a profound change in adult understanding of what children's behaviour is communicating when they have more knowledge and training in attachment and early adversity.

Increased communication skills are also demanded in multi-agency working across professional boundaries. School staff also communicated on behalf of the child to the network. Quinn et al. (2021) identified in the CSF that ideally the school is part of an integrated network which holds insights from different professional perspectives and has clear pathways for further support. Their research identifies

Educational Psychologists as ideal for facilitating reflection and learning while maintaining a systemic perspective.

5.1.5.2 It lives or dies by the staff

Authentic engagement of the staff is pivotal to the success of the approach. The ‘passion’ of key staff was a driver of the success of the approach. Influential staff that authentically embraced the WSABA seemed to inspire a lot of support for the approach. Their vocal support and sharing of effective practices further embedded the WSABA in the school system. Influential staff could spread the attachment ‘message’ much more effectively than even SLT could, reported a participant from the leadership team. The style of the teacher seemed to be important in terms of their embracing of the approach. The ‘old style’ teachers who were more punitive seemed to have some difficulty in embracing the central message that the adult needed to change their response to the child, rather than it being the child that needed to change. This attitudinal shift seemed to be linked with values to some degree, but also with knowledge. Senior staff indicated that they had received no training in attachment or trauma. One participant stated that in previous schools, poor behaviour in their classroom was attributed to the teacher’s lack of competence; so, the teacher was blamed. This ‘blame’ culture seemed to contribute to a more punitive response to the child. All schools spoke about some teachers that ‘got it [the WSABA]’ or did not ‘get it’. Staff less likely to respond to the approach were the more ‘old fashioned’ teachers that were focused on discipline, or ‘justice seekers’, as one participant eloquently put it.

5.1.5.3 ‘Everyone is listened to’

The current study found that robust and holistic support for the wellness and emotional regulation of staff was essential for the success of the WSABA. The demands on the staff such as in expansion of their role must be facilitated through support from the system and senior leadership to give them the support to practice in this way. MacLochlainn et al., (2022:3) supports this finding and report that “stress

resulting from being re-traumatised, being ill-equipped to deal with students' disruptive classroom behaviour, and lack of support systems within schools, have been highlighted as major factors leading to teacher burnout and reasons for leaving the profession". Although the support provided to the staff in the form of supervision was only available in the AP, there was a strong focus on meaningful staff support in the other two mainstream schools as well, both via formal and informal channels. The author contends that staff wellbeing should be a key performance indicator in schools. Sunderland (2006) states that in the face of chronic stress, teachers need interactive regulation if they are to emotionally regulate the children in their care, and further elaborates that all teachers should ideally receive a regular massage and counselling to equip them to better cope with the challenging environment. A staff 'chill out' space was available in the AP. No other space that was specifically for staff emotional regulation was mentioned by the participant schools. Another key aspect of support to staff was a compassionate approach from management regarding performance management. Participants used language such as "have the opportunity to" rather than any kind of blaming language. As a participant shared, staff are "allowed to have a bad day." Staff are recognised as feeling beings.

Similarly to the pupils, the teachers must feel seen, safe, soothed and secure to implement an attachment-based approach (Rose & Gilbert, 2017). The AAS model advocates supporting staff in particular ways such as establishing a staff mental health lead, having a staff mental health policy, and establishing an ethos that encourages open discussion around the challenges of work. Support from SLT to engender this is key. As mentioned in the above theme 'We bring ourselves' intra-staff support seemed of vital importance also. Examples was time spent socially with peers within supportive spaces in the school. Treisman (2016) states that the system-wide impact of trauma needs to be explicitly addressed and concordant processes attended to such as mirroring, splitting and projection. This study upholds this finding and deems it imperative that schools acknowledge the incredibly challenging nature of the work. Once the weight of the work is acknowledged, robust systems of support must be established for staff. The AAS model recommends monthly team supervision from a line manager or external professional

that understands the approach and appreciates the relational demands made of the staff. The AAS model advocates one-to-one staff supervision if high levels of trauma are prevalent in the staff member's caseload. In the current study, a member of the senior leadership team in the AP had "fought for years" to secure a supervisory space. They had to 'buy in' this support externally from CAMHS. The SLT participant deemed it essential.

Schools must acknowledge the reality of staff stress. It is essential that the school is a 'safe space' in which the staff can acknowledge distress and difficulty. Treisman (2016: 109) asks "how can children be held by safe hands and within thinking minds if the people delivering the services themselves are not held in the same way?" Self-care and stress management are fundamental to the success of these approaches (Treisman, 2016). Therefore, as well as the extensive strategic support necessary that is outlined in the first theme, the senior leaders must ensure that their staff are psychologically supported and contained so that they can carry out this challenging approach. This is what will have a real impact on the success of attachment-based whole school approaches. A consideration of the teachers' own attachment style may also be helpful when it comes to the teachers reflecting on the challenges. This would need to be done with a high level of psychological safety and containment and of course, of their own volition. Ultimately, sustainable whole school change came about through changing the staff perceptions. A significant perception to shift is likely in the recognition of the role of the school in exacerbating children's distress, as notes by Aspland et al. (2020)

Support to staff on a multitude of levels was vital for the success of the approach. The findings of one small scale study on training in attachment theory without a whole school focus (Little & Maunder, 2020) are of interest to note. Despite finding potential for the approach to instigate a change in staff evaluations of challenging behaviour while helping them consider alternative perspectives and increase their empathy, some of the staff expressed negativity towards the training. These staff were concerned about the challenges they perceived they would face when implementing the approach. Staff concerns included

the limited time available during the school day, perceived pressure to be consistent with students, and concerns about clashes between their current role and the attachment-based practices. They also saw a potential incompatibility with the school's behaviour policy. These tensions must be explored in a safe space with staff to reduce the chance of the intervention becoming meaningless in the context of demands of everyday practice.

5.1.5.4 'Having it guide your moral compass'

WSABA work best when the value system of the individual staff members connects with the values and aims of the attachment-based approach as a whole. Values were a focus in the CFS study (Quinn, 2021). In their research, Aspland et al. (2020) note “the challenges in evaluating different sites, with different leadership, philosophies, vision and values”. The word values is contained within the title of ‘The Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring a values-driven, hope-filled, relational approach with school leaders’. The literature on meaningful work in education supports the findings from the current study confirming that staff values are important when working with children in a trauma-informed manner. The current study adds to the evidence base that aligning staff values with the WSABA is a key element of its successful introduction (Quinn, 2022). Research states that when people act in accordance with their authentic thoughts, feelings, identity and values at work, they are expressing their real self. “Individuals experience psychological meaningfulness at work when they experience that they are receiving a return on investment of the self in a currency of physical, emotional, and/or cognitive rewards” (Rothmann & Hamukang'andu, 2013, p. 1). This authenticity is a bedrock of WSABA. The research states that meaningful work is a buffer against the pressures of work. Meaningful work guards against ‘burnout’, a key issue for teachers in the UK currently, as reported by the literature (Aspland, 2020). The current study found that a staff team who are authentically aligned and committed to the approach and find a sense of authenticity and meaning in it is a key predictor of the approach being successful.

The values of school leaders were a key driver to the success of the approach and a pivotal element in embedding authentic whole school change. Keeping the approach visible and reinforcing it as in line with the values of the school was important. The leadership style in all of the schools appeared to be more democratic. It was unclear whether this was a symptom of the approach or whether these democratic environments preceded it. In the current study, some of the SLT members stated that they valued the importance of listening and responding to staff. A democratic leadership team that “listened to everyone” seemed to encourage a higher level of autonomy and respect in the wider staff. Staff in the AP noted the supportive leadership and the importance of being able to have an ‘off day’. This perception of the leaders being supportive and on a similar level as the rest of the staff seemed to help the introduction of the approach. In the participant schools, it seemed that this sense of ownership and empowerment happened most effectively if the participants felt that they were equal partners in the school and could have their voice heard. A top-down culture may not encourage a relational approach to bloom, as it could preclude a sense of safety which is the essential first step. Relationships need to be as symmetrical as possible between the staff and children and between the staff and school leaders. The participant schools reported a less hierarchical culture than may be seen in a typical school. It is unknown whether this was a symptom of the approach or a precursor to it. However, the majority of the participants in the study were from SLT, so this view of reduced hierarchy would need to be corroborated by all parts of the school community. The participants voiced appreciation of the flattened hierarchy in their schools, as the more democratic system that allowed them to learn and reflect authentically, which was essential to the introduction of the WSABA.

5.1.6 Reflective Practice Groups

A key vehicle of staff support is time to reflect. Staff need space together to reflect on their needs and how they can be able to support the needs of the child. Reflective practice sessions are a meaningful way to do this. The AAS model recommends more formal reflection slots as well as informal ‘debriefs’ for staff to problem-solve as required. The findings from the current study support the view that both formal and informal avenues of staff support are necessary. MacLochlainn et al. (2022) measured compassion satisfaction and found an increase in this measure after a two-day CSF⁹ workshop. Compassion satisfaction is positively correlated with meaning. Brunzell, Stokes and Waters (2018) report that when working in a trauma-based environment, compassion satisfaction can be fostered when staff are supported and their vulnerability to compassion fatigue and secondary trauma recognised. Reflective practice in the form of a work discussion group (WDG) is one avenue to support attachment-based approaches. As well as emotionally containing staff, reflecting on relationships with children helps to engender a ‘child-centred’ approach. This will contribute to effective pedagogy. “All students are unique; educators, through implementing a variety of motivational techniques, can have considerable influence on students’ participation and self-expression; individual teachers have the capability of making learning empowering, thus allowing the energy of the classroom to be filled with excitement and anticipation” (Valerio, 2012, p. 2).

5.1.7 Impact on Behaviour Policy

In Aspland et al. (2020:21) the impact of a WSABA on behaviour policy was a central issue. In a notable development, CAMHS were invited to contribute to the establishment of a behaviour policy in one of their participant schools. As a result, in one of the schools there was “now a consistent system in place

⁹ Compassionate Schools Framework

for stepped actions and sanctions, all based in restorative justice. These are recorded and followed up by the senior leadership team.” Treisman (2016) states that the most effective discipline and management strategy is prevention and an early intervention approach. This hinges on adults ‘seeing’ the child acting as a ‘thinking mind’, anticipating the child’s triggers. This child-centred planning was found to be of pivotal importance in the current study. The word ‘discipline’ means to teach or guide. Participants in the current study shared that when discipline feels like punishment, it did not lead to the reflection necessary for behavioural change. The Traumatic Stress Institute (n.d.:2) reports that “for children with attachment difficulties, ordinary discipline and being given directions are reliable triggers for a shame reaction”. Goodman (2017) reports that researchers have found shaming to be an ineffective means of managing misbehaviour as well as psychologically harmful to children. In the study by Aspland et al. (2020) suspension and expulsion as punishments were replaced with choice and consequences instead, such as five acts of kindness replacing detention. Such a shift in policy and practice requires reflection and engagement from all levels of the school community. Successful management of children’s ‘challenging behaviour’ with an attuned and empathetic response that is reflected in policy is key for the successful introduction of WSABA.

5.2 Unique Contribution to the Literature

“A significant outcome of research is the contribution that it makes to the existing knowledge base of a discipline” (Birks et al. 2009, p. 413). The RTA of this study extends the existing research on WSABA. It constructed themes from the data garnered in interviews with a selection of school staff from diverse backgrounds. This study sought to generate new knowledge. It coalesces with many of the findings in the extant literature. This study is proposing tentative answers to some, not all, of the questions that transpired from a review of the literature. One question is regarding how training in attachment principles needs to be posed to the staff in terms of complexity and length for it to be relevant to them. The RTA of this study indicates that ‘in the classroom’ and ‘on the ground’ utility was key in terms of staff

perceptions of the usefulness of the WSABA. The emotional impact of the training on the staff was a key point that affected its success. Alignment with the staff interests was also seen as important and seemed to increase staff ownership and meaningfulness. Findings from the literature indicate that reducing ‘jargon’ and maximising the school focus will bolster the perceptions of the training as useful.

This study has also presented its findings related to emotion coaching. Participants in the current study reported uncertainty about the intervention, and shared that it can be ‘confusing’, and that they were not sure of the relevance of the approach to attachment. Even motivated senior leaders did not have clarity. This was at odds with the AAS finding that emotion coaching is the main universal strategy that has been particularly effective across participant schools (Rose et al. 2019).

This study would propose that in a typical mainstream school there are generally insufficient resources and capacity internally to provide the ongoing support needed to effectively embed and sustain a WSABA. The alternative provision of the current study, which had access to significantly more resources than a mainstream provision, had a ‘hard-won battle’ to secure external supervision from CAMHS. The SLT member that “fought for years” for this external support was particularly conscious of the potential for secondary trauma and the impact that this could potentially have on staff, and therefore pupils. This external support appears to be pivotal to help the school system to meaningfully engage in a WSABA.

This study did not propose a reasonable answer regarding elements of a WSABA that are most effective. It did not make any contributions regarding outcome measures. These are multi-faceted, complex topics and appropriate avenues for future research.

5.3 Limitations of the Current Research

As doctoral research, this small-scale study was conducted on a limited timescale. It had a relatively small sample and was conducted within three schools in a single borough of East London. One of the

schools was an alternative provision. An alternative provision undoubtedly has more resources than a mainstream setting. However, there is no reason that elements of the practice used in the alternative provision cannot be feasibly situated within the mainstream practice. The interviews were conducted in the schools. This was positive as it was the participant's natural environment. This likely helped the process of analysis for the researcher as they got a feel for the school ethos, a central aspect of this approach. However, a negative aspect was that the time given for the interviews was not as protected as it would have been in an external venue. For example, one of the interviews was terminated early due to an incident occurring in the school and it could not be rescheduled due to a lack of time despite continued attempts from the researcher.

5.4 Future Directions

Consensus across all of the stakeholders in the school system is advocated in the literature on WSABA (Dingwall & Sebba, 2018a). The scope of the current study did not extend to eliciting the voice of the entire school community. The participants were limited to teachers, support staff and SLT. Pupil voice is especially lacking. Considering the research question and limitations of the current study in terms of time and resources, the perspective of pupils was deemed to be less key. Many of the participants in this study were from SLT. In terms of directions for future research, this author would welcome the voices of less senior staff, particularly the 'unqualified' staff who may spend the most time with students with attachment difficulties. The impact of governors is also an area for exploration in future research; it was not raised in the current study but was deemed to be important in the extant literature (Parker & Levinson, 2018).

There is a need to further understand shared relational values within the school and the impact of these on how relational interventions are maintained within different types of relationships and interactions in the school during times of heightened stress (Quinn et al., 2021). Brunzell et al. (2016a) highlight that

trauma-informed education tends to be conceived from a deficit perspective with a focus on repairing negative states, specifically 'repairing regulatory abilities' and 'disrupted attachments'. They argue that there is also a need to move beyond this to include a focus on building positive psychological resources and growth. They make the case for trauma-informed positive education that incorporates research from positive psychology that is particularly relevant to building psychological resources for trauma-affected students (Brunzell et al., 2016a). Research to develop a trauma-informed, positive psychology framework for education would be a welcome new direction. Lastly, robust research into appropriate, meaningful and robust outcome measures in the area of WSABA is needed. As outlined below in section 5.6.2, this may be an appropriate role for EPs.

5.5 Dissemination Strategy

Publication of this research may be sought in a subject-specific journal. The participant schools will be given directions to access the full thesis. The findings will also remain on file in the local educational psychology service and can be shared with schools as well as the EPS team to stimulate discussion and encourage the uptake of this approach.

5.6 Recommendations for Educational Psychology (EP) Practice

Sparling et al. (2021) state that EPs are well-positioned to support schools in adopting strategies, approaches, processes, and practices to work effectively with children experiencing adversity. EPs are well-placed to support schools due to their theoretical, evidence-based knowledge paired with practical experience of the school environment.

5.6.1 Organisational Development and Training

EPs can offer training in bespoke trauma informed approaches and support the school development of such approaches at an organisational level. EPs can provide systemic assistance in embedding the

approach due to their knowledge of systems theory and organisational psychology which will likely aid effective planning. Across the extant literature, key systemic barriers were ownership of the approach, capacity - both practically and emotionally, and integration of the framework across the diverse elements of the school community. An EP would be well-placed to provide a space where these elements can be reflected on and problem solved with SLT.

5.6.2 Research

EPs could also have a role in contributing to developing rigorous outcome measures that will assist in monitoring the effectiveness of the approach. Aspland et al., (2020:24) state that “successful embedding of trauma informed practice in school life should positively impact on a range of measures over time - including the rate of exclusions, both permanent and fixed term, and lower-level behaviour incidents”. Such impacts need to be carefully monitored to reflect the effectiveness of the WSABA. In addition, a systemic and multi-faceted overview of children’s unique needs and progress is vital. Such a research challenge could be well-matched to the skill set of an EP due to their familiarity with ecological systems theory. Lastly, EPs could contribute to the development of a trauma-informed, positive psychology educational framework as advocated by Brunzell et al., (2016a). Such a model could include research from positive psychology to build psychological resources for students that have experienced trauma and staff working in such an environment.

5.6.3 Reflective Space, Coaching and Supervision

A core skill of EPs is holding therapeutic space. Reflective space would likely be beneficial for staff working with students that have experienced trauma. It could allow them to reflect on their emotional capacity when working in this challenging environment. Over time, EPs could also support the system to become more empowered and self-sufficiently reflective. EPs can support schools by providing supervision and coaching based around the bespoke WSABA for school leaders and staff. EPs are also

ideally placed to provide supervision or reflective space for staff working with children that have experienced early adversity. In a trauma-based environment, Langle (2003) emphasises the need to pause and to ‘be’; to develop an inner relationship to the work. He cautions that if this does not happen enough, staff will fail to connect to the intrinsic value of the task. This balance between ‘doing’ and ‘being’ could be supported with reflective practice time. This may develop a meaningful relationship to the work and therefore increase staff capacity. This ties in with the extant literature which states that additional reflective practice time to introduce and embed the attachment-based approach is recommended. Jackson (2002) illustrates how providing teachers with a thinking space where they can take a break from the intensity of the class and the pressure to ‘deliver the curriculum’ can help them to reflect. This reflection space will likely help them to process the emotions stirred up in them from working with trauma-affected pupils. A space for this reflection, thinking and feeling outside of line management is key to the success of an attachment-based approach. EPs would be very suitable to support such reflective practice in schools.

5.6.4 Design of Universal and Targeted Therapeutic Support in Schools

Attachment-based practice offers a potential avenue for addressing mental health universally in the school community and offering targeted support. EPs can support the design of universal interventions and provide direct therapeutic support to pupils. They can also supervise school staff that to deliver interventions, upskilling the school staff in the process. In addition, EPs could provide parenting support to support attachment at any age. In a graduated approach such as Parker & Levinson (2018) describe, vulnerable children are referred for direct therapeutic support. There are significant benefits of containing this therapeutic support within the school day, such as ease of access, both practically and psychologically. An EP could be well placed to deliver attachment informed therapeutic interventions as described in section 1.3 if they were within their bounds of competence (BPS, 2022).

5.6.5 Emotion Coaching

In the Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) framework, emotion coaching was effective, and the main universal attachment-based strategy adopted by all participating schools (Rose et al. 2019). Due to the support for emotion coaching in the literature but ambivalence in the sample schools, effective training and monitoring of this simple yet challenging approach would be a beneficial role for an EP. Such training could take place throughout the school community, and with parents.

5.7 Conclusions

Long (2022) asserts that system-wide investment is needed in attitudes, beliefs, resources, and practise to introduce and embed a WSABA. Demkowicz and Humphrey (2019) state that whole school approaches are not a panacea. Expectations need to be managed as per the outcomes, as well as the inputs needed, to achieve meaningful outcomes. This mirrors the findings of the current research and the extant literature. The WSABA is not a ‘quick fix’, and it takes time and strategic investment to develop and embed. Demkowicz and Humphrey (2019) echo that these approaches are complex to implement in practice. They advise that a staged approach to delivery is advisable, and that there is no single ‘gold standard’ approach. Rather, approaches should be selected based on the local need and context and critically evaluated in relation to bespoke outcome measures.

WSABA are a change to the organisational fabric, not a “quick fix”. This study has argued that schools are ideally placed to engage in the early detection of and intervention in mental health issues using a whole school approach, based in attachment theory. These approaches work best when they are carefully planned and strategically monitored. Such intervention needs “decisive commitment” (Aspland et al., 2020). Without this commitment there is the risk of the WSABA wilting in the face of the many competing demands of the school system. Staff support and impactful training is essential. This study and extant literature (Quinn et al., 2021) found that WSABA seem to work most effectively when the

value system of the individual staff member connects with the values and aims of the school and the whole school attachment-based approach. WSABA are extremely challenging to introduce. However, the benefits could potentially be significant. Recent literature indicates that there are positive effects across a wide range of indicators for the school community as a whole. This research hopes to add to the developing evidence base and to encourage uptake of these approaches for the benefit of all in the school community. In the current study, similarly to the literature review findings, the focus was on the process of introducing and embedding a WSABA rather than a 'destination'. Embedding meaningful change in complex and strained systems takes time. There was an awareness that this was "a journey with no end point."

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Appendix A: Search Strategy Results for the Literature Search questions

Search 1

Term(s)	Database	Returns (duplicates)
"Attachment Aware"	PsycInfo	2
	ERIC	4(2)
	Education Source	5(4)
Attachment AND "whole school" AND "mental health"	PsycInfo	3 (1)
	ERIC	2(2)
	Education Source	2(1)
"Whole school approach" AND attachment AND Learning	PsycInfo	0 (0)
	ERIC	0 (0)
	Education Source	0 (0)
"Attachment Aware schools"	PsycInfo	1(1)
	ERIC	3 (3)
	Education Source	4(4)
"Trauma informed school"	PsycInfo	28 (0)
	ERIC	11 (7)
	Education Source	14 (8)
Attachment AND "whole school" AND United Kingdom	PsycInfo	0
	ERIC	2 (2)
	Education Source	1(1)

“Attachment Aware” AND “relational” AND School	PsycInfo	0
	ERIC	1(1)
	Education Source	1(1)
		84 (38)

Repeated search on 27.07.2022

“Attachment Aware”	PsycInfo	2 (2)
	ERIC	4 (3)
	Education Source	8 (6)
Attachment AND “whole school”	PsycInfo	11 (7)
	ERIC	8 (4)
	Education Source	8 (6)
		41 (28)

Discovery

Search #	Database	Term	Results
1	Essex university library search	“Attachment Aware”	51 (8)
2		“Whole school attachment”	4 (2)

		“Attachment Aware School”	7 (1)
3	Tavistock & Portman 'Discovery'	“Attachment Aware School”	5 (1)
4		“Attachment Aware”	26 (13) 2 (2)
		“Whole school Attachment”	95 (35)

Appendix B: Papers from Search 1 and 2 Screened, Excluded and Included at the Title, Abstract and/or Full Paper

Author(s)	Title	Screened at and Reason for exclusion
Zsolnai, Anikó; Szabó, Lilla	Attachment aware schools and teachers.	Screened in Full text analysis - Non-UK context
Ruth Spence, Lisa Kagan, Moja Kljakovic & Antonia Bifulco	Understanding trauma in children and young people in the school setting	Screened in , Full article analysis - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA) One article 'snowballed' from this paper
Patton, G. C., Glover, S., Bond, L., Butler, H., Godfrey, C., Pietro, G. D. & Bowes, G.	The Gatehouse Project: A systematic approach to mental health promotion in secondary schools.	Screened at abstract - Non UK context and unrelated to topic
Sloan, S., Winter, K., Connolly, P., & Gildea, A	The effectiveness of Nurture Groups in improving outcomes for young children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in primary schools: An evaluation of Nurture Group provision in Northern Ireland	Screened at abstract - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)

Gore Langton, E. (2017).	Adopted and permanently placed children in education: from rainbows to reality. Educational Psychology in Practice, 33(1), 16-30.	Screened at title - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Goodall, K., Robertson, H., & Schwannauer, M.	The relationship between adverse childhood experiences and educational disadvantage: A critical perspective.	Screened at title - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Wiatrowski, M., & Anderson, K.	The Dimensionality of the Social Bond	Screened at title - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Roseby, S., & Gascoigne, M.	A systematic review on the impact of trauma-informed education programs on academic and academic-related functioning for students who have experienced childhood adversity.	Screened at abstract - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA) and US study
Mendelson, T., Tandon, S., D., O'Brennan, L., Leaf, P., J., & Ialongo, N. S.	Brief report: Moving prevention into schools: The impact of a trauma-informed school-based intervention.	Screened at title - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
,Larissa Gaias, Joni W. Splett, Janine Jones, Whitney Walker	Embedding equity into school mental health theory, research, and	Screened at title - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)

	practice: An introduction to the special issue series	
Angelique G. Day, Cheryl L. Somers, Beverly Baroni, Shantel West, Laura Sanders &	Evaluation of a trauma-informed school intervention with girls in a residential facility school: Student perceptions of school environment	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Jiyoung K. Tabone ^a , Carrie W. Rishel ^a , Helen P. Hartnett ^a , Kathy F. Szafran ^b	Examining the effectiveness of early intervention to create trauma-informed school environments.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Crosby, S. D., Day, A., Baroni, B. A., & Somers, C	On promoting understanding and equity through compassionate educational practice: Toward a new inclusion.	Screened at abstract- Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Phifer, L. W., & Hull, R.	Helping students heal: Observations of trauma-informed practices in the schools.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Yanet Quijada 1, Carolina Inostroza 2, Pamela Vaccari 2, Julie Riese 3, Carolina Hausmann-Stabile 3	Infusing the trauma-informed approach in youth suicide research: Lessons from the field	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)

Aaron A. Gubi, Gabrielle Denicola, Oscar Kosecki, Joel O. Bocanegra, Julia E. Strait, Kirby Wycoff & Keri Giordano	Knowledge of Trauma-Informed Care Among Graduate Students in School Psychology	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Alysse Melville Loomis, Faithe Felt	Knowledge, Skills, and Self-reflection: Linking Trauma Training Content to Trauma-Informed Attitudes and Stress in Preschool Teachers and Staff	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Kimberly T Arnold 1 2 3, Keshia M Pollack Porter 1, Shannon Frattaroli 1, Rachel E Durham 4, Laura K Clary 5, Tamar Mendelson	Multilevel Barriers and Facilitators to Sustainability of Universal Trauma-Informed School-Based Mental Health Intervention Following an Efficacy Trial: A Qualitative Study	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Nicholas W. Gelber, Kristin M. Rispoli, Melissa A. Bray, Cheryl Maykel	Trauma and Early Adolescent Development: Case Examples from a Trauma-Informed Public Health Middle School Program.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Diggins, J.	Reductions in behavioural and emotional difficulties from	Screened at abstract - Not UK study

	specialist, trauma-informed school	
Elbedour, S., Alsubie, F., Al'Uqdah, S. N., & Bawalsah, J. A.	School crisis management planning	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Berger, E., Chionh, N., & Miko, A.	School leaders' experiences on dealing with students exposed to domestic violence.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Rajan, S.	School safety and violence: Drawing on a public health approach.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Berger, E., D'Souza, L., & Miko, A.	School-based interventions for childhood trauma and autism spectrum disorder: a narrative review.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Broussard, D. L., Eitmann, L. P., & Shervington, D. O.	Sex education through a trauma-informed lens: Do parents who see trauma as a problem for youth support trauma-informed sex education?	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Rumsey, A. D., & Milsom, A.	Supporting school engagement and high school completion	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School

	through trauma-informed school counseling.	Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Frydman, J. S., & Mayor, C.	Trauma and early adolescent development: Case examples from a trauma-informed public health middle school program.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Gubi, A. A., Strait, J., Wycoff, K., Vega, V., Brauser, B., & Osman, Y.	Trauma-informed knowledge and practices in school psychology: A pilot study and review.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Morton, B. M., & Berardi, A. A. (2018).	Trauma-informed school programming: Applications for mental health professionals and educator partnerships.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Courtney Wiest-Stevenson & Cindy Lee	Trauma-Informed Schools	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Lai, B. S., Osborne, M. C., Lee, N., Self-Brown, S., Esnard, A. M., & Kelley, M. L.	Trauma-informed schools: Child disaster exposure, community violence and somatic symptoms.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Overstreet, S., & Chafouleas, S. M. (2016). Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue.	Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study

S Overstreet, SM Chafouleas	'We need to address the trauma': School social workers' views about student and staff mental health during covid-19.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Scott, J., Jaber, L. S., & Rinaldi, C. M.	Trauma-Informed School Strategies for SEL and ACE Concerns during COVID-19.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA).
Flanagan, V., & Rodriguez, S.	The Value of Social and Emotional Learning: Considerations for Kentucky's Approach to Trauma-Informed Schools.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Biddle, C., & Brown, L. M.	Banishing "Siberia" and Student Seclusion: Leading Trauma- Informed Systems Change in a Rural School.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study
Anna Berardi and Brenda M. Morton	Maximizing Academic Success for Foster Care Students: A Trauma-Informed Approach.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Day, A. G., Somers, C. L., Baroni, B. A., West, S. D., Sanders, L., & Peterson, C. D.	Evaluation of a Trauma-Informed School Intervention with Girls in a Residential Facility School:	Screened at abstract - Not UK study

	Student Perceptions of School Environment.	
Anderson, E. M., Blitz, L. V., & Saastamoinen, M.	Exploring a School-University Model for Professional Development With Classroom Staff: Teaching Trauma-Informed Approaches.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Mendelson, T., Clary, L. K., Sibinga, E., Tandon, D., Musci, R., Mmari, K., ... & Ialongo, N.	A randomized controlled trial of a trauma-informed school prevention program for urban youth: Rationale, design, and methods.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Pelayo, E.	Trauma-Informed School Libraries: A Space for All	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)

Crosby, S. Day, A. Baroni, A, Somers C.	Examining Trauma-Informed Teaching and the Trauma Symptomatology of Court-Involved Girls	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
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Acosta, J., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Malone, P. S., Phillips, A., & Wilks, A.	Evaluation of a whole-school change intervention: Findings from a two-year cluster-randomized trial of the restorative practices intervention	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Rovis, D., Jonkman, H., & Basic, J.	A multilevel analysis of adverse family relations, school bonding and risk behaviours among adolescents.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Hernandez, L., Oubrayrie-Roussel, N., & Prêteur, Y. (2012).	Relations sociales entre pairs à l'adolescence et risque de désinvestissement scolaire.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)

Rowe, F., Stewart, D., & Patterson, C.	Promoting school connectedness through whole school approaches.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Sprague, J. R., & Walker, H. M.	Review of Safe and Healthy Schools, Practical Prevention Strategies.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Patton, G., Bond, L., Butler, H., & Glover, S.	Changing Schools, Changing Health? Design and Implementation of the Gatehouse Project.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Smyth, J., McInerney, P., & Hattam, R.	Tackling School Leaving at its Source: A case of reform in the middle years of schooling.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Nolan, A. D., Hannah, E. F., Lakin, E., & Topping, K. J. .	Whole-School Nurturing Approaches: A Systematic Analysis of Impact	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Gordon, M., & Green, J.	Roots of Empathy: Changing the World, Child by Child. Education Canada, 48(2), 34-36.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and unrelated to topic

Cole, T., Daniels, H., & Visser, J. (Eds)..	The Routledge International Companion to Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and unrelated to topic
Demanet, J., & Van Houtte, M.	The Impact of Bullying and Victimization on Students' Relationships	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Demanet, J., & Van Houtte, M.	Understanding nurturing practices — a comparison of the use of strategies likely to enhance self-esteem in nurture groups and normal classrooms	Screened at abstract - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Little, S., & Maunder, R.	Why we should train teachers on the impact of childhood trauma on classroom behaviour.	Full text analysis - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Rutledge, R.	A whole school approach to building relationships, promoting positive behaviour and reducing teacher stress in a secondary school.	Screened at abstract - Not UK study

Papers included in the Systematic Review from search 1 and 2

Author(s)	Name	Paper number
Parker, R., & Levinson, M. P. (2018).	Student behaviour, motivation and the potential of attachment-aware schools to redefine the landscape.	1
Parker, R., Rose, J., McGuire-Snieckus, R., Gilbert, L., & McInnes, K. (2019).	Attachment Aware Schools: The impact of a targeted and collaborative intervention. A3	2
Kelly, P., Watt, L., & Giddens, S. (2020).	An Attachment aware schools programme: a safe space, a nurturing learning community.	3

Appendix C: Papers Screened, Excluded and Included at the Title, Abstract and/or Full Paper from the Library Wide Databases

Rose, Janet ; Gilbert, Louise ; McGuire-Snieckus, Rebecca ; Gus, Licette ; McInnes, Karen ; Digby, Rebecca	Attachment Aware Schools: Working with Families to Enhance Parental Engagement and Home-School Relationships	Full text analysis - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Drew, Helen ; Banerjee, Robin	Supporting the education and well-being of children who are looked-after: what is the role of the virtual school?	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Dawson, Laura	An educational psychology service's contribution to supporting families formed by adoption	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Roccas, Sonia ; Klar, Yechiel ; Liviatan, Ido; Dovidio, John F	The Paradox of Group-Based Guilt: Modes of National Identification, Conflict Vehemence, and Reactions to the In-Group's Moral Violations	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Stother, Andi ; Woods, Kevin ; McIntosh, Sarah	Evidence-based practice in relation to post-adoption support into educational settings	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Sullivan, Daniel ; Young, Isaac F.	Place Attachment Style as a Predictor of Responses to the Environmental Threat of Water Contamination	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Zalaznik, Dina ; Weiss, Michal ; Huppert, Jonathan D	Improvement in adult anxious and avoidant attachment during cognitive behavioral therapy for panic disorder	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Roos-Jansåker, Ann-Marie ; Almhöjd, Ulrica S. ; Jansson, Henrik	Treatment of peri-implantitis: clinical outcome of chloramine as an adjunctive to non-surgical therapy, a randomized clinical trial	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Long, Eleanor	The future of pastoral care in schools: exploring whole-school trauma-informed approaches	Screened at full text – did not contain empirical data
Fernandez, Elizabeth	Working towards better education for children in care: longitudinal analysis of the educational outcomes of a cohort of children in care in Australia	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Karakaş, Nazmi Mutlu ; Sarı, Burcu Akın ; Aksakal, Fatma Nur Baran ; Özdemir, Dilşad Foto ; Dağlı, Figen Şahin	Mother-child attachment patterns in mothers with and without a history of adverse childhood experiences	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Wall, Sarah	'A little whisper in the ear': how developing relationships between pupils with attachment difficulties and key adults can improve the former's social, emotional and	Screened at title – not WSAA

	behavioural skills and support inclusion	
Worsley, Joanne D. ; McIntyre, Jason C. ; Corcoran, Rhiannon	Cyberbullying victimisation and mental distress: testing the moderating role of attachment security, social support, and coping styles	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Petrowski, Katja ; Berth, Hendrik ; Schurig, Susan ; Probst, Thomas	Suppressor effects in associations between patient attachment to therapist and psychotherapy outcome	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Dlamini, Simangele ; Tesfamichael, Solomon G. ; Breetzke, Gregory D. ; Mokhele, Tholang	Spatio-temporal patterns and changes in environmental attitudes and place attachment in Gauteng, South Africa	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Templeton, Fiona ; McGlade, Anne ; Fitzsimons, Lelia	'My experience of school': the perspective of adopted young people aged 16-21 years	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Mair, Helma	Attachment safety in psychotherapy	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Fogg, Penny	Learning lessons: school communities as points of connection in a 'whole of society' pandemic response,	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Bruna, G.	Ian Maclaren's Scottish Local-Colour Fiction in Transnational Contexts: Networks of Reception, Circulation, and Translation in the United States and Europe Bruna, Giulia	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Dyer, Bryce	An Investigation into the Product Attachment between Athletes and Their Sports Equipment	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Lachmar, E.M.	Psychophysiological Arousal and Perceived Support during Couple Support Interactions: The Role of Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Megan Lachmar, E. ; Seedall, Ryan B.	Supporting pupils in school with social, emotional and mental health needs: a scoping review of the literature	Full text analysis - not UK study. Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Carroll, Catherine ;	Hurry, Jane Sad Paradise: Jack Kerouac's Nostalgic Buddhism	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Haynes, Sarah F.	Education and Attachment: Guidelines to Prevent School Failure de Castro, Rosa ; Pereira, Dora	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

KANG, YAE-RI ; LEE, JONG-SUN ; KANG, MIN-CHUL	Adult attachment styles, self-esteem, and depressive symptoms: A comparison between postpartum and nonpostpartum women in Korea	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Abu-Rayya, Maram Hussien ; Abu-Rayya, Hisham Motkal	Ethnic identification, religious identity, and psychological well-being among Muslim and Christian Palestinians in Israel	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Tieffenbach, Emma	Incommensurability and Trade	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
López-Tarjuelo, Juan ; Bouché-Babiloni, Ana ; Morillo-Macías, Virginia ; Santos-Serra, Agustín ; Ferrer-Albiach, Carlos	Practical issues regarding angular and energy response in in vivo intraoperative electron radiotherapy dosimetry	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Jaye, Chrystal ; Egan, Tony ; Smith-Han, Kelby	Communities of clinical practice and normalising technologies of self: learning to fit in on the surgical ward	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Berman, Steven L. ; Weems, Carl F. ; Rodriguez, Eileen T. ; Zamora, Irving J.	The relation between identity status and romantic attachment style into middle and late adolescence	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Knepper, Paul	Rethinking the racialization of crime: the significance of black firsts,	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Abu-Rayya, Hisham Motkal	Ethnic identity, ego identity, and psychological well-being among mixed-ethnic Arab-European adolescents in Israel	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Abu-Rayya, Hisham Motkal	Ethnic identity, ego identity, and psychological well-being among mixed-ethnic Arab-European adolescents in Israel	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Anan, Ruth McLeister ; Barnett, Douglas	Perceived Social Support Mediates Between Prior Attachment and Subsequent Adjustment: A Study of Urban African American Children	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Michaela Anne	Implementing Dialectical Behaviour Therapy: organizational pre-treatment	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Swanson, Krista ; Beckwith, Leila ; Howard, Judy	Intrusive caregiving and quality of attachment in prenatally drug-exposed toddlers and their primary caregivers,	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

von Oppen, Karoline	Reporting from Bosnia: Reconceptualising the Notion of 'Journalism of Attachment'	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Landau, Ruth	Artificial womb versus natural birth: an exploratory study of women's views,	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Smith, Barry	From simulation to reality breaking down the barriers	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Ong, Rebecca	Internet sex crimes against children: Hong Kong's response,	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Bragin, Martha ; Pierreponte, Monica	Complex Attachments Exploring the Relation Between Mother and Child When Economic Necessity Requires Migration to the North	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Egan, Vincent	Personality Disorder: The Definitive Reader	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Morrell, Robert E	Shingon's Kakukai on the Immanence of the Pure Land	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Connelly, J.	101. New Literacies: A Pedagogical Framework for Reading Virtual Worlds -- A Journey into Barbiegirls.com.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Meredith, P.	102. Introducing attachment theory to occupational therapy.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Stoher, A., Woods, K., & McIntosh, S.	103. Evidence-based practice in relation to post-adoption support into educational settings.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Sivers, S., & Schnackenberg, N.	104. Educational psychologists creating a Reach-Out webinar series during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Lowri, C.	105. Issues in persistent non-attendance at school of autistic pupils and recommendations following the reintegration of 11 autistic pupils.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Fernandez, E.	106. Working towards better education for children in care: longitudinal analysis of the educational outcomes of a cohort of children in care in Australia.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Woodley-Hume, T. A., & Woods, K.	107. Exploring the role of assistant educational psychologists within local authority educational psychology services in England.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
O'Brien, T., & Roberts, A. (2019).	108. Domains-based approach to meeting social, emotional and mental health needs.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Breznik, Eva	109. ODNOS KOT OSNOVA SOCIALNOPEDAGOŠKEGA DELA- KAKO NAM JE TEORIJA NAVEZANOSTI LAHKO V POMOČ. (Slovenian)	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
HASATEŞ, M. Can; BADEMCI, Özden; ZABCI, Neslihan	110. ÖĞRETMENLERİN KAPSAYICI İŞLEVİNİN ÖĞRENME İLİŞKİLERİ BAĞLAMINDA NİTEL YÖNTEMLE ARAŞTIRILMASI. (Turkish)	Screened at title - unrelated to topic
Kengatharan, Navaneethakrishnan.	111. The Effects of Teacher Autonomy, Student Behavior and Student Engagement on Teacher Job Satisfaction.	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Rose, Janet; Parker, Richard.	112.New resources focusing on attachment issues in school	Screened at title - unrelated to topic

Papers included in the Systematic Review from the search of Essex library databases and Tavistock universal search function Discovery

Author(s)	Name	Paper number
Quinn, K., Mollet, N., & Dawson, F. (2021).	The Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring a Values-Driven, Hope-Filled, Relational Approach with School Leaders.	3
Sparling, E., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2022).	Evaluation of an ACE-informed whole-school project development.	4
MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022)..	An Evaluation of Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study.	5

Appendix D: Screened, excluded and included from citation reference checking, practice manuals and ETHOS

Screened and Excluded

Mears, C (2020) Awarding Body: University of East London A case study exploring systemic implications of implementing the attachment awareness programme at Key Stages 3 and 4 Introduction and discussion read for reference to source articles – did not meet inclusion exclusion criteria
Creating an attachment theory and adoption psychology based training programme for parents and school staff, Sohrabi-Shiraz, Jamin (2014) Awarding Body: University of Manchester – not WSABA
Bhagvanji, KB(2020) Awarding Body: University of Nottingham A case study exploring systemic implications of implementing the attachment awareness programme at Key Stages 3 and 4, Introduction and discussion read for reference to source articles – did not meet inclusion exclusion criteria - not WSABA
Attachment-focused interventions for care experienced children in primary schools : a design and implementation study of 'The Attach Project' - not WSABA
Adolescent views about mental health promotion in secondary schools, University of Essex Aston, Hermione Jane - not WSABA
Adolescent views about mental health promotion in secondary schools - not WSABA
An exploration of secondary school teachers' views of attachment, trauma, challenging behaviour and inclusion – not WSABA
Treisman, K. (2016). Working with relational and developmental trauma in children and adolescents. Routledge - no empirical data

Dix, P. (2017). When the adults change, everything changes: Seismic shifts in school behaviour. Crown House Publishing Ltd. – no empirical data
Bombèr, L. M. (2007). Inside I'm hurting: practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools. Worth. – no empirical data
Attachment in the classroom (Geddes, 2017) – no empirical data
Townshend, Kate (2013). How to get a grip on attachment theory Screened at abstract – magazine article – not peer reviewed
Easton, E. (2020).114. Spartans Alternative School: Building a bridge of trust. Full text reviewed – no empirical data – did not meet inclusion and exclusion criteria
The impact of Nurture Group principles and practice on the whole primary school (2011) Papamichael, Anna Awarding Body: University of Exeter - – not WSABA
Promoting emotional well being and inclusion for children identified with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in mainstream primary schools : an evaluation of a psychotherapeutic approach (Thrive) Cole, Michaela Jane (2012) Awarding Body:University of Exeter – not WSABA

Included from cited references

Source paper	Name	Paper number and Title
Spence, R., Kagan, L., Kljakovic, M., & Bifulco, A. (2021).	Aspland, H., Cameron, H., & Strelitz, J. (2020).	Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools: The iTIPS Pilot

<p>Long, E. (2022). The future of pastoral care in schools: exploring whole-school trauma-informed approaches.</p>	<p>MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022).</p>	<p>An Evaluation of Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study.</p>
<p>Harlow, E. (2021). Attachment theory: Developments, debates and recent applications in social work, social care and education.</p>	<p>Webber, L. (2017).</p>	<p>A school's journey in creating a relational environment which supports attachment and emotional security.</p>

Appendix E: Excluded at full text

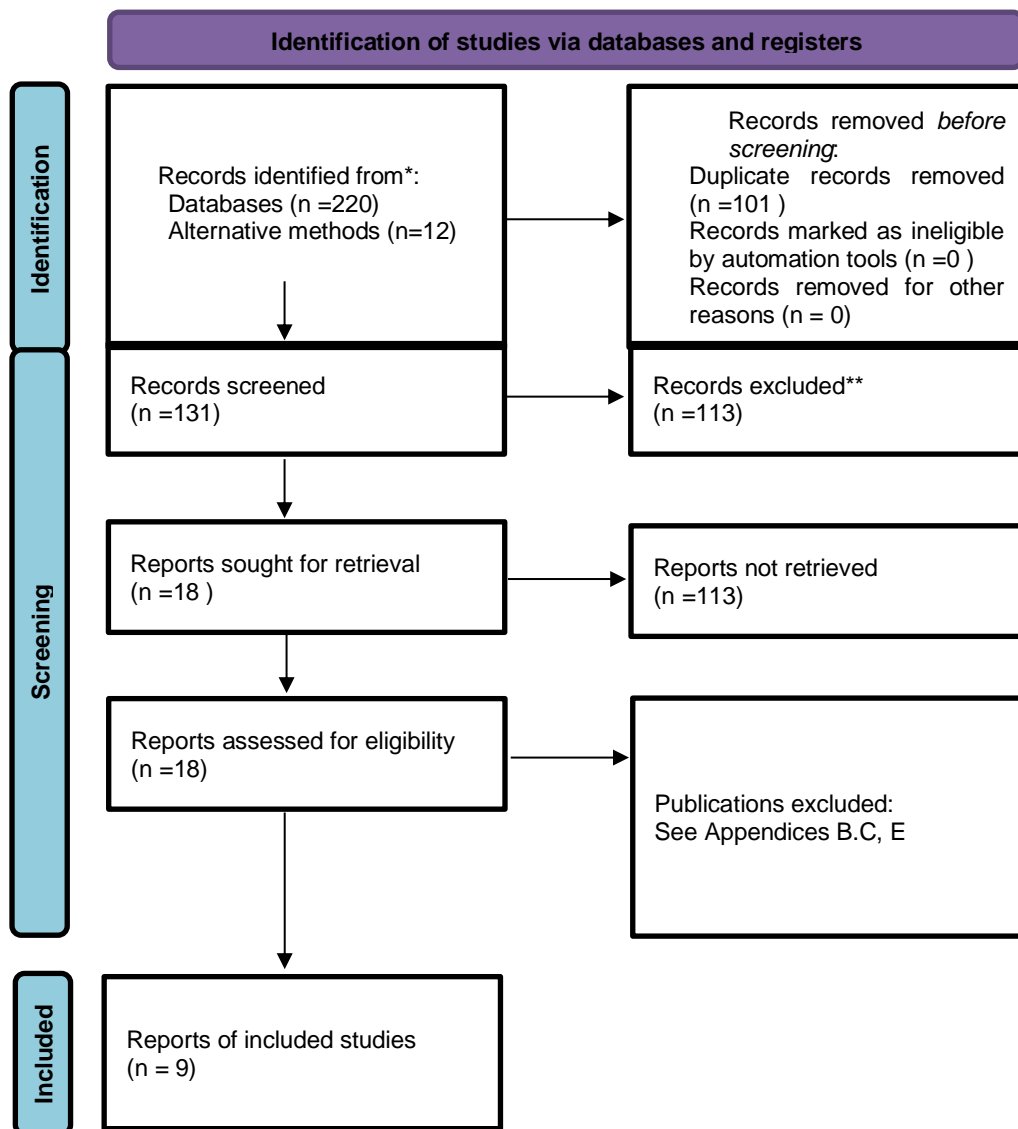
Zsolnai, Anikó; Szabó, Lilla	1. Attachment aware schools and teachers.	Screened in Full text analysis - Non-UK context
Little, S., & Maunder, R.	2. Why we should train teachers on the impact of childhood trauma on classroom behaviour.	Full text analysis - Not UK study and not a Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Rose, Janet ; Gilbert, Louise ; McGuire, Snieckus, Rebecca ; Gus, Licette ; McInnes, Karen ; Digby, Rebecca	3. Attachment Aware Schools: Working with Families to Enhance Parental Engagement and Home-School Relationships	Full text analysis - Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Long, Eleanor	4. The future of pastoral care in schools: exploring whole-school trauma-informed approaches	Screened at full text – did not contain empirical data
Megan Lachmar, E. ; Seedall, Ryan B.	5. Supporting pupils in school with social, emotional and mental health needs: a scoping review of the literature	Full text analysis - not UK study. Not Whole School Attachment Approach (WSAA)
Easton, E. (2020).	6. Spartans Alternative School: Building a bridge of trust.	No empirical data – did not meet inclusion and exclusion criteria

Dix, P. (2017).	7. When the adults change, everything changes: Seismic shifts in school behaviour. Crown House Publishing Ltd.	No empirical data – did not meet inclusion and exclusion criteria
Bombèr, L. M. (2007)..	8. Inside I'm hurting: practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools. Worth	No empirical data – did not meet inclusion and exclusion criteria
Treisman, K. (2016).	9. Working with relational and developmental trauma in children and adolescents. Routledge.	No empirical data – did not meet inclusion and exclusion criteria

Appendix F: Included literature in the current review in chronological order

Title / Author/ Date
• Webber (2017) ‘A school’s journey in creating a relational environment which supports attachment and emotional security’
• Parker & Levinson (2018) Student behaviour, motivation and the potential of attachment-aware schools to redefine the landscape.
• Fancourt (2019) Looked after children: embedding attachment awareness in schools.
• McGuire- Snieckus, Gilbert & McInnes (2019) Attachment Aware Schools: The Impact of a Targeted and Collaborative Intervention
• Kelly, Watt, & Giddens (2020) An Attachment Aware Schools Programme: A Safe Space, a Nurturing Learning Community
• Aspland, H., Cameron, H., & Strelitz, J (2020) Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools: The iTIPS Pilot.
• Quinn, K., Mollet, N., & Dawson, F (2021) The Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring a Values-Driven, Hope-Filled, Relational Approach with School Leaders.
• Sparling, E., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2022). Evaluation of an ACE-informed whole-school project development
• MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022)..An Evaluation of Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study

Appendix G: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses



Appendix H: Critical Appraisal Using Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018

“Attachment informed Schools: the impact of a targeted and collaborative intervention” (Rose, 2019)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?			✓	
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			✓	
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?		✓		

	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	
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An Attachment aware schools programme: a safe space, a nurturing learning community (Kelly al, 2020)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.					
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?		✓		
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	✓			

5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	✓			
5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?				✓ NA
5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	

‘A school’s journey in creating a relational environment which supports attachment and emotional security’ (Webber, 2017)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can’t tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?				Case study
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?			✓	
Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is ‘No’ or ‘Can’t tell’ to one or both screening questions.					

5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?		✓		More detail needed
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?			✓	
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			✓	
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?			✓	Not stated
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	Not enough detail re Quantitative

Looked after children: Embedding attachment awareness in schools (Fancourt, 2019)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments

Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			Very clear research questions
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?			✓	
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?			✓	
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			✓	
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?			✓	
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	

MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022). An Evaluation of Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study.

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			Very and Standardised Measures
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	✓			
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	✓			

	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	✓			
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?	✓			

Aspland, H., Cameron, H., & Strelitz, J. (2020). Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools: The iTIPS Pilot.

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			Insofar as possible with no agreed outcome measures
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			

	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	✓			
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	✓			
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?		✓		
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?		✓		

Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring a values-driven, hope-filled, relational approach with school leaders Kirsty Quinn, Nicola Mollet & Fiona Dawson

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			CSF is a standardised evidence-based framework

	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	✓			
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			✓	Not very much detail on the post-training Likert scale
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?			✓	Insufficient detail re quan results
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	Insufficient detail

Sparling, E., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2022). Evaluation of an ACE-informed whole-school project development. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 38(1), 37-56.

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	Responses			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	✓			
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	✓			
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	✓			
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?			✓	audit to identify existing systems but no detail evidence base of audit
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?			✓	
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?		✓		Not stated

	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?			✓	The interviews lasted from 24 to 72 minutes, not information re interview schedule
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Appendix I: Literature Review Matrix

Title Author Date	Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework And Research Question(s) (RQ)	Methodology	Analysis & Results	Conclusions	Implications for Future research and practice
Parker & Levinson (2018) Student behaviour, motivation and the potential of attachment-aware schools to redefine the landscape.	Attachment. Position paper citing empirical studies. No RQ stated	Position paper reports on several mixed methods studies – no design data given	Inferences supported by Dingwall and Sebba’s (2017) independent evaluation of the B&NES and	Concluded that there is a growing body of evidence that ‘Attachment-aware’/emotion coaching interventions have a potentially significant impact on	The approach appears to be clearly situated within the child-centred, holistic tradition, even though its effect might be seen as normative, in socialising the child and making him or her ‘ready to learn’ within an education system over which he or she has little control. There is a need to understand

			BSU programme—is that attachment-aware/emotion-coaching approaches have a potentially significant impact on pupils, teachers and families	pupils, teachers and families and on professionals involved but there are concerns, particularly over the mis-use of the term ‘attachment’	the reasons for the (false) separation between the learning child and the feeling child. There are more important discourse needed around the reasons for poor behaviour, not to mention the still deeper layer around the purposes of education.
McGuire-Snieckus, Gilbert & McInnes (2019) Attachment Aware Schools: The	Attachment. RQ - Explore the effectiveness of	Mixed methods action research.	Significant improvements in pupils’ academic achievement and	Study concluded there was a positive impact on professional practice, adult self-	Programme has a ‘real and lasting effect’ over time. Action research and reflective practice -

<p>Impact of a Targeted and Collaborative Intervention</p>	<p>attachment-based interventions which address particular needs of pupils, including more vulnerable groups, to enable them to develop their potential.</p>	<p>Sample of 200 - 107 staff & 54 Pupils. Training phase and an action research phase. Pupil outcomes - academic behavioural indices. Academic progress was monitored through achievements in reading, writing</p>	<p>significant decreases in sanctions, exclusions and overall difficulties - SDQ. An emphasis upon reflective practice has enriched and empowered staff and this has led to a significant and positive impact.</p>	<p>regulation and emotional self-control, more confidence when talking with children about emotions. Across the settings, there has been a more holistic approach higher importance has been placed on emotional needs being met, demonstrating a re-positioning of an emphasis upon wellbeing and a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>‘ownership’ and ‘longevity’. Although the schools did implement some ‘AA strategies’ in their schools, it was the process of developing better understanding in their schools and active development programme which has led to a more empathic, person centred approach where the depth of learning has gone far beyond the implementation of any particular strategy. Relatively little empirical research. Further research is needed to resolve the limitations of these pilot studies.</p>
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		and maths & pupil exclusions & SDQ.			
Kelly, Watt & Giddens (2020) An Attachment Aware Schools Programme: A Safe Space, a Nurturing Learning Community	Attachment. Action research, Schools to vision a project that would tackle an issue of school improvement they wish to work upon and would be	77 whole school Staff/pupils Pre and post questionnaires and also through a face-to-face audit interview 6 months after completion of the programme, thus forming	Study concluded that all participant schools affected ethos change, and developed better informed pedagogical practice.	An emphasis upon reflective practice has enriched and empowered staff and this has led to a significant and positive impact. The paradigms of action research and reflective practice have been instrumental in that sense of ‘ownership’ and ‘longevity’. Many	Issues with outcomes measures, ‘cross-fertilisation’ of other similar approaches. Community of practice key for ownership. Key themes were Transformation in Developing Policy and Systems, Transforming Environment, Staff and Pedagogical Development, Impact on Pupils, Extending relationships with parents/carers.

	significant to their setting	a mixed-methods evaluation		participating schools have moved away from a behaviourist approach of rewards and sanctions towards a supportive and inclusive ethos – AAS training had a fundamental impact.	
Aspland, H., Cameron, H., & Strelitz, J (2020) Developing trauma-informed practices in inner London schools: The iTIPS Pilot.	Attachment RQ- 2017-8, five Islington primary schools, local authority and NHS, working	Mixed methods across 9 schools, baseline survey from pupils, staff survey from 233 staff.	Some positive results on behavioural outcomes; Survey indicated that the training was very	5/6 schools more confident in identifying triggers and anticipating patterns that lead to pupils' challenging behaviour. Positive initial results.	Changing complex systems and professional behaviour is challenging work. Author recommendations - Understand and communicate how the benefits of this approach can contribute to meeting local challenges e.g. youth violence 2. Bring different partners

	<p>in partnership, implemented a pilot aiming to embed trauma-informed practice in schools – measured efficacy and barriers / facilitators</p>	<p>Qualitative analysis of workshops, diaries. Exclusions were measured.</p>	<p>positively received. Other themes from the qualitative feedback included staff reporting that they valued being given a single framework to think about their work with children.</p>	<p>Important changes in staff knowledge and understanding, and effective working with vulnerable children and improvements in behaviour - which was evidenced in fewer exclusions and other measures.</p>	<p>together - providing a range of expertise, perspective, support and reach across the local system. 3. Find school leaders who are committed to trying this work in their school. 4. Recognise the tension between action-oriented and busy schools, and the need to find time for reflection. 5. Find a small amount of funding- not expensive needs resources for training and for the ongoing consultation support. which is vital to embed policy and practice change.</p>
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<p>Sparling, E., Woods, K., & Ford, A. (2022). Evaluation of an ACE-informed whole-school project development</p>	<p>Attachment. RQ. What are the main aims and objectives of the AIS ACE-Informed Schools [AIS] and how are they realised? How is the knowledge of AIS shared and embedded in participating schools?</p>	<p>A balanced inductive-deductive qualitative content analysis. Purposeful sample with individual interviews with the programme members (PT) and 4 four head teachers, follow-up focus group.</p>	<p>Interviews with the project team (PT) and the focus group (FG) produced four main themes: changes to practice, organisational change, developing a local model and ACEs. Support to school systems emphasised as well as need for</p>	<p>Barriers and facilitators included the important role of ‘champions’ in school, leadership engagement, and the intervention’s compatibility with local national interests/foci, practical issues linked to training delivery, organisational capacity to support schools after the training, school staff motivation to change and programme complexity. capacity,</p>	<p>As discussed, the evidence suggests that training sessions without follow-up support and a clear implementation plan are unlikely to have the desired impact. Therefore, before the scaling-up happens, it might be appropriate to consider the following: is the AIS being implemented as intended in schools that attended the initial training? How can the impact be evaluated? Are there appropriate resources and capacity to deliver the training and provide ongoing support? What is the contingency plan? The extent to which trauma-informed programmes can prevent and/or reduce ACE-related symptoms has not been rigorously tested.</p>
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	What are the facilitators and barriers to the implementation process?	Retrospective, which limited the opportunity to tailor data gathering and the capacity to inform the ongoing implementation process	and clarity and future training, the importance of the evaluation cycle, use of the school audit tool and sustainability planning	motivation to change, practical issues, programme complexity. and the lack of clear direction.	It is also unclear what skills the staff would need to develop to work in a trauma-informed way. Therefore, evaluation studies of trauma-informed initiatives in schools are needed to better understand what works and why - aims to evaluate the implementation strategy across the local authority with reflections on initial vision, experiences of implementation, including barriers and facilitators, and project review.
Quinn, K., Mollet, N., & Dawson, F (2021) The Compassionate Schools Framework: Exploring	Attachment. CSF - ten inter-related principles	Mixed methods study. Using questionnaires and World Café	There was an emphasis on developing a clear vision and	Risk of bias in self selected sample. Longer term follow up is needed to gain a more	There is need for ongoing collaboration through a multi-agency community of practice to continue to deepen understanding and share learning on

<p>a Values-Driven, Hope-Filled, Relational Approach with School Leaders.</p>	<p>informed by three key areas of research and practice: framework within which to reflect on and strengthen aspects of school practice</p>	<p>method on 44 school leaders across two groups from 32 different schools. The CSP is made up of a training day, follow-up activities within their school and a reflection workshop after 12 weeks</p>	<p>maintaining momentum, as other priorities emerge Shared, visible values key and extending to the community. That deepening understanding of the impact of stress enabled school leaders to translate learning from research and clinical</p>	<p>robust insight into issues related to implementation and impact over time. Particular areas that have been raised for further research include how the individual teacher values and school values align and how this relates to how adults interpret and respond to children's behaviour, recognising relational approaches may be more of a shift</p>	<p>implementation and impact within a supportive network. Long-term commitment and a long-term process of change and learning. School leaders reported challenges in ensuring an integrated approach was implemented consistently across practice and policy. Challenges in terms of the size and organisational complexity of some schools, and tensions with current systems of behaviour management and the different beliefs/values of staff members. Relationships School leaders recognised that compassionate relationships pervade all levels of school life. It is proposed that having a common integrated framework to</p>
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			<p>practice into school-based approaches - regulation strategies and environment prioritised. The central importance of attuned compassionate relationships; an understanding of the systemic impact of stress and trauma and</p>	<p>in values and mindset rather than a set of strategies.</p>	<p>use as a self-evaluation tool will enable school leaders to work together in identifying key elements for development over time while maintaining a holistic perspective, and to track progress against areas of development.</p>
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			the principles of effective support; and the importance of a strengths-based approaches focusing on building psychological resources amongst school communities.		
MacLochlainn, J., Kirby, K., McFadden, P., & Mallett, J. (2022).. An Evaluation of	Attachment. RQs: whether a 2-day workshop	Quasi-experimental wait-list control pre-post	Quantitative data revealed an immediate and long-term impact	2-day training programme had an immediate, positive, significant effect on	Trauma-informed care is a top-down system-level intervention. Not a short-term fix - adequate groundwork being laid to guarantee genuine buy-in. Sufficient

<p>Whole-School Trauma-Informed Training Intervention among Post-Primary School Personnel: A Mixed Methods Study</p>	<p>Change in attitudes related to trauma informed care (post & 6 months later) RQ2 – workshop influenced levels of compassion fatigue & secondary traumatic stress and levels of</p>	<p>intervention design to evaluate in one post primary school (n=98) with 2 other schools as matched control group, establishing internal validity. pre-workshop survey and 3 standardised questionnaires</p>	<p>on attitudinal change towards their trauma-impacted students. Both quantitative and qualitative data supported the positive impact of CS training on teacher attitudes towards trauma-impacted students.</p>	<p>attitudes related to trauma-informed care. Self-care and on recognising and responding to stress and how stress manifests in the classroom along with school leadership buy-in seemed to de-escalate patterns of burnout and compassion fatigue in participants.</p>	<p>resources, both financial and human, to be released to ensure a shift in paradigm. Including community partnerships ensure that these approaches gain a foothold and the benefits accrued can be maximised. Teacher training in trauma needed that is well-grounded, and methodologically rigorous research and practice. Staff self-care is essential.</p>
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	compassion satisfaction (post & 6 months later)	and focus groups analysed using RTA			
Webber (2017) 'A school's journey in creating a relational environment which supports attachment and emotional security'	Attachment. RQ - gain insights into the participants experiences, feelings, attitudes and values of staff	Mixed methods case study on one whole school community-methods included open ended questionnaires and semi structured interviews	Study concluded school were beginning to adopt a consistent approach. There was greater peace, greater connectedness, a changed atmosphere and children could	6 six key components - whole school intervention of a therapeutic Playfulness Acceptance Curiosity Empathy (PACE) attitude, communication between staff including support for transitions, physical contact – touch, regulating	Areas still to be developed include: 1. Identifying a key worker (personal TA) for each child who has an insecure attachment who can move through the school with the child 2. Ongoing support for all staff to develop and facilitate these approaches in the school ²⁴⁰ . Continued support for staff and parents to encourage an attitude of PACE and partnership between the school and home environments

			name feelings and communicate in a new way	emotions, bespoke provision for each child, not shaming children, working with families and multi-agency networks, importance of the physical environment for children's sense of comfort and safety. .	
Fancourt (2019) Looked after children: embedding attachment awareness in schools.	Attachment – RQ: How have the participants' professional repertoire and	Mixed-methods pre-post intervention design, drawing on school data, surveys and	No claims are made about the efficacy of the programme in raising the attainment of	Study concluded developing professional repertoire on language, strategies, diagnosis and problem- solving as well as changing	Expertise from different domains needed to meet needs and bolster practice in schools. Existing models of expertise too rigid. Senior leader commitment, support and resource allocation were crucial to effectively embedding the training, and

	<p>confidence changed How have schools' organisational structures and responses changed? How is attachment-theory research mobilised in schools?</p>	<p>interviews Mixed methods, 23 whole school – staff and pupils : participants in the initial survey (n=102) were from a selection of primary phase schools, secondary schools, designated teachers and the</p>	<p>LAC children due to design barriers e.g. RCT & and complex instrumentation.</p>	<p>organisational culture emerged as the key themes that had impact across all of the 23 sample schools.</p>	<p>various structural issues were illuminated Issues collecting the survey responses due to school issues, low return rate of 28%.</p>
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		special school with a range of years' experience.			
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Appendix J Coding of Overarching themes, themes, subthemes and codes for “What issues do school staff describe as important when introducing a whole school attachment-based approach?”

Examples of coding as part of Phases Three, Four and Five (Braun & Clarke, 2021) are demonstrated below.

Overarching Theme One – Context Affects Delivery

Coding Phase Four and Five: Rationale for organising themes under an overarching theme - Context Affects Delivery

This overarching theme was formed of 2 themes. These themes related to systemic factors that affected the introduction of the approach. The 2 themes were supported with 8 subthemes. In the first theme there were 2 subthemes that related to external factors that affected the introduction of the approach. In the second theme there were 6 subthemes which related to the internal systemic factors affecting the introduction of the approach. The themes were conceptually similar due to the significant influence of wider systems on this approach that centres around day-to-day interactions with children. External factors included socio-political elements such as budget cuts and mainstream delivery of schooling that would result in constraints on the practical elements of the approach. These included capacity for individual staff time with pupils to build relationships. Internal factors related to school systems and policies affected the WSABA. The level of prioritisation the WSABA was afforded by SLT affected its introduction and maintenance via practical and financial issues, planning and policy.

Theme 1 - Approach Meets the Needs of the Wider System

1. Subtheme - Impact of wider system
2. Subtheme - Mainstream and AA (‘Mainstream and AA’ and ‘Mainstream hinders delivery of AA approach’ amalgamated in Step 4)

Theme 2 – School Systems affect the approach

3. Subtheme - Impact of SLT
4. Subtheme - Impact of Attachment informed practices on behaviour policy
5. Subtheme - Strategic management of approach
6. Subtheme - Strategic process
7. Subtheme - Positive results encourage the approach
8. Subtheme - Impact of other services

Overarching Theme 1	Themes Supported by Subthemes	Subthemes supported by codes
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	<p>Theme 2 – School Systems affect the approach</p> <p><u>Subthemes</u></p> <p>Impact of SLT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of mainstream is the issue • Practicalities of mainstream • Mainstream ‘gets rid of those kids’ • Academics not an issue • ‘turning mainstream’ • School is for secure • Time here to go deep • Relationship outsourced elsewhere • Off rolling • Lack of awareness • No awareness of AA in mainstream • Need for more AAA in teacher training • Lack of time hinders <p>Less time for behaviour management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time needed for an AA <p><u>THEME 2</u></p> <p><u>Subtheme 1: Impact of SLT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach filters down from SLT • SLT buy in to encourage the AA • Rogue members of SLT • Influence of the Head • SLT are amazing • SLT push it 100% • Impact of SLT • SLT must agree • SLT holding it • SLT ‘getting it’ • Leadership as inspiring others
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	<p>Impact of Attachment informed practices on behaviour policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT not hugely above other staff • Head is listening • Confidence of SLT helps to encourage • SLT must be confident • Supportive SLT • SLT • Strong Leadership • Split between SLT and other staff <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 2:</u> Impact of Attachment informed practices on behaviour policy</p> <p>Learning From Mistakes Behaviour Policy Not Supporting Staff Conflict Between ‘Naughty in Class’ And AA Had To Ask Him To Leave Always In Trouble How To Build Resilience Punishment Leaves No Space For Teaching Responsibility For Mistake Sanction After Sanction Response To Low Level Behaviour Child Can Press Buttons Adeptly What’s Beneath Looking Behind Their Behaviour</p> <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 3:</u> Strategic management of approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot “be an add on” • Need to think strategically • Time invested
	<p>Strategic management of approach</p>	

	<p>Strategic process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System to support the approach is lacking • Sustainability of approach • Ambivalence about communication ‘on the ground’ • ‘Above my level’ • Interview helped staff think strategically • Right support at the right time • Lack of an awareness of the school having an AAA • Visibility of AA staff • Quality management • Not just reactive communication • “It’s more of a thinking” (in interactions with children) • ‘Battles’ without SLT support • Clear lines of communication • Targeted children • Challenge fitting AA in • Not an ‘add on’ • Clear policy • Worthless ‘add on’ • Prohibitive cost • Strategic planning • Recruitment • “A meeting about a meeting” • Be really clear • In tandem with school improvement • Opportunity to communicate is there • Children could fall through the cracks • Length of time AA in school <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 4: Strategic process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings • Don’t miss anything – monitor
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	<p>Positive results encourage the approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about context • Monitoring of the approach (or lack thereof) • Strategic communication – lack of • Conflict with staff – keyness of communication • Leadership of AA • Capacity of staff for AA • Revisit • “It’s conversations” – (Difficulties monitoring emotion coaching) • Clarity of what is important • Documentation • Steering group • School development time • Compassionate monitoring • Interview questions • Practicalities of delivery impact meaningfulness • Strategic implementation and planning and check in • Funding of the approach • Recruiting for AA staff in interview <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 5: Positive results encourage the approach</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wins make it an easy sell” • Results of initial case studies • Benefits of education on attachment • Intuitive sense • People being heard • Helps reflexivity in relationships • Behaviour is good here • Positives of an AAA • No downsides to an AAA • “changes are huge”
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	<p>Impact of other services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AA is prolific • More connection between staff and students • Way ahead of other schools • People listen to you <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 6:</u> Impact of other services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of counselling services • X org in school doing X • Part of research project
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Overarching Theme Two – Training Must Resonate

Coding Phase Four and Five: Rationale for organising themes under the overarching theme.

This overarching theme was formed of 2 themes, ‘Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training’ and ‘On the Ground Utility is Key’. These two themes were organised and structured together due to both representing patterns in the data related to the effective training and embedding of the approach. The first theme represented the importance of the training resonating with the staff. The second related to the practical applications of the approach.

9. Elements of training that impacted its success.

Theme One - Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training (refined in Phase 5 of RTA from subtheme 9 above)

Theme Two - On the Ground Utility is Key

10. Subtheme - All staff

11. Subtheme - Specific AA approach used

12. Subtheme - AA approach in classroom

13. Subtheme - Meaning in learning

Overarching Theme 2:	Themes Supported by Subthemes	Subthemes supported by codes
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<p>Training Must Resonate</p>	<p>Theme 1: Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training</p> <p>(Refined from Elements of training that impacted its success)</p>	<p><u>THEME 1</u></p> <p>Meaning Mediates the Impact of Training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciating all staff individual perspective / input 2. Reminder of why you're here 3. 'Just an intro' 4. Not talked about collectively 5. Lack of annual training 6. Using science to convince staff that "it is not making excuses" 7. Uncertainty about emotion coaching 8. Lack of clarity around 'who does' emotion coaching 9. Linking up the science 10. Practical scenarios 11. Bring in an expert 12. Clarity on what attachment is 13. Clear path to practice with case studies 14. Breadth of staff trained 15. Explore real feeling in training 16. Other trainings can be tokenistic 17. Qualities of the training 18. Staff contributed differing knowledge 19. Differing levels of emotional challenge 20. Challenges of training a wide spectrum of knowledge 21. What bit you find interesting 22. Frequency of training 23. Ongoing impact of training 24. Drip feeding 25. Different levels of trauma 26. Revisiting it 27. Formality of training 28. Consistency of training 29. Reality vs ideal in training
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	<p><u>Theme Two - On the Ground</u> <u>Utility is Key</u></p> <p><u>Subthemes</u> All staff</p> <p>Specific AA approach used</p>	<p>30. Connecting the real person with the training 31. Abstract nature of mental health issues 32. Can choose a different area 33. “Oh I already do that” 34. High frequency of AA training</p> <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 1 All staff</u></p> <p>1. Every Single staff member 2. Whole school 3. All staff 4. Child won’t get powerful response 5. Supply staff not trained even though they need it the most 6. Powerful response of all staff supporting 7. Everybody ‘bought into’ AA</p> <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 2 Specific AA approach used</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic understanding of ‘flip your lid’ • Proactive systems • Drops ins where people can be listened to • Class ‘cementing’ • Specific examples of a good outcome • Importance of safety
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	<p>AA approach in classroom</p> <p>Meaning in learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable approach (no Emotion Coaching) • Affects face to face with children • ‘Hold’ the child • Have a script in your back pocket • Filters out from one child • Need for a lead • Key attachment figure • No AA ‘approach’ • Personal definition • Strategies to connect • Specific approaches used <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 3</u> AA approach in classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way they need to learn • Time in the first term to build relationships • Respect to learn • This is a new kind of learning • Feed AAA thinking into the teaching • Academically responsible for the child • Strategies in the classroom • How attachment looks in the classroom <p><u>THEME 2</u> <u>Subtheme 4</u> Meaning in learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogy • School is just for learning • Curriculum stuff takes priority • “Oblivious to the AA side of things as a part of learning” • What is high quality schooling
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people just want to do the teaching • Pedagogy and attachment • What is success • Relationship acts as a buffer • Importance of a relationship in learning
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Overarching Theme Three – Scope of the School and Staff Role Dramatically Widens

Coding Phase Four and Five: Rationale for organising themes under the overarching theme.

This overarching theme was formed of 2 themes - Theme 1: Function of the School Widens and Theme 2: Staff Role Expands Dramatically

This overarching theme organises and structures these themes together due to the impact of the widened boundary and function of school on the role of school staff. The first theme Function of the School Widens represents the quite radically changing concept of a school. The second theme Staff Role Expands Dramatically represents the shift in staff role within this widened concept of a school.

Theme 1: Function of the School Widens

14. Subtheme - New meaning of school
15. Subtheme - Thinking in a different way
16. Subtheme - Thinking in a different way about abuse
17. Subtheme - Culture of Empowerment
18. Subtheme - Knowing the whole child
19. Subtheme - What students need from staff
20. Subtheme - Students Need Structure

21. Subtheme - One Size doesn't fit all

Theme 2: Staff Role Expands Dramatically

22. Subtheme - New role of teachers

Overarching Theme 3:	Themes Supported by Subthemes	Subthemes supported by codes
Scope of the School and Staff Role Dramatically Widens	<p>Theme 1.: Theme 1: Function of the School Widens</p> <p><u>Subthemes</u> New meaning of school</p> <p>Thinking in a different way about abuse</p>	<p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 1 New meaning of school</u></p> <p>Safe place Mini people / mini world Build them up Real world coping skills Teaching and learning vs therapeutic Supportive space The next chapter Work in progress Resilience Healing them</p> <p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 2 Thinking in a different way about abuse</u></p> <p>Depersonalises abuse from children Here and now issues Not taking things personally Understanding</p>

	<p>Thinking in a different way</p>	<p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 3</u> Thinking in a different way</p> <p>Encourage different thinking Thinking in a different way Don't take it personally New thinking Fight the barrier Staff's views change Intangible 'cant test it' We owe it to them</p>
	<p>Culture of Empowerment</p>	<p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 4</u> Culture of Empowerment</p> <p>Empowering young people Pupils are unique AA empowered system Empowering the system Empower others to regulate</p>
	<p>Knowing the whole child</p>	<p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 5</u> Knowing the whole child</p> <p>Unpicking the triggers Have to know personal to care The 'work' (of decreasing response to triggers) Change with the young person</p>

	<p>What students need from staff</p>	<p>Knowing the full child Understanding triggers Punitive response leaves no space for the why Knowing the child holistically Behaviour as a communication Problem solving around triggers Authenticity Understanding our learners Knowing the child’s history Seeing the whole child Pupils are unique Holistic overview of the child is maintained Collective trauma The unique child Knowing the child The need to understand learners first and foremost Teacher practice activates trauma Curiosity about what is behind the behaviour Awareness of child’s triggers</p> <p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 6</u> What students need from staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children respect honesty • Importance of praise for relationship building • Need to know that they won’t be abandoned • Bespoke learning experience • Importance of trusting relationships • “Our learners are different” • Importance of honesty • Foremost – the relationship • Balance between being fun and professional being reliable • Need for something different • Rigidity around children not useful
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	<p>One size doesn't fit all</p> <p>Students need structure</p> <p>Theme 2 – New role of teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of fairness to student <p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 7</u> One size doesn't fit all</p> <p>It's not working for those children One size doesn't fit all</p> <p><u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 8</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed messages are distressing to the young person • Transparent with students • Boundaries • Students contained by structure • Asserting boundaries • Lack of consistency hinders AA <p>THEME 2</p> <p>Teachers unpick the behaviour An emotional teacher impacts on the child Being allowed to know Awareness of trauma Permission to know Reflective about relationships New role of teacher Teachers not in pastoral meeting Working on transference</p>
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	Mindful of transference
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Overarching Theme Four - Permission to Feel

This overarching theme was formed of 3 themes. The themes within this overarching theme were structured and organised together as the central organising concept of all three themes was the impact of emotions being expressed authentically in the school and the resulting impact of this relationships across the school with students, between staff and on the general ethos of the school.

Theme 1: ‘People are interested in what you feel’ (refined in Phase 5 from subtheme 23)

23. Subtheme - Feel the atmosphere

Theme 2: ‘We bring ourselves’

24. Subtheme - Staff intra support

25. Subtheme - Staff team working improved

Theme 3: ‘Being Human’

26. Subtheme - Ethos/culture of school (Themes of ‘culture of school’ and ‘ethos’ amalgamated in Step 4)

Overarching Theme 4:	Themes Supported by Subthemes	Subthemes supported by codes
Permission to Feel	Theme 1: People are interested in what you feel’	<u>THEME 1</u> <u>Subtheme 1</u> I want children to feel it Honour the children’s best Relationship prioritised Key attachment figure

	<p>Theme 2: ‘We bring ourselves’</p> <p>Staff intra support</p>	<p>Astounding changes in the school Difference in atmosphere</p> <p><u>Theme 2</u></p> <p><u>Subtheme 1</u> Staff intra support</p> <p>Gift of strength Role specific collective voice Task of group supervision Access support Supporting relationships from colleagues Role specific group processes discussed Maker needs known in group supervision Communication between staff is strong</p>
	<p>Staff team working improved</p>	<p><u>Theme 2</u></p> <p><u>Subtheme 2</u> Staff team working improved</p> <p>Good for staff teamwork AA helps with relationships across team</p>
	<p>Theme 3: ‘Being Human’ (Ethos/culture of school)</p>	<p><u>Theme 3</u></p> <p>Seeing children as children Trying to create that community feel</p>

		<p> Culture of mutual respect Share good practice (culture of sharing) AA leads discussion on children Built through ethos Celebrate tiny triumphs Sense of fairness Fault not with child Ethos and culture Emotional support affects ethos Non blaming -staff “have had the opportunity to...” “my advice would be, enjoy it” Honour the children’s best Relationship prioritised Attachment comes up in conversation Culture of sharing good practice Emotionally intelligent culture, within reason Not punitive Positive perspective Lunchroom is vital AA part of the narrative Its talked about now “We’re not here to correct behaviour” It’s a journey No ‘there’ to get to OFSTED culture Intangible quality </p>
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Overarching Theme 5: ‘Not Running Alone with Them’

This overarching theme was formed of 4 themes. These 4 themes were organised together as the central organising concept of all themes was the high level of demand on staff and their need for support. The WSABA demanded an extremely high level of engagement from staff, the value system of the staff to coalesce with the approach and increased communication skills. Due to these complex demands, staff needed to be adequately supported when introducing a WSABA.

Theme 1: Increased communication skills are demanded

- 27. Subtheme - Multi-agency working
- 28. Subtheme - How the child communicates
- 29. Subtheme - Communication for the child

Theme 2: 'It lives or dies by the staff'

- 30. Subtheme - Engagement of staff
- 31. Subtheme - Person not role
- 32. Subtheme - 'Staff getting it'
- 33. Subtheme - Style of teacher

Theme 3: 'Everyone is listened to'

- 34. Subtheme - Supporting staff

Theme 4: Having it guide your moral compass'

- 35. Subtheme - Personal values of staff
- 36. Subtheme - Real emotions
- 37. Subtheme - Staff's own stuff
- 38. Subtheme - Authority

	<p>Communication for the child</p> <p>Theme 2: 'It lives or dies by the staff'</p> <p>Engagement of staff</p> <p>Person not role</p>	<p><u>Theme 1</u> <u>Sub theme 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJL facilitating YP feeding back how they want to • Voice of YP is clear • Communicating on the child's behalf • SJL facilitates real communication <p><u>Theme 2</u></p> <p><u>Subtheme 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyness of influential staff member on the ground • 'Buy in' • AA lives or dies by staff • Passion • Carry it <p><u>Subtheme 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are human • Celebrate the difference of teachers • Knowing each other as people • Impact on AA on person beyond their role • Permission to be human
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing staff • Vital for staff to be together • Protected space for staff • Structural valuing of staff • Balance staff well-being and authority • Open door policy • Team helps resilience • Well-being of staff at the forefront • Unity great for staff morale • Safety of staff • Clear where to access emotional support • Impact of coaching on staff levels of investment • Infrastructure designed to support staff • Support through mistakes • Day to day valuing • Being together as staff • New teachers need support • Priority of staff well-being • Culture of coaching • Support for teachers • Easy to ask for help • Staff team support each other • Well-being support • Support for staff • Invest in staff to create a vision that everyone buys into • Being together as staff • Active praise • Raising morale • Willing but need support • Proactive rest taking • Keyness of demands being realistic • Need to be present
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	<p>Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic connecting through touch • Enable them to trust us • Relationship is key • They are loved here • Real emotions • Emotions are validated by system • Authenticity • Emotions are welcome • Trusted relationships • Increased empathy <p><u>Subtheme 3</u></p> <p>Explaining management processes to staff Co -decision making Equal with SLT Authority vs treat them as humans Lack of authority in AAA Struggle with authority Control over own CPD Showing emotions as a sign of weakness Allowing but guiding Allowing difference Always be moaning System of respect Comparison to other authority figures Everyone has a voice Authority vs listening Giving the children the power Authority different with an AAA Ok to question</p>
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	Staff's own 'stuff'	<u>Theme 4</u> <u>Subtheme 4</u> Staff attachment style /trauma
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Appendix K: Approved Ethics Application



Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

This application should be submitted alongside copies of any supporting documentation which will be handed to participants, including a participant information sheet, consent form, self-completion survey or questionnaire.

Where a form is submitted and sections are incomplete, the form will not be considered by TREC and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

For further guidance please contact Paru Jeram (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

PROJECT DETAILS

Current project title	What helps and hinders the implementation of attachment aware approaches in schools?		
Proposed project start date	21st June 2019	Anticipated project end date	July 2020

APPLICANT DETAILS

Name of Researcher	Sorcha O' Dea
Email address	so'dea@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Contact telephone number	0744 **** *

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

<p>Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above their normal salary package or the costs of undertaking the research?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If YES, please detail below:</p>
<p>Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES <input type="checkbox"/> If NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>YES, please detail below:</p>

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

<p>Is your research being conducted externally* to the Trust? (for example; within a Local Authority, Schools, Care Homes, other NHS Trusts or other organisations).</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>*Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)</p>	
<p>If YES, please supply details below:</p>	

<p>Has external* ethics approval been sought for this research? (i.e. submission via Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) to the Health Research Authority (HRA) or other external research ethics committee)</p> <p>*Please note that ‘external’ is defined as an organisation/body which is external to the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)</p> <p>If YES, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies:</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If your research is being undertaken externally to the Trust, please provide details of the sponsor of your research?</p>	
<p>Do you have local approval (this includes R&D approval)?</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>

COURSE ORGANISING TUTOR

Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed?

<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Signed</p>	
<p>Date</p>	

<p>APPLICANT DECLARATION</p> <p>I confirm that: The information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and up to date. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research. I acknowledge my obligations and commitment to upholding our University’s Code of Practice for ethical research and observing the rights of the participants. I am aware that cases of proven misconduct, in line with our University’s policies, may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research.</p>	
<p>Applicant (print name)</p>	<p>Sorcha O’ Dea</p>
<p>Signed</p>	<p><i>Sorcha O. Dea</i></p>

Date	08/04/2019
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FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

Name and School of Supervisor/Director of Studies	Judith Mortell
Qualification for which research is being undertaken	Doctorate of Child and Educational Psychology

Supervisor/Director of Studies –

Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research?

YES **NO**

Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate?

YES **NO**

<p>Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance?</p> <p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Signed	
Date	

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

<p>Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)</p>

This study aims to investigate what helps and hinders the implementation of an attachment aware (AA) approach in schools. It will be carried out in primary schools in an inner London Local Authority.

John Bowlby revolutionised our thinking about a child's tie to their mother and the implications of its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement in the form of attachment theory (Bretherton, 1992). “Traditional attachment theory emphasises the integral role of relationships in child wellbeing, and how children’s receptivity to learning is affected by their early relationships with their primary caregivers” (Bowlby 1969, as cited in Carpenter, 2017). Attachment theory has an extensive empirical base and has been “generating creative and impactful research for almost half a century” (Cassidy, Jones & Shaver, 2013).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) confirms that extensive, cross-cultural research demonstrates how attachment is an important influence on children’s academic success and wellbeing at school (Carpenter et al, 2017). Attachment Aware (AA) approaches are designed to promote first and foremost a feeling of safety in school. AA schools training covers an understanding of attachment theory and the evidence base to support it, the impact of trauma on the developing brain, and subsequent behaviour. There is a strong emphasis on emotion coaching, which helps school staff to distinguish between behaviour and the feelings that underlie that behaviour and uses empathy to validate these feelings and communicate with the child more effectively. Active listening and co-regulation are key. AA schools are thoughtful about the impact of sanctions on children. Whole school strategies aim to avoid stigmatising individuals, such as Looked After Children.

There was “relatively little empirical research on the effectiveness of attachment-based school strategies for meeting children’s attachment needs, and the implications of whole school strategies” (Bergin & Bergin, 2009) however, the field is now developing rapidly. The REES Centre at Oxford University launched a five-year research programme in 2018 which aims to raise school staff awareness and increase understanding of the role of attachment and trauma in children’s education - “supporting and building the evidence base around staff development on attachment and trauma in a minimum of 300 schools in approximately 20-30 local authorities nationally”. That research programme is informed by learning from the evaluations of Attachment Aware Schools Programmes in Bath and NE Somerset, Stoke-on-Trent and Leicestershire which have reflected factors that contribute to positive outcomes.

This study will develop a theory about facilitating and blocking contexts and mechanisms in the development of an attachment aware approach. It is hoped that in developing, and subsequently testing, a theory this could be used to guide other schools seeking to implement an attachment aware approach.

At least two schools in the intended participating LA have received training in a specific AA approach. Participants will be staff from those schools. They will be asked to participate in an interview that will last no more than 1 hour. The interviews will take place at their place of work. The interviews will explore their experiences of implementing and delivering an AA approach.

Provide a statement on the aims and significance of the proposed research, including potential impact to knowledge and understanding in the field (where appropriate, indicate the associated hypothesis which will be tested). This should be a clear justification of the proposed research, why it should proceed and a statement on any anticipated benefits to the community. (Do not exceed 700 words)

This study aims to support the successful implementation of an AA approach in schools. It aims to do this by identification of what helps and hinders the implementation of AA approaches. It is hoped that in adding to knowledge in this area, it will enable educational psychologists to support all young people, but particularly the most vulnerable.

The study is particularly relevant to the proposed population due to the high levels of social emotional mental health (SEMH) needs. SEMH. The local context has one of the highest proportions of children in the country with SEND, at 17%. SEMH ranks second in terms of primary SEN in the borough. ‘Good intentions, Good Enough’ (Gov.uk, 2017) stated that the best provisions for SEMH are a “wraparound offer for the child, with trauma-informed practice in schools as well as both mental health and social care support outside of them”.

A theory to guide schools seeking to implement an attachment aware approach will be useful to the profession of Educational Psychology as it will promote well-being in schools for all children, not solely children that the school refer to the Educational Psychologist

(EP). EPs are well placed to support systemic thinking and promote opportunities that support teachers in developing their AA practice.

This study aims to impact knowledge and understanding in the field of educational psychology through developing a theory about what helps and hinders the implementation of an AA approach in one of the most deprived and culturally diverse boroughs in the UK.

Provide an outline of the methodology for the proposed research, including proposed method of data collection, tasks assigned to participants of the research and the proposed method and duration of data analysis. If the proposed research makes use of pre-established and generally accepted techniques, please make this clear. (Do not exceed 500 words)

This research is a qualitative, explanatory study. As AA schools are a relatively under researched area, it is thought that a qualitative design that seeks to explain the phenomena will contribute to current understanding. The researcher aims to elucidate rich data from the participants and to explore the meaning of phenomena.

Due to the fact that there is specific information to be gathered, the proposed method of data collection is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen due to the need to direct the conversation, but flexibility will be employed as ongoing analysis will influence the questions that are asked.

The proposed method of data analysis is Grounded Theory (GT). Grounded theory is a systematic research methodology used to construct an explanatory model or theory about a phenomenon of interest (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, as cited in Singh & Estefan, 2018). Critical reflection was carried out on the three different grounded theory approaches of Glaser, Charmaz and Strauss and Corbin to judge which methodology was the best fit with the research question alongside the pragmatic constraints of the research and researcher epistemology and ontology. The researcher concluded that the Strauss and Corbin model of GT would be the most fitting for the project. As a novice to the area, the systematic methodology outlined in this approach is relatively clear to follow and is achievable within the agreed time limit.

This study will rely on interview data, gathered directly from participants in a natural setting - their school. Induction will be used as an analytic tool for theoretical sampling. Thereby, participants will be sampled based on the direction of the emerging theory. All participants will be members of staff - members of senior and middle management, class teachers or teaching support staff. Participants will be interviewed for a maximum time of one hour.

PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Provide an explanation detailing how you will identify, approach and recruit the participants for the proposed research, including clarification on sample size and location. Please provide justification for the exclusion/inclusion criteria for this study (i.e. who will be allowed to / not allowed to participate) and explain briefly, in lay terms, why this criteria is in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

All 70 LA maintained primary schools in the LA area will be approached via email to ask if the school has received training in an AA approach. Those schools that respond will be given an information sheet and invited to participate in the research study. If there is no response the researcher will follow up with the school, a maximum of three times.

If the school agree, invitations to participate in interviews, alongside information sheets and consent forms will be sent to the member of staff who is responsible for managing, monitoring and/or evaluating the approach. Once an interview has been conducted the initial consenting participants, a process of theoretical sampling will be applied to identify and invite further potential participants. The original participant in each school will be asked to distribute the information sheets and consent forms. It is anticipated that 6-10 participants will be interviewed, as this is the number that is typically needed to achieve theoretical saturation.

Invitations to participate will be staggered in order to ensure that invitations to participate are not sent to participants who would not subsequently have an opportunity to participate.

Inclusion criteria for participation in this study are school staff who work in an attachment aware school for whom the headteacher has consented to staffs' participation. Exclusion criteria for participation in this study are school staff who do not work in an attachment aware school, or school staff who work in an attachment aware school where the headteacher has not consented to staffs' participation.

Will the participants be from any of the following groups?(Tick as appropriate)

- Students or staff of the Trust or the University.
- Adults (over the age of 18 years with mental capacity to give consent to participate in the research).
- Children or legal minors (anyone under the age of 16 years)¹
- Adults who are unconscious, severely ill or have a terminal illness.
- Adults who may lose mental capacity to consent during the course of the research.
- Adults in emergency situations.

- Adults² with mental illness - particularly those detained under the Mental Health Act (1983 & 2007).
- Participants who may lack capacity to consent to participate in the research under the research requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).
- Prisoners, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Young Offenders, where ethical approval may be required from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- Healthy volunteers (in high risk intervention studies).
- Participants who may be considered to have a pre-existing and potentially dependent³ relationship with the investigator (e.g. those in care homes, students, colleagues, service-users, patients).
- Other vulnerable groups (see Question 6).
- Adults who are in custody, custodial care, or for whom a court has assumed responsibility.
- Participants who are members of the Armed Forces.

¹If the proposed research involves children or adults who meet the Police Act (1997) definition of vulnerability³, any researchers who will have contact with participants must have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.

‘Adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or a reduction in physical or mental capacity, and living in a care home or home for people with learning difficulties or receiving care in their own home, or receiving hospital or social care services.’ (Police Act, 1997)

Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/serviceuser) may compromise the ability to give informed consent which is free from any form of pressure (real or implied) arising from this relationship. TREC recommends that, wherever practicable, investigators choose participants with whom they have no dependent relationship. Following due scrutiny, if the investigator is confident that the research involving participants in dependent relationships is vital and defensible, TREC will require additional information setting out the case and detailing how risks inherent in the dependent relationship will be managed. TREC will also need to be reassured that refusal to participate will not result in any discrimination or penalty.

Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable? YES NO

For the purposes of research, ‘vulnerable’ participants may be adults whose ability to protect their own interests are impaired or reduced in comparison to that of the broader population. Vulnerability may arise from the participant’s personal characteristics (e.g. mental or physical impairment) or from their social environment, context and/or disadvantage (e.g. socio-economic mobility, educational attainment, resources, substance dependence, displacement or homelessness). Where prospective participants are at high risk of consenting under duress, or as a result of manipulation or coercion, they must also be considered as vulnerable.

Adults lacking mental capacity to consent to participate in research and children are

automatically presumed to be vulnerable. Studies involving adults (over the age of 16) who lack mental capacity to consent in research must be submitted to a REC approved for that purpose.

6.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants’ interests? NA

If **YES**, the research activity proposed will require a DBS check. (NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>)
NA

Do you propose to make any form of payment or incentive available to participants of the research? YES NO

If **YES**, please provide details taking into account that any payment or incentive should be representative of reasonable remuneration for participation and may not be of a value that could be coercive or exerting undue influence on potential participants’ decision to take part in the research. Wherever possible, remuneration in a monetary form should be avoided and substituted with vouchers, coupons or equivalent. Any payment made to research participants may have benefit or HMRC implications and participants should be alerted to this in the participant information sheet as they may wish to choose to decline payment.

What special arrangements are in place for eliciting informed consent from participants who may not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information provided in English; where participants have special communication needs; where participants have limited literacy; or where children are involved in the research? (Do not exceed 200 words)

Informed consent shall be attained through simple English consent and information sheets. Due to prospective participants being employed in a teaching capacity in a school, all participants will have sufficient spoken and written English to access the information and give informed consent.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Does the proposed research involve any of the following? (Tick as appropriate)

- use of a questionnaire, self-completion survey or data-collection instrument (attach copy)
- use of emails or the internet as a means of data collection
- use of written or computerised tests
- interviews (attach interview questions)
- diaries (attach diary record form)
- participant observation
- participant observation (in a non-public place) without their knowledge / covert research
- audio-recording interviewees or events
- video-recording interviewees or events
- access to personal and/or sensitive data (i.e. student, patient, client or service-user data) without the participant's informed consent for use of these data for research purposes
- administration of any questions, tasks, investigations, procedures or stimuli which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process
- performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience discomfiture, regret or any other adverse emotional or psychological reaction

- investigation of participants involved in illegal or illicit activities (e.g. use of illegal drugs)
- procedures that involve the deception of participants
- administration of any substance or agent
- use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions
- participation in a clinical trial
- research undertaken at an off-campus location (risk assessment attached)
- research overseas (copy of VCG overseas travel approval attached)

Does the proposed research involve any specific or anticipated risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants that are greater than those encountered in everyday life? YES NO

If YES, please describe below including details of precautionary measures.

There proposed research involves no anticipated risks to participants that are greater than these encountered in everyday life. Interviews are being undertaken at participants' usual place of work within the Local Authority. The researcher is on placement in the Educational Psychology Service within this Local Authority. The Principal Educational Psychologist has granted permission for this research to be conducted.

Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress for participants, please state what previous experience the investigator or researcher(s) have had in conducting this type of research.

The researcher has extensive experience of supporting those experiencing distress due to their previous roles in CAMHS and in an adult psychiatric inpatient unit. The researcher also carried out a large research project in an out-patient psychiatric hospital, during which they gained a plethora of experience in carrying out interviews with service users, carers and staff, and encountered no issues. During their training to qualify as an EP the researcher has supported both school staff and parents with difficult issues and have received training in therapeutic modalities as well in managing safeguarding concerns.

Provide an explanation of any potential benefits to participants. Please ensure this is framed within the overall contribution of the proposed research to knowledge or practice. (Do not exceed 400 words)

NOTE: Where the proposed research involves students of our University, they should be assured that accepting the offer to participate or choosing to decline will have no impact on their assessments or learning experience. Similarly, it should be made clear to participants who are patients, service-users and/or receiving any form of treatment or medication that

they are not invited to participate in the belief that participation in the research will result in some relief or improvement in their condition.

This study aims to develop a theory about what helps and hinders the implementation of an AA approach. This study will give participants an opportunity to reflect on practice and what is working well and less well in the setting in which they work. The participants will have an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base, and to supporting other schools to develop an AA.

Nash & Schlosser (2015) refer to the “the sizeable minority of teachers in both primary and secondary schools who appear to be unaware of the psychological underpinnings of disruptive behaviour. That is, that such behaviour frequently communicates “unresolved emotional needs, rather than wilful defiance”. This study will contribute to the field of education by emphasising the impact of emotional regulation in the learning environment.

The participants in this study will benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their training in an AA approach and how they have put it to use in their setting. Participants will be contributing their experience and thinking to a research study that will add to the evidence base in this burgeoning field.

Provide an outline of any measures you have in place in the event of adverse or unexpected outcomes and the potential impact this may have on participants involved in the proposed research. (Do not exceed 300 words)

Due to the subject of the interviews, the researcher does not anticipate that participants will experience discomfort or distress. The researcher will leave enough time after each scheduled interview to debrief the participants. In the unlikely event that a participant is experiencing any discomfort after de-briefing, the researcher will signpost them to the appropriate support services should it be appropriate to do so.

The information sheet will contain contact details of the research supervisor and point of contact in the LA to contact if there are any concerns following the interviews.

Provide an outline of your debriefing, support and feedback protocol for participants involved in the proposed research. This should include, for example, where participants may feel the need to discuss thoughts or feelings brought about following their participation in the research. This may involve referral to an external support or counseling service, where participation in the research has caused specific issues for participants. Where medical aftercare may be necessary, this should include details of the treatment available to participants. Debriefing may involve the disclosure of further information on the aims of the research, the participant’s performance and/or the results of the research. (Do not exceed 500 words)

Following debrief post data collection, the emotional state of the participant will be assessed by the researcher. Due to the subject of the interviews, the researcher does not anticipate that participants will experience discomfort or distress. In the unlikely event that a participant is experiencing any discomfort after de-briefing, the researcher will signpost them to the appropriate support services should it be appropriate to do so.

Another copy of the information sheet that contains the contact details of the researcher, research supervisor and point of contact in the LA will be given so participants can make contact should issues arise at a later date.

Findings will be disseminated by the researcher following completion of the research study. A session will be held for participants in their place of work where the theory will be communicated to them. A summary of the findings will also be sent to them in brief report form, with a summary sheet attached to capture the key findings.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

Have you attached a copy of your participant information sheet (this should be in plain English)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials. YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

Have you attached a copy of your participant consent form (this should be in plain English)? Where the research involves non-English speaking participants, please include translated materials.

YES NO

If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

The following is a participant information sheet checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

Clear identification of the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher or Principal Investigator and other researchers along with relevant contact details.

- Details of what involvement in the proposed research will require (e.g., participation in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-recording of events), estimated time commitment and any risks involved.
- A statement confirming that the research has received formal approval from TREC.
- If the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for confidentiality / anonymity.
- A clear statement that where participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers that participation in the research will have no impact on assessment / treatment / service-use or support.
- Assurance that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw consent at any time, and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
- Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.
- A statement that the data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- Advice that if participants have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher(s) or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@taviport.nhs.uk)
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

The following is a consent form checklist covering the various points that should be included in this document.

- University or Trust letterhead or logo.
 - Title of the project (with research degree projects this need not necessarily be the title of the thesis) and names of investigators.
 - Confirmation that the project is research.
 - Confirmation that involvement in the project is voluntary and that participants are free to withdraw at any time, or to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
 - Confirmation of particular requirements of participants, including for example whether interviews are to be audio-/video-recorded, whether anonymised quotes will be used in publications advice of legal limitations to data confidentiality.
 -
- If the sample size is small, confirmation that this may have implications for anonymity any other relevant information.

- The proposed method of publication or dissemination of the research findings.

- Details of any external contractors or partner institutions involved in the research.
- Details of any funding bodies or research councils supporting the research.
- Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Below is a checklist covering key points relating to the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Please indicate where relevant to the proposed research.

- Participants will be completely anonymised and their identity will not be known by the investigator or researcher(s) (i.e. the participants are part of an anonymous randomised sample and return responses with no form of personal identification)?
- The responses are anonymised or are an anonymised sample (i.e. a permanent process of coding has been carried out whereby direct and indirect identifiers have been removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers).
- The samples and data are de-identified (i.e. direct and indirect identifiers have been removed and replaced by a code. The investigator or researchers are able to link the code to the original identifiers and isolate the participant to whom the sample or data relates).
- Participants have the option of being identified in a publication that will arise from the research.
- Participants will be pseudo-anonymised in a publication that will arise from the research. (I.e. the researcher will endeavour to remove or alter details that would identify the participant.)
- The proposed research will make use of personal sensitive data.
- Participants consent to be identified in the study and subsequent dissemination of research findings and/or publication.

Participants must be made aware that the confidentiality of the information they provide is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality (i.e. the data may be subject to a subpoena, a freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions). This only applies to named or de-identified data. If your participants are named or de-identified, please confirm that you will specifically state these limitations.

YES NO

If NO, please indicate why this is the case below:

NOTE: WHERE THE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVES A SMALL SAMPLE OR FOCUS GROUP, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT THERE WILL BE DISTINCT LIMITATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF ANONYMITY THEY CAN BE AFFORDED.

DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

Will the Researcher/Principal Investigator be responsible for the security of all data collected in connection with the proposed research? YES NO If NO, please indicate what alternative arrangements are in place below:

In line with the 5th principle of the Data Protection Act (1998), which states that personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes for which it was collected; please state how long data will be retained for.

1-2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 10> years

NOTE: Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance currently states that data should normally be preserved and accessible for 10 years, but for projects of clinical or major social, environmental or heritage importance, for 20 years or longer.

(<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/grcpoldraft.pdf>)

Below is a checklist which relates to the management, storage and secure destruction of data for the purposes of the proposed research. Please indicate where relevant to your proposed arrangements.

Research data, codes and all identifying information to be kept in separate locked filing cabinets.

Access to computer files to be available to research team by password only.

Access to computer files to be available to individuals outside the research team by password only (See **23.1**).

Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically within the European Economic Area (EEA).

Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). (See **23.2**).

NOTE: Transfer of research data via third party commercial file sharing services, such as Google Docs and YouSendIt are not necessarily secure or permanent. These systems may also be located overseas and not covered by UK law. If the system is located outside the European

Economic Area (EEA) or territories deemed to have sufficient standards of data protection, transfer may also breach the Data Protection Act (1998).

Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.

Use of personal data in the form of audio or video recordings.

Primary data gathered on encrypted mobile devices (i.e. laptops). **NOTE:** This should be transferred to secure UEL servers at the first opportunity.

All electronic data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For hard drives and magnetic storage devices (HDD or SSD), deleting files does not permanently erase the data on most systems, but only deletes the reference to the file. Files can be restored when deleted in this way. Research files must be overwritten to ensure they are completely irretrievable. Software is available for the secure erasing of files from hard drives which meet recognised standards to securely scramble sensitive data. Examples of this software are BC Wipe, Wipe File, DeleteOnClick and Eraser for

Windows platforms. Mac users can use the standard 'secure empty trash' option; an alternative is Permanent eraser software.

All hardcopy data will undergo secure disposal.

NOTE: For shredding research data stored in hardcopy (i.e. paper), adopting DIN 3 ensures files are cut into 2mm strips or confetti like cross-cut particles of 4x40mm. The UK government requires a minimum standard of DIN 4 for its material, which ensures cross cut particles of at least 2x15mm.

Please provide details of individuals outside the research team who will be given password protected access to encrypted data for the proposed research.

Not applicable.

Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the European Economic Area (EEA).

Not applicable.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL FOR RESEARCH

Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK? YES NO

Have you consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/> YES NO

If you are a non-UK national, have you sought travel advice/guidance from the Foreign Office (or equivalent body) of your country? YES NO NOT

APPLICABLE

Have you completed the overseas travel approval process and enclosed a copy of the document with this application? (For UEL students and staff only) YES
NO

Details on this process are available here <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/research/fieldwork.htm>

Is the research covered by your University's insurance and indemnity provision?

YES NO

NOTE: Where research is undertaken **by UEL students and staff** at an off-campus location within the UK or overseas, the Risk Assessment policy must be consulted: http://dl-cfs-01.uel.ac.uk/hrservices/documents/hshandbook/risk_assess_policy.pdf.

For UEL students and staff conducting research where UEL is the sponsor, the Dean of School or Director of Service has overall responsibility for risk assessment regarding their health and safety.

Please evidence how compliance with all local research ethics and research governance requirements have been assessed for the country(ies) in which the research is taking place.

Not applicable.

Will this research be financially supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programs? YES NO

Not applicable.

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

How will the results of the research be reported and disseminated? (Select all that apply)

- Peer reviewed journal
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES

Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC)?

No.

CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

- Letters of approval from ethical approval bodies (where relevant) Recruitment advertisement
- Participant information sheets (including easy-read where relevant)
- Consent forms (including easy-read where relevant)
- Assent form for children (where relevant)
- Evidence of any external approvals needed
- Questionnaire
- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

Where it is not possible to attach the above materials, please provide an explanation below.

In line with the method of data collection and analysis, grounded theory, the interview schedule is in development as questions will emerge based on the direction of the emerging theory.

Appendix L: Participant Information Sheet

The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

Researcher - Sorcha O' Dea - so'dea@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Supervisor – Dr. Judith Mortell - Mortell@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Information sheet regarding participation in a Research Study

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether or not to participate a research study. The study is being conducted as part of my Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology degree at the Tavistock & Portman, accredited by the University of Essex. The findings will be published in a dissertation that will be placed in Essex's library and in Ethos – an online database.

Project Title

What helps and hinders the implementation of attachment aware approaches in schools?

Project Description

This study aims to investigate what helps and hinders the implementation of an attachment aware (AA) approach in schools. This study will develop a theory about facilitating an blocking contexts and mechanisms in the development of an attachment aware approach. It is hoped that in developing, and subsequently testing, a theory this could be used to guide other schools seeking to implement an attachment aware approach. You are being asked to take part in an interview in your place of work to explore your views on what helps and hinders the implementation of attachment aware approaches in schools. You have been approached because you have experience of implementing an attachment approach. The interview will take less than an hour. It is entirely confidential, bar a disclosure of imminent harm to self and or others. All data will be anonymised. The study is relatively small and therefore I cannot guarantee that anonymisation will protect you entirely from recognition, despite any and all identifying information being changed or omitted. This research has received formal approval from the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee.

Confidentiality of the Data

Participants' names will be kept in a locked cabinet with the researcher having sole access to it, ensuring this is not shared with anyone else. All the data collected will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), Essex University's Data Protection Policy, and GDPR, ensuring that only the researcher, Director of Studies and examiners have the data of the fully anonymised transcripts.

Audio recordings from the interviews will be erased once the study is completed, however anonymised transcripts might be kept for a duration of up to ten years for further analysis and may be used for later publication. Data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Your participation

You are not obliged to take part in this study and should not feel coerced. You are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Should you choose to withdraw after the interview, the information that you had provided will be deleted, unless you withdraw after the data analysis commences; after this point your data will have influenced the analysis and so it cannot be fully removed. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the researcher or any other aspect of this research project, they should contact Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk).

Thank you in anticipation,

Sorcha O' Dea

Appendix M: Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX



The Tavistock and Portman
NHS Foundation Trust

This is a consent form that you are signing to take part in a research project, titled:
What helps and hinders the implementation of attachment aware approaches in schools?

Below are the details of the researcher and supervisor of this project:

Researcher - Sorcha O' Dea - so'dea@tavi-port.nhs.uk **Supervisor**

– Dr. Judith Mortell - Mortell@tavi-port.nhs.uk

By signing, you are agreeing that you have read the information sheet provided relating to the above study and have been given a copy to keep. You are aware that you are being asked to participate in an interview that will last no longer than one hour at your place of work. You understand that interviews are to be audio recorded and that anonymised quotes may be used in publication. You understand that interviews are entirely confidential, bar a disclosure of imminent harm to self and or others.

The nature and purpose of the research have been explained to you, and you have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. You understand that the study is being conducted as part of a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology degree at the Tavistock & Portman, accredited by the University of Essex. You understand that the findings will be published in a dissertation that will be placed in Essex's library and in Ethos – an online database.

You understand that your involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to you what will happen once the research study has been completed. You understand that the study is relatively small, and therefore the researcher cannot guarantee that anonymisation will protect you entirely from recognition, despite any and all identifying information being changed or omitted.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study, and to withdraw my unprocessed data, at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

.....

Participant's Signature:

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

.....

Researcher's Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Appendix N: Semi- structured Interview Schedule

Interviewer introduction and rapport building

Initial open-ended question

Can you tell me a bit about the type of Attachment Aware approach that you practice here?

Intermediate questions

Impact of SLT?

How did training need to be? What kind of staff 'get it'?

What kind of staff don't 'get it'?

Tell me about management of the approach? Staff support?

Does every staff member need to be on board?

Ending questions

What would you recommend to another school that wanted to do this? Anything else to say?

Anything else you want to ask me?

Prompt Questions

Can you say more? So did that helped X? - Did anything hinder X?

What do you mean by....

Can you tell me more about that?

