

**‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how
an additional resource provision in a mainstream secondary school
facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).**

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Abstract

The drive toward inclusion for autistic children and young people, has led to the majority of these students being educated within mainstream schools (DfE, 2021/22). School placement decisions for these students are generally based on individual needs and resources available. One option that is slowly growing in popularity based on parental satisfaction and aimed at promoting inclusion in mainstream education is that of additional resource provisions (ARPs) (Fredrickson et al., 2010). Currently there is little research on ARPs and even less eliciting the views of autistic students who access support from these ARPs. Therefore, the aim of this research was to conduct an exploratory case study of an ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school and aimed to explore the available support through observations and a staff focus group. The research also aimed to elicit the views of 7 autistic students through semi-structured interviews on their experiences of being supported by an ARP, including what they found helpful and what they experienced as being barriers to effective support. Reflexive Thematic Analysis was used to analysis the data collected and indicated that the ARP in this study offers several benefits that supports students to access the mainstream school, including keyworkers being central to facilitating individualised packages of support. However, findings also highlighted areas of improvement, including developing the wider school ethos and culture, through training and attention to school policies. Furthermore, findings called for more collaborative working between the ARP staff and mainstream teachers with the aim of having a shared understanding of how best to support this population of students. The unique insight into student's experiences of available support aims to inform future thinking on what students may find works well and what might need further consideration to supporting these students to access the mainstream setting.

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1 . INTRODUCTION

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

With the ongoing rise in the number of children and young people (CYP) in the United Kingdom (UK) being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a key question is, “How are these CYP being supported to access support in the education systems?” This thesis is concerned with the topic of inclusive practice in educational settings for secondary aged young people with ASD. This thesis aims to focus specifically on young people’s experiences of accessing an additional support provision (ARP) attached to a mainstream secondary school, and how this may or may not support inclusion to the mainstream environment and access to their learning.

The introductory chapter aims to set out the context of the study, to explore current concerns around how to meet the educational needs of children and young people with ASD and to identify the possible educational options available to this group of. It will highlight key legislation and government guidelines for supporting these CYP in educational settings and discuss the possible challenges in adhering to these. This chapter will set out what an additional resource provision is and what these provisions aim to achieve. The chapter concludes by discussing the role of an educational psychologist in supporting CYP with ASD and sharing insight into the researchers position on this topic.

1.2 DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE

‘Autism spectrum disorders’ is an umbrella term that is often used to refer to autism and a number of other related diagnoses such as Asperger’s syndrome, Pervasive developmental disorder – not otherwise specified and Rett’s disorder. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5, 2013), ASD is defined as a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition where a CYP experiences persistent deficits in areas of social communication and social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests or activities including sensory difficulties, often referred to as the dyad of impairments. While CYP with ASD share commonalities across these criteria, it is important to highlight that these difficulties often manifest differently between individuals (Fredrickson & Cline, 2015).

ASD was once considered a rare condition, with early population studies indicating an occurrence rate of between 4-5 per 10,000 (0.04% - 0.05%) children (Wing & Gould, 1979). A recent study carried out by researchers from Newcastle University in collaboration with the University of Cambridge’s department of Psychiatry and Maastricht University, found that around one in 57 (1.76%) children in the United Kingdom (UK) is diagnosed with ASD, showing a significantly increased prevalence rate. Reasons for this increase have been considered and include possible changes to the classification of diagnostic criteria since the 1990s (Fredrickson & Cline, 2015) and increased awareness amongst practitioners that result in better identification and more sensitive assessments (Wing & Potter, 2002). Regardless of these reasons, a more pressing issue, given the complexities and wide-ranging manifestations of individual needs among those CYP’s with ASD, is how do those working with this population

work to understand and meet their presenting needs, particularly in relation to inclusion and supporting them to access their education.

1.3 INCLUSION AND EDUCATION FOR CYP WITH ASD

1.3.1 Brief history of the move toward inclusive practices in education

The education of children with special educational needs (SEN) has long been a topic for debate. In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child made a statement that had lasting influence throughout legislation and government policy “Every child has a right to education across the United Kingdom”. This statement extended to every child irrespective of their individual presenting needs and differences, including race, gender and if they had a disability or special educational need (Section 19, Education Act, 1996; Equality Act, 2010). This prompted impetus to move away from the segregated educational practices and toward integration and inclusion of children with SEN into mainstream provisions. The move aimed to support children with SEN to access and participate in society and it was justified on the basis that segregation only served to deny their ‘rights’ and showed poorer outcomes in research (UNESCO, 1994).

The move toward inclusion and inclusive practices in education was not without difficulty and as more children with SEN were brought into the mainstream education system, schools struggled to accommodate the wide-ranging needs (including learning and behaviour) being presented and this led to an increasing number of children being

excluded. With little incentive and support for these schools to work on accommodating these children and then further pressure placed on staff to increase pupils' performance and achievement, this resulted in children with SEN being set up to fail (Dyson, 1991).

Regardless of this initial criticism, over the last two decades the drive toward improving inclusive practices has remained a key issue in education policy both nationally and internationally (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This was particularly noted in the Salamanca Statement where 92 governments worldwide made commitments to adopt the principle of inclusion as a 'matter of law or policy' (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 1994). In the UK this was supported in the Green Paper entitled 'Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' (DfEE, 1997) that stressed the importance of inclusion and was later backed up by the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) that emphasised schools making 'reasonable adjustments' to enable children with SEN to access and be included in mainstream settings.

1.3.2 Current national context

Current government legislation and policy has continued to promote inclusion for children with SEN. This has included an emphasis on promoting schools to make changes and remove barriers that prevent children with SEN accessing their learning, for example: as part of commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK government prioritised

the inclusive education of children with SEN, including the removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education (DfE/DOH, 2014: 25).

This is further supported by both the Children and Families Act (2014) that highlights the importance of the need to support children and young people to help them achieve the best possible educational outcomes, and backed up by the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DOH, 2014) that places the responsibility on the schools to be doing what is necessary to facilitate pupil access and achievement, whilst making reasonable adjustments to support these CYP with SEN.

Despite the continued push toward inclusion, Ainscow (2014) highlighted that schools are still experiencing difficulties that limit their ability to fully incorporate inclusive practices into their settings. This includes the ambiguous way in which the concept of inclusion is understood (Goodall, 2015) and the various descriptions of inclusion and inclusive practices. Some descriptions include schools implementing an ethos that respects the diversity of all learners (UNESCO, 2009), or focus on celebrating the individual differences of each child (Barton, 2008) or a somewhat more useful description of working to bring all children together irrespective of differences (Florian, 2013). For the purpose of this thesis the following description of inclusion will be adopted:

Inclusion involves more than simply integrating children into mainstream settings (De Valenzuela, 2014). Inclusion is about bringing all children together, irrespective of their differences in abilities and focuses on providing appropriate support structures (Tilston et al., 1998; Artiles et al., 2006) that provides for all children

equally (Thomas & Loxley, 2007) enables all children to access all aspects of the mainstream setting, including the social environment and the learning.

Given the complexities of inclusion and the wide-ranging manifestations of the presenting needs of CYP with ASD, it is not a surprise that the inclusion of these CYP have been identified as the most complex and poorly understood areas of education (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008b). Moreover, this population of CYP have been identified as being amongst the most difficult to successfully include in mainstream educational provisions (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2006).

1.3.3 Education for CYP with ASD

In February 2009, the Autism Education Trust investigated the practices and challenges in educational provisions for pupils with ASD and found that greater effort was needed to develop more inclusive schools to accommodate the high prevalence of CYP being diagnosed with ASD. Wittemeyer et al (2012) described a range of placement options available to CYP with ASD in England that can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1: Placement options for CYP with ASD in England

Provision Type	Description
Mainstream school	The pupil attends mainstream school without any additional support.
Allocated individual support within a mainstream classroom.	The pupil is provided with support to access their learning

		according to their specific presenting needs.
	Specific resource bases/provisions that specialise in ASD and are attached to a mainstream setting	These provide pupils with the opportunity to be included within the mainstream setting as well as providing them with specialist support and education as needed.
	Specialist ASD schools	Schools that cater specifically for pupils with ASD. Often funded by the local authority or privately.
	Specialist schools aimed to meet a variety of educational needs, including intellectual difficulties or emotional and behavioural issues	Schools that cater for pupils with a variety of additional learning needs and complex emotional and behavioural needs. Often funded by the local authority or privately.
	Residential schools for CYP with ASD whose needs cannot be met by day provisions	Often these schools cater to pupils who present with severe behaviour or emotional difficulties that are often significantly impacting on their family.
	Independent or non-maintained schools	More often than not these are funded by the local authority or paid for privately by parents.
	Home schooling	Generally chosen by parents who find that the available local provision does not meet their child's specific presenting needs or when the child has been excluded.

From what is understood by inclusion, it is clear that only the top three provision types in the table (i.e., colour coded as green) can be considered to be inclusive practice. Generally, school placement options differ according to the severity of needs for the child or young person and for what might be deemed as

‘best fit’ for the CYPs presenting needs (i.e., it is generally assumed that the higher the severity of needs the more specialised the placement option would be). However, this is not always the case. According to the most recent national statistics of special educational needs in England (Office of National Statistics, 2022), it is evident that the majority of CYP with ASD are being educated within mainstream schools.

Research has highlighted several positive outcomes from CYP with ASD being educated in mainstream provisions, including experiencing benefits both socially and academically (Dybvik, 2004; Farrell, 2001). Studies found that CYP with ASD and their typically developing peers benefitted from learning from each other (Smith, 2012; Sagers, 2015), such as through peer mediated interventions or peer assisted learning strategies (Hass et al., 2019). Further benefits include developing their overall social behaviour, through having a wider social network that increases opportunities to meet role models and establish good relations with peers (Eldar et al., 2009) and improving their social skills, such as developing their interpersonal communication skills (Reiter & Vitani, 2007). While on the surface this would appear to be a positive result for meeting inclusion criteria for this population of CYP, when this is further explored there is significant evidence to suggest that this may not be as positive as initially assumed.

A key misconception made about this population of CYP is that the higher functioning the CYP is, the better they will be able to access mainstream education and the mainstream environment (Moore, 2016; Morewood et al., 2011). However, evidence has suggested that these CYP are more at risk of social rejection, bullying

and lower levels of social acceptance (Schroeder et al., 2014; Rowley et al., 2012). Research by Humphrey and Lewis (2008, p.138) involving multiple case studies in a small number of schools across England, reported that the gap between “inclusion rhetoric” and “classroom reality” was very wide. Further research conducted by the National Autistic Society (NAS) which sought the views of teachers across England, Wales, and Scotland on current educational provisions for CYP with ASD, reported that a significant number of these CYP were not receiving the specialist support that they needed (Barnard et al., 2002).

When considering these findings alongside how they may relate specifically to young people’s experiences of secondary mainstream education, research has highlighted several factors related to the overall environment of secondary schools that may impact on inclusion for this population. Humphrey and Parkinson (2006) found that secondary environments are generally noisy and chaotic which makes for an unsettling experience for those pupils who have significant sensory needs associated with ASD. This was further supported by Moore (2007) who highlighted the unpredictability of routine and the constant changes throughout the day that is recognised in secondary schools as another factor impacting on pupils with ASD. In addition, the increased complexities of social groups in adolescence (Tobias, 2009) and the higher level of social skills needed to navigate more complex interactions (Myles & Simpson, 2001) added to factors impacting on pupils with ASD. Finally, factors such as the level of staff knowledge (i.e., training on ASD and how to support CYP with ASD) and the level of flexibility of available support (e.g., access to differentiation in learning strategies and reason adjustments in the classroom) were

identified as impacting on pupils with ASD (Barnard et al., 2002; Batten et al., 2006).

Currently, school placement decisions for CYP with ASD are based on individual needs and resources available. One option that is slowly growing in popularity is that of ASD resource provisions or units. A possible explanation for this is based on parental satisfaction regarding the balance of access to the mainstream setting while still offering a good level of support (Fredrickson et al., 2010).

1.4 ASD RESOURCE BASES/PROVISIONS IN SCHOOLS

1.4.1 What are they?

It is important to initially distinguish between ASD units/bases and ASD resource provisions. The Department for Education (DfE, 2015) described units as specialist provisions within a mainstream setting, where pupils are taught mainly within separate classes for at least half of their time, but still do access some of the mainstream curriculum and environment. Usually, these units are for pupils who have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), although not always and they can cater for pupils on the SEN register. Whereby, the DfE (2015) described ASD resource provisions as being reserved for pupils who spend the majority of their time in the mainstream school, accessing mainstream classes but have a base or specialist facilities around the school that they can access for various reasons, including engaging in interventions or spending break/lunchtimes in. These are usually

reserved for pupils with EHCPs. The main difference between the two supports is the time boundary associated with each (i.e., pupils enrolled in units/bases generally spend less time in the mainstream setting and more time in the base, while the expectation for pupils in ASD resource provisions is that they spend the majority of their time in the mainstream setting and less time accessing the resource provision).

This research thesis is specifically focusing on ASD resource provisions. However, it is important to note that these can also be referred to as a Specially Resourced Provision (SRP) or Additional Resource Provision (ARP), which is how it is referred to in this thesis.

1.4.2 Possible benefits and barriers to ARPs

While there has been some research on ARPs, these studies have mainly focused on parental and staff views. These studies have suggested that the benefits of ARPs can be associated with the level of staff knowledge and training (Fredrickson et al., 2010; Whitaker, 2007), actively paying attention to teaching social understanding and the ‘hidden curriculum’ needed to support pupils with ASD (Myles & Simpson, 2001) and being able to incorporate proactive strategies that support behaviour often associated with ASD (Robertson, Chamberlain, & Kasari, 2003).

However, despite some initial positive findings a recent study suggested that things are not all positive and success can be dependent on how the school ethos views inclusion and where they focus their interventions (Landor & Perepa, 2017).

This will be explored further in the literature review chapter. This highlights the need for further research into the effects of ARPs, with a particular focus on young people's experiences of these ARPs.

1.5 THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SUPPORTING INCLUSION FOR CYP WITH ASD

Over the years, the role of the EP in supporting CYP has moved away from a medicalised model of practice which held a more within child view and was dominated by psychometric testing, toward a more social constructionist theoretical framework where inclusion and the social model of practice holds more of an emphasis (Gainsborough & Cockburn, 2022). In more recent times, EPs are influenced by more systemic ways of practice (e.g., Pellegrini, 2009) that recognise the child or young person's context in relation to their presenting needs (i.e., how multiple aspects of the CYP's life interact and impact on them). In this way EPs view the CYP's development as being part of a complex system that can be impacted and influenced by their environment, including their schools and families, in addition to broader societal and cultural values.

An important aspect of the role of the EP is the acknowledgement of how important it is to explore and understand the profile of the CYP and through this understanding promote inclusive practices. As already discussed above, inclusive practices within educational settings opens up a range of educational and social opportunities for CYPs with SEND, including those with ASD. A key role that the EP plays is supporting school systems to identify the potential interaction of multiple

factors (i.e., intersectionality) that can lead to discriminatory practice against a group of pupils and supporting staff to make sense of the CYP's profile of needs. This is important when considering the different ways that ASD can manifest between individuals and holds true to a famous quote from Stephen Shore 'If you've met one individual with autism, you've met one individual with autism' (Flannery & Wisner-Carlson, 2020).

In this way, EPs work collaboratively with organisations, schools, families and the CYPs themselves to help ensure that there is a shared understanding of their presenting needs, including their areas of strengths and needs, and help identify appropriate and well-matched evidence-based interventions to support them. EPs also work systemically and on an organisational level to help develop autism-friendly policies and a culture of inclusion to ensure best practice for this population of pupils. Finally, as scientist-practitioners EPs are well placed to contribute toward research and the development of evidence-based practice that will continue to highlight effective ways of supporting these CYP, including eliciting young people's voice to identify appropriate priorities in their learning, whilst championing a positive and strength-based approach to supporting the development of their independence and future planning.

1.6 RESEARCHER'S POSITION

Before going further, it is important to highlight the researcher's position in this study with the aim of sharing the researcher's rationale for engaging with this

particular topic of study and being transparent to any possible biases that may become apparent later.

The researcher holds a background of almost 10 years' worth of experience working with CYP with ASD in various different capacities, including working in mainstream settings (both primary and secondary) as a teaching assistant, working in a specialist ASD school both as a learning support assistant and assistant psychologist, and working in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services both as part of the neurodevelopmental assessment and diagnostic team and in Tier 3 delivering therapeutic intervention to young people with ASD and associate mental health difficulties. Throughout this experience the researcher has developed a good understanding of autism and the varying degrees of presenting difficulties that CYP with this condition can experience in their daily lives both at home and at school.

In the researcher's second year on placement as part of their educational psychology training, they were allocated an additional resource provision (ARP) attached to a mainstream secondary school. This provision is aimed at supporting young people to access the mainstream environment and their learning. The researcher recalled being told that the model of the ARP works on an 80/20 model, which means that young people are expected to spend the majority of the time in the mainstream setting and only access the ARP for around 20 percent of the time. Given the possible challenges that can present for this population of CYP when accessing a mainstream setting, as mentioned above, it led to the researcher questioning how an ARP may work to facilitate inclusion in a mainstream setting

and what this inclusive practice might look like and what might be the presenting barriers to this being done effectively.

1.7 RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

In 2021, the government refreshed the national strategy for improving the lives of people with ASD and their families across England (GOV.UK, 2021). It built on and replaced the preceding autism strategy, 'Think Autism', which was published in April 2014, and which solely related to provisions and supports for adults. This new strategy extends the scope to include children and young people for the first time and recognises the importance of ensuring early intervention and the right to support across their lifetime.

This strategy highlights 6 key themes aimed at improving access to education and support for young people with ASD and includes a drive toward improving educational professionals' understanding of ASD and the subsequent inclusive cultures with schools. They share a commitment to embedding autism as a priority for educational leaderships and supporting schools to improve the educational experiences of those pupils with ASD. Furthermore, they identify the crucial need for these children to get the right school provision and aim to open 24 new provisions specially for children with ASD across England.

The aims of this strategy can already start to be noticed at a local level, specifically regarding talks about increasing the local autism provisions available

for these young people. Currently, in the researcher's borough of professional placement, there are only three available ARPs at primary level and one ARP available at secondary level, which is the focus of this study. This has resulted in a number of young people, especially at a secondary level needing to be placed in out of borough provisions. Subsequently, this has increased the local authority expenditure on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and has led to the DfE initiating the Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve Agreement' (DfE, 2022) actions with the aim of reducing expenditure.

In a recent conversation with the author's placement Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP), he shared that as part of the Borough's Autism Strategy (2021-2023), there is a drive toward reducing the number of young people being placed in provisions outside of the borough by working toward increasing the number of local options, with a particular focus on developing more ARPs in secondary school mainstream settings. During this conversation the PEP shared an interest in exploring the borough's current secondary school ARP, with the aim of understanding what daily practice may entail and how it supports young people with ASC and facilitates inclusive practices. These findings would be used to inform future development of additional ARPs.

Furthermore, in a recent discussion with the setting during a planning meeting (the setting of interest is the one of the authors allocated schools), this research idea was tentatively put forward to the leadership team who expressed their openness to engage in the research. The provision lead shared the settings aim of

moving toward being recognised as a centre of excellence and thought the results of the study could also be used to inform their current and future practice, including shedding light on, and incorporating their pupils' views into practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to outline the systematic literature review that was conducted as part of this study. The researcher's initial goal is to share the literature review aims, including the specific questions the researcher was aiming to address in the review. The search strategy is presented including what databases were used to search for literature, detailing specific search terms and limiters applied to the search results. The selected literature is appraised and key themes across papers are identified. Finally, the researcher will consider these themes in relation to the literature review questions and their implications for the current study.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AIM

The aim of this review was to systematically explore and collate the available literature on the effectiveness of autism resource provisions to facilitate inclusion for children and young people with autism in mainstream schools, while addressing the literature review questions detailed below. A secondary aim of this review was to identify important gaps within the body of literature with the goal of providing some context for further research (Hempel, 2020). Although the researcher's initial goal was to focus solely on autism resource provisions within secondary mainstream schools with a preference for views and experiences of the young people, due to the very limited

available research on this topic, the researcher felt it was beneficial to provide a more exhaustive overview of the available literature on the use of autism resource provisions in any mainstream school setting (i.e., primary and secondary schools) as well as broaden this out to include the views and experiences gathered from all available stakeholders.

Overall, the literature review aimed to provide context and further rationale for the current study and looked into the views and experiences of all stakeholders, including children and young people, parents, and school staff (both from the mainstream and the resource provision) in autism resource provisions attached to mainstream schools, to answer the following questions:

1. What does the literature say about the available offer of support from an autism resource provision?
2. What does the literature say about how effective an autism resource provision may be in facilitating inclusion and inclusive practices in mainstream education settings (both primary and secondary)?
3. What might be the views of parents and staff regarding how they might experience an autism resource provision and the offer of support available?
4. What might be the views of children or young people regarding how they might experience an autism resource provision and the offer of support available?

2.3. SEARCH STRATEGY

To search for the relevant literature, the researcher used a methodical and transparent approach with the aim of enabling replicability (Siddaway et al., 2019). This approach aimed to ensure the search was thorough and systematic, while also addressing the review questions. Furthermore, the researcher employed a clear criterion for inclusion and exclusion in this review (Siddaway et al., 2019).

2.3.1 Databases

The researcher carried out four searches in April 2023 via the EBSCOhost online research platform, on electronic databases that were relevant to the researcher's field of study (i.e., psychology and education). These relevant databases included APA PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Education Source and Education Resource Information Center (ERIC). A further search was carried out on the Web of Science search platform. With limited available literature coming up on these search platforms, the researcher extended the search to include Google Scholar and a hands-on search by using a snowballing technique to identify any further relevant references cited in identified studies.

2.3.2 Search Terms

Careful consideration was given to the search terms used for this systematic literature review and the chosen terms were devised based on the proposed review questions (Hempel, 2020). Initially the researcher spent time brainstorming key terms and then worked on identifying the different synonyms related to each key term. This included the researcher searching within various journals and articles to exhaust

synonyms used for each key term. These included keywords related to 'autism', 'resource provision' and 'school' (See Table 2). Truncators were used when necessary and the Boolean operators 'AND' and 'OR' were used to increase and refine numbers of results where necessary.

The researcher used a Boolean/Phrase search mode to locate relevant literature through four stages of searching the literature on EBSCOhost (please see Appendix A). In each stage the researcher added extra key terms (mostly identified and used in initial relevant studies) and attempted different Boolean operators (i.e., 'AND', 'OR') to work out the best suited combination to retrieve the most relevant studies available. In the final stage, the researcher settled on the key terms as seen in table 2 with no chosen field, as this combination retrieved the most relevant studies. This final search stage (i.e., using key terms in table 2) was replicated on Web of Science with the aim of being comprehensive in the search of available studies. However, in this search the researcher had to specify fields in order to refine the results and ensure retrieved studies were as relevant as possible to the literature review questions.

Table 2: Literature Search terms used in the final stage of searching

Keyword/term	Search Terms	Field
Autism	Autism or ASD or ASC or autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition or Aspergers	No field chosen (in EBSCOhost) 'Title' field chosen for Web of Science.
Resource provision	Additional resource provision or resourced provision or resource provision or resource unit or resource base or additional education provision or specialist resource base or specialist resource unit or alternative education provision or autism resourced provision or resourced autism provision	No field chosen (in EBSCOhost) 'Abstract' field chosen for Web of Science.
School	Mainstream* or secondary school or secondary education or high school or primary school or school or primary education	No field chosen (in EBSCOhost) 'Abstract' field chosen for Web of Science.

2.3.3. Limiters

With the limited literature available, search limiters were kept to a minimum and included limiting results to articles written in English and from peer-reviewed journals. The researcher was mindful that including only peer-reviewed articles created a limitation in relation to publication bias, however this ensured that a high quality of literature was included in this study. Due to the wide range of disciplines covered by Web of Science, the researcher used additional limiters to increase the relevance of results from that part of the search (see Appendix A for further details).

2.3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure only relevant journals were identified, the researcher used inclusion and exclusion criteria to help refine the search results. The researcher came up with initial criteria at the start of the search process and these were subsequently further refined and adapted as the search progressed (e.g., initially only having an interest in children and young people in secondary mainstream schools, then having to include other stakeholders, such as parents and school staff in all mainstream schools due to limited available research). Due to limitations in the available research, criteria such as publication date and location were not included (see table 3 for full list of criteria).

Table 3: Summary of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria Topic	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Researcher's Reasoning
Quality of Research	Only those published in a peer reviewed journal	Not published in a peer reviewed journal	To ensure the quality of research has been reviewed
Participants	Children and/or young people with autism and who are enrolled and receive support from an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.	Any children and young people who do not have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or who do not receive support (i.e., enrolled in) an autism resource provision.	To gain an insight and understanding of the experiences of a particular population, i.e., children and young people with autism who are enrolled in an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.
	Parent of a young person with autism and whose child	Any parent whose young person does not have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and who is not enrolled in an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.	To gain insight and understanding parents whose autistic

	<p>is enrolled and receives support from an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.</p>		<p>children/young people receive support from an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.</p>
	<p>School staff (e.g., teachers, teaching assistants, learning support assistants, senior leadership, or ARP leads) who are involved in delivering support to those children and young people who are enrolled in an autism resource provision</p>	<p>Any school staff who are not directly involved in supporting children and young people who are enrolled and receiving support from an autism resource provision attached to a mainstream school.</p>	<p>To gain an understanding of the experiences of school staff who are directly involved in supporting this population of children and young people.</p>

	attached to a mainstream school.		
Subject of interest	Autism Resource Provisions	Any other alternative education settings that cater to this population of children and young people, such as autism specific schools or simply schools without any resource provision available.	The main aim of this study is to gain further information and insight into autism resource provisions and how they work to support children and young people with autism.
Type of literature	Research journal article	Editorial, Policy Literature, Opinion Piece, or Theoretical.	To ensure the literature is answering the review questions, i.e., literature where studies have gathered and analysed data and provide further information on Autism Resource provisions through

			experiences and views from all stakeholders.
Language	Articles published only in English	Articles not published in English	The researcher's spoken language is English.

2.4. METHOD OF CRITICAL APPRAISAL

2.4.1. Selection Process

The process of literature selection consisted of several steps (please see Appendix B for the systematic flowchart illustrating the search process). Following this systematic search of the literature a total of 39 papers were found on EBSCOhost and a total of 52 papers were found on Web of Science. Papers from each platform were downloaded to separate Microsoft Word tables and duplications were removed (i.e., EBSCOhost had 19 papers remaining and Web of Science had 52 papers remaining). Remaining papers were screened for relevance based on titles and abstracts, resulting in 10 relevant papers found on EBSCOhost and 2 papers from Web of Science. Bringing these papers together, the 2 papers from Web of Science platform were identified as duplications and removed. These final 10 papers were organised in a table of relevance (i.e., 'relevant', 'unsure' and 'not relevant at all'). Papers that were assigned as 'unsure' were read fully to determine status of relevance (please Appendix A for table of

relevance). This final screening resulted in only 7 papers being deemed relevant to the review. In the final stage of the selection process, the researcher attempted a hand-search and snowballing technique based on attempting to identify any additional papers through references found in relevant papers, but no further papers were identified.

2.4.2. Organisation and Familiarisation of the Literature

Throughout the process of reading the full text of each paper, the researcher used a data extraction table as a method for getting familiar with the information of each study and to organise any identified relevant information. This included information such as, the population of focus in the papers, the methodological details, findings and strengths and limitations (please see Appendix D for this table). Alongside this process, the researcher also used a critical appraisal tool for each study (as discussed below).

2.4.3. Appraisal of Literature

To facilitate the researcher's understanding and insight into the relevance and methodological quality of the included papers, the researcher used The Critical Appraisal Programme (CASP) Qualitative Research Checklist (CASP, 2018). The use of the CASP framework aimed at exploring the research in each paper and was not aimed at providing a conclusive assessment of the research quality, rather the focus was on exploring possible areas of strengths and limitations of the studies used in each paper (please see Appendix C for the critical appraisal table for each study).

2.5. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

2.5.1. Aims

Throughout the selected papers, while there was a range of aims highlighted for each study, there was also a more common underlying theme amongst all the aims, and this included each study aiming at gathering insight and understanding in one way or another into how resource provisions can be used to support children and young people with autism to access and thrive in a mainstream education setting. This was particularly noted as an aim in a small-scale study by Warren et al., (2020) where the focus was on exploring one resource provision in a primary setting. Another key commonality was whether there may be a difference in available resources and support available for those who do not have access to these resource provisions. In the study by Fredrickson et al., (2010), their aim was to investigate exactly this, and they aimed to gather information addressing questions around differences in characteristics between mainstream schools with and without resource provisions, including looking into strategies used by professionals and overall parental satisfaction in both instances.

Three studies looked more specifically into areas of difficulty for this population of children and young people, including social inclusion, friendships, and experiences of camouflaging. The study on students' experiences of social inclusion, looked at which factors may facilitate social inclusion for students, including whether a resource provision enhances or hinders this process in secondary school (Landor & Perepa, 2017). In the study by O'Hagan and Hebron (2016), they explored the perceptions of adolescents' experiences of friendships in a resource base attached to a secondary

mainstream school, with the focus of addressing any gaps in the current literature relating to influences for the development for friendships at both an individual and contextual level. The study addressing camouflaging, aimed at specifically looking into how autistic girls who attend an ASD resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school experience and use strategies of camouflaging in different contexts (i.e., in the resource provision and in the mainstream setting) (Halsall et al., 2021).

Two studies drew on data from a longitudinal project, published in separate articles and with each focusing on gathering views and experiences from different stakeholders, namely gathering views of school staff in the first part of the study, and then gathering views of parents and pupils in the second part (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017). This two-part study facilitated the aim of gaining a comprehensive insight into perspectives of different stakeholders who experience resource provisions in mainstream schools. As both studies were longitudinal studies, a secondary aim was to gain the stakeholders' perspectives at different time intervals (as discussed in data collection). While appraising the selected papers, the researcher found that each study worked hard to address the aims outlined and this was clearly evident in the chosen designs and methodology, as detailed in the next sections.

2.5.2. Design

In all included papers, the studies had a qualitative design, which was deemed the most appropriate method for gathering the views and experiences of all the chosen participants. Amongst the studies there were variations to the qualitative approach that each study took, including several studies taking on a multi-informant exploratory

approach (i.e., O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017; Halsall et al., 2021), exploratory design (i.e., Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017), explanatory design (i.e., Fredrickson et al., 2010), an exploratory case study approach (i.e., Landor & Perepa, 2017) and a qualitative visual storyboard methodology (Warren et al., 2020).

2.5.3. Participants and Sampling

Participants included were all either students or pupils with a diagnosis of autism and the various stakeholders supporting these children, including either their parents and school staff (e.g., SENCOs, teachers, teaching assistants, keyworkers or learning support assistants and head teachers). Primary and secondary schools, both with and without resource provisions/bases, made up the context where these pupils and stakeholders were identified.

Throughout all the studies, the use of purposive sampling was used to identify the main participants. However, in some studies the process of recruitment felt more purposive than others, such as in the study by Fredrickson et al., 2010 where one key member of staff was identified by each participating school as the person best able to provide information on the provision for the pupil(s) with ASD and this person was invited to interview. This same approach was used in the study by O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017, where three students were recruited to interview through the SENCo identifying three participants in accordance with the study's inclusion criteria. Parents of the same students were invited to interview. Then the head of the resource provision assisted in identifying key adults who work closely with each student. In both these studies the process of recruitment appeared more selective by having clearer inclusion criteria.

However, clarity on the recruitment rationale and process for selecting specific schools varied from study to study, with some studies specifically stating their rationale and process of school recruitment (e.g., Landor & Perepa, 2017; Fredrickson et al., 2010; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017), while others provided little clarity on this (e.g., Warren et al., 2020; Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017; Halsall et al, 2021). Finally, all studies managed to recruit a larger total size of participants due to their nature of using a multi-informant approach, but when considering the sample size within each participant category (i.e., children/young people, parents, or staff members, these were in fact quite small).

2.5.4. Data Collection

In all the selected papers, the studies used semi-structured interviews as the main method of gathering data as this provided a means of more in-depth exploration. This method was also identified as a strength in the review of this body of literature, as this aligned with the aims of exploring views and experiences of students/pupils with autism (Warren et al., 2020; Halsall et al., 2021; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017; Hebron & Bond, 2017) and their various stakeholders in the context of both primary and secondary schools with or without an autism resource provision. In one study, alongside the semi-structured interviews, the researchers used methods of gathering quantitative information, such as cognitive, academic, and behavioural information, although it is important to note this was only used for the purpose of informing the qualitative data (Fredrickson et al., 2010).

While the data collection of the body of literature for this review was considered a strength, it is important to also note a key point of weakness identified during the process of the appraisal (CASP, 2018). This identified point of weakness was specifically regarding the collection of data from pupils and students. Given the inclusion criteria being that each student/pupil recruited had to have a diagnosis of autism, and the known associated difficulty in the area of social interaction and communication, only one study considered this and employed a more child-centred method of gathering data alongside their semi-structured interviews through the process of a visual storyboard method (Warren et al., 2020). Finally, as already mentioned most studies in this literature review used some means of triangulating their data from other sources. This predominately included data from students/pupils being triangulated from interviews with parents and/or school staff (Halsall et al., 2021; Hebron & Bond, 2017; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2016; Warren et al., 2020).

2.5.5. Data Analysis

The methods chosen for data analysis across the selected papers varied, with a larger portion of the studies choosing to use a form of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) at some point in their process of analysis. In three studies, methods of inductive, followed by deductive thematic analysis were used (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2016). In addition, Halsall et al., (2021) used reflexive thematic analysis and Landor and Perepa (2017) briefly shared that they used thematic analysis but did not provide any further descriptions of this procedure. Only two studies used other methods of data analysis, including Vaughn, Shy-Shumm and Sinagub's (1996) staged procedure of data analysis (Fredrickson et al., 2010) and Taylor-Powell and Renner's (2003) method of categorisation (Warren et al., 2020).

2.5.6. Reflexivity

The most significant limitation found throughout the process of appraising this body of literature using the CASP appraisal tool (CASP, 2018) was the lack of researcher reflexivity (i.e., where the researcher considered and openly addressed their own role and any potential bias that could have been present during the study). This was surprising given the vulnerable nature of the pupils/students and the potential misassumptions, attitudes and beliefs that can often be experienced by this population (e.g., attitudes and beliefs regarding the diagnosis of autism, discriminatory views in line with availability of support and inclusion) and the complex nature of contexts these studies take part in (i.e., the complex and often dynamic context of the school setting, including availability of provision and school's ethos and culture in supporting children and young people with autism).

Despite one study specifically using a method of reflexive thematic analysis for their data analysis, throughout the paper, there was no attempt at addressing the researcher reflexivity which is at the heart of this method of data analysis (Landor and Perepa, 2017). Furthermore, while in both longitudinal studies the authors made clear references to the socially and ethnically diverse context that contained areas of significant deprivation, they made no attempts at speaking to their role and position within a context such as this or considering any of the potential biases that may come up for them as part of their studies (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017). The remaining papers made no attempts at considering researcher reflexivity and only two made light attempts at addressing their relationships with their participants, as far as supporting feelings of comfortability through observations and gentle reminders

(Halsall et al., 2021) of the voluntary nature of participation in the interviews (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

2.5.7. Ethics

Throughout the included papers, several ethical aspects were considered to protect all participants, including seeking informed consent and providing anonymity and confidentiality. In all the papers the authors made clear statements highlighting the ethical approval gained from their respective ethical committees or organisations. Further considerations were taken in the studies where participants included children and young people (Warren et al., 2020; Halsall et al., 2021; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017; Hebron & Bond, 2017). These considerations included gaining informed written consent on a strictly opt-in basis from both the young person and their parents (Warren et al., 2020, Halsall et al., 2021; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017; Hebron & Bond, 2017). The children and young people were provided with child-friendly consent forms to aid their understanding and purpose of their consent. Two studies specified that other considerations around establishing rapport with the young people were taken, including observation of the girls in their study as a way to establish rapport, increasing the researcher's understanding of their experiences and build familiarity prior to interviews (Halsall et al., 2021) and a brief statement about the researchers taking time prior to the interview to ensure the young people felt comfortable and that they understood that the interviews were voluntary with no consequences for not participating (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

As mentioned in the data collection section, only two studies considered issues regarding accessibility for children and young people who have a primary need in understanding social communication and interaction and the use of interviews as a primary method of gaining information. These studies each used additional methods such as a visual storyboard approach (Warren et al., 2020) and supported understanding with the aid of visual cartoons, with simplified questions (Halsall et al., 2021). A key area of limitation regarding ethical considerations throughout the selected papers, was around addressing the safeguarding of participants. Only one study made a brief mention of their consideration around the potential distress that may be caused during interviews, especially with the young people and this was only to say that questions were positively phrased and open-ended to minimise the risk of distress (O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017). Given the vulnerable nature of this population (e.g., risk for high levels of anxiety and low mood) and the often-higher levels of stress that accompany those supporting this population of children and young people it would beg the question of whether any other considerations were taken to protect those who participated in these studies.

2.5.8. Values

A concluding strength of the studies reviewed in this body of literature is the overall value that each of these studies bring to an under-researched area of educational provision for the population of children and young people with autism. These studies provide valuable insight and a foundation of knowledge and understanding into the use of resource provisions as an approach to supporting children and young people with autism to access mainstream educational provisions, including providing considerations

around aspects of social inclusion, friendships, camouflaging and day-to-day strategies to support this population.

Using multi-informant approaches to gaining information supports the understanding of the use of resource provisions from multiple perspectives and highlights the experiences of different stakeholders, especially when these include the views and experiences of the children and young people involved, thus raising awareness of the experiences of autism within mainstream settings and support that may fit within the wider school setting. Furthermore, these studies also provide considerations around implications for mainstream schools both with and without resource provisions when it comes to modifying their approach to supporting this population of young people and outline possible directions for future research.

2.6. THEMES GATHERED FROM THE LITERATURE

In order to provide a broad overview of the qualitative findings, which are discussed throughout the selected papers, Hempel (2020) recommended that these are considered thematically. Themes were identified through a similar process of that found in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) findings were pulled from the studies, codes were identified from each study, these were then grouped by commonality to form initial themes and then these themes were finalised (Please see Appendix E for a visual representation of these themes).

2.6.1. Theme 1: Offered and available support from a Resource Provision.

Throughout the findings there was an overall sense that the availability of having a resource provision attached to a mainstream setting, whether this be a primary or secondary setting, was considered a positive aspect toward supporting inclusion for children and young people with autism. In one study, parents described the provision as being a good balance between having their child be included into a mainstream setting while still providing sufficient and necessary support (Hebron & Bond, 2017). Throughout the literature there was a varied range of support being offered by having a resource provision available, such as individualised programmes of support for pupils (Hebron & Bond, 2017) with a high proportion of strategies and flexibility in the delivery of these strategies and support available (Fredrickson et al., 2010; Bond & Hebron, 2016), including flexibility regarding the individual child's pace of accessing mainstream classes (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

The literature suggested that having a separate environment that is still within the proximity of the mainstream setting supported inclusion for pupils accessing the resource provisions (Bond & Hebron, 2016). In the study by Halsall et al (2021), the parents and staff reported that this environment away from the mainstream setting tended to have a calmer and more relaxed environment, which they felt reduced the girls' tendencies to use camouflaging strategies when it came to their social and academic difficulties. Similar findings were highlighted in the study by Warren et al., (2020), where staff reported that the pupils tended to respond better to the structure and rhythm of their morning within the resource provision over their afternoons in the mainstream setting which they still found difficult to manage. This more relaxed and calmer physical location was found to also be a safe space for pupils during unstructured times where they could either use the space for socialising with peers who also have

autism, or they could simply use it as a quiet space (Landor & Perepa, 2017). An additional benefit that was found throughout the literature was the higher level of home-school collaboration (Fredrickson et al., 2010), where the focus was on sharing strategies (Bond & Hebron, 2016) and where parents reported that communication had an overall more positive focus on meeting the needs of their child (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

Despite the reported offer of support, in one study staff raised an important point, sharing that inclusion of all children in mainstream settings, whether with a resource provision or not, is not always possible or successful (Landor & Perepa, 2017). Possible reasons briefly mentioned in the literature related to mainstream staff attitudes (Fredrickson et al., 2010) and the need to cater to a varied range of individual differences, even amongst those pupils with the same conditions (Landor & Perepa, 2017). Nevertheless, when the resource provision was deemed a good fit for the child and was successful in meeting their needs, parents reported positive outcomes, including pupils demonstrating academic progress, especially in areas of reading and writing skills, and having an overall positive effect on their home life.

2.6.2. Theme 2: Staff's specialist knowledge and understanding.

In several studies the specialist knowledge and understanding of staff in the resource provision and staff in mainstream schools with a resource provision available was highlighted as a strength. Not only were staff in the resource provisions noted to have a higher level of training (Bond & Hebron, 2016), but wider school staff, such as SENCOs and mainstream teachers were also noted to have more access to training

through the resource provisions (Fredrickson et al., 2010), leading to more positive staff attitudes and higher staff knowledge on autism (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

This knowledge and understanding appeared to have a direct impact on staff's abilities to form strong and positive relationships with pupils, that supported positive communication (Hebron & Bond, 2017) and led to better facilitated mediation between pupils and mainstream class teachers (Halsall et al., 2021). In addition, this enhanced knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs supported the delivery of support from learning support assistants in the mainstream classrooms, which was found to be where the majority of support was offered (Landor & Perepa, 2017). For example, this understanding, knowledge, and more positive relationships with the pupils from the resource provision, led to increased awareness of the need to offer more generalised support in the classroom to reduce stigmatisation of the pupils with autism (Landor & Perepa, 2017), thus possibly improving their overall sense of belonging.

Despite the acknowledgement of staff having more specialist knowledge and understanding of pupils with autism, one important area of concern that was raised in the literature was how staff consider the concept of inclusion. This was found to be more related to academic achievement and success, rather than social inclusion (Landor & Perepa, 2017). Nevertheless, throughout the literature it was seen that attempts to address social inclusion can still be found to be positive and successful, as seen through intervention programmes being offered by staff with more enhanced skills and training (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

2.6.3. Theme 3: Resource provision facilitates the development of friendships.

Despite common misconceptions regarding children and young people with autism not valuing social interactions or social engagement as much as their neuro-typical peers, throughout the literature social engagement, particularly establishing and maintaining friendships was seen as an area of priority for this population. In the study by O'Hagan and Hebron (2017), all pupils interviewed were found to have a strong desire for forming friendships. In other studies, pupils reported to have successful established friendships both within the resource provision and the mainstream setting (Hebron & Bond, 2017) and especially valued their friendships with other SEN pupils attending the mainstream setting (Halsall et al., 2021).

In some studies, it was found that while pupils found establishing friendships in the mainstream settings trickier due to pupils' difficulties with understanding social conventions, they were still able to form friendships in the resource provision (Warren et al., 2020; O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017). Reasons found in the literature to support this were related to the resource provision being described as an environment where there is a "pre-established network" of peers with the commonality of all having autism, where it was likely that pupils who share common interests and these interests would form the foundation for these friendships (O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017). Other reasons included the resource provision specifically focusing on developing social skills through interventions and having these skills constantly monitored (Landor & Perepa, 2017). Moreover, in their study, Hebron and Bond (2016) highlighted that the resource provisions worked hard to create opportunities for pupils to socialise with each other.

While this appeared to be a great benefit for these pupils, it was not always successful and without difficulty. This was noted in the study by Halsall et al (2021), where the lack of females enrolled in the resource provision directly impacted on the girls' ability to form friendships within the resource provision. Instead, they were found to either establish friendships with different age groups or their closest relationship was found to be with staff. Furthermore, one study suggested that the process of forming and maintaining friendships was found to be trickier the older the pupils were (O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017).

Despite some positive findings regarding the development of friendships for this population of pupils who have access to a resource provision, a key question raised in the literature was whether having a resource provision could potentially impact on social inclusion? One study questioned whether the resource provision could be used as a possible escape from the mainstream setting, thus limiting the potential opportunities for forming friendships and limiting the natural exposure to social situations, thus limiting opportunities for the development of social skills (Landor & Perepa, 2017).

2.6.4. Theme 4: Wider ethos of inclusion and facilitation of social inclusion in the community.

Some studies perceived the wider school's ethos of inclusion to be important in promoting feelings of being included for children and young people (Bond & Hebron,

2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017). In these same studies it was identified that having access to a resource provision attached to a mainstream setting allowed for consideration of the ethos of inclusion to be extended to the wider school settings. In Bond and Hebron's (2016) study it was found that this wider inclusive ethos was often accompanied by positive staff attitudes and more commitment from the senior management staff at the schools. Similarly in the study by Hebron and Bond (2017), parents reported a high need for all staff, whether they be working in the resource provision or in the mainstream setting, to be autism aware.

This wider inclusive ethos that accompanied having a resource provision was seen as a facilitator to creating more autism friendly environments, that included more access to clearer signs and use of photos in communal areas (Fredrickson et al., 2010) and supported pupils to participate in the wider life of school that included being able to access school outings and trips (Hebron & Bond, 2017). Interestingly, in one study it was found to be less likely or more difficult to achieve this level of inclusion in school settings without these resource provisions and other than visual timetables that were commonly found to be used in the classrooms, little modifications made it further into the wider school setting (Fredrickson et al., 2010). Furthermore, in this same study schools without access to these provisions reported concerns regarding their ability to offer adequate support to children and young people with autism (Fredrickson et al., 2010).

2.6.5. Theme 5: Pupil identity and perceived difference.

Whilst this was a smaller theme and only briefly highlighted in the findings of three studies (Hebron & Bond, 2017; Warren et al., 2020; Halsall et al., 2021), pupils' identity and their perceived difference were seen as factors that impacted on the aim of resource provisions being able to facilitate inclusion. In one study, pupils in a resource provision attached to a primary school, reported that they enjoyed the dual identity that came with being part of both settings. However, this enjoyment was not felt in other studies and instead pupils appeared to find this a difficult balance to achieve that often impacted on their sense of identity. For example, in the study by Halsall et al (2021), girls were seen as working hard to straddle the line between fitting in with their mainstream peers and finding acceptance for having a diagnosis of autism and being a part of a resource provision. In this study, it was found that this often led to the girls using camouflaging strategies with the aim of concealing their difficulties in social interactions and difficulties related to their learning, leading to possible long-term consequences of academic underachievement and social and emotional stress (Halsall et al., 2021).

One possible factor that may be exacerbating this is the limited understanding and awareness of autism by the neuro-typical peers generally found in the mainstream setting. This was found to be a concern in a study, where parents and staff reported that this limited understanding and awareness often leads to neuro-typical peers presenting with apprehension and anxiety when interacting with pupils from the resource provision, which in turn may lead to issues around social isolation and bullying (Landor & Perepa, 2017).

2.7. CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

For the purpose of this literature review the researcher aimed to explore the available research on resource provisions for pupils with autism. While the initial aim was to simply focus the search on only research conducted with young people with autism who attended a resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school, this was not possible due to the overall lack of research into this topic. Therefore, the search had to be broadened to include the perspectives of all possible stakeholders involved, with the aim of addressing the following questions:

1. What does the literature say about the available offer of support from an autism resource provision?
2. What does the literature say about how effective an autism resource provision may be in facilitating inclusion and inclusive practices in mainstream education settings (both primary and secondary)?
3. What might be the views of parents and staff regarding how they might experience an autism resource provision and the offer of support available?
4. What might be the views of children or young people regarding how they might experience an autism resource provision and the offer of support available?

Despite broadening the search areas for the literature search, the results still yielded a small number of suitable papers, that included perceptions and experiences from various stakeholders including, children, young people, their parents, and staff both in the mainstream setting and staff working in the resource provisions. The research

in the selected papers also covered settings with and without resource provisions, both attached to primary and secondary schools.

The findings in the literature highlighted an overall positive view on having access to resource provisions for pupils with autism and highlighted that the offer of support from these provisions included benefits such as, a calm and relaxed environment that these pupils could access away from the mainstream setting (Halsall et al., 2021), which offered individualised programmes of support (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017). Throughout the literature, it was evident that schools with a resource provision had a higher success rate of effective inclusive practices for pupils with autism and this was seen by wider autism friendly environments throughout the communal areas of the mainstream settings (Fredrickson et al., 2010) and the overall wider inclusive ethos and positive attitudes of staff both within the resource provisions and in the wider mainstream setting (Bond & Hebron, 2016).

Additionally, it was evident throughout the literature that both parents and staff expressed an overall positive perception regarding resource provisions. With staff being found to have a higher level of training and expertise in supporting pupils with autism (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017), as well as staff from the mainstream setting benefitting from a wider knowledge and understanding of autism when the school has access to a resource provision (Fredrickson et al., 2010). Parents reported better home-school collaboration (Fredrickson et al., 2010; Bond & Hebron, 2016) and greater long-term outcomes for their children (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

Throughout the literature while some studies explored the views and experiences of children and young people, these were felt to not come through as strongly in the findings and tended to focus around specific areas of interest, such as friendships (O'Hagan & Hebron, 2017) and the use of camouflaging strategies (Halsall et al., 2021). The researcher noted that none of the studies explored more specifically the children and young people's views and experiences of the support offered by the resource provision and what they found helpful and what they felt were remaining barriers in the offer and delivery of support. Therefore, this apparent gap in the literature highlights the drive for this current study where the researcher has aimed to explore these key areas with young people attending a resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will explore the philosophical underpinnings of this research study and argue from the position that understanding what knowledge is and the ways in which we go about discovering it, are subjective (Scotland, 2012). As outlined in figure 1, the aim of this chapter is to outline and explore the interrelationships between components in the paradigm used to explore and answer the research questions and meet the aims and purpose of the research. This will include discussing the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions and linking these to the research's chosen method and methodology, including the procedure used to recruit participants, and the processes of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the reflexivity and trustworthiness of the research findings, while considering any ethical implications.

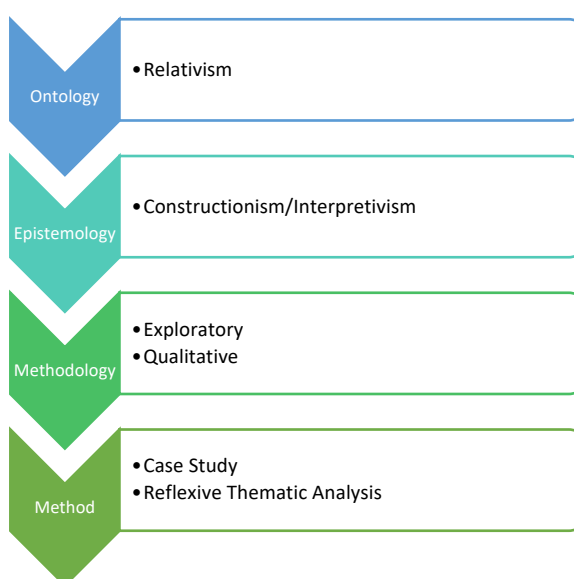


Figure 1: The components making up the paradigm underpinning this research study

3.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does the Access Centre (ARP attached to a mainstream secondary school) support the inclusion of young people with autism?

What does the Access Centre offer in ways of support that would ordinarily not be available without it? (e.g., interventions, staff support, separate building etc.)

What might be some of the presenting challenges that act as barriers to implementing the Access Centre's offer of support?

What might be some of the identified areas of improvements to support the inclusion of these young people?

3.3. AIMS OF RESEARCH

Throughout the literature while there was some exploration of the views of children and young people (CYP), it was felt that little is known about their specific experiences and views of the support offered by ARPs and whether they found this helpful or what they felt might be a barrier to this support being effective. Therefore, the main aim of this research is to explore how young people with autism experience the support offered by an ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school and how having an ARP may facilitate inclusion practices for these young people. This research

will follow several phases with the aim of first gaining some clarity of what the ARP may offer and how staff may go about supporting the young people, and then it will focus on the experiences of young people who are enrolled in the ARP.

While the findings of this research are not aimed at being generalisable, a secondary aim of the research will be to shed light into what might be the possible positive and challenging aspects that may be experienced by young people with autism who attend an ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school. The hope is that this understanding and insight may be used to inform the local borough's decision making when expanding current provisions or when setting up new ARPs.

3.3.1. Overview of the Setting

The ARP (the Access Centre in this study) in this study is a separate purpose-built facility attached to the secondary mainstream setting. The building comprises of three dedicated rooms for the delivery of therapies, such as Speech and Language Therapy, Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, ELKLAN and Lego Therapy. There is also a small classroom for small group teaching and individual sessions, as well as a large room that students can access for unstructured times, such as break and lunch. The premises also consist of a 'Time Out Zone', a changing room for PE, toilets, a cloakroom and dedicated playground and space for activities.

The provision is aimed at supporting up to 30 secondary aged students that have a primary diagnosis of ASD with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). The main purpose of this ARP is to support students to participate in the broad range of

curricular activities of the mainstream setting, whilst offering support by staff with expertise in meeting specific individual needs of the students. Integration into the mainstream lessons is fundamental and the expectation is that the students enrolled in the ARP will largely access the mainstream classes, as the model of service delivery for the ARP is that of 80-20.

The ARP can offer flexibility for students who require alternative methods for accessing their learning. This might include being withdrawn from some mainstream lessons, although this is carefully considered and done on an individual needs' basis. The ARP staff deliver an additional or alternative curriculum, such as literacy, numeracy, or an enhanced personal development programme. Additionally, the ARP offers a variety of clubs, including cooking, homework, and Rebound Therapy. To conclude, the ARP offers a strong pastoral support system through the Key Support Workers who are trained in managing sensory needs, developing social skills, and supporting emotional and behavioural needs.

3.4. METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

3.4.1 Ontology

All research is grounded in philosophical underpinnings and the ontological stance that the researcher takes shapes and defines how the research is conducted, including the methodology and method of how data is gathered, interpreted, and analysed (Popkewitz et al., 1979). Ontology is the study of existence and makes assumptions concerning the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998, p.10) and asks the question

'*what is*' (Scotland, 2012). Researchers' ontological positions are concerned with '*how things really are*' and '*how things really work*' (Scotland, 2012) and can be viewed as a being on a continuum, ranging from relativism to realism (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Realism assumes an objective position that holds the belief that objects exist independent of the knower (Cohen et al., 2007) and that reality is discoverable (Pring, 2014). Relativism assumes a subjective position and holds the belief that reality can differ from person to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110) and when consciousness engages with objects that are already laden with meaning, reality develops (Crotty, 1998, p. 43).

The current research undertakes a relativist ontological position, where the emphasis is on multiple constructed realities that can differ across time and space (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This position also holds the belief that reality cannot be differentiated from subjective experience, implying that everyone perceives the world differently and constructs meaning in different ways (Crotty, 1998, p. 9), leading to as many realities as there are people (Levers, 2013). This research is interested in the multiple perspectives and unique experiences of both staff and the young autistic people who attend the ARP, as opposed to identifying objective constructs about a shared or knowable reality.

3.4.2 Epistemology

Whilst the ontological stance the researcher takes shapes and defines how research is conducted and is concerned with the nature of reality, epistemology makes

assumptions about how knowledge can be generated, gathered, and communicated to others (Cohen et al., 2007) and examines the relationship between the knower and what can be known (Tuli, 2010). While ontology asks the question '*what is*', epistemology asks the question '*what it means to know*' (Scotland, 2012). The current research study embraces a constructivist/interpretivist epistemology and assumes that knowledge is socially constructed through an active process that is personal and idiosyncratic (Fox, 2001). While there is an acknowledgement that knowledge is socially constructed which may assume more of a constructionism epistemology, a key position of constructivist/interpretivist is that it emphasises the individual's experience within the wider social system and how the individual uniquely constructs, interprets, and makes meaning of their social environment (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Fox, 2001). The researcher holds to the belief that to experience a world is to be a part of it while holding and confronting it at the same time (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 3) and this social world can only be understood by individuals who are experiencing it (Cohen et al., 2007).

3.4.3 Researcher's Values, Beliefs and Philosophical Position

Interpretivists accept that it is impossible to have value-free knowledge and instead they assume the belief that a researcher asserts their beliefs and values when they choose their research topic, consider the process of how to research the topic of choice and what method to use to interpret their data (Edge & Richards, 1998, p. 336). Although interpretive theory works to be as inductive as possible (i.e., knowledge is generated from the data gathered rather than the researcher coming in with an already established hypothesis that they are testing out), there is also the acknowledgement that the researcher does not come as a blank slate and therefore has driving reasons (i.e.,

from previous experiences, values, and beliefs) for embarking on this chosen research journey.

Prior to this research study, the researcher gained significant experience working with children and young people with autism, including working in a specialist education setting for autism. During this time, the researcher developed a keen interest in inclusive practice and educational provisions to meet the needs of those children and young people with autism. Key questions taken from this experience were '*how do we know that what we do actually works?*' and '*who do we ask to find out? Is it the adults delivering the provision or the young people receiving it?*'. These key questions resurfaced when the researcher was assigned as one of two link EPs for the ARP in this study, and it became a key driver for the researcher choosing this as a topic of research when they were not able to find satisfactory answers to these questions. The drive to understand how these provisions may facilitate inclusive practices for young people with autism to access a secondary mainstream school was intensified when the researcher found out that as part of the DfE Safety Valve Initiative, the local authority was looking to expand these types of provisions throughout the borough.

Gaining and incorporating children and young people's voices has been a crucial part of delivering inclusive practices in education and is a moral imperative for those working with children and young people (Prunty et al., 2012; Michael & Fredrickson, 2013). The revised SEND Code of Practice (2015) highlighted a key legislative and policy commitment to improving initiatives to promote student engagement in decision-making (Kennedy, 2015). Key areas highlighted were related to a) the student's views,

wishes and feelings and b) the importance of the student being able to fully participate in decisions (Code of Practice, 2015, p. 19). In light of this, exploring pupil voice became another key driver for this research, with the aim of working toward establishing practices where the pupils have a say in what they find helpful and what they find unhelpful. Thereby aiming to move away from a system where things are done to the young person and rather aiming to move toward a system where things are done collaboratively with the young person.

Interpretivism recognises that there are hidden social forces and structures in the interaction between the researcher and participants and aims to bring these to light while also acknowledging that constructs are elicited and influenced by this interaction (Scotland, 2012). With this in mind the researcher aimed to engage in reflexivity throughout the research process and as part of this reflexive process used Burnham's (2018) Social GRRRAACCEESSS as a tool to reflect on some of these hidden social forces and structures that may present, specifically related to race, age, ability, employment, and education. As a researcher who is also linked to the school as an EP, this may come across as being more aligned with staff and adults who work in the ARP and therefore may impact on the participants willingness to be open about their experiences for fear of where the information may go. In addition, the researcher acknowledged that as being a person without obvious additional needs and someone who is currently completing a Doctoral degree, this may have impacted on participants engagement and the researcher may have been seen as someone who is able and does not need additional support, thereby influencing participants to view the researcher as not being able to understand what they may be experiencing. Therefore, in order to lessen the inescapable power disparity between the researcher and the participant, the

researcher sought to adopt an advocate stance for participants, emphasising the importance of their perspectives and the constructions related to their unique experiences of being a part of the ARP and receiving the support offered to enable them to access the mainstream setting.

3.5. RESEARCH PURPOSE

3.5.1 Exploratory

An exploratory research approach was used in this study with the aim of asking questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ in relation to understanding how an ARP in a mainstream school can help support inclusive practices for young people with autism. In contrast to an explanatory approach that may have an established hypothesis and be more interested in finding specific factors and developing a framework that details and explains what does and does not work well when it comes to having an ARP attached to a mainstream school, the exploratory approach used in this study is more interested in understanding individual experiences and the meaning those individuals make of attending an ARP and how each individual may view and feel about the strategies and interventions that are on offer to help support inclusive practice and access to the mainstream setting. Furthermore, the researcher does not have a working hypothesis and rather works to remain in a state of inductive, discovery-orientated exploration (Baker et al., 2017).

3.5.2 Qualitative Research

Long and Godfrey (2004) define qualitative research as a method of both gathering and analysing data through a process that is conceptual or thematic (i.e., visual

and verbal). In contrast to quantitative data where there are often predetermined variables that are expressed numerically, qualitative research aims to provide rich insight into human behaviour, including providing contextual information and exploring people's feelings, thoughts, and ways of understanding the world and how they make meaning of their experiences (Baker et al., 2017, p. 74-75). In line with the researcher's ontological and epistemological position, qualitative research emphasises that research is fundamentally a human interaction, and that the researcher is essentially the tool for measurement, thus rather than attempting to eliminate any researcher bias, it embraces the researcher's subjectivity and views this as an enriching process (Gough & Madill, 2012). For all these reasons, the current researcher aligns with a qualitative research approach as data analysis is aimed at highlighting the individual experience and working to establish a holistic understanding of the ARP.

3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

The following section describes the research process, including the selection and recruitment of participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and processes of data gathering for each phase of the research study, including the rationale behind using a modified version of the School Wellbeing Cards to help facilitate engagement during individual interviews.

3.6.1 Case Study

In the hopes of conducting an in-depth exploration of the ARP, with the aim of answering the research questions proposed above, the researcher chose to carry out a case study of the setting and the individuals (both staff and students) in the ARP.

For the last three decades, case studies have been used to illuminate educational practices and have included case studies of students, teachers, innovations, programmes, and schools (Merriam, 1998). Despite the high prevalence of case studies, the term can often be misused or confused with other forms of research such as fieldwork, ethnography, participant observation and naturalistic inquiry.

3.6.1.1 Definition of a case study

Throughout literature many different definitions of a case study exist (Gerring, 2004). One attempt made by Stake (1995, p. xi) defines a case study as ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a case, where the researcher comes to understand its activity within identified circumstances’, with a case being an integrated system. This indicated that Stake draws from research methods that are naturalistic, ethnographic, and holistic, and where these methods emphasis a focus that is on qualitative inquiry into the single case (Simons, 2009). Yin (1994) on the other hand saw a case study in terms of the research process and defined it as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (2003, p.13).

For the purpose of this study the researcher aligns more with the definition proposed by Merriam (2007, p. 16) which defined a case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit.” This definition also aligns with that of Miles and Huberman (1994) that views a case as ‘a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context’ and graphically represent this as a circle with a heart in the centre, with the circle aiming to depict the boundaries of the study (but not what will be studied) and the heart in the centre being the focus of the study (p.25). Merriam (2007) went on to define the case study by its special features, namely having characteristics as being particularistic (i.e., focuses on a particular situation, event, phenomenon, or programme), descriptive (i.e., produces an end product that is rich and ‘thick’ in description) and heuristic (i.e., illuminates the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon being explored).

In line with the researcher’s ontological and epistemological positions, a case study is grounded in discovering an in-depth understanding of the meaning making of those individuals within a particular setting and context. While there are different types of case studies, this research aligns with an instrumental case study that Stake (1995) defines as ‘a case (i.e., the selected ARP) that is chosen to study with the aim of providing insight into a particular issue or with the aim of answering a question (i.e., how the ARP may facilitate inclusive practices in a mainstream setting).’

3.6.1.2 Strengths and limitations of a case study

This section has already mentioned one particular strength that accompanies a case study design, namely, enabling an in-depth and holistic understanding of a complex

phenomenon and providing an opportunity for meaning making of those who experience this phenomenon. Additional strengths include case studies being flexible (i.e., not constrained by method) and that they can allow for multiple perspectives. In relation to educational process, they bring about an understanding that can impact and improve future practice (Merriam, 1998). On balance and in line with other methods of design there are obvious limitations to a case study that can include, a risk of being too lengthy or too detailed, that they may be limited by the sensitivity of the investigator (Merriam, 1998), oversimplified, or exaggerated and may be impacted by the researcher's biases (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Further limitations involve issues related to reliability, validity, and generalizability, to be addressed in later sections of this chapter. Despite these limitations, which the researcher has considered and worked hard to mitigate as much as possible, the researcher argues that for the purpose of this research study the strengths outweigh the limitations.

3.7. STRATEGIES FOR DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned above the aim of a case study design is to gather rich and 'thick' descriptive data about the phenomenon being studied. To achieve this, it is encouraged to gain data from multiple sources with the aim of triangulating findings. With this in mind, the researcher decided on four phases of data collection with the aim of gaining a holistic view of the setting and a richer understanding of the experiences the participants. The following four phases were used:

3.7.1 Phase 1: Review of setting documentation

To gain an initial insight into the ARP setting and to identify what the ARP is offering students who are enrolled in the setting, the researcher reviewed the available setting documents. This included the ARP offer on their website, their behaviour management policy, and the individual education/behaviour plans (IEPs/IBPs) of individual students who gave consent to share this information.

3.7.2 Phase 2: Observation

Observations are one of two primary sources of data collection (Merriam, 2007) and aim to provide a rich description of norms and values of the phenomenon being studied, in this case the setting and the individuals working and enrolled in the ARP. Observations can also be used to enlighten the researcher of the setting's culture and subcultures (Simmons, 2009). Furthermore, observations can be used to cross reference what has been said and identified in the reviewed documentation (i.e., they can be used to see how what is said on paper is carried out in real life daily practice). The observation phase in this study had a time boundary of one week (i.e., 5 days). The ideal would have been for these observations to be conducted over 5 consecutive days, however due to the researcher's constraints in other work commitments this was carried out as 3 days of observation completed before the summer holidays (i.e., during the Spring term of 2022) and 2 days of observation at the beginning of Autumn term 2022. The timings of the observations were based solely on shared availability between the researcher and the setting.

Naturalistic observations were gained throughout the 5 days, where the researcher spent time observing the natural occurrences of the setting and where the

researcher gained consent to observe individual students and keyworkers in a classroom setting or during the delivery of a specific intervention (e.g., during an Occupational Therapy intervention or reading intervention).

3.7.3 Phase 3: Focus Group with staff

With the aim of gaining further insight into the functioning of the ARP and specifically how staff working in the ARP view their role in supporting their students to access the mainstream setting and support them to access their learning, the researcher facilitated a focus group with staff. Furthermore, the focus group was an opportunity for the researcher to gain some insight into the culture, values, and beliefs of staff around inclusion and inclusive practices and identify areas that may be working well in the setting and what areas may need further consideration and support to enable the setting to function more effectively.

All staff working in the ARP were invited to join the focus group. The group session was run in two parts, namely free discussion around addressing the research question “How does the ARP support inclusive practices for young people with ASD and help them to access the mainstream setting?” and then staff were presented with the image seen below in figure 2, to prompt further discussion related to the different areas of inclusion and inclusive practices and how the setting might aim to support and address these areas of inclusion.

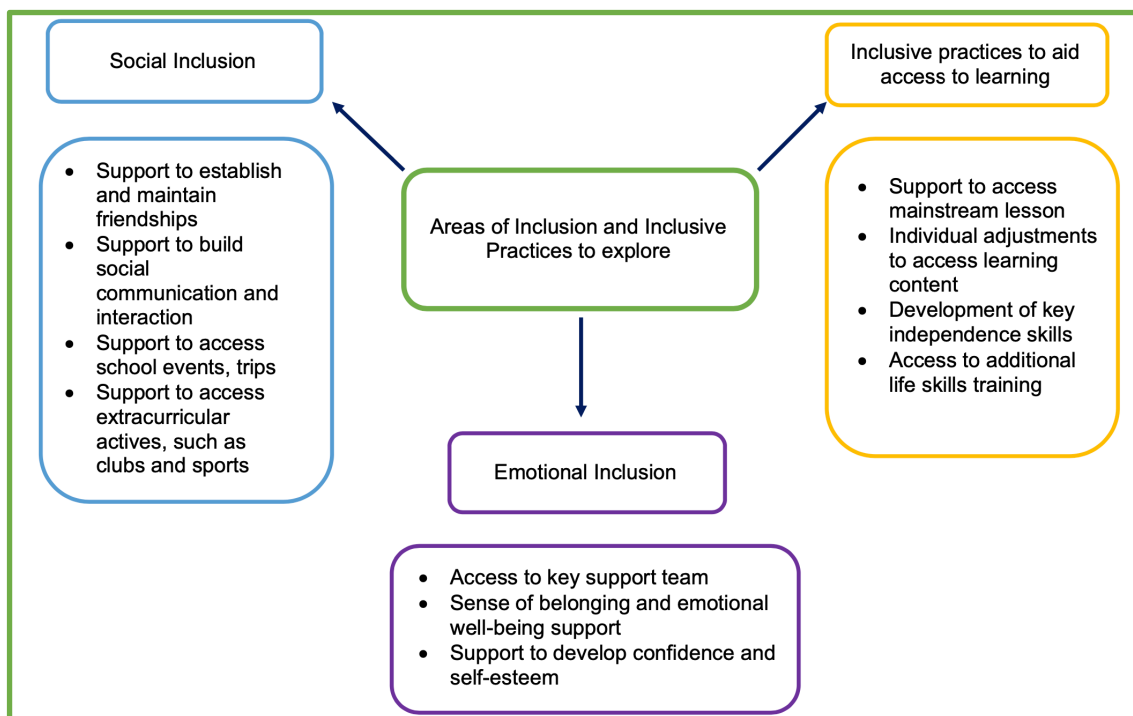


Figure 2: A visual representation of examples of areas of inclusion for young people with ASD used in the focus group to prompt discussion of how the ARP may aim to address the areas listed.

3.7.4 Phase 4: Interviews with Young People

Dexter (2006, p. 136) described an interview as “a conversation with a purpose”, where the researcher aims to elicit and obtain a special kind of information. Patton (2002) elaborates further on four aims of interviews, namely exploring what might be on someone’s mind, active engagement and learning from the interviewee and interviewer, exploring emergent issues and probing a topic of interest and finally to uncovering unobserved feelings and events that cannot be observed.

In this study, the researcher was specifically interested in understanding how students enrolled in the ARP experience and make meaning of the support they receive and how this might help support them to access the mainstream setting. The interview process also gave the researcher an opportunity to explore areas of strength related to

the delivery of support gained from the ARP and potential barriers to this support from the young people's perspective.

Literature distinguishes between three types of interview structures, namely highly structured interviews (i.e., wording of questions are predetermined), semi-structured interviews (i.e., a mix of more-and-less structured questions) and unstructured interviews (i.e., open-ended questions that are more flexible and exploratory). For this research, the researcher carefully considered the interview structure, with a specific focus on how to best support the young people to understand the interview questions and to clearly communicate their responses. It is well known that visual aids can be beneficial in supporting young people with ASD to process and understand language (Gerhardt & Cohen, 2014). Therefore, with this in mind the researcher included a visual categorisation task to the interviews, followed by semi-structured questions, that allowed for more open and flexible discussion based off the young people's responses in the categorisation task.

The categorising task followed a similar process to that seen in communication tools such as 'talking mats' (Murphy, 1998), where the aim is to provide a structured method of communicating through a non-verbal means (i.e., through visual aids). The categorisation task included three categories, namely 'things that are true about me', 'things that are sometimes true' and 'things that are not true'. The young people were presented with cards and asked to place them in the category that they felt best describes the card. The presented cards originated from the School Wellbeing Risk and Resilience Cards developed by Dr Jerricah Holder (2023). The aim of the School Wellbeing Risk

and Resilience Cards is to provide a discussion platform to gain insight into how young people view their experience of school. The researcher modified the presented cards across all participants with the aim of addressing the young people's specific experiences within the ARP and accessing the mainstream school and their learning.

The categorisation task also allowed for a gentler start to the interview process (i.e., having the young people focus on a practical task that slowly got them thinking about the topics of discussion before any interview questions were asked). Furthermore, it provided time for the young people to settle and become more comfortable with the researcher. When it came time for the interview questions, the visuals from the categorisation task supported the young people to order and focus their thoughts and responses. It also provided cues for the young people to initiate discussions on their responses and it provided guidance for the researcher's interview questions. Please see Appendix H for the modified cards used for the interview.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The data collection process commenced in July 2022 and all data was gathered by October 2022. The researcher provided all staff, young people eligible to participate and their parental guardians a copy of the research information sheet (please see Appendices F and G). Written consent was sought for all those wishing to participate. Timings and dates of all phases of the data collection process were collaboratively agreed with the ARP manager, staff, and young people. In the observation phase all staff and students (including those who did not consent to being a part of the study) were informed of the days and times of the researcher being in the setting and understood that

the researcher may be seen observing the setting's natural activity. All observation data was recorded via the researcher taking field notes and then later recorded on the researcher's password protected laptop. Data from the focus group with staff and all young people interviews were gathered through a Sony voice recorder and then later downloaded on the researcher's password protected laptop.

3.9. PARTICIPANTS

3.9.1. Sample

In a case study where the aim is to understand and gain an in-depth insight into a phenomenon the researcher will be responsible for making the decision of how best to go about answering the research question and who might be in the best position to provide rich information (Simons, 2009). The type of sampling that is best for this and used in this research study is purposive sampling, where the assumption is that the researcher aims to understand, discover, and gain insight from a sample that can be best learnt from (Merriam, 1998). In this study where the case is bounded in one setting (i.e., the ARP/Access Centre), the researcher chose to invite all staff who met the inclusion criteria to participate in the focus group and all students who met the inclusion criteria to participate in the interviews, with the aim of promoting inclusive practice and equality. The sample size for the focus group was 9 adults consisting of keyworkers across the setting, the setting deputy manager, and the setting receptionist (please see table 5). Informed consent was obtained for 8 young people to be observed and for 7 of these to be interviewed (please see table 6). The inclusion and exclusion criteria for all participants are listed in the table 4 below with a rationale for each.

Table 4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation in the research study and researcher's rationale.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Researcher's Rationale
All participants (i.e., both students and staff) who have been working and/or enrolled at the ARP for at least one full term.	Any participants (both student and staff) who are new to the ARP and have not worked or been enrolled for a full term in the ARP.	The researcher felt that for participants and staff to have a good understanding and experience of giving/receiving support, they would need to have at least been enrolled or working at the ARP for a term.
All students being invited to participate will have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.	Any students who do not have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder will not be invited to participate in the study.	This study is specifically looking into inclusive practices and support to access the mainstream setting and curriculum for young people with autism spectrum disorder and therefore a formal diagnosis is required.
All students being invited to participate in the study will be enrolled in the ARP.	Any students who are not enrolled in the ARP will not be invited to participate in the study.	As the focus of this case study is the ARP, only students who are enrolled in the ARP will have access to the support offered.

3.9.2. Participant Recruitment Process

The researcher had several informal meetings with the Head of the ARP to discuss the possibilities and agree details of the ARP being part of the study. The researcher also held a formal meeting with the Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP) of the EP service to discuss the proposed research and to identify how this might be

beneficial to supporting and informing the goals set out to meet the Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve Agreement' (DfE, 2022). Following the successful completion of the research protocol and then gaining ethical approval for the study to go ahead, the researcher was able to begin the recruitment process.

In June 2022, the researcher requested to attend a staff meeting for the ARP with the aim of introducing the research study, elaborating on what the aim of the study was, sharing the research questions with staff and explaining the different phases of data collection (i.e., review of ARP documentation, observation, focus group and interviews with the young people). During this meeting staff were given the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that they had with the aim of demonstrating transparency and limiting any concerns of staff possibly feeling like they are going to be evaluated or judged. All staff in attendance at the meeting were invited to take part in the focus group and an agreed time and date was collaboratively agreed upon. In a discussion with the ARP manager, it was agreed that she would not take part in the focus group as this would enable any staff in attendance to speak freely without concern of repercussions. Finally, it was agreed that all young people who met the inclusion criteria would be spoken to about the research study by their key workers (i.e., trusted adults that knew them well) as an initial way to check if it might be something they would be interested in participating in. All interested participants were given the research information sheet (please see Appendices F and G for separate staff and young people versions of this).

3.9.3. Participant Information

Table 5: Focus group participants

Pseudonym	Role in ARP	Gender
Frankie	Key worker	Female
Maggie	Main role as a Key worker but also supports as Deputy ARP Manager	Female
Grace	Key worker	Female
Debbie	Key worker	Female
Sally	Setting Receptionist	Female
Gloria	Key worker	Female
Zara	Key worker	Female
Sue	Key worker	Female

Table 6: Observation and interview participants

All participants listed in the table below have a diagnosis of ASD. Some young people listed below have additional co-occurring conditions, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia, specific learning difficulties (SpLD).

Pseudonym	Year group	Gender	Ethnicity
Molly	KS5	Female	White European
Freddy	KS4	Male	White European
Emma	KS4	Female	White British

Jack	KS3	Male	White British
Max	KS3	Male	Black African
Matthew	KS3	Male	Black Caribbean
Sarah	KS3	Female	Black Caribbean

3.10 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Throughout literature there is some debate on the view of whether a case study design is a method or methodology or simply an approach to research design. This has a direct influence on the choice of data analysis. For the purpose of this research study the researcher aligned with Stake's (1995) view of a case study being an approach to research, which subsequently enabled the researcher to broaden the choice of analysis, choosing to follow Reflexive Thematic Analysis which offers a more structured approach to analysis, but remains flexible enough to provide a rich description of complex data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.10.1. Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Researchers conducting qualitative research are expected to select from a wide range of data analysis methods that offer various conceptualisations of qualitative research. Thematic analysis (TA) is considered a foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and can be broadly used across a varied range of epistemologies and research questions (Nowell et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006)

describe TA as a flexible method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set, that can be used to produce trustworthy and insightful findings.

For this study, the researcher has aligned with Braun and Clarke's (2022) version of TA, whereby they stated that TA offers an approach that is both accessible and robust, and can be used to develop, analyse, and interpret patterns across a qualitative dataset and systematically develop codes and themes. This version has also evolved to include the researcher's subjectivity which they referred to as researcher's reflexivity. In this version Braun and Clarke (2022) emphasised that 'subjectivity is at the heart of reflexive TA practice'. In reflexive TA the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis (Nowell et al., 2017 p. 13 in Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this way, reflexive TA strives for the researcher to 'own their perspective' (Elliot et al., 1999). Good qualitative research does not simply embrace subjectivity but goes beyond this by interrogating it with the aim of developing an insight into the role of the researcher and the articulation around this role.

Braun and Clarke (2022) stated that TA is designed to be theoretically flexible and does not hold true to a specific epistemological position, however it does not exist within a theoretical vacuum. Reflexive TA rejects a positivist stance that dictates that reality exists within the dataset and rather it aims to identify what patterns of meaning may exist across the dataset while considering the researcher's involvement throughout the research process. In this way reflexive TA works to not simply find meaning within the data but rather to construct meaning through the intersection between the researcher

and the dataset. Thus, theoretically reflexive TA can be seen to fit well with the researcher's chosen constructivist/interpretivist epistemological position and holds true to the belief that multiple realities can exist and is dependent of an individual's unique experiences and meaning making.

Braun and Clarke's (2022) six step process for data analysis was used, as seen illustrated below in figure 3.

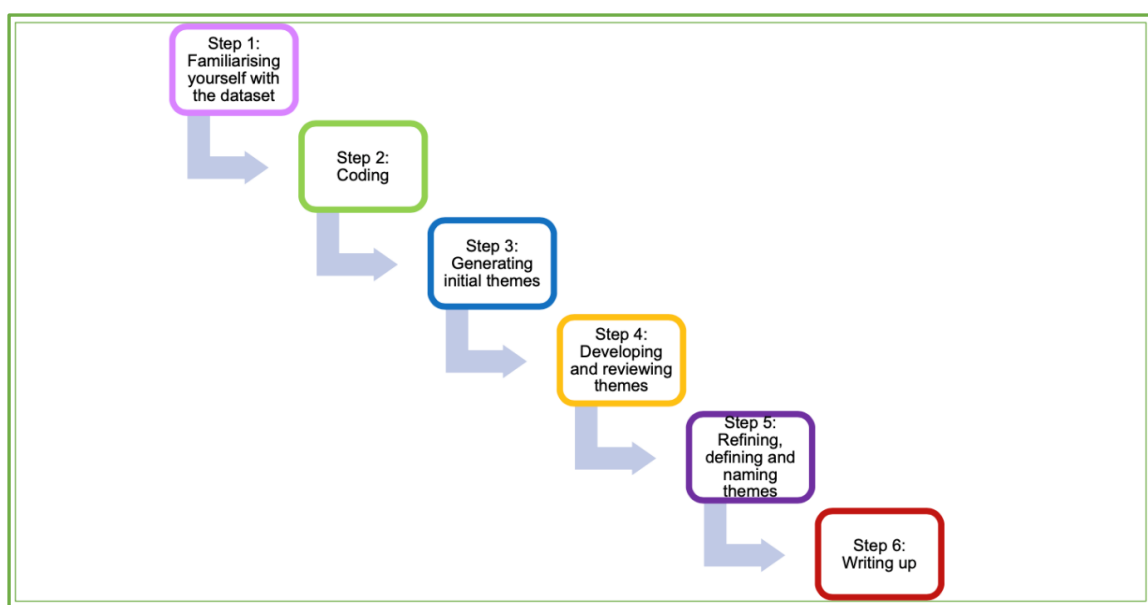


Figure 3: a depiction of the 6 stages of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2021, p. 35).

3.11. PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS

3.11.1. Step 1 – Familiarisation with the data

Braun and Clarke (2022), emphasise the importance of the process of immersion, whereby the researcher deeply explores the dataset. Following the staff focus group and each interview the researcher actively interacted with the data by recording initially interpretations and thoughts in a reflective journal (please see examples in Appendix J). The researcher continued with the familiarisation process

during the transcription process, whereby the researcher listened to each recording carefully and multiple times and transcribed the verbal data into written format. Again, during this phase, the researcher spent time considering any interactions, feelings, and thoughts the data provoked and recorded this in the reflective journal. Following this process, the researcher spent time reading and re-reading the transcriptions and spent time studying the images of the categorisation tasks completed during the interviews, highlighting key text, and considering their interpretations and emotional reactions. Throughout this process of studying the data multiple times, the researcher was able to become ‘deeply and intimately familiar’ with the participant’s experiences and attitudes (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

3.11.2. Step 2 – Generating codes

Braun and Clarke (2022) describe generating codes as the process whereby the dataset is worked through systematically in order for meaningful segments to be identified that are relevant to the research question and then given analytically meaningful descriptions (code labels). In reflexive TA, codes range from being semantic (i.e., where they are explicit) to latent (i.e., where they are implicit), although Braun and Clarke (2022) also encourage a combination of these approaches and therefore the researcher aimed to identify both semantic and latent meanings throughout the coding process. The researcher recognised their own preconceived ideas/biases on inclusive practices based on their years of working with this population of young people and in similar settings and what might be considered best practice for supporting young people with autism to access a mainstream setting and curriculum that they may have imposed on the dataset. However, the researcher held no pre-conceptualised theoretical frameworks and strived to be driven by the data in order to understand all participants

experiences and their meaning making. This led to the researcher relying on data driven inductive coding.

The process of generating codes was conducted in MAXQDA software by highlighting segments of the data (i.e., the researcher going through the data set line by line) and assigning a unique code to each segment. All codes assigned from the dataset on MAXQDA were then transferred into a Microsoft Word document and printed off to use in a code visual map. Please see appendices K and M for examples of how transcript lines were made into codes.

3.11.3. Step 3 – Generating initial themes

Braun and Clarke (2022), refer to generating initial themes as the start of identifying shared patterned meaning across the dataset. In this step the researcher compiles clusters of codes that appear to share key ideas or concepts with the aim of shedding some meaning insight toward answering the research question. By printing each code, the researcher was able to link similar codes together to form groups of initial shared ideas (please see appendix L and N for initial themes highlighted in blue generated from the codes). Any codes that did not fit within a group were placed separately to review later and assess their relevance to addressing the research questions.

3.11.4. Step 4 – Developing and reviewing themes

Building codes and themes is an organic, fluid, and continuously evolving process that is not linear (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Therefore, the researcher reviewed initial themes generated in relation to both the coded extracts and the full dataset. During

this process, the researcher identified any overlap between themes, which resulted in merging, collapsing, retaining, and discarding themes. Key questions were considered, namely around each theme being able to tell a convincing and compelling story and whether the collective themes highlighted the important patterns across the dataset. For instance, initial themes of “it’s not stock standard care”, ‘ARP tailormade interventions’, ‘ARP benefits’ and ‘recognising individuality of needs’ were all merged under one umbrella term “it’s not stock standard care”. Please see Appendices L and N where themes highlighted in green are the next phase).

3.11.5. Step 5 – Defining and naming themes

This is the process of fine-tuning the analysis, ensuring each theme is built around a strong core concept. Braun and Clarke (2022) suggest asking the data key questions around what story does the theme share? And how does the theme fit into the overall story? With this in mind, the researcher considered the themes in relation to the research questions and how they worked together to address these questions. The researcher then went through another process of merging and collapsing themes into overarching themes and gave these overarching themes names that reflected their analytic interpretation of the data, for instance, subordinate themes like ‘The Access Centre is a unique selling point for the school’, ‘What’s working well in the Access Centre’ and ‘The central role of the staff/keyworker to the positive delivery of support’, all came together to form the superordinate or overarching theme of ‘The Access Centre is excellent’. Please see appendices L and N where themes highlighted in orange illustrate the superordinate themes.

3.11.6. Step 6 – Writing up

While this is positioned as the final step of the data analysis, this process does not occur in a linear sense and instead occurs informally from step 3. Nevertheless, this step is designated for refining and completing the writing process. Braun and Clarke (2022) describe this step as being a time for weaving together the analytic narrative and producing a compelling and persuasive story around the dataset which addresses the research aims and question. At this stage the researcher took caution in finalising the findings and held in mind criticism made by Nowell et al., (2017) where they argued that TA is at risk of producing analysis that can be shallow and lack sufficient detail. With this in mind, the researcher aimed to address this by having a clearly identified and linked qualitative paradigm before commencing the reflexive TA and consistently referred to Braun and Clarke's guidelines (2022) to ensure high quality analysis.

3.12 REFLEXIVITY

Braun and Clarke (2022) describe reflexivity as the practice of being able to critically reflect on the role of the researcher, the researcher's approach and practice toward their research and the processes that the researcher has chosen to conduct the research. In this way reflexive TA is able to fully capture the embedded values and beliefs of the qualitative paradigm. Throughout the process of conducting this piece of research, the researcher took to heart the definition of reflexivity outlined by Roni Berger whereby she described the process of reflexivity as 'a means of turning the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognise and take responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation' (2015, p.220). With this held strongly in mind, throughout the research process, the researcher followed Sue Wilkinson's (1988) three areas of reflexivity, namely personal reflexivity

(i.e., how the researcher's values influence their research and the subsequent knowledge produced), functional reflexivity (i.e., how the methods and design shape the research study and the knowledge), and disciplinary reflexivity (i.e., how academic disciplines influence and shape the knowledge produced). These reflections were recorded in a reflexive journal and examples of these extracts can be seen in Appendix J.

3.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the research process, including recruitment, data collection and analysis the researcher adhered to ethical standards, such as those set out by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2018). The researcher specifically considered key principles that inform psychological research practice, namely 'respect for the autonomy and dignity of the persons', 'commitment to scientific integrity', 'social responsibility' and 'maximising benefit and minimising harm'. The following areas of ethical consideration aimed to meet these four key principles:

3.13.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Throughout the research process, the researcher aimed to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. All data, including documents taken for review, images used in the focus group, observation field notes, photos taken of the categorising task and interview and focus group recordings were all stored on a password and fingerprint protected laptop and backed up on an encrypted external hard drive and any researcher notes were locked away in a secure filing cabinet. While the researcher aimed to anonymise all data and use pseudonyms to protect individual identity, there was an open acknowledgement with participants that due to this being a

case study of one specific setting that would result in a smaller sample size there was the possibility that data may be more recognisable.

3.13.2 Consent and Withdrawal

The researcher sought consent at different levels. First and foremost, overarching consent was sought from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust Research Ethical Committee (TREC) and thorough conversations were had with both the Senior Management team at the ARP setting. As the ARP is overseen by the Local Education Authority the researcher also sought approval from Principal Educational Psychologist from the local authority prior to the research commencing with the aim of establishing clarity and transparency of the study's aims and processes of data collection. The researcher also shared the research proposal with both settings to maintain transparency about the study.

Once formal consent was achieved from the TREC, the researcher met with the ARP manager to confirm internal approval and agreement had been given from the senior leadership team (both for the overall research project but also specifically to access the mainstream setting during the observation phase). It was agreed that prior to any observations of mainstream lessons verbal consent to observe the lesson would be sought from the class teacher. The process of gaining verbal consent included the researcher briefly sharing the research title and sharing that the aim for the observation was to observe the support that the ARP student received during the lesson.

Following this the researcher held a staff wide meeting at the ARP with the aim of providing clear and transparent information about the study and explaining each phase of data collection. The researcher then shared both the information sheets and consent forms (please see appendices F and G) for both the young people and staff phases of data collection. Careful consideration and planning were taken to ensure that the young people understood what they were consenting to. It was agreed that key workers would initially introduce the study to their young people and once interested participants were then approached by the researcher with the aim of going through the participant information sheet more carefully before gaining consent. For young people under the age of 18 years old, parental consent (i.e., parental information and consent forms were sent home) was also sought following the young person's initial interest in participating.

Throughout this process, all information was made easily accessible and at the level of the young people's development and emphasised that participation in the study was purely on a voluntary basis so that participants could make an informed decision about whether they would like to participate to the research.

Participants (both staff and young people) had the option of only consenting to discrete parts of the study rather than all the phases. Both the staff and young people were carefully and thoroughly informed of their right to withdraw before data analysis commenced.

3.13.3. Protection from Harm and Duty of Care

The author acknowledged the need for special safeguards to be considered and put in place to protect the vulnerable young people who took part in this research study. The researcher carefully considered areas regarding the young people's difficulties with social communication (including their potential difficulties with receptive and expressive language) and their potential susceptibility to experience high levels of anxiety and low mood. Safeguarding strategies and additional support were added to the design of the study and included use of visual aids, consideration around language used by the researcher and the option of support outside the study (either by their parental guardian and/or key worker). Careful discussions were had with setting staff to explicitly share how the study, especially the line of questioning during interviews and categorisation task may evoke sensitivity and careful processes were considered around how key workers would support their young people following any observation or interview sessions. Additional outside resources were added into the debrief forms that were given to staff and young people following their participation in the study.

3.14. RESEARCH RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Numerous traditional methods for ensuring quality and validity in research, includes reliability and validity. This refers to the degree to which findings can be replicated and to what extent they may be consistent with earlier research (Simmons, 2009). These traditional procedures are primarily found in quantitative research and often termed positivist (Simmons, 2009). With qualitative research being more concerned with 'rich' and 'descriptive' data that is more focused on the human experience, it relies on the concept of trustworthiness to assess the rigour of the research.

Trustworthiness is a method of supporting both the researcher and readers of the research that the findings from the research are worthy of consideration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and it encompasses the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.14.1. Credibility

Tobin and Begley (2004) describe credibility as the “fit” between the participants’ views and experiences and the researcher’s interpretation and representation of them. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined several strategies to address credibility, including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking. The nature of this research being a case study where the researcher was immersed in the environment and with the participants throughout each phase of data collection (i.e., review of documentation, 5 days of observation, the focus group with staff and the interviews with young people) supported both aspects of prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The time invested in the setting and with the participants also supported the process of building trust and rapport with participants.

To further support the credibility of the research, the process of triangulation was achieved through the different phases of data collections, which highlighted commonalities in themes between different phases and led to the overarching themes being identified. Due to time constraints, the researcher was not able to fully support the process of member checking and peer debriefing following the process of data analysis, however throughout each phase of the data collection process the researcher

aimed to co-construct meaning with the participants, by explicitly checking interpretations and asking clarifying questions to confirm that the researcher understood what was being observed or understood in both the focus group with staff and the interviews with young people.

3.14.2. Transferability

In case study research the aim is not necessarily to be in a position to generalise findings, but rather to demonstrate how and in what ways can the findings be transferred to other contexts that may be similar (Simmons, 2009). Given the rationale for this research study where the researcher aimed to have findings inform any further expansions of ARP settings within the local borough, the researcher felt that the findings could be used for what Stake (1980) referred to as Naturalistic generalisation. He proposed that this type of generalisation can be used by recognising similarities and differences to cases or situations that may be similar and transferring this knowledge to inform further thinking. Throughout this study the researcher aimed to gather sufficient detail and rich descriptions to support a reader to discern which aspects of the case and its findings may be used to help inform considerations for establishing future ARPs and how they may facilitate inclusive practices that support young people to access a mainstream secondary school.

3.14.3. Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability refers to the process that the researcher takes to ensure that the research is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the research findings and the

researcher's interpretations of these findings are generated from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This requires the researcher to demonstrate how interpretations and conclusions are reached and includes the researcher outlining markers such as reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices for the study, thus allowing readers to understand the researcher's decision-making process (Koch, 1994). To ensure both dependability and confirmability, the researcher maintained an audit trail in the form of a reflective journal throughout the duration of the study. As mentioned above, this journal consisted of three areas of reflexivity, namely personal, functional, and disciplinary (Wilkinson, 1988)

3.15. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the aim of the research and the research question. It also highlighted the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions and demonstrated how these positions influenced the overall research design. In addition, the chapter detailed the process of data collection and analysis. Finally, the chapter discussed the ethical considerations taken throughout the research study and areas of trustworthiness of the research. The chapter that follows outlines the findings gathered from all phases of the data collection process.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The aim of this following chapter is to provide an analytical narrative of the findings from the data collected at each phase of the case study. The chapter will also address the findings in relation to the research questions:

How does the Access Centre (ARP attached to a mainstream secondary school) support the inclusion of young people with autism?

What does the Access Centre offer in ways of support that would ordinarily not be available without it? (e.g., interventions, staff support, separate building etc.)

What might be some of the presenting challenges that act as barriers to implementing the Access Centre's offer of support?

What might be some of the identified areas of improvements to support the inclusion of these young people?

The researcher will aim to ‘set the scene’ by sharing themes gained from the researcher’s observation of the setting and review of the setting documentation. This will then be followed by the themes gathered from the focus group with staff and finally the focus will be on the themes gained from the individual interviews with the young people enrolled in the access centre. See figure 4 for a summary of all the themes gathered from each of the phases of data collection. Finally, the researcher will aim to summarise how the findings come together to address the research questions.

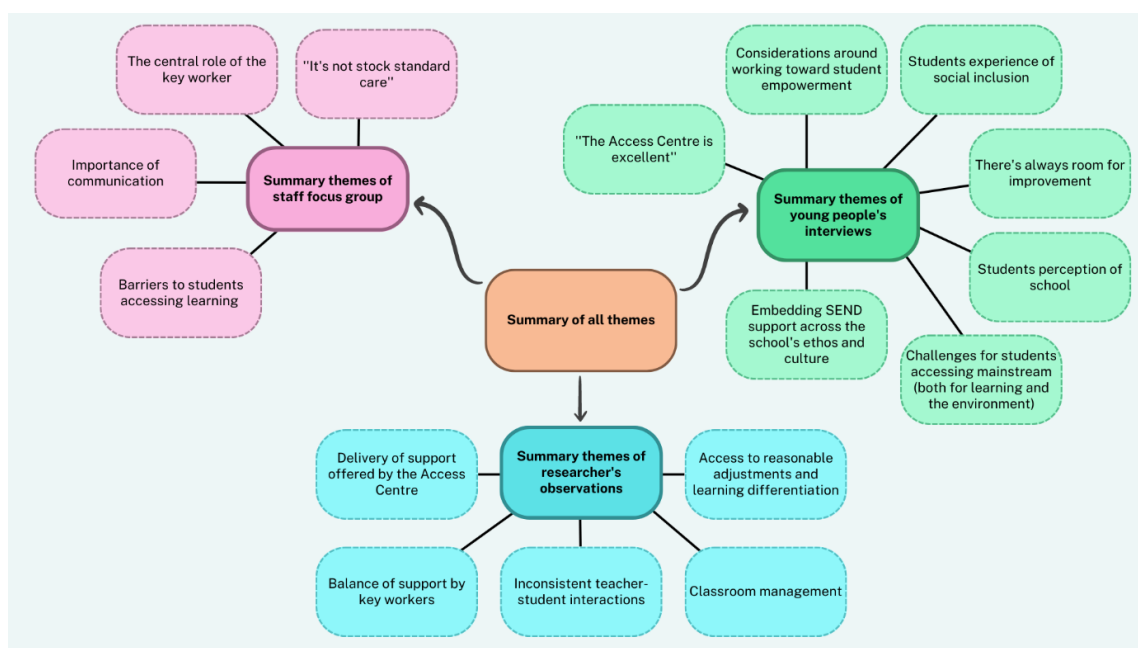


Figure 4: Summary of all themes gathered from all phases of the data collection.

4.2 'SETTING THE SCENE'

4.2.1. Review of the access centre documentation.

Prior to the five-day observation in the setting, the researcher spent time reviewing the access centre’s documentation with the aim of gaining an understanding

of their procedures and policies underpinning the delivery of support. The reviewed documentation included information of the teaching strategies employed by the centre, their behaviour policy, and the additional needs profiles of the consenting young people. These documents are distributed to all teaching and supporting staff across the school and there is an emphasis on all staff working with any access students to familiarise themselves with these documents, including each student's additional needs profile.

4.2.1.1. Teaching strategies for students

This document highlighted key areas of difficulty that students with autism experience, including difficulties in processing spoken and written information, difficulties making conceptual links, environmental difficulties such as those related to sensory sensitivities, and struggles with working in pairs or groups. This document outlined strategies to support each of these areas, including slowing down the pace of teaching delivery to allow for processing time, employing the use of visuals, implementing clear structures and routines with an emphasis on providing warnings for any changes, reducing environmental noise where possible and thoughtfully planning any group or paired work.

4.2.1.2. Behaviour support policy

The behaviour support policy highlights the importance of fostering positive relationships between staff, students, parents, and the local community. It also emphasises the importance of developing a whole school approach, that is built on respect, trust, and commitment to listening to, and involving students, parents, and staff in the development of their policies and procedures. Furthermore, it stresses the

importance of recognising behaviour as a form of communication and working together with students to identify alternative ways of expressing themselves when these are not in line with the school's behaviour policy (e.g., putting themselves and/or others at risk of harm). Finally, the centre adopts a 'no contact' policy to physical intervention which translates to no staff being permitted to physically restrain students. The policy outlines that students will have access to 'time out' zones when they need a space to calm.

4.2.1.3. Student additional needs profiles

Each student enrolled in the access centre has an additional needs profile. This profile starts with a brief bio on the student, including areas of interest. It then outlines the student's areas of strengths and their specific presenting needs, with suggested strategies and ways of working with the student that are thought to work best. The profile includes an outline of the interventions that each student will be offered, such as occupational therapy, Lego therapy, speech and language intervention or social skills/friendship groups, learning interventions such as reading intervention and emotional literacy support such as access to sessions with the trained emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA).

4.2.2. Researcher observation.

Throughout the five days of observation of the setting and its offered service of delivery, the researcher recorded and made reflections on what she observed and any thoughts or feelings that she experienced. From these observations and reflections, the researcher identified five key themes, namely 'delivery of support offered by the access centre', 'balance of support by keyworkers', 'inconsistent teacher-student interactions',

‘classroom management’ and ‘access to reasonable adjustments and learning differentiation’.

4.2.2.1. Theme 1: Delivery of support offered by the access centre.

Throughout the observations the researcher noted that the actual access centre itself (i.e., the building) was mainly used as a hub for students to access in-between lessons such as during breaks and lunchtimes, or for times when it was agreed that the student can work independently, either when there was a supply teacher or when the student had allocated study time. The centre was also used to host the implementations of interventions and therapies. This meant that it was not uncommon to find the centre quiet, with only one or two students at a time using the space. The researcher noted that the heart of the delivery of support was coming from the staff employed in the centre. Each morning the researcher observed how staff were matched with students and deployed into the mainstream setting to work supporting their allocated student while they attended their lessons.

“Deployment of staff is well managed and careful consideration is given to matching the most appropriate staff member with each student” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day One (first morning keyworker assignment).

“The access centre is almost deserted, only one student in the building for the duration of the lesson, all other students in their mainstream lessons” – Observation Day One (General observation of the access centre during period three).

Following the summer break (i.e., after a number of staff left at the end of the summer term), this deployment of staff became increasingly trickier as the centre was under pressure due to limited available staff to support the students. This resulted in students having to attend lessons independently, and while allocation was sensitively thought about, there were moments during observations where students with obvious needs were having to attend lessons independently and without the needed support or were made to attend the lesson supported by supply staff who had little experience and understanding of working with the allocated student, who in turn had little relationship with the assigned keyworker.

“it’s such a scarce difference in the way that staff are deployed...It is apparent the stress associated with thinking about which young people get supported and which don’t, and when and how this might be divided throughout the day” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day Four (first morning keyworker assignment after the summer break).

4.2.2.2. Theme 2: Balance of support by keyworkers.

Throughout the observations, the researcher noted that the matching of keyworker to student was sensitively deliberated and where possible aspects such as relationship and lesson expertise were considered. During the observations of the delivery of support to the access students by their allocated keyworkers the researcher noted that these differed significantly between pairs (i.e., different keyworkers and their allocated student). In some instances, it was noted that the keyworkers delivered support that was more explicit and direct (e.g., more hands-on support where the keyworker was

observed to work more side-to-side with the student, using strategies such as breaking down instructions, using sentence starters, supporting understanding of task instructions, and focusing on task completion). In other instances, the keyworker was seen to take a less directive approach to support, and during these times, they were either positioned at the back of the classroom or on the side-lines, occasionally offering check-ins or providing little to no support throughout the lesson.

“Ms M uses a good balance of support with Emma throughout the lesson, using a combination of discrete check-ins and allowing Emma some independence and ownership in indicating when she needs support” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day One (observation of Emma in her Maths lesson).

“Ms S had to provide a significant amount of hands-on scaffolding and support to help Matthew to access the learning content” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day Two (observation of Matthew in his Science lesson).

“I felt myself wanting to intercept the interaction between Max and Ms F and offer Ms F the option of stepping back for a bit. As it was evident that the support offered was too heavy handed and that this type of continuous interaction and overbearing nature of support was triggering Max throughout the lesson” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day Five (observation of Max in his Geography lesson).

4.2.2.3. Theme 3: Inconsistent teacher-student interactions.

While observing the access students in their lessons, the researcher started to notice an inconsistent pattern to teacher-student interactions. While the researcher observed some moments of positive student and teacher interaction, such as the teacher coming over to check-in on the student or to spend time explaining and discussing the lesson content with the student, there were a number of observed lessons where the researcher noted that the teacher made little to no contact with the student. During these moments, the researcher observed how the teachers were either being over-reliant on the keyworker to support the student and/or assuming that the student was fine, and the keyworker was capable of managing any difficulties the student may have. Throughout the observations, it was evident that the access students observed had little to no relationship with their class teachers.

“Teacher didn’t take any ownership or responsibility to check in with Max throughout the lesson, despite his keyworker communicating that he was having a bad morning” – Researcher’s reflection Observation Day Five.

4.2.2.4. Theme 4: Classroom management.

Throughout the classroom observations, it was apparent that in some lessons the teacher struggled to manage the behaviour of the students in the classroom, and this led to some lessons being noisy, overwhelming and students presenting with behaviours that were disruptive to the classroom and the learning, such as calling out, making noises, throwing objects around the room etc. In some observations, the researcher observed teachers shouting at students or sending students out of the lessons. This often

resulted in a tense environment where the focus was taken away from the learning. While the researcher did not observe any of this specifically directed at the access students, it did impact on the overall learning atmosphere, and it was noted how distracting this was for the access student which impacted on their ability to consistently access and engage in their learning.

“Students in the lesson are loud and disruptive to the classroom environment, calling out and some students making loud inappropriate noises” – Researcher’s reflections Observation Day Four (observation of Jack in his Maths lesson).

“Coming into the lesson, I felt overwhelmed by the chaos of the classroom, students walking around and one student running up the aisle and shouting at his friend. The class teacher proceeded to manage the behaviour by shouting at the young people and sending one student out for the duration of the lesson” – Researcher’s reflections Observation Day Three (observation of Max during Science).

4.2.2.5. Theme 5: Access to reasonable adjustments and learning differentiation.

Throughout the observations, the researcher struggled to observe any moments where the students were offered or had access to any differentiated learning facilitated by the teacher. Instead, the researcher noted that the main responsibility for the implementation of any adjustments made to learning, environment or implementation of strategies was very much held by the keyworker. One crucial example of this was during an observation of a student who presents with significant difficulties in reading, spelling, and writing. In the observed lesson, the teacher appeared to have no knowledge

or understanding of the student's presenting difficulties and no differentiation to the task or strategies were put in place to support this student to access and engage in the learning. Instead, the responsibility to facilitate and deliver this was held solely in the keyworker's hands, even though the keyworker had little expertise in the taught content.

"It was the keyworker who made sure that Sarah has access to her ear defenders throughout the lesson, also making sure she stayed on task throughout the lesson and was allowed to leave five minutes before the lesson ended" – Researcher's reflections Observation Day Five (observation of Sarah in her English lesson).

4.3. THEMES GATHERED FROM THE STAFF FOCUS GROUP

4.3.1. Theme 1: "It's not stock standard care."

This theme emphasises how according to the access centre staff who joined the focus group, the main aim of the access centre and the staff working there is to work hard to deliver support that is individualised to meeting the needs of each student. As seen in figure 1 this theme is made up from four subthemes, namely 'students at the heart of service delivery', 'a place for belonging', 'working toward building key skills in students' and 'recognition of student growth'.

"It's not a unit that just provides in a box...It's so much more" – Sally (paragraph 136).

“...here they are getting tailormade interventions...” – Frankie (paragraph 43).

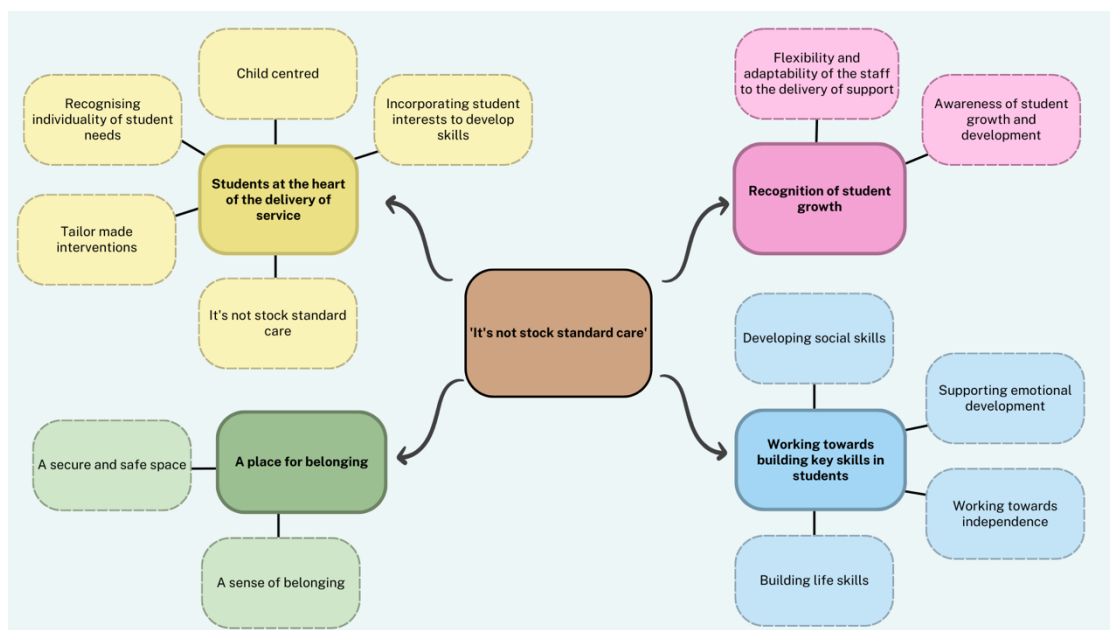


Figure 5: Theme 1 gathered from focus group findings.

4.3.1.1. Subtheme 1: Students at the heart of the delivery of service.

Throughout the focus group, a key running theme for staff was around how they work hard to hold the student at the heart of their service delivery. By this the staff emphasised how their service aims to be child centred and works to meet the individual needs of each student enrolled in the centre, stressing how their delivery of support is not simply ‘stock standard care’ but instead incorporates specific strategies of support and interventions that aim to meet the individual student’s presenting needs, including incorporating the student’s interests with the aim of having better success at developing the student’s skills.

“...the interventions that are tailormade to the individual because what works for one student doesn't work for another...it's not a blanket approach...” – Sally (paragraph 43).

“...we always put the child first...” – Frankie (paragraph 46).

“...we know that our student is the focus...” – Gloria (paragraph 311).

“...we are playing to their interests but it's actually giving them these other skills...” – Frankie (paragraph 231).

4.3.1.2. Subtheme 2: A place for belonging.

Staff reported that the access centre is aimed at providing a safe and secure place for students to come to. They reported that it was a place where students feel like they can be themselves and be accepted for who they are without any judgement and a place where they can feel like they belong and where there are other students who have similar presenting needs.

“It's having that calm space that they can come back to” – Maggie (paragraph 26).

“And where they feel secure” – Grace (paragraph 27).

“It’s a place where they feel like they belong...students are similar to them” – Frankie (paragraph 29).

4.3.1.3. Subtheme 3: Working towards building key skills in students.

Given the purpose of the access centre is to support students with autism, there was a clear awareness and understanding by staff that students would require support in key areas that would commonly be impaired in this population. These include the development of their social skills, support around developing their emotional literacy and emotional regulation skills, building their capacity to be more independent and working toward developing the student’s life skills. Staff reported that these key areas of skill were very much part of the focus of delivery of support.

“...Helping them to develop their social friendships...so they can grow in their relationships...” – Sally (paragraph 16).

“Building their confidence to be independent...knowing what their needs are” – Grace (paragraph 5).

“...they have the ownership and it’s not on me...” – Frankie (paragraph 270).

“We work on developing their life skills... I got mine to make a fruit salad...dressing independently...just things they struggle with” – Sue (paragraph 200).

4.3.1.4. Subtheme 4: Recognition of student growth.

Staff reported that as a result of having a good understanding of their students, including areas of both their strengths and needs, and having a close working relationship with their students they are in a position to recognise student growth. This occurs through both monitoring of targets and outcomes but also through everyday observations of their students. This awareness of student growth results in staff working flexibly and being in a position to be adaptable and tailor support plans for each individual student, thus adding to the notion that their delivery of support is ‘not stock standard care.’

“...when we get them in year 7, they’re at one sort of stage of development and we give them the potential to grow and support this growth...” – Sally (paragraph 136).

“The way they develop is amazing...” – Grace (paragraph 152).

“A few of them did and they’ve really come far” – Frankie (paragraph 157).

“You can observe them and see how they are changing” – Zara (161).

4.3.2. Theme 2: The central role of the Keyworker.

Throughout the focus group, it quickly became apparent that the key workers play a crucial role in the delivery of support for the students enrolled in the access centre. This theme was made up of four subthemes, including “we are the roses between the thorns”, ‘the importance of relationships’, ‘the key is knowing the students’ and ‘the role of the key worker’.

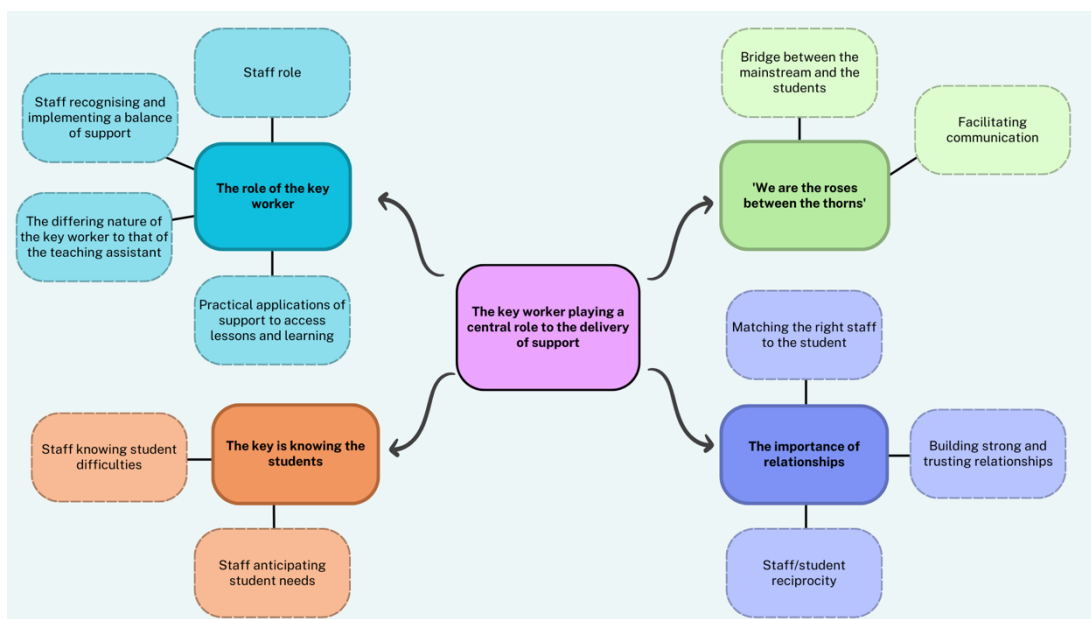


Figure 6: Theme 2 gathered from the focus group.

4.3.2.1. Subtheme 1: “We are the roses between the thorns.”

Staff adamantly stressed the importance of their role and described this as them being a buffer between the student and the mainstream setting, which they saw as an adverse environment for their students, that resulted in daily stress for their students. They highlighted that a key aspect of their role is to often support their students to bridge and facilitate communication between the student and the teaching staff in the mainstream setting, whether this is in lessons (e.g., facilitating students to communicate their needs to the teacher in the lessons) or around the mainstream setting (e.g.,

supporting their understanding of expectations and communicating their needs, thoughts and feelings to both staff and peers outside of lessons).

“We are the rose between the thorns” – Frankie (paragraph 30).

“We act as the go-between” – Frankie (paragraph 34).

“...we are like that steppingstone, the building blocks between the teacher and the student” – Sally (paragraph 35).

4.3.2.2. Subtheme 2: The importance of relationships.

Staff highlighted the importance of their relationships with the students in the access centre. They reported that they often work hard to develop relationships that are grounded in trust and safety for the student, highlighting this as being the best practice in order to support and fully understand the student’s needs. They reported that without these relationships, students would not be in a position to openly share their thoughts and feelings, and without student input, the delivery of support would ultimately be compromised. A key factor toward facilitating these close relationships that the access centre tries to foster is to try and match the right staff to the student. Staff acknowledged how different students respond to and how they work better with different staff members and this is considered when pairing staff with students.

“...sometimes they (students) have a got a bond with one staff, so we keep it that way and we really respect that...” – Zara (paragraph 49).

“...so, we really do think who works best with that child and who do they like working with and find out who has the better rapport with that student, so we do try and really tailor it around everyone...” Frankie (paragraph 46).

4.3.2.3. Subtheme 3: The key is knowing the students.

Staff emphasised that the key to the delivery of support is knowing their students, including their areas of strength and needs. Knowing each individual student's area of difficulties supports staff to tailor interventions and target strategies to help better support the students. This fits with the first theme that highlighted staff expressing that their level of support was 'not stock standard care' and aimed to really understand the student's individual and unique profile of needs. Staff shared that having a strong and trusting relationship with their students, one that enables them to understand their student's needs, allows them to often be in a position of 'knowing' and this can often manifest as staff being able to anticipate the student's needs, often before they have explicitly communicated this. For students who very likely have impairments in their ability to always communicate clearly, this is seen as a helpful aspect to facilitating support.

“Building a really good relationship between the keyworker and the student so that we can almost predict how they are going to act in certain situations” – Maggie (paragraph 6).

“We really know our students... you know your student and how to communicate with them” – Zara (paragraph 127).

4.3.2.4. Subtheme 4: The role of the keyworker.

During the discussion staff shared their perception of their role, including practical supports that they employ in lessons to help students access their learning. Staff also spent time describing how their role differs to that of a teaching assistant, with specific emphasis on how their role is supporting their designated student with all aspects of their needs, including their emotional, social, and learning needs. This support was very much reliant on their ability to develop trusting and safe relationships with their students that allow them to fully understand and ‘get to know’ their student, including their areas of strengths and needs. When talking about what the support for the student may look like, there was a clear distinction between direct/explicit support and the more indirect or subtle support that they might use. They shared that knowing their students and their specific needs helps them to make decisions on how to balance their delivery of support.

“We use all sorts of different techniques so that there aren’t barriers to their learning...” – Sally (paragraph 289).

“Teachers don’t know how to relate to us because we are different to teaching assistants...our focus is on our student...” – Gloria (paragraph 311).

“I am very much a doer, I am hands on and don’t like sitting back, but sometimes it’s necessary to stand back...” – Frankie (paragraph 313).

4.3.3. Theme 3: Importance of communication.

A key theme highlighted from the staff focus group was how clear and open communication plays an essential role in the delivery of support for the staff in the access centre. Three subthemes came together to make up this theme, including ‘clear and open communication in the access centre’, ‘the emphasis in empowering the students’ voice’ and ‘barriers to communication’.

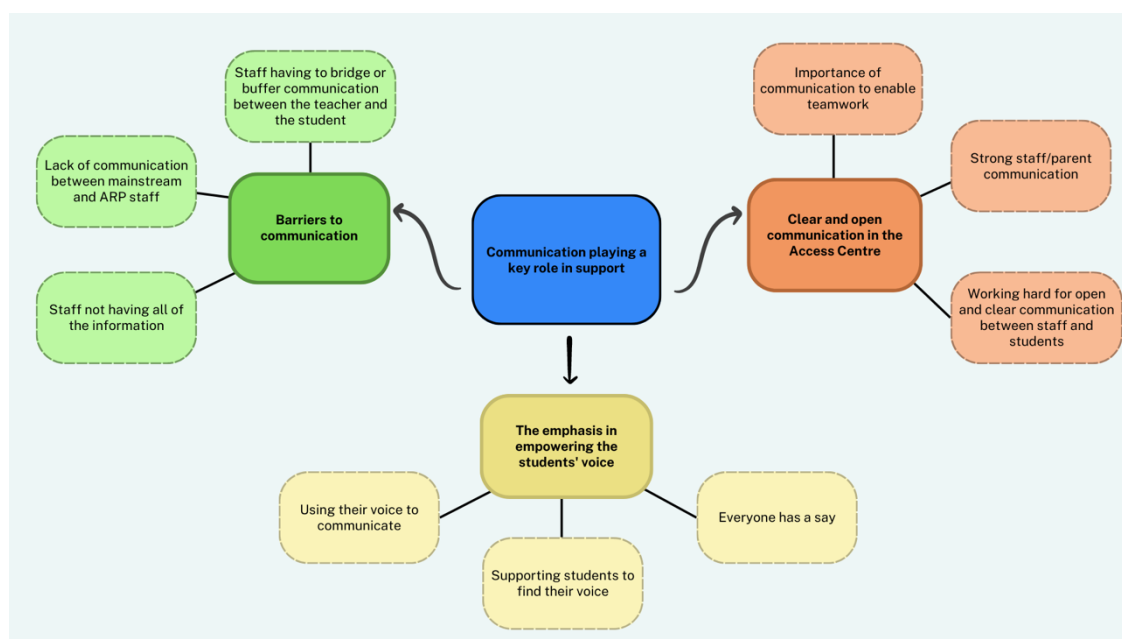


Figure 7: Theme 3 gathered from the focus group.

4.3.3.1. Subtheme 1: Clear and open communication in the access centre.

Throughout the focus group discussion, staff highlighted that clear and open communication is key to helping them to facilitate the delivery of support for students.

This includes using open lines of communication between staff to facilitate teamwork, such as sharing key information about students during handovers or having open discussions and peer reflections when faced with moments that they might find challenging. Staff also emphasised the importance of having clear communication with parents, as this helps them understand how the student may be presenting or what they might be communicating at home. Finally, staff expressed the importance of having open and clear lines of communication between staff and students. This was important for staff to know how students may feel or what their thoughts might be about different aspects of their learning and support.

“As much as we know the students, we are always in touch with our key student’s parents, updating them or them telling us things...what things we need to think about, what we should do about something...” – Gloria (paragraph 259).

“We (staff) are communicating all the time, so and so is having a bad day or so and so is alright or whatever it is” – Frankie (paragraph 56).

“So, as a team in the WhatsApp chat, we convey our messages and don’t wait until the end of the day...” – Zara (paragraph 53).

“That internal communication, it’s been absolutely fundamental, hasn’t it?” – Zara (paragraph 62).

4.3.3.2. Subtheme 2: The emphasis in empowering the students' voice.

According to staff who joined the focus group, a key element to the access centre is that everyone who is part of the access centre has a say in how it functions, and at the heart of that is the student voice. Staff emphasised the importance of the student voice in understanding the effectiveness of the delivery of support and what works and what doesn't work for them. With this in mind, staff shared that they work hard to help support students to develop their ability to communicate their needs and encourage them to openly share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. This is often supported through the staff-student relationships.

"...it's not a case that there is a leader instead everyone has an equal say" – Frankie (paragraph 15).

"What was really helpful as well is that you asked her (student) how to tell people" – Grace (paragraph 93).

"...give them ownership...if you need me, give me a signal..." – Frankie (paragraph 268).

4.3.3.3. Subtheme 3: Barriers to communication.

While communication is recognised as a key factor toward facilitating the delivery of good quality and effective support, staff were also able to recognise that this doesn't always go well and during the group discussion they were able to highlight key

barriers that can stand in the way of effective communication. Staff openly shared struggles that frequently present when trying to bridge the communication gap with the mainstream setting, including students not having the same level of comfort and confidence with mainstream staff and how this often limits their ability to openly share their thoughts and feelings with teachers. This often results in the students relying on their keyworker to facilitate this communication. This is further impacted by the limitations in the relationships that access staff have with the teachers. Often these relationships are not open and this impacts on the communication between the keyworker/access staff and the teachers in mainstream. Finally, staff reported that they are frequently slow to gain information from mainstream staff and this can often impact on their ability to be open and clear with communicating this information to their students.

“It’s his favourite line at the minute “I didn’t know, nobody told me”, and I have to say “but no one told us” – Frankie (paragraph 278).

“We (access staff) need them (teachers) to communicate with us” – Gloria (paragraph 311).

“I am a communication bridge, so they know their stuff is safe with me...” – Zara (paragraph 38).

“I had to step in and say “Miss (teacher) this is the fifth early start for him and the fourth day of exams, he has a lot going on” – Frankie (paragraph 306).

4.3.4. Theme 4: Barriers to students accessing learning.

Despite the clear drive toward the effective delivery of support that holds the individuality of students and the relational dynamic between students and staff at the heart of the support offered by the access centre, staff were able to openly recognise and discuss how this might not always go to plan. They were also able to identify clear barriers that may stand in the way of delivering effective support for the students enrolled in the access centre.

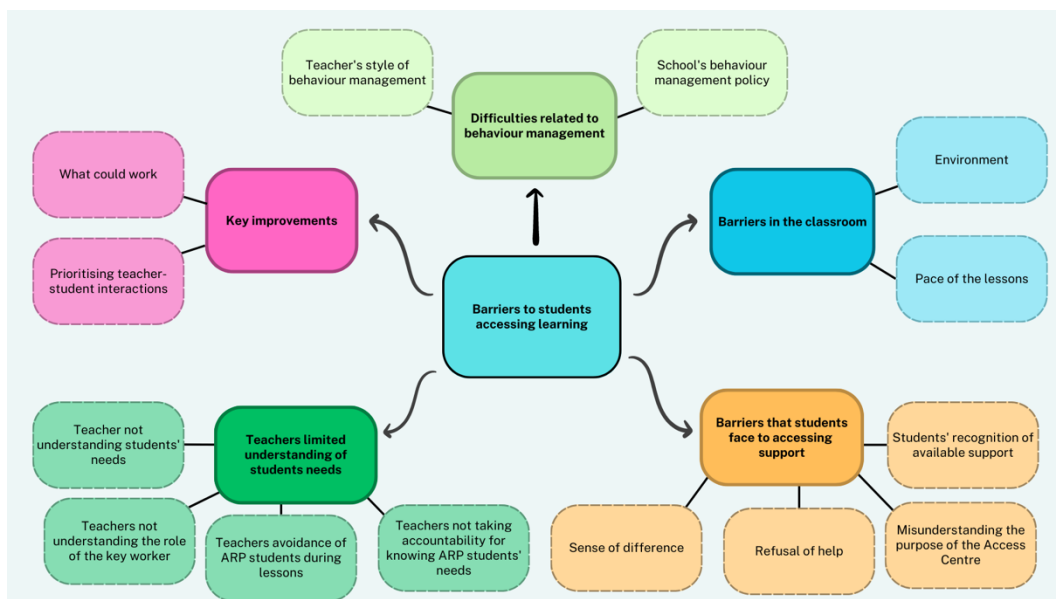


Figure 8: Theme 4 gathered from the focus group.

4.3.4.1. Subtheme 1: Barriers in the classroom.

The first group of barriers that staff identified were barriers related to the classroom, including environmental barriers and barriers presented from the delivery of

the lessons. Staff shared that more often than not, Access students are expected to attend lessons where there are up to 28 other students in the room. This often results in lessons that can be noisy and disruptive. In addition, staff reported that a key barrier in the classroom that impacts on the student's ability to access and engage in the lesson is the overall pace of the delivery of the lesson content. Often Access students are working at a slower pace to their mainstream peers and this can result in the Access student not keeping up with the pace at which the teacher delivers the lesson content. Staff reported that this can leave Access students falling behind their mainstream peers and needing keyworker support to follow what is happening in the lesson and what the expectations are for the parts they have missed out on.

“The teachers move on quite quickly and it’s really hard, so you got to keep up with what’s happening so that then you can at least help support them to do part of the lesson...” – Gloria (paragraph 267).

*“There are too many distractions in the class, especially science, it’s so noisy, isn’t it?”
– Sue (paragraph 41).*

“...there is extra support here for them so that they aren’t behind what is happening in their class” – Zara (paragraph 38).

4.3.4.2. Subtheme 2: Teachers’ limited understanding of students’ needs.

Throughout the group discussion, staff appeared to feel quite strongly about how the mainstream teachers had limited understanding of the needs of the Access students. While they acknowledged that teachers are given copies of student profiles and are expected to engage in training on autism, according to staff this does not appear to be sufficient or well managed. Staff reported that they have often noticed that teachers do not know or understand the access students in the class and take very little accountability for getting to know them or trying to work with them. Staff openly shared that there are frequent lessons where the teacher will simply avoid checking in on the access student/s and will leave the keyworker to manage and support the student. Finally, staff reported that teachers also have a limited understanding of the role of the keyworker, including what support they can offer versus what support they cannot. This can sometimes act as a barrier to student learning, especially when teachers display an avoidance of the student and an assumption that the keyworker is fully able to support the student to fully access the lesson content.

“...one of the barriers is that even though the teachers, they all get given the additional need information, but they don't read it and if they do, they have forgotten about it by the time” – Gloria (paragraph 292).

“They don't know the student” – Sue (paragraph 293).

“Sometimes teachers are not really focusing on the student, considering that they don't know them, or they don't ask the student or try to communicate with them...they should ask, not just ignore the student” – Zara (paragraph 8).

“...the teacher didn’t seem to know or understand that the young person in that classroom could not read...” – Researcher reflecting on observation (paragraph 289).

“They should not assume that we’re just there for them and they don’t have to do any teaching” – Sue (paragraph 9).

4.3.4.3. Subtheme 3: Difficulties related to behaviour management.

In a busy often noisy and disruptive environment, staff reported that teachers can sometimes struggle to implement appropriate behaviour management for the classroom. Staff shared that often teachers’ personal style of behaviour management, which can sometimes include teachers shouting at students or their frequent use of overly strict behaviour consequences (e.g., negative behaviour points and detention) can be a struggle for the access students to witness or be subjected to. Staff also reported that the mainstream setting has a very strict behaviour policy that often does not consider the presenting needs of the access students. According to staff this adherence to the overall strict behaviour policy and the expectation that Access students need to follow the behaviour policy to the letter without any room for reasonable adjustments, can frequently result in unnecessary and stressful experiences for the Access staff, student, and the student’s parents.

“...sometimes you get teachers that just do not understand how our kids work...” – Frankie (paragraph 34).

“Teachers can sometimes be very loud, shouting at the students...” – Sally (paragraph 287).

“The main barrier that I can think about is that if any of our students, if something has gone wrong, for example homework, you know, then it escalates to the mainstream, and they get detention” – Grace (paragraph 265).

“I find that by the time we’ve come across the problem to the time it’s been sorted it could go on for a couple of weeks...the student is then so upset, and the parents are upset...it’s causing so much of an issue...” – Grace (paragraph 266).

4.3.4.4. Subtheme 4: Barriers that students face to accessing support.

Throughout the discussion, staff highlighted that a key barrier to accessing support can often come from the student themselves. This can be a combination of students struggling to recognise and understand the available support being offered. This can sometimes lead to students misunderstanding what the access centre is for and can include them assuming that the access centre is a place for them to come to instead of lessons. While staff acknowledged that there was some flexibility and circumstances where this is possible, students often don’t understand that there needs to be a valid reason to be out of lessons and this needs to be agreed with the access lead and their keyworker. Staff emphasised that a key barrier to accessing support can often stem from the student struggling with their sense of difference (i.e., not wanting to be seen as

different by their mainstream peers or at the very least not wanting to exacerbate this sense of difference). This often results in students refusing support both in terms of coming to the access centre and in terms of engaging with a keyworker and allowing them to offer the student support during or even outside of lessons.

“I was also going to say a barrier that I often come across is from the students who don’t want to be different, that’s a really big one...they get paranoid about the fact that they are part of the access centre” – Frankie (paragraph 266).

“...you almost feel like a burden when they say “no, no, don’t sit next to me, I don’t want to look like I need help or I don’t want to associate with the access centre, so follow behind me” – Gloria (paragraph 267).

“...In the past we have had students who want to be here all day every day and that isn’t why we are here, so it’s about getting the balance right” – Maggie (paragraph 35).

4.3.4.5. Subtheme 5: Key improvements.

Through the process of identifying and discussing some of the key barriers that can impact on the delivery of support, staff were also able to consider some key improvements that may help students to better access and engage in their learning. One key improvement staff mentioned was around finding ways to support and develop the interactions between the student and the teacher, emphasising that teachers are in a

position of open curiosity with the student and where they can establish better relationships with the student. The hope is that this will support teachers to have more confidence and a better understanding of working with the Access students in their classrooms.

“They (teachers) could ask the students questions like “are you okay?”” – Gloria (paragraph 309).

“If they (teachers) just have a conversation with us” – Frankie (paragraph 306).

“They put us all together, you know SEN department and the access” – Sue (paragraph 312).

Table 7 summarises the findings taken from the focus group with access staff and categorises them in accordance with how they might work to addressing the research questions.

Table 7: Summary of findings from the focus group related to research question.

How does the Access Centre (ARP attached to a mainstream secondary school) support the inclusion of young people with autism?		
What does the Access Centre offer in ways of support that would ordinarily not be	What might be some of the presenting challenges that act as barriers to implementing	What might be some of the identified areas of improvements to support the

available without it? (e.g., interventions, staff support, separate building etc.)	the Access Centre's offer of support?	inclusion of these young people?
<p>It's not stock standard care. The focus of support is child centred, taking the individuality of student needs and working toward creating tailor-made interventions.</p>	<p>Overall classroom environment often being noisy. Pace of the delivery of learning in the classroom can often leave access students working behind their mainstream peers. Teachers' poor style of behaviour management.</p>	<p>Teachers to develop a clearer understanding of the role of the keyworker, including what's possible within the support remit and what is not.</p>
<p>The keyworker role being at the heart of the delivery of support. Valuing the staff and student relationships, that aim to be open and trusting. Keyworkers being a communication bridge between the student and mainstream staff.</p>	<p>Strict behaviour policy that impacts on the access students and doesn't consider the presenting needs of the student.</p> <p>Teachers' limited understanding and awareness of access student's needs. Often not interacting with students during lessons and making assumptions that the keyworker can fully support the students learning.</p>	<p>Teachers needing to develop their knowledge and understanding of the access students presenting needs that are in their classrooms.</p>
<p>Communication being a key to the delivery of effective support. Valuing and empowering the student voice. Facilitating open lines of communication between staff members and student's parents.</p>	<p>Students themselves struggling to recognise and understand the available support, often leading to misunderstandings of the purpose and use of the access centre. Students struggling with their sense of difference and not wanting to exacerbate this amongst their mainstream peers, leading to a refusal of support.</p>	<p>Teachers needing to improve on the interactions and engagement with the access students.</p>

4.4. FINDINGS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE INTERVIEWS.

4.4.1. Theme 1: “The access centre is excellent.”

Across the interviews with the young people, a clear theme that emerged was how the majority of students found being enrolled in the access centre as helpful in one form or another. This theme was made up by three subthemes, namely ‘the access centre is a unique selling point for the school’, ‘what’s working well in the access centre’ and ‘the central role of the staff/keyworkers to the positive delivery of support’.

“The thing about the access centre, it’s excellent” – Molly (paragraph 141).

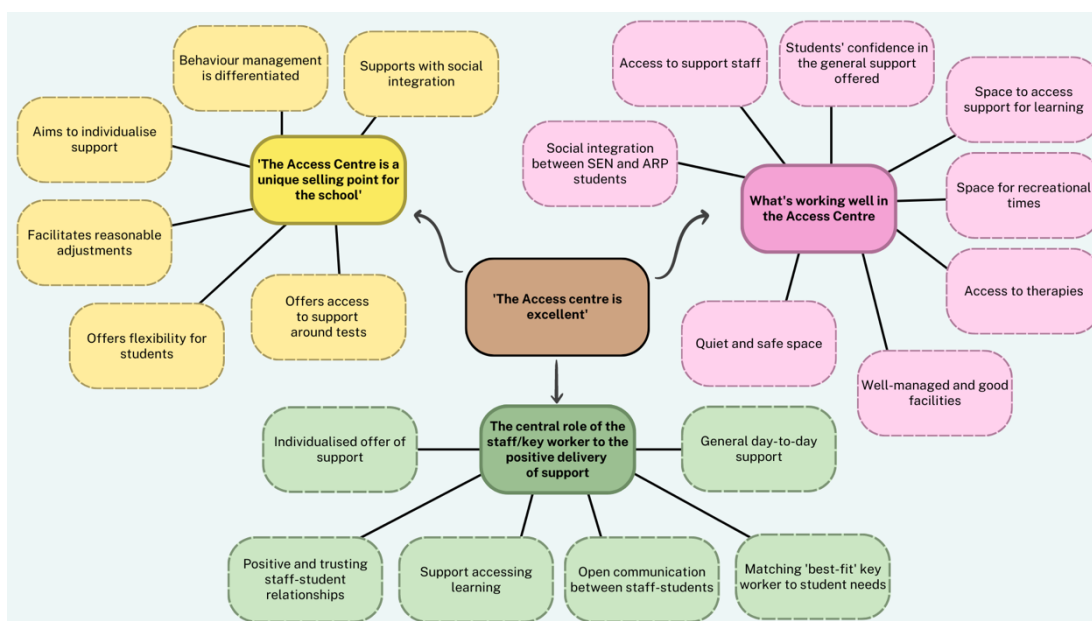


Figure 9: Theme 1 gathered from the young people’s interviews.

4.4.1.1. Subtheme 1: “The access centre is a unique selling point for the school.”

Throughout the interviews with the young people, many were able to reflect on the key points of the access centre’s offer of support that they found helpful. Some of these included how the staff in the access centre aim to provide a bespoke package of

support for each student, that is tailored to meeting their specific areas of needs, including offering access to support around tests. Students also reported that the staff in the access centre help facilitate the reasonable adjustments that are needed to help them access the mainstream environment and engage in their learning. Other students shared their experiences of gaining support with helping them to establish and maintain friendships, such as specifically offering a safe space for them to spend their breaktimes. Finally, students reported that the access centre offers more understanding and leniency when it comes to their behaviour policy, whereby staff take into consideration the needs of the individual student.

“...the access centre is good because everyone will properly include everyone, because we are all similar but different at the same time.” – Molly (paragraph 197).

“I did my science test and I got to have more time, so that felt nice” – Emma (paragraph 113).

“So, I noticed during my observations that you are allowed to leave your lesson early” Researcher (paragraph 418). “Yeah, scheduled five or ten minutes early” – Sarah (paragraph 424).

“I go to access to have my lunch, its quieter” – Sarah (paragraph 432).

“In access, they do get similar treatment but to a certain degree, like for example, some access staff might only tell them off” – Freddy (paragraph 273).

“Sometimes they get...just a little punishment. Sometimes they get detentions but not that long, like 5/10 minutes” – Freddy (paragraph 277).

4.4.1.2. Subtheme 2: What’s working well in the access centre.

Throughout the interviews, the majority of young people were able to confidently share some of the things that they felt were going well for them in the access centre. Some of these included having access to support staff either through the keyworker or just the general access to staff. A few of the young people commented on finding the integration of the SEN students during lunch and breaktimes good, because then it meant they were able to access these friendships too. The majority of young people reported that they enjoyed having the access centre to come to in-between lessons, as this provided a quiet and safe space for them or when on a break or during lunchtimes. Some young people reported to finding the access to therapies useful. Finally, the majority of the young people reported that they thought the access centre was well managed with good facilities including having space to access support for their learning.

“...students from the access centre are allowed to bring one or two friends at break or lunchtime...I get a few of my friends to come over and play football” – Freddy (paragraph 149).

“...my keyworker has now got me a laptop that I can use in English, media and history, so that helps me and yeah they do help me” – Emma (paragraph 89).

“It’s (access centre) away from everyone, meaning its quiet” – Freddy (paragraph 109).

“I liked the therapies with Miss, we used to do that” – Matthew (paragraph 373).

4.4.1.3. Subtheme 3: The central role of the staff/keyworkers to the positive delivery of support.

Throughout the young people interviews, it became apparent that the keyworkers and access staff play a central role in the facilitation and delivery of support. Students acknowledged that staff work hard to personalise support to meet the individual needs of each student and offer general everyday support that helps support the student to access their learning. Students reported that for the most part staff and students are ‘matched’ together based on student preference and staff skills. This focus on ‘matching’ aims to promote positive experiences and for the most part aims to foster trusting relationships with the staff and their keyworkers, that includes open and reciprocal communication between both staff and the students.

“...access centre is mostly like, personal kind of, it’s individual to the person” – Freddy (paragraph 349).

“I’m not good with anger or other emotions, I don’t express them well and they give...used to give me support in that” – Freddy – (paragraph 357).

“I requested an HLT English in my lessons, which is Miss V because she knows I’m not the best in English and she already does interventions with me. So... we both knew that she would have been beneficial for it to be in my lessons” – Emma (paragraph 209).

“Do you prefer to have someone with you?” “Sometimes” “What’s the sometimes part?” “Depends on who” “...is it because of somebody who you might like better or is it somebody who’s better at helping you?” “Both” – discussion between the Researcher and Jack (paragraphs 246-256).

“What happens Sarah, if there was no access centre?” “No key support worker and no person to give me sweets...no person to hug...no person to love” – Discussion between Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 318-328).

“So, there was one support worker which got really good grades in geography and history...they put him in their lessons, and they jumped from like a two or a three to like a seven” – Freddy (paragraph 225).

“...reading and writing it’s not my...I’m not good at that” “...I noticed that your keyworker was helping you with your writing and to understand what it meant. Did you find it helpful” “Yeah, yeah...they would write down and I’ll just copy, or I’ll write it on the side...” – Discussion between the Researcher and Matthew (paragraphs 297-305).

4.4.2. Theme 2: Considerations around working toward student empowerment.

Throughout the interviews, the researcher became aware of the increasing theme of the need to focus on empowering students to not only develop their awareness and insight into themselves, but also to enable them to use their voice to communicate these needs.

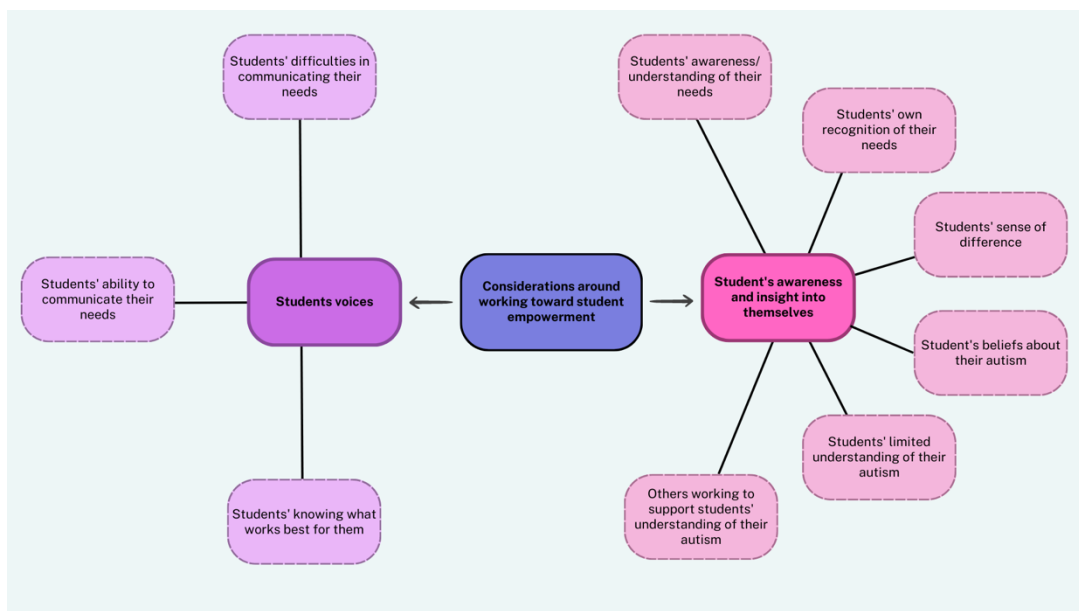


Figure 10: Theme 2 gathered from the young people's interviews.

4.4.2.1. Subtheme 1: Students' awareness and insight into themselves.

While the young people who were interviewed were able to demonstrate some awareness and insight into their needs, be they either related to their learning or related to their diagnosis of autism, it became apparent that this was not always consistent. Instead, the researcher noted that many of the young people struggled to recognise what they might struggle with and furthermore found it hard to demonstrate much knowledge or insight into their autism. Some students appeared to have a superficial understanding of autism (e.g., "it makes me smart" – Sarah) and had limited input into what autism is or some students tended to rely on support from their families to provide some sense of what autism is and what it might mean for them.

"I can't focus for too long and I can't like...I like reading, but I can't read for too long because I need like visual aids sometimes" – Jack (paragraph 312).

"The thing I really wish I could do, reading and writing. If I could read and write and spell, oh my God, I will be able, it would be so much better with all those lessons I wouldn't need teachers no more" – Matthew (paragraph 721).

"Do you feel like your social skills have become better?" "No" "No? What do you still struggle with?" "The boys" – Discussion between the Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 206-212).

“...it’s just that I don’t really, kind of, like...do the things they do, like the things they like. So, I isolate myself from them because we don’t have that much in common” – Jack (paragraph 332).

“...I asked if you knew what autism was?” “No” “Has anyone ever sat with you and spoken to you about your autism” “No” – Discussion between Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 582-584 and 598-600).

“Like what autism is?” “Yeah, what is it?” “I don’t even know” – Discussion between Researcher and Matthew (paragraphs 700-705).

“...Because autistic people, I think, I mean apparently, are more logical” – Freddy (paragraph 193).

4.4.2.2. Subtheme 2: Enabling and incorporating students’ voices.

Throughout the interviews, the young people shared varying degrees of openness and ability to communicate their needs and ask for help. Many young people interviewed shared that they would either speak to their keyworker or would simply manage the difficulties themselves. There was a consistent theme that the young people interviewed felt that they knew how best to support themselves and therefore this impacted on the willingness to always request help when they needed it.

“...who would you ask then if you needed help?” “Yeah, normally my keyworker when I have a one to one every single Wednesday with her or really just anyone” – Emma (paragraph 75).

“I will talk to a teacher, but that’s only in a really extreme case” – Matthew (paragraph 365).

“So, you’re dealing with all of the feelings all by yourself?” “Yes” – Discussion between Researcher and Max (paragraph 186-188).

“...the person who knows how to support them best is themselves” – Molly (paragraph 185).

4.4.3. Theme 3: Students’ experience of social inclusion.

During the interviews, the young people shared some insights into their experiences of social inclusion. While there was a consensus that on some level the young people experienced a sense of social acceptance and belonging within the access centre and in some instances in the wider mainstream setting, this was not without an acknowledgement that there were still elements that made social connection difficult. These difficulties appeared to have a direct impact on their willingness to access and engage in the support offered by the access centre and its staff.

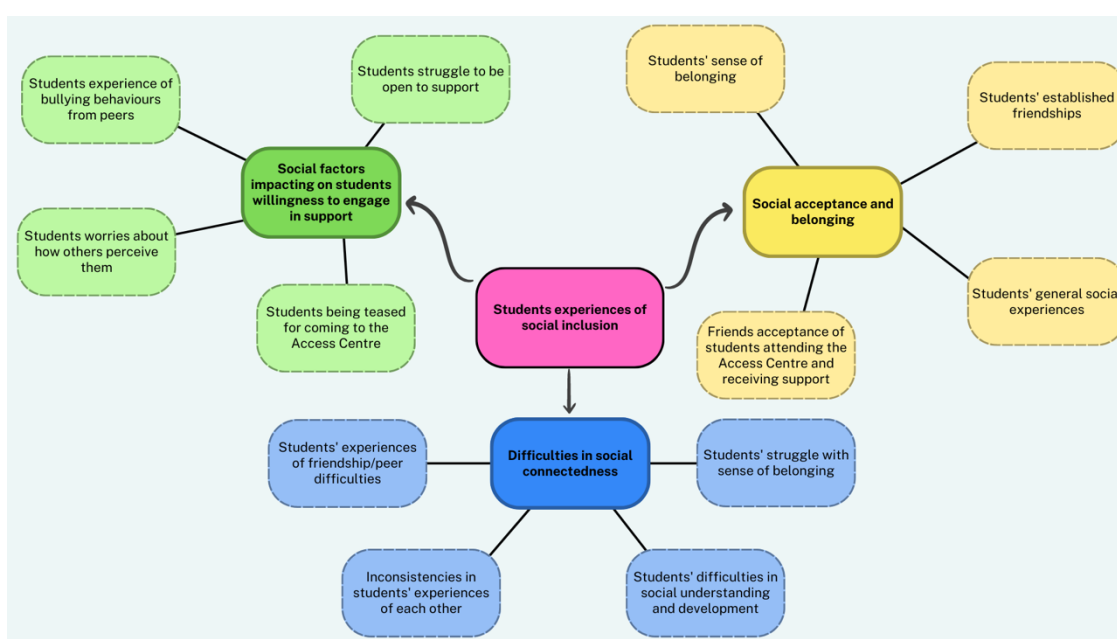


Figure 11: Theme 3 gathered from the young people's interviews.

4.4.3.1. Subtheme 1: Social acceptance and belonging.

On the whole, the young people reported that they were able to establish friendships (although in some instances these took over a year to establish), whether these were amongst their peer group in the access centre, amongst their mainstream peers or in some cases a combination of both. These friendships appeared to provide the young people with a sense of belonging and in some cases, interviewees reported that

they experienced feelings of acceptance from their friendship group regarding their need to access support from the access centre and its staff.

“I started having friends like after a year or two because in the first year I would just come here all the time and not go out, so I just didn’t talk to people. But I started to talk to people so I got friends” – Freddy (paragraph 165).

“I am pretty sure all of my friends know I go to access” – Matthew (paragraph 209).

*“...do they know that you come to the access centre, and you get support” “Yeah”
“How have they been in terms of being accepting with that?” “They’ve kind of been chilled about it... they’ve really said nothing about it” – Discussion between Researcher and Emma (paragraphs 124-127).*

4.4.3.2. Subtheme 2: Difficulties in social connectedness.

Interviewees were able to openly share information about their difficulties with establishing and maintaining good social connections with their peers both from mainstream and within the access centre. These difficulties often left the young people struggling with their sense of belonging amongst their peer groups. From some of the responses in the interviews, this appeared to be further impacted by some young people’s social development and overall social understanding.

“...there was a bit of a fight and I didn’t quite hang out with them and I found a new bunch of friends and then I found another new bunch of friends but again something happened so then I went back to the old group of friends and then this year at the beginning they said “oh yeah we don’t want to be friends with you” and then now I found a really nice bunch of friends...” – Emma (paragraph 71).

“...In year 9, I struggled with anxiety a lot because of the friends situation” – Emma (paragraph 121).

“I just don’t feel like I’m included with most students” – Max (paragraph 492).

“Sometimes they just like insult me for no reason, spread lies, things like that” “are those the young people in the mainstream school or...” “yeah students in the mainstream school” – Discussion between the Researcher and Max (paragraphs 560-564).

“When someone pushes you...you just got to push them back. When someone hits you, you got to hit them back...because that’s the point of the fair way” – Jack (paragraph 265).

4.4.3.3. Subtheme 3: Social factors impacting on students’ willingness to engage in support.

Responses from the young people's interviews demonstrated a connection between how the young people feel and experience how others perceive them when engaging in support and how willing they may be to engage with the available offered support. Findings suggested that the more unaccepted the young person felt and the more they experienced teasing from their mainstream peers, the less likely they were to be willing to access the available support they are offered from the access centre and its staff.

"Sometimes they make fun of my fidgeting..." – Molly (paragraph 245).

"...do you think they would have been able to help you?" "I don't think so because I don't want any help" – Discussion between the Researcher and Jack (paragraphs 147-149).

"Sometimes they tease me" "...is it like in a banter way or are they being a bit serious" "I can't tell no, I can't tell" – Discussion between Researcher and Matthew (paragraph 237).

"I only come here (access centre) if I have to" – Matthew (paragraph 541).

"I just wish I could make myself invisible and then just go here" – Matthew (paragraph 557).

“I don’t want them to be saying that you’re the kid that always goes to access for everything” – Matthew (paragraph 581).

4.4.4. Theme 4: There’s always room for improvement.

Throughout the interviews, the young people were able to openly share different aspects that could be considered to improve the delivery and access to support offered by the access centre. As seen in the image below five subthemes around improvements were highlighted from the interviews, namely ‘It’s not always perfect’, ‘The balancing act to offering support’, ‘Considerations around delivery of interventions’, ‘Factors impacting on the delivery of support’, and ‘Staff retention and recruitment’.

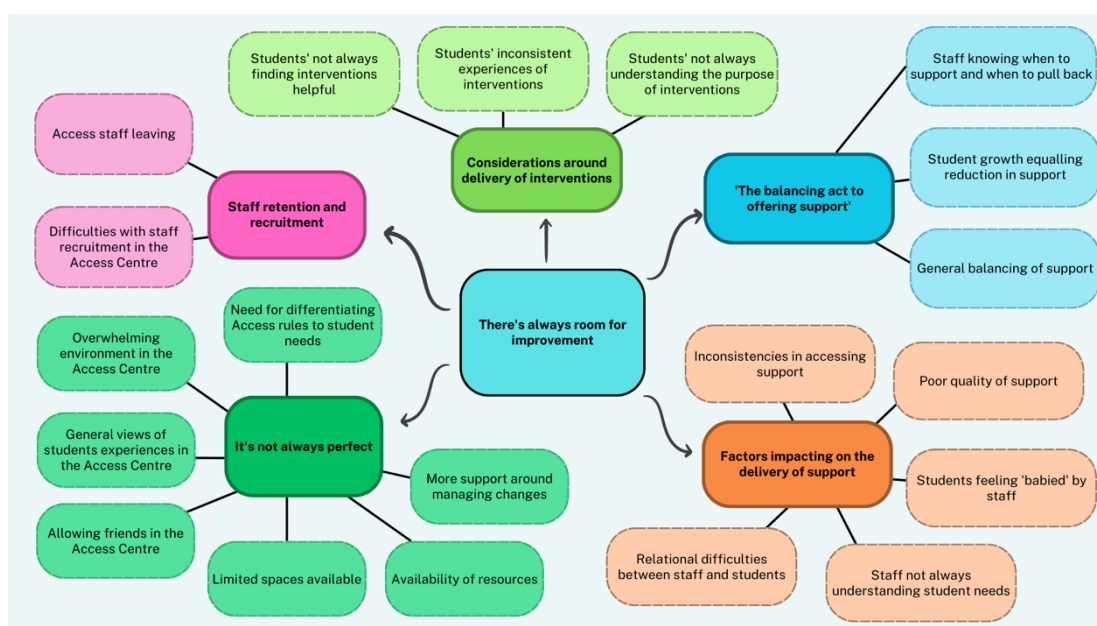


Figure 12: Theme 4 gathered from the young people’s interviews.

4.4.4.1. Subtheme 1: It’s not always perfect.

During the interviews, the young people reported several aspects that required consideration as they impacted on their experiences of the access centre and the offered support. These considerations included a need for differentiating the rules of the access centre to meet the individual needs of each young person and allowing more opportunities for young people to bring their friends into the centre. Other considerations included environmental aspects of the centre such as how some young people reported that they found it overwhelming, others highlighted the limited availability of spaces in the centre. Furthermore, considerations around the availability of resources and how better to support and manage changes were raised.

“The environment being noisy and overwhelming?” “That also includes the access centre, in the blue room” – Discussion between Researcher and Molly (paragraphs 291-293).

“There is no alternative space, sometimes I sneak in here...with staff members’ permission...but there should be an alternative quiet space. This I think is a main defect of the access centre” – Molly (paragraph 297).

“Every day it’s noisy and overwhelming in the access centre?” “Yeah, because some of the classes go through access” – Discussion between Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 474-476).

“I mean, I’d maybe change like, some access rules...there are some rules that are like...they are kind of childish rules and I guess that is for...year 7s and 8s...but they apply to all access...just say rules for like certain people” – Freddy (paragraph 333).

“I guess some people might not like non access students coming here but...the space is quite big” – Freddy (paragraph 341).

“I know some of the changes can be minimized” – Molly (paragraph 349).

4.4.4.2. Subtheme 2: ‘The balancing act to offering support’.

Across the interviews, the young people reported that while the ‘balancing of the delivery of support’ was often achieved, there were also moments where they felt this needs further consideration. The young people openly shared that although there are moments where they feel they are receiving the right kind of support that is well balanced by their keyworkers and other access staff, there are moments where they expressed that the offered support didn’t always achieve this balance successfully (e.g., where staff were not always aware of when to provide direct support and when to step back and allow more independence).

“When I need them to help me, I honestly don’t care that the keyworker is with me, when I actually need help...say like, I’m just doing a simple thing and like, I got a keyworker following me, why are you watching me?” – Matthew (paragraph 433).

“I call them to come over, maybe I just look at them to tell them to come here” – Matthew (paragraph 629).

“You said only sometimes true, so does she not always check in with you”, “She doesn’t” – Discussion between Researcher and Sarah (paragraph 366-368).

“No teacher of mine helped me” “Oh no, did you have a key support worker in that classroom with you?” “No, I did go by myself” – Discussion between the Researcher and Jack (paragraphs 141-145).

4.4.4.3. Subtheme 3: Considerations around delivery of interventions.

Throughout the interviews, the delivery and experience of young people’s engagement and access to interventions was inconsistent, with some interviewees reporting that they had last engaged in any interventions when they first started in year 7 and 8 and not since. While some young people reported that they found the interventions available helpful, some reported that they do not, and some reported a combination of finding some interventions helpful and others not so much. Interestingly, many of the interviewees struggled to identify the purpose of the interventions they engaged in and did not always appear to recognise what the intervention may be trying to target.

“So, when you were doing OT (occupational therapy) what was it helping?” “It was just for fun” – Discussion between the Researcher and Matthew (paragraph 380-383).

“I think it was for improving handwriting and stuff” – Matthew (paragraph 389).

“Do you have any intervention for social or emotional skills?” “I did it in year 7) – Discussion between the Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 542-544).

4.4.4.4. Subtheme 4: Factors impacting on the delivery of support.

Several factors were highlighted during the young people interviews that appeared to impact on the delivery of support. These included the students reporting that they did not always feel that the access staff understood their needs. They also reported that there were times when accessing support was inconsistent and there were some reports that suggested that the offered support was poor quality. Other young people openly shared their frustrations around the support they had experienced and reported feelings of being ‘babied’ rather than support being tailored to their level of maturity and need. This appeared to impact on the relationships between the student and staff.

“It’s some keyworkers who treat me like I’m a little child and I find that so annoying” – Matthew (paragraph 441).

“After a while lots of my key supporters get agitated at me, they get agitated when I can’t do...when I don’t...when I stop to do something else” – Max (paragraph 280).

“They kept raising their voice at me...I thought I’d done a lot of work and she was always nit picking at the tiniest details and that frustrates me a lot” – Max (paragraph 296).

“The staff, what is it that they don’t understand about you?” “How I function” – Discussion between the researcher and Max (paragraphs 306-308).

4.4.4.5. Subtheme 5: Staff retention and recruitment.

During the interviews, the young people shared their feelings of upset about staff leaving at the end of the summer term. Some interviewees shared that they had lost staff who they had developed close relationships with, and this meant they would have to start all over again at establishing new relationships with other staff members. Some interviewees spoke about the difficulties they had been experiencing since staff had left, and shared how the shortage of staff had impacted on the consistency of support they were currently being offered.

“I’m going to be honest, the change of head of access centre between, there has not been a smooth transition but that’s of course because many staff members left” – Molly (paragraph 349).

“...sometimes I don’t have people who are in French. Like in year 8, I always had someone but year 9...so there has been less staff, there’s less staff for year 9” – Matthew (paragraph 317).

4.4.5. Theme 5: Students' perception of school.

Across the interviews, a clear theme emerged related to the young people's overall perceptions of school. As expected, these varied according to the individual student and were situation and context dependent, leading to both positive and negative points of view. Nevertheless, some consistencies were identified that related to students' experience of anxiety and pressure related to their school experiences and a key factor that emerged was related to the students' experience of trust and this appeared to impact on their overall perceptions of how they experience school.

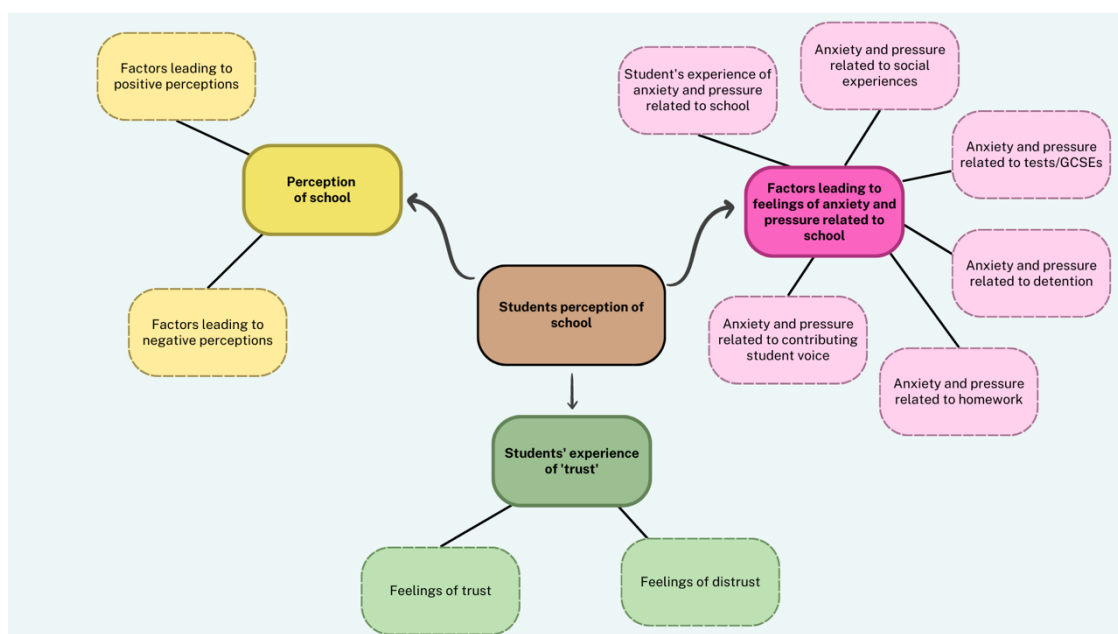


Figure 13: Theme 5 gathered from the young people's interviews.

4.4.5.1. Subtheme 1: Students' perception of school.

As expected, when one might ask a student about their experience of school, there were both positive and negative elements that influenced their experiences and beliefs related to school. Some students reported feeling enjoyment about attending

school, sharing that they really enjoy the learning element, while others shared that they found school to be annoying and boring.

“So, I am glad to see you have said that you like coming to school, is there anything you particularly enjoy?” “I like the education” – Discussion between the Researcher and Jack (paragraph 75-77).

“The main factor that makes me come to school is my future” – Freddy (paragraph 377).

“But I don’t like coming to school, just annoying and boring and stuff” – Freddy (paragraph 385).

“So sometimes in a way I’d fake being sick and fake being ill, so I didn’t quite come to school” – Emma (paragraph 121).

4.4.5.2. Subtheme 2: Students’ experience of ‘trust’.

During the interviews, a number of the young people expressed their experiences of trust related to both their experiences with staff and other students. For the most part, the young people reported that they struggled to trust either party or in some cases struggled to trust both the staff and the students. If students did report that they trusted someone at school, this was mainly aimed at them trusting their keyworker enough to talk to them about their feelings.

“...you put you have somebody who you trust at school to talk to...” “Miss J” “Do you have anybody else who you trust and are able to talk to?” “Only her” – Discussion between the Researcher and Sarah (paragraphs 382-384).

“I wish I could trust someone, but I don’t usually trust a lot” – Jack (paragraph 362).

“The keyworker I actually trusted with everything was in year 8...she left the school; she was my favourite keyworker” – Matthew (paragraphs 353 and 357).

4.4.5.3. Subtheme 3: Factors leading to feelings of anxiety and pressure related to school.

Throughout the interviews, the young people were able to openly share their experiences of feeling anxiety and pressure related to different aspects of school. In most instances these feelings were related to the general day to day experiences of school, such as understanding social contexts/situations and friendships or related to more obvious things such as homework expectations and tests. In some instances, young people related feelings of anxiety related to worries around getting detentions and teacher expectations.

“You said you feel worries about school” “...the school should do no surprise tests because for autistic students...I know when a teacher does a surprise test, I cannot even do it” – Molly (paragraph 205).

“Threatening, even if they never give them, threatening a detention, or threatening some punishment that they will not do will add anxiety and I think it should be banned” – Molly (paragraph 201).

“I’m really scared for when it (GCSEs) come down, I’m just I’m gonna fail” – Matthew (paragraph 481).

“Like some teachers...I feel like some of the teachers are on to me...like, they don’t like or don’t want me to be in the lessons or be here” – Max (paragraphs 144,148 and 152).

4.4.6. Theme 6: Challenges for students accessing mainstream (both for learning and the environment).

A consistent theme throughout the interviews with the young people was related to the various challenges that they each experienced on a daily basis while attending the mainstream secondary school. This theme was made up of three subthemes, namely ‘accessibility issues for access students in mainstream’, ‘Teachers’ lack of autism friendly teaching and management’ and ‘Need for differentiation in behaviour management for access students. These will be discussed further below:

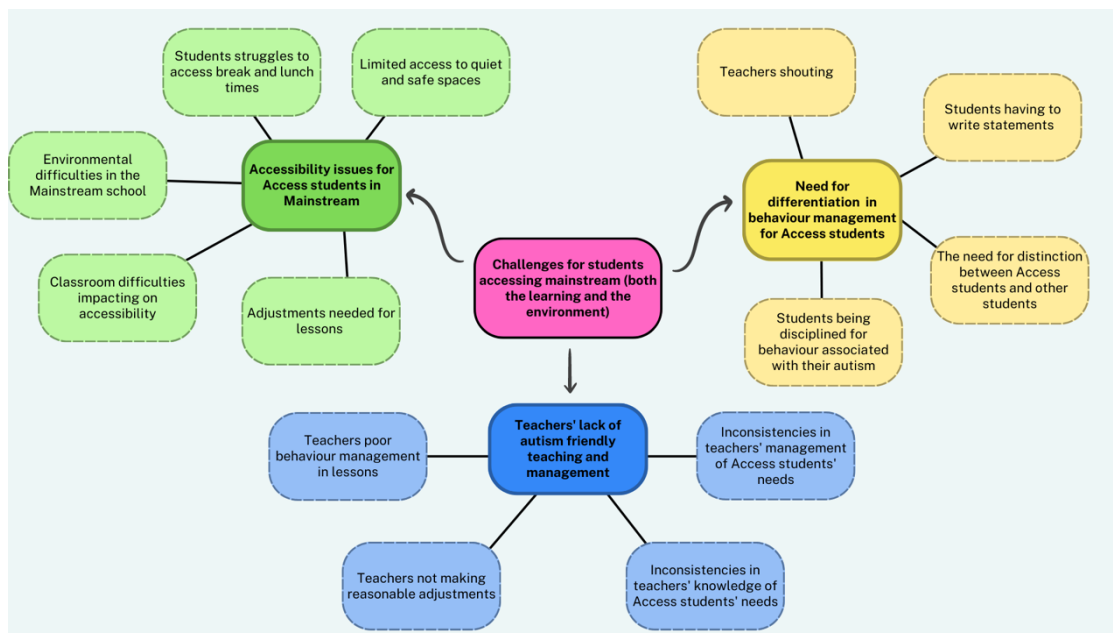


Figure 14: Theme 6 gathered from the young people's interviews.

4.4.6.1. Subtheme 1: Accessibility issues for access students in mainstream.

This subtheme was made up of smaller themes gathered from the young people interviews, that included reports from the interviewees experiencing struggles in accessing the mainstream setting due to environmental difficulties such as finding the school setting (one example being the corridors) too noisy and overwhelming, and finding the break and lunchrooms rowdy and dirty. Some of the young people openly shared that they experience difficulties related to accessing the classroom and feeling like there were not enough appropriate adjustments being made to the lessons. Finally, some interviewees shared that in the mainstream school they found there was not enough access to having quiet and safe spaces to work or access during break and lunchtimes.

“Because for History I go to sit at the back because I like to have my own space. Also, in year nine I sat at the back, and I done really well, but now I’ve sat in a different position and it’s a bit harder to see the writing” – Emma (paragraph 141).

“...You spoke about running away, when would you run away?” “Like if it got too much, like the lessons or shouting and stuff” – Discussion between the Researcher and Max (paragraphs 402-404).

“I don’t usually have somewhere safe to go...” – Jack (paragraph 325).

“Has anyone ever used them with you (visual aids)” “No, not really” – Discussion between the Researcher and Max (paragraphs 318-320).

4.4.6.2. Subtheme 2: Teachers’ lack of autism friendly teaching and management.

Across the interviews, the young people spoke about the difficulties that they experienced related to their interactions with the class teachers. While two interviewees reported that they felt the teachers had a good understanding of their needs, the rest of the students felt this was an area that needed improvement, sharing that although teachers receive information on each access student’s needs, in their experience they felt the teachers still did not understand how to support them, with some young people being under the assumption that the teachers simply had not read the information and if they did they could not remember it. The young people reported that this limited understanding then impacted on the teacher’s ability to interact and support the access students within the classroom, such as not making reasonable adjustments to learning

and supporting accessibility, and also resulting in teacher's poor management of the access students and general poor behaviour management in the lessons.

"The teacher says I'm not going to write on the board...usually she writes what people say, but this time she said we had to be listening. I have quite a few problems with this. Sometimes it's overwhelming, sometimes I shutdown, sometimes it's good to have references on the board and sometimes people are saying too many stuffs, my mind cannot process it." – Molly (paragraph 145).

"The assignment brief was jumbled up and I think this is not good if you know what I mean" – Molly (paragraph 146).

"There are some teachers that know (how to help in lessons) and some that don't" – Freddy (paragraph 61).

"Sometimes I get help...not from the class teacher because usually my class teacher is usually by her desk" – Jack (paragraph 297 and 301).

"...some people are just really disruptive in class" – Freddy (paragraph 261).

"I'm trying to focus, and everyone is shouting" – Matthew (paragraph 513).

4.4.6.3. Subtheme 3: Need for differentiation in behaviour management for access students.

Throughout the interviews, the young people highlighted the need for differentiation in the management of the behaviour of the access students in the mainstream setting. The young people outlined how there needs to be a clear distinction between the access students and the other students, with an emphasis on the students' individual needs and behaviours related to their autism. Some of the young people interviewed reported their experiences of getting into trouble for behaviours that were related to the autism, while others shared their experiences of teachers shouting at them or being made to write statements after difficult incidents, such as social conflict or behavioural incidents.

“I think that’s what mainstream teachers are trying to put, that you’re missing homework deliberately. It’s not that, I never missed homework but because I was always too anxious and too under pressure and I think this is oppression” – Molly (paragraph 201).

“And most people in the access, I don't know in the future but for now, are nearly always like good in class” – Freddy (paragraph 269).

“And now they are making me write statements and pinpoint them” – Max (paragraph 124).

“‘They wouldn't obey' and the school rules like, if you don't obey a teacher, it's a BM which is like a negative point. And you've got plus points which are... you know like in Harry Potter?’ – Freddy (paragraph 273).

4.4.7. Theme 7: Embedding SEND support across the school's ethos and culture.

Throughout the interviews, there was a strong call from the young people for more to be done to increase awareness, training, and support to be implemented to support students with autism or other special educational needs and disabilities. Many young people reported that more was to be done for SEND awareness and support to be properly imbedded into the school ethos and culture.

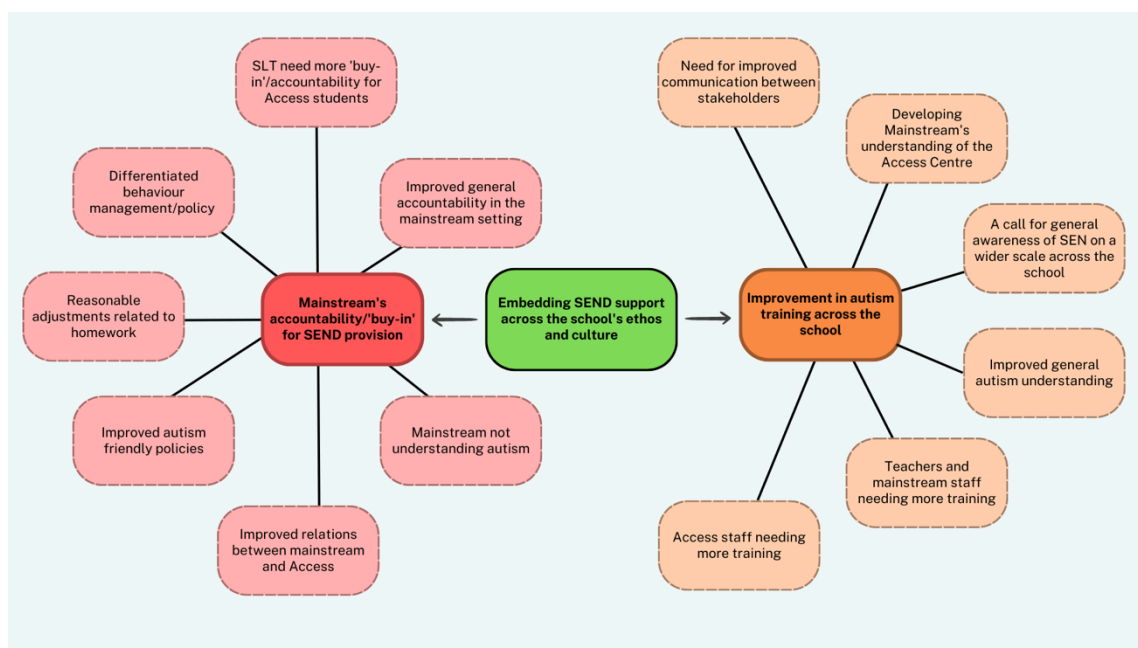


Figure 15: Theme 7 gathered from the young people's interviews.

4.4.7.1. Subtheme 1: Mainstream's accountability/'buy-in' for SEND provision.

Across the interviews with the young people, they highlighted how in their experience they felt that the mainstream setting (i.e., both the staff and the students) did not have enough of an understanding of autism and how to support this population of students within the whole school setting (including those who are not part of the access centre) and shared insight into their suggestions for how they felt the school could do more to hold more accountability and ‘buy-in’ for developing the whole school’s SEND provision. Some of the suggestions made by the young people included more being done to improve the general accountability in the mainstream by having the school senior leadership team being more involved and accountable for the SEND provision across the school, including taking more accountability for the access students. Other suggestions that were mentioned in the interviews included having differentiated and more autism friendly policies, particularly around the school behaviour and homework policies. A final suggestion mentioned was related to having better relationships between the access centre and the mainstream school.

“The school should consider the Equality Act...if a reasonable adjustment needs to be done, it needs to be done. It’s law...The school is quite strict...I think homework should be done but it should not be ‘oh you’ll get detention if you do not do it’...an extension should be always given...” Molly (paragraph 229).

“The main one is improving the relationship between the access centre and the mainstream, and teachers especially...” – Molly (paragraph 369).

4.4.7.2. Subtheme 2: Improvement in autism training across the school.

The findings across the young people's interviews demonstrated a high need for improvement to be made in relation to the autism training that is delivered across the school. The majority of the young people reported that they did not feel confident in the knowledge and training that the school staff receive, both those attached to the access centre and those that are in the mainstream school. They also reported that there is a need for better SEN awareness across the school. Furthermore, highlighting that better communication between all stakeholders (i.e., all those associated with the access students such as, their parents, teachers, access staff and any other professionals that may be working with the students), is vital. The aim is that information will be shared across the groups to enable everyone to have a shared understanding of the students' specific needs including how best to support them and resulting in more consistent support for students.

“The problem is, for the access centre to work well, it will also need to be incorporated in the mainstream training. I think, in my opinion, there needs to be more training for the access centre to work like clockwork” – Molly (paragraph 141).

“...the link between the access centre and mainstream needs to be improved, and the training with the teachers and students, I think this is what's maybe useful” – Molly (paragraph 337).

“So, they do this meeting with the parents, head of support, head of department and the teachers, but I think maybe instead of head of department, maybe the head of year, I think this should be done” – Molly (paragraph 369).

“...when you were saying that sometimes your teachers don't know how to help you or don't understand you. Were you talking about the access centre staff?” “Both” – Discussion between the Researcher and Max (paragraphs 214-216).

“What do you think could help?” “Maybe autism training to be a bit more flexible” – Discussion between the Researcher and Max (paragraphs 622-624).

“I think the teachers because they've had autism training. With some behaviours they're overconfident and think they know everything about it” – Freddy (paragraph 416).

“...before they enter especially when they're at contract by the school, they should have two or three weeks of training” – Molly (paragraph 341).

“This should include let's say quarterly training, especially that this is with an access centre. So, the training should be more intensive than other schools” – Molly (paragraph 177).

Table 8 summarises the findings taken from the interviews with the young people and categorises them in accordance with how they might work to address the research questions.

Table 8: Summary of findings from young people’s interviews related to the research questions.

How does the Access Centre (ARP attached to a mainstream secondary school) support the inclusion of young people with autism?		
What does the Access Centre offer in ways of support that would ordinarily not be available without it? (e.g., interventions, staff support, separate building etc.)	What might be some of the presenting challenges that act as barriers to implementing the Access Centre’s offer of support?	What might be some of the identified areas of improvements to support the inclusion of these young people?
The access centre is excellent, including being able to offer individualised support, behaviour differentiation, positive and trusting staff – student relationships, quiet and safe space, space for recreational times, space for learning, social integration.	Teacher’s ability to interact and support access students within their lessons. Teachers having a better understanding of students’ presenting needs and being able to offer better learning differentiation, reasonable adjustments, and general accessibility in accessing learning. Teachers’ lack of understanding of access students are having an impact on their ability to appropriately manage behaviour (e.g., missing homework) within the classroom.	More embedding of SEND support across the school’s ethos and culture, including improving mainstream’s accountability/’buy-in’ for SEND provision and Improvement in autism training across the school.
Support to build students’ sense of belonging,	Students struggle with their own sense of empowerment.	The access centre is not always perfect. A call for

<p>supporting them to establish friendships, develop their communication skills.</p>	<p>This leads to difficulties around communicating their needs effectively and recognising and accepting that what they may need support with. Also, their limited understanding of their own autism impacts on this further.</p>	<p>better differentiation around rules to match students' level of needs, allowing more access to peers outside of access to be allowed in the centre, have better access to resources, including better staff retention and recruitment.</p>
<p>Students' access to keyworkers is at the heart of the support offered and available. Keyworkers have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the students they work with, and this shows in their ability to support them and anticipate the student's needs.</p>	<p>Students struggling with a sense of difference. Also experiencing social difficulties around acceptance and understanding of their need to access support and engage with a keyworker in mainstream lessons or attend the access centre for further support.</p>	<p>Getting the balance of support right, recognising student growth, and knowing when to step in to support and when to pull back.</p> <p>Staff also developing their understanding and recognition of student needs.</p> <p>Students being more part of the process of understanding reasons behind interventions and collaborating on target setting and monitoring.</p>

4.5. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the findings gathered in all stages of this case study, namely phases one and two (i.e., review of setting documentations and five-day observation), phase three (i.e., focus group with staff in the access centre) and phase four (i.e., interviews with the young people). In the next section the researcher will aim to draw these themes together and discuss the how key relationships can be identified across themes, how they may impact on each other and how they may come together to address the research questions set out at the start of this study.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter aims to reflect on the process taken throughout this study and discuss the findings, while answering the research questions posed at the outset. The researcher aims to consider the findings in the context of government legislation and school systems supporting children and young people with autism. The researcher will also consider the findings in relation to the current available literature and psychological theories that may offer further context. The chapter will also aim to offer insight into the researcher's reflexivity throughout this study.

Finally, the researcher will consider the strength and limitations for this study and reflect on the implications of these findings in relation to the school environments and the support offered for this population of children and young people. Further considerations will include the implications for wider educational practice and the role of the Educational Psychologist. To conclude the researcher will put forward some possible directions for future research.

5.2. DISCUSSION OF THEMES

Throughout this study, the researcher aimed to address the main research question of 'how does the Access Centre (ARP attached to a mainstream secondary

school) support the inclusion of young people with autism?’ The findings from this research highlighted that this is a complex question, and while there are clear benefits to the Access Centre that support inclusive practices, there are also still apparent areas of improvement to help this work more effectively. The summary of these themes can be seen in figure 4 in the findings chapter.

There were several interesting common themes that emerged throughout the three phases of data analysis, and they may prove useful in considering the possible support available in an ARP and the potential issues that may present that impact on the delivery of this support and ultimately impact on the inclusion of young people with autism in a secondary mainstream school. These commonalities were grouped under four overarching themes, namely “it’s not stock standard care”, ‘the keyworker being at the heart of the delivery of support’, ‘us versus them’ and ‘Wider ethos and culture of the mainstream setting’.

5.2.1. “It’s not stock standard care.”

The very nature of having an ARP attached to a mainstream setting is to provide an offer of support to the population of children and young people with autism that aims to ease their integration into the mainstream environment (McAllister & Hadjri, 2013), that is often associated with stress and anxiety for this population (Whitaker, 2007). In addition research has suggested that having an ARP supports these CYP to access their learning (Hebron & Bond, 2017), while helping them to experience a sense of belonging by supporting their social development through developing their social connections and friendships (O’Hagan & Hebron, 2017).

Throughout the available literature on ARPs, there was an overall consensus that having access to these provisions in a mainstream setting, whether it be a primary or secondary setting, was associated with positive experiences where parents, staff and children and young people reported that the support gained from these provisions supported pupils to access the mainstream learning and social environment and provided a positive balance between integration in the mainstream setting and having sufficient support (Hebron & Bond, 2017). Literature findings emphasised that not only does an ARP offer a physical space, that was often described as a calm, relaxed environment which pupils used as a safe space away from the hustle and bustle of the mainstream environment (Halsall et al., 2021), but also stressed that the available offer of support for pupils were individualised to meet their unique presentation of needs (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

Further benefits highlighted in literature included staff having more expert training and knowledge (Hebron & Bond, 2017; Halsall et al., 2021; Landor & Perepa, 2017), the provision being a “pre-established network” of peers with commonalities that subsequently supports the development of social connections and friendships (O’Hagan & Hebron, 2017; Hebron & Bond, 2017; Halsall et al., 2021) and supporting a wider ethos of inclusion throughout the wider school setting (Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017).

Similarly, findings from this study highlighted that the availability of the ARP meant that students received an offer of support that was aimed at tailoring strategies

and interventions to meet individual students' needs. Throughout the focus group with the staff, they stressed the importance of individualising support for each student. This was not simply an aspect of their role but also an area of pride, whereby there was a real sense of belief and purpose for meeting students' specific areas of need. Staff emphasised that their students were at the heart of the ARP's delivery of service. Part of this was working collaboratively to create a space where students felt a sense of camaraderie and belonging both amongst staff and their peers in the provision.

This was further supported by the findings gathered in the interviews with the young people, whereby there was an overall acknowledgement that the support provided by the staff in the ARP helped them to engage with the mainstream setting, including accessing their learning. The young people's data aligned with that of previous research in that the ARP was seen as both a safe space separate from the large and noisy mainstream environment and a space that offers support that includes strategies and interventions such as those supporting emotional and social development, and facilitating reasonable adjustments that help them in aspects of the mainstream environment that they otherwise would find difficult to access.

When bearing in mind these findings in relation to the research questions, it is evident that for some children and young people this type of provision does work toward facilitating inclusion in a mainstream setting. However, it is important to mention that, as some findings from the literature reported, this provision might not work for all children and young people with autism, which will be discussed later. Nevertheless, in the context of this study and with the staff and young people who participated, there

was an overall sense that having access to an ARP attached to a mainstream setting had a positive impact on supporting them to access the mainstream environment, including accessing their learning and supporting their social and emotional development.

5.2.2. The keyworker is at the heart of the delivery of support.

When considering the term ‘delivery of support’, one might immediately think of different types of strategies and interventions being offered and less about the role of the adult delivering these. However, in this study, there was less of a focus on the specific types of strategies and interventions and how these were experienced by the young people, but rather a clear theme that emerged across the different phases of data collection was the role of the keyworker (i.e., the term used by the provision to describe a learning support assistant) in delivering these strategies and interventions, and more specifically how their role was central or at the heart of delivering the offered support.

According to the findings gathered in the focus group in this study, staff highlighted that they received specific training in autism and had a high level of knowledge on working with and supporting young people with autism. This was further supported by the available research where studies emphasised staff knowledge and training as being a key strength in these provisions (Fredrickson, 2010; Bond & Hebron, 2016; Hebron & Bond, 2017). While there was some difference in experience reported by the young people interviewed (which will be discussed more later), a key factor that facilitated the delivery of support was the relationships between the students and staff, and more specifically the relationships that were established with between the student and their designated keyworker. These positive relationships were reported to facilitate

openness and trust, that resulted in the keyworkers really knowing and understanding their student's areas of strength and needs and helped the student to be more accepting and trusting of the support offered. This relationship also facilitated more open communication, where the student's voice was part of decision-making process and considerations around offered support was more collaborative.

With the role of the keyworker being at the heart of the delivery of support, a key area of consideration that was raised throughout the findings was regarding the varied approaches taken to deliver support to the young people, particularly in the classroom and when supporting their access to learning. The researcher's observations showed that there was a need for consideration around how support is delivered as it was noted that the approaches taken by different keyworkers were not always consistent or well matched to the student needs. For example, the researcher noted that in some observations the students were either being under or over supported. This was then mirrored in the young people's interviews where some students were reporting feelings of frustration toward the support they received and were found to be struggling to engage in the offered support.

This is not an uncommon finding and similar difficulties have been reported in research on teaching assistants struggling to always navigate their delivery of support when supporting children and young people in the classroom (Webster et al., 2016). In this study keyworkers appeared to struggle to know when to provide direct and explicit support (i.e., support that is more hands on, such as breaking down instructions and providing explicit support on navigating a task) and when to generalise this support (i.e.,

where support is provided to more than just the target student and when the keyworker allows the student space to work more independently and offers support through check-ins) to reduce students perceived difference and being stigmatized (Landor & Perepa, 2017).

When considering this in relation to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of Zones of Proximal Development, it highlights the need for keyworkers to have a clear understanding of the distance between what the student can do and what they cannot do independently, so that they can make informed decisions regarding what mediation and scaffolding techniques might benefit the student and encourage more growth rather than overreliance (Dillon et al., 2016). Furthermore, having this understanding can inform decisions around suitability of strategies and may highlight gaps in students' skills that can be supported through teaching key skills such as those around developing metacognition and executive functioning skills that help support the student to develop their overall independence in the classroom. Subsequently, this may allow keyworkers to feel more confident to take a more generalised approach to the delivery of support in the classroom and may in turn reduce students' perceived difference and worries over being stigmatized.

While this is a key issue in the delivery of support, the researcher acknowledges that there are also clear barriers that impact this, including the pressures on keyworkers to make sure students engage in their learning, regardless of the students' affective state and the high expectation to support students to stay focused, follow instructions (Symes & Humphrey, 2011) and complete the assigned work (Blatchford et al., 2012b). An

additional barrier that was highlighted in this study was related to staff retention and recruitment. During this study there was a period of significant staff departure that was felt across the setting and not only was this a loss of positive relationships for some students, but also left the setting having the added pressure of attempting to recruit new members of staff into a role that requires skilled and motivated individuals, which was noted to not be as simple as one might like. This also manifested as the setting being understaffed and struggling to deliver the needed support to students' effectively, including having to compromise on some of the decisions related to matching students and staff (e.g., support staff not always being available, students not always being paired with staff who they trust or have positive relationships with, and staff being paired with student's that they know less about).

5.2.3. Us versus them.

Throughout the findings in this study there was a strong sense of dichotomy, where there was a clear divide between the ARP and the mainstream setting that manifested in an 'us versus them' sentiment. This sentiment appeared to originate from the acknowledgement of the challenges faced by students in the ARP when accessing the mainstream environment and this impacted on the position staff take up, and role they play in supporting their students.

Staff emphasised that students experience significant struggles on a daily basis when accessing a mainstream environment that is naturally stressful, including aspects around school policies and procedures (e.g., having to adhere to a strict behaviour policy), environmental stressors (e.g., the large, busy, and noisy environment) and the

challenges in accessing learning (e.g., difficulties with the pace of learning and poor differentiation of learning tasks). Many students interviewed mirrored similar experiences of finding the policies to be not autism-friendly and struggling to navigate the environment and access their learning. Because of this, staff reported having to take up positions of acting as ‘buffers’ between students and the mainstream, including acting as a bridge between student and teacher interactions. During the focus group, staff viewed this position as them being the ‘roses between the thorns’, in this case the thorns being a metaphor for the challenges associated with the mainstream environment.

One possible explanation for staff having to take up this position as the ‘rose’ where their role is to ‘bridge’ and ‘buffer’ could be the challenges noted in the findings where mainstream teachers were seen to struggle to take accountability and ownership to be part of the process of delivering support to the students from the ARP themselves. This issue was raised throughout all three phases of the data collection process, where inconsistencies in teachers’ interactions and engagement with students from the ARP were evident. This was emphasised by staff in the focus group where they reported that teachers had limited knowledge and understanding of how best to support their students. Although there was some discrepancy on this issue from the young people’s experiences (i.e., some young people reported that they felt well supported by their teachers), there were still some students who reported that the mainstream teachers did not know how to support them.

While it is important to acknowledge that the researcher takes up the position that it is very much the responsibility of teachers to know and understand the needs of

all students in their lessons and to be able to support these students through reasonable adjustments and differentiation and this position is clearly aligned with government guidelines and expectations (e.g., Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice, 2015), it is also important to consider the contextual factors that may be impacting on teachers being able to take up this role effectively. Research highlights that teachers are having to work in highly stressful environments (Brown et al., 2022) and navigate a significant amount of pressure to facilitate students' progression and achievement (Reeve, 2009). This does not take into account the added pressure and expectations that resulted from the Covid pandemic (Kim et al., 2021). When taken together one might argue "How far can teachers be expected to extend their responsibilities?" Furthermore, given that the very purpose of an ARP is to be providing specialised support for this population of children and young people, and the staff employed in these provisions are expected to have more expert knowledge and understanding, then, in the circumstances, one can see how staff are the 'roses' and their role is to be the 'buffer' and 'bridge' between the student and the mainstream environment.

Looking ahead, a consideration could be that in addition to ARP staff bridging the interactions between the student and teacher, there should also be the need for more work to be done to bridge the interactions between the ARP staff and the mainstream teachers with the aim of improving collaboration (Blatchford et al., 2012b). This was supported in research where survey findings highlighted limited opportunities to facilitate day-to-day preparations as a key barrier to interactions between teaching assistants and mainstream teachers (Webster et al., 2016). Key findings from the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) study outlined that 95 per cent of

secondary school teachers reported that they had no allocated planning time with teaching assistants, and instead any communication was done through ad hoc conversations during break/lunch times or in between lessons (Blatchford et al., 2008). This was found to have a direct impact on teaching assistants reporting feelings of being under-prepared for lessons and having to pick up on vital subject knowledge, information, and instructions during the teacher's whole class input (Webster & Blatchford, 2015). When these findings are considered in the current context of this study, where the Access Centre keyworkers are charged with supporting the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of the young people, and then also charged with supporting them to access their learning while managing any additional learning needs that may be present, it is unsurprising that interactions between keyworkers and mainstream staff will need to be a priority. With the focus being not only on supporting the keyworker to feel prepared to better support the young people's learning but also on the keyworkers and teachers having a shared understanding of the young people's presenting needs and how best to support them. Thus, aiming to create a collaborative approach between the teacher and keyworker to the young people's support (Webster et al., 2016).

5.2.4. Wider ethos and culture of the mainstream setting.

For children and young people with autism, the school itself is the key driver and agent of change. This notion is reflected in government legislation and guidelines for supporting special educational needs and disabilities (e.g., Equalities ACT, 2010; DfE, SEND code of practice, 2022). Given this, one might assume that for mainstream settings who have ARPs as part of their available offer to support students with autism

this should translate into the school having an ‘autism-friendly’ culture, including having a wider acceptance, knowledge and understanding of autism and the presenting difficulties often associated with this diagnosis, whilst also promoting inclusive practices that entail reasonable adjustments and differentiation in their overall policies and procedures.

Previous research findings appear to provide some evidence that supports this assumption and in the body of literature that was reviewed earlier, researchers had found that having an ARP as part of the mainstream setting resulted in an ethos of inclusion that not only extended into the classrooms (e.g., support strategies such as visual aids being incorporated), but also into the wider school setting, such as positive staff attitudes and a higher commitment from senior management (Bond & Hebron, 2016) and into the wider life of school, such as inclusion in school trips and outings (Hebron & Bond, 2017).

In contrast, the findings from this study highlighted the need for further consideration and improvement regarding the wider ethos and culture of the mainstream setting and emphasised this as one of the key factors acting as a barrier to the facilitation of effective inclusion for the young people in the ARP. Main areas of consideration were related to environmental barriers, such as school procedures and policies, barriers in the classroom (e.g., pace, implementation of support including differentiation, and behaviour management), as well as related to the overall knowledge, understanding and attitudes to supporting young people with autism.

Across the interviews with the young people this was a key discussion point, and they reported their experiences of struggling to navigate such a big and noisy environment, mentioning key difficulties in accessing common areas such as the lunch hall. This difficulty had a direct impact on their overall sense of social inclusion and sense of belonging, something reported to be experienced more in the ARP where they could access it during unstructured times rather than in the mainstream setting. The young people also shared their experiences of their mainstream teachers not always employing autism-friendly teaching, including teachers' limited consideration of reasonable adjustments and strategies used in the classroom. Furthermore, young people stressed the need for more training across the school setting, including some young people calling for further training of the ARP staff and mainstream students. This was with the aim of embedding a more autism friendly provision that extends to include the schools' policies and procedures.

It is important to acknowledge that there will always be a limit to the amount of reasonable adjustments and differentiation that can be possible within a mainstream environment before it stops being mainstream and starts to border on more specialist provision. However, some compromise and flexibility need to be available in order to find a balance that both meets the requirements and standards of a mainstream school but also meets the expected government legislation and guidelines related to inclusive practice for this population. While the researcher acknowledges that this will most certainly look different for different school settings, it is an important issue that should remain a priority for all settings.

5.3. STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A point of focus for the current study was to gain a real understanding and insight into the young people's views and experiences of receiving support from the ARP. This was a definite area of strength for this study and was aided by using visual supports to facilitate engagement, focus and to act as a nonverbal communication aid. This emphasised what is already known about how beneficial visual aids can be in supporting young people with autism to process and understand communication (NAS, 2020) and as an added benefit demonstrated how useful communication tools such as 'talking mats' (Murphy et al., 2010; *Talking Mats | Improving Communication, Improving Lives, n.d.*) can be when used to aid communication in a helpful structure that also takes the pressure off of having to verbally communicate and can be modified to meet a range of ages and areas of focus.

As already mentioned, the nature of a case study is for the researcher to immerse themselves into the focus setting to gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the phenomenon that they are studying. This was no different in this study and while the findings cannot be deemed generalisable due the study being bound by one context in a specific time period, the researcher will argue that through the process of triangulation whereby information was gathered through multiple sources (i.e., phases of data collection), the findings from this study can be used to inform ongoing and future practices. Furthermore, the findings can provide the local authority and other stakeholders in these settings aspects to consider when developing and maintaining other ARPs.

The findings from this study highlighted barriers related to the overall sense of dichotomy between the ARP and the mainstream setting, that appeared to be enhanced by the staff and students' experiences of issues related to the wider ethos and culture of the mainstream school. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to gain a more holistic view of the system as a whole, therefore the study did not include any views and experiences of the mainstream staff. Future research into this area may help provide a more rounded understanding of what might be some of the benefits and barriers experienced by mainstream staff when working alongside the staff from the ARP to support students to access the mainstream environment and their learning.

When taken together the overall positive views and experiences found in previous research and the findings from the current study, one might assume that having access to ARP support, enables all children and young people with autism to access mainstream education. However, this is a much more complex issue and there still remain some pupils who do not find this level of support enough to access a mainstream setting (Landor & Perepa, 2017). While the literature highlighted some possible reasons for this including factors such as the attitudes of mainstream staff (Fredrickson et al., 2010) and the difficulties that can present when having to cater to a range of presenting needs (Landor & Perepa, 2017), another possible consideration that was not highlighted in this body of literature and that was not a point of focus for the current study was regarding the model of support employed by different provisions.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are differences between what is known as an autism base and an ARP, with bases offering a model of 80 – 20 (i.e., 80 percent of time spent is in the base and the pupil accesses the mainstream for 20 percent) and ARPs offering a model of 20 – 80 (i.e., 20 percent of time spent is in the ARP, while there is an expectation that the student spends 80 percent of the time in the mainstream setting). Not much attention is given to this difference and in the body of literature there was no reference to this distinction and the terms base and provision appeared somewhat interchangeable. However, it appeared that there is a tendency for bases to be found more commonly in primary settings and ARPs tend to be found in secondary settings. This may create a challenge at the point of secondary school transition and the children from these bases are potentially expected to move into an ARP where the model of service delivery is vastly different. These different models of service delivery warrant consideration and should be a key area for future research.

5.4. IMPLICATIONS

The findings from the current study add to the growing body of research and literature that aims to develop insight into the facilitation of inclusion and inclusive practices through support systems such as ARPs that work to enable children and young people with autism to access mainstream educational settings. These findings have clear implications for highlighting the importance of empowering the voice of the young people who experience support from these provisions. In addition, these findings aim to emphasise the notion ‘how do we know something is actually working, if we don’t ask?’ The hope is that this will enable these systems (i.e., additional resource provisions and mainstream schools) and the people working within them to support these young people to understand the importance of collaborative practice, where the young people are part

of the process and decision making, rather than simply having ‘things’ done to them. Moreover, by highlighting the steps taken to facilitate inclusion into a mainstream setting by the current ARP in this study, and openly and honestly considering the areas of improvement that impact both the ARP and mainstream setting it is attached to, has direct implications for all stakeholders involved. For example, highlighting these steps can support the ARP and the mainstream school to consider what is going well and what might be the possible next steps for improvement.

In the context of this current study, the findings highlight that while it is apparent that the Access Centre does work to facilitate inclusion into the mainstream school for the young people by offering individualised support programmes, access to support from keyworkers and interventions to meet individual areas of social, emotional, and learning needs, just to name a few. The findings also highlighted key areas for improvement that have direct implications for both the Access Centre and the mainstream school. For example, an area of suggested improvement relating to the relationships between Access Centre staff/keyworkers and mainstream teachers has clear implications for the need for all staff and senior management to consider how time is protected to better facilitate more collaboration between keyworkers and teachers. Another example of an area of improvement is the need for considerations regarding the wider school’s ethos and culture on inclusion and autism awareness. Further considerations are needed for stakeholders to rethink areas of school policies and procedures and how these support inclusion for young people with autism or SEN in general. Furthermore, considerations into how to improve all staff training (e.g., staff are trained more frequently and to a higher level of knowledge and understanding) is

essential with the aim of developing better autism awareness throughout the school system.

This study has important implications for the role of the educational psychologist and highlights their responsibility in taking up the role of a researcher as part of their practice. It is commonly acknowledged that educational psychologists work in complex organisations (i.e., school systems) and with vulnerable children and their families that not only require key skills in consultation, assessment, and intervention, but also require the educational psychologist to have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the systems that they work with (e.g., schools' ways of functioning, understanding of policies and procedures, understanding the roles of staff within the schools etc.). The current study demonstrates that having an educational psychologist step into the role of a researcher can really support the process of 'seeing behind the curtain' of a school system (or in this case the Access Centre) which subsequently provides invaluable insight and knowledge and can then be used to inform decision making processes.

In this case, not only has this process supported the researcher to build stronger links and relationships with both the staff and students within the Access Centre but has facilitated the researcher to move out of the role of being the observer and move into the role as being an agent of change. This insight and knowledge of how the Access Centre functions can now inform possible next steps to collaboratively working toward organisational change such as identifying areas for further training (e.g., developing effective keyworker support). In addition, this insight and knowledge highlights the

need for collaboratively working with both the Access Centre and the mainstream setting. The aim of this collaborative working is that it will result in a more integrated system of support for these young people (e.g., through consultation with senior management for both the Access Centre and the mainstream setting and offering further training opportunities to develop all staff's knowledge on understanding and supporting young people with autism).

It is well known throughout research that transition from primary to secondary school can be a challenging period for young people with autism (Murin et al., 2016). Challenges, such as the overall difference between settings, which include differences in environment, rules and expectations and meeting new people (both new staff and peers) can all increase the young person's vulnerability and anxiety (Mandy et al., 2015). Given these challenges, EPs are generally well positioned to support schools and young people to manage these transitions and for the most part already do so by working with schools to facilitate transition packages that include individualised transition plans, consisting of 'screening questionnaires', 'bridging meetings' and 'pupil profiles' (Murin et al., 2016) or through programmes such as The Systematic Transition in Education Programme for ASD (STEP-ASD) (Mandy et al., 2015). Moreover, Educational Psychologists may consider taking up a more proactive role in supporting the build-up to transition and point of entry into secondary placements. EPs may play a specific role in supporting resource bases attached to primary schools to consider their models of service delivery, where the focus could be around considering how might these resource bases work toward gradually reducing their support in preparation for transitions to secondary placements, with the aim of progressively building up the child's skills and tolerance for managing more time spent in the mainstream setting. EPs

may then be positioned to support the ARPs attached to mainstream secondary schools to design and implement a transition package that consists of a gradual build up into accessing the mainstream school (i.e., where young people may start on a model of support similar to their previous resource base, where the expectation of being in the mainstream school is reduced and slowly built up). There is no doubt that this will need to be carefully managed and considerate of the individual presenting needs of the young people. However, where possible, this could mean that young people may be in a position where they are capable of accessing ARPs attached to mainstream secondary schools, rather than only having the option of attending a specialist school for autism, which are few and far between and often are oversubscribed.

Further implications extend to the local authority who hold responsibility for these provisions and the support that they offer. The findings from the current study build on what is already known about these provisions and can inform local authorities' decision-making processes regarding whether having ARPs in mainstream settings within their local community is beneficial and what might need to be done to ensure these provisions function to the best of their abilities. In this case, part of the rationale for this study is that the local authority is working toward reducing local expenditure in line with the Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve Agreement' (DfE, 2022) and part of this is that they are considering expanding their local autism provision through developing more ARPs in their mainstream settings. The findings from this study can be used to inform this decision-making process and can be used to model key areas that can work well and highlight key areas that may need further consideration when developing these provisions.

Following this research and in the run up to finalising this thesis, the findings from this study were used to inform the researcher's work as the link EP for the ARP setting. Specifically, the findings from this study were used to inform possible next steps in termly planning meetings. This resulted in the researcher contracting and delivering training to the ARP staff with the aim of maximising the effectiveness of the support they deliver to the ARP students. This training was based off the 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants' training (Webster et al., 2016), but was modified to meet the needs of the ARP staff. Furthermore, the researcher was requested to present the findings to the Educational Psychology Service PEP and the newly appointed ARP Lead Practitioner for the Local Authority, who is responsible for overseeing all the ARPs within the borough. The aim of this presentation was to inform thinking around the practices of the ARP, to share information into how young people might be supported in these settings and to inform possible next steps.

5.5. DISSEMINATION

The researcher aims to share the findings from this study, through a presentation, with the staff and the manager from the ARP with the aim of sharing the valuable insight gained from the interviews with the young people. With the aim of supporting a shared understanding, the researcher aims to invite the senior leadership team from the mainstream school to join the presentation. The young people who participated in this study will be invited to a small group feedback session, where key themes will be shared.

Furthermore, the researcher intends to present the findings to the Education Psychology Service team and invite any local education authority stakeholders that may be interested in the findings. In this presentation the researcher aims to highlight the benefits and potential barriers to ARPs with the hope of informing future practice. Finally, the researcher aims to highlight the role of the EPs in supporting these provisions and mainstream settings to work collaboratively to support children and young people autism and to outline the role that EP's may have in supporting young people through the transition between a resource base to a resource provision.

5.6. RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

The very nature of a case study is to take on the process of immersion, whereby the role of the researcher is to be embedded and part of the environment with the study's participants (Merriam, 1998). The aim of this immersive process is to enable the researcher to gain a real sense and understanding of what participants experience and in this case for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how the young people experienced the support offered by the Access Centre (ARP), with a focus on what they might find helpful that facilitates inclusion and what they may experience as barriers to this inclusion (i.e., being able to access the mainstream environment and their learning).

Throughout this study the researcher found herself having to be mindful of the balance between subjectivity and objectivity. This subjectivity was not only the beliefs and values that the researcher already held from past experiences working with this population of children and young people, including the experience and insight that had already come from working as the link EP for the ARP, but also from the process of the

carrying out this case study. While it is clear that there are benefits to the immersive aspect of a case study, it inadvertently had an impact on the researcher's ability to remain objective and this was particularly experienced throughout the phases of data collection. During these phases the researcher found herself mirroring the staff's feelings of anxiety, helplessness, and frustration, to the point where in the researcher's reflexive diary there was a noticeable pattern of the researcher adopting the staff's sentiment of 'us versus them' and 'all good or all bad'. These feelings of anxiety and frustration impacted on the researcher, and she found herself struggling to maintain the boundary of staying in the role of the researcher, and finding herself wanting to take up her role of the EP which is more solution focused and problem solving.

The researcher found it helpful to apply a psychoanalytic lens to critically reflect on the process of mirroring the feelings and attitudes of the staff within the ARP and mainly drew from Melanie Klein's (1935) theory of object relations. In the same way that the infant holds a strong position of splitting and polarising things into either something it loves or something it hates, otherwise referred to as the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1946), the researcher mirrored the staffs divided feelings between the ARP and mainstream setting (i.e., the ARP being all good and working hard to promote inclusion, while the mainstream environment was viewed as all things bad and difficult, and not aligning with practices that support inclusion). These feelings were further entrenched by the researcher's previous experiences working with this population where the belief was held that mainstream settings were environments that often struggled to be open to inclusive practice. This led to the researcher experiencing feelings of needing to act to problem solve and find solutions to the challenges that were being uncovered

throughout the ARP and ultimately led to constantly having to self-monitor the boundaries of being a researcher where the aim is to simply observe and gain insight.

Through the process of data analysis, these unconscious processes started to become more conscious and through critical reflection the researcher was able to start the process of resolving this ‘splitting’ and progressed to the next phase of moving into what Klein (1946) terms the depressive position, where the researcher was able to balance out the good and bad qualities and critically reflect on what feelings and beliefs were her own and what belonged to the staff. This allowed the researcher to take more of a step back and view the situation from multiple perspectives, which ultimately allowed for a more holistic view of an ARP and the context (i.e., mainstream secondary school) in which it functions, and this was reflected in the discussion above. Furthermore, the insight gained from this immersive experience can be likened to ‘seeing behind the curtain’, in the sense that it provides a more experiential insight into the functioning of an ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school and the experiences of individuals within this complex system.

In conclusion, often there is a belief that the ‘gold standard’ of research is considered to be more in line with experimental approaches to research such as randomised control trials (Fox, 2003), however given the findings from this study and the journey of reflexivity it is the hope of the researcher that one might see that experiential learning through immersive research and the emotionality of the researcher can offer valuable insight that can inform psychological practice when working with complex systems.

5.7. CONCLUSION

With the continued rise in children and young people being diagnosed with autism and a large proportion of this population attending mainstream educational settings, this thesis was concerned with the topic of inclusive practices in these settings and in particular the available support options that aimed to help facilitate inclusion for this population of children and young people. The aim of this study was to address the question ‘does it do what it says on the tin?’ and the key focus was to specifically explore the experiences of young people in accessing an ARP (Access Centre) attached to a secondary mainstream school, and to explore how this provision may or may not support inclusion in the mainstream environment and help these students to access their learning.

This was achieved through an exploratory case study whereby data was gathered and triangulated through three phases of data collection, namely through observations, a focus group with staff and interviews with young people accessing the support from the ARP. Collected data was then analysed through reflexive thematic analysis. Findings from this study reflected those found in previous research, whereby the overall consensus was found to indicate that ARPs provide several benefits that support children and young people to access a mainstream environment, including facilitating strategies and interventions that not only support them to access their learning in the classroom, but also aim to develop their social and emotional development and independence skills.

Findings from this study also highlighted the central role that keyworkers have in facilitating the delivery of support offered by the ARP and emphasised their role in tailoring strategies and interventions to meet the individual needs of each student. Findings indicated that this was further supported by the positive and trusting relationships between the students and their keyworkers. While there were clear benefits to having access to an ARP noted by both the staff and young people who participated in this study, this was not without challenge and key areas of improvements were raised that included considerations regarding the challenges of two systems (i.e., an ARP and mainstream school) working within one organisation to support vulnerable students.

This study demonstrated that there is a potential for a divide when two systems come together and highlighted the need for careful consideration and support to help these systems to work more collaboratively. Furthermore, findings indicated the need for vital work to be done to ensure a wider school ethos and culture that prioritises training for all staff working with this population and recognises the vital importance of encouraging ongoing awareness throughout the school that extends to all students. Therefore, given the findings one could conclude that it does in many ways do what it says on the tin, however, there is always room for improvement and this study demonstrated that being open to ‘look behind the curtain’ and facilitate opportunities to include the young people’s voice can pave the way for growth.

These findings have significant implications for all stakeholders involved in working with this population of children and young people and within these ARPs and mainstream settings. There is a clear emphasis on the importance for educational

psychologists to take up the role of a researcher with the aim of exploring the way these complex systems function by gaining holistic views that inform the process toward organisational improvement and change that enhance inclusive practices for children and young people with autism.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW SEARCH JOURNEY

Search 1 Terms used:

Autism or ASC or ASC or autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition or aspergers

Additional resource provision or resource provision or resource unit or resource base or additional education provision or specialist resource base or specialist resource unit

Mainstream* or secondary school or secondary education or high school

Limiters included: English, peer reviewed articles.

Databases searched included: APA PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Eric, education source.

Total articles found: 3

Number:	Articles Found
1.	Supporting students with autism and PDA: a personal perspective from a 14-year-old student. Carroll, Finley. Good Autism Practice, May2019, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p27-28, 2p, Database: Education Source
2.	Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parent and pupil perceptions

	Hebron, Judith; Bond, Caroline. European Journal of Special Needs Education , Nov2017, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p556-571, 16p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569, Database: Education Source
3.	Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: staff perceptions and satisfaction Bond, Caroline; Hebron, Judith. European Journal of Special Needs Education , May2016, Vol. 31 Issue 2, p250-263, 14p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543, Database: Education Source

Search 2 Terms used:

Autism or ASC or ASC or autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition or aspergers

Additional resource provision or resource provision or resource unit or resource base or additional education provision or specialist resource base or specialist resource unit

Mainstream* or secondary school or secondary education or high school or [primary school or school](#)

Limiters included: English, peer reviewed articles.

Databases searched included: APA PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Eric, education source.

Total articles found: 13

Number:	Articles Found
1.	‘This school is 100% not autistic friendly!’ Listening to the voices of primary-aged autistic children to understand what autistic primary school should be like. By: Cunningham, Melanie. International Journal of Inclusive Education , Oct2022, Vol. 26 Issue 12, p1211-1225, 15p; DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2020.1789767, Database: Education Source
2.	Everyday experiences of inclusion in primary resourced provision: The voices of autistic pupils and their teachers.

	<p>Warren, Amber; Buckingham, Kate; Parsons, Sarah; European Journal of Special Needs Education, Vol 36(5), Dec, 2021 pp. 803-818. Publisher: Taylor & Francis; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
3.	<p>“Camouflaging” by adolescent autistic girls who attend both mainstream and specialist resource classes: perspectives of girls, their mothers, and their educators.</p> <p>By: Halsall, Joanne; Clarke, Chris; Crane, Laura. Autism: The International Journal of Research & Practice, Oct2021, Vol. 25 Issue 7, p2074-2086, 13p; DOI: 10.1177/13623613211012819, Database: Education Source</p>
4.	<p>An evaluation of sensory diets and the impact on sensory processing, engagement, and the wellbeing of autistic children</p> <p>Barnsley, Bethany; Bates, Lucy. Good Autism Practice, May2021, Vol. 22 Issue 1, p38-58, 21p, Database: Education Source</p>
5.	<p>Developing a case mix classification for child and adolescent mental health services: the influence of presenting problems, complexity factors and service providers on number of appointments</p> <p>Martin, Peter; Davies, Roger; Macdougall, Amy; Ritchie, Benjamin; Vostanis, Panos; Whale, Andy; Wolpert, Miranda. Journal of Mental Health. Aug2020, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p431-438. 8p. 4 Charts, 2 Graphs. DOI: 10.1080/09638237.2017.1370631. Database: Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection</p>
6.	<p>Supporting students with autism and PDA: a personal perspective from a 14-year-old student.</p> <p>Carroll, Finley. Good Autism Practice, May2019, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p27-28, 2p, Database: Education Source</p>
7.	<p>Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parent and pupil perceptions</p> <p>Hebron, Judith; Bond, Caroline. European Journal of Special Needs Education, Nov2017, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p556-571, 16p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569, Database: Education Source</p>

8.	<p>Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: staff perceptions and satisfaction</p> <p>Bond, Caroline; Hebron, Judith. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, May2016, Vol. 31 Issue 2, p250-263, 14p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543, Database: Education Source</p>
9.	<p>Editorial</p> <p>Garner, Philip. <i>Support for Learning</i>, May2013, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p50-51, 2p; DOI: 10.1111/1467-9604.12017, Database: Education Source</p>
10.	<p>Inclusion and the special educational needs (SEN) resource base in mainstream schools: physical factors to maximise effectiveness.</p> <p>McAllister, Keith; Hadjri, Karim; <i>Support for Learning</i>, Vol 28(2), May, 2013 pp. 57-65. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
11.	<p>Peer acceptance of children with language and communication impairments in a mainstream primary school: associations with type of language difficulty, problem behaviours and a change in placement organisation.</p> <p>Laws, Glynis; Bates, Geraldine; Feuerstein, Maïke. <i>Child Language Teaching and Therapy</i>, v28 n1 p73-86 Feb 2012. (EJ957498), Database: ERIC</p>
12.	<p>Inclusive provision options for pupils on the autistic spectrum.</p> <p>Frederickson, Norah; Jones, Alice P.; Lang, Jane; <i>Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs</i>, Vol 10(2), Jun, 2010 pp. 63-73. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
13.	<p>Exploration of a 'double-jeopardy' hypothesis within working memory profiles for children with specific language impairment.</p> <p>Briscoe, J.; Rankin, P. M.; <i>International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders</i>, Vol 44(2), Mar, 2009 pp. 236-250. Publisher: Informa Healthcare; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>

Search 3 Terms used:

Autism or ASC or ASC or autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition or aspergers (TI)

Additional resource provision or **resourced provision or resource provision or resource unit or resource base or additional education provision or specialist resource base or specialist resource unit (AB)**

Mainstream* or secondary school or secondary education or high school or primary school or school or **primary education (AB)**

Limiters included: English, peer reviewed articles.

Databases searched included: APA PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Eric, education source.

Total articles found: 5

Number:	Articles
1.	<p>Creating ‘autism friendly’ education in an inclusive mainstream primary school</p> <p>Lloyd, Eleanor. Good Autism Practice, Oct2019, Vol. 20 Issue 2, p13-26, 14p, Database: Education Source</p>
2.	<p>Supporting students with autism and PDA: a personal perspective from a 14-year-old student.</p> <p>Carroll, Finley. Good Autism Practice, May2019, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p27-28, 2p, Database: Education Source</p>
3.	<p>Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parent and pupil perceptions</p>

	Hebron, Judith; Bond, Caroline. European Journal of Special Needs Education , Nov2017, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p556-571, 16p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569, Database: Education Source
4.	Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: staff perceptions and satisfaction Bond, Caroline; Hebron, Judith. European Journal of Special Needs Education , May2016, Vol. 31 Issue 2, p250-263, 14p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543, Database: Education Source
5.	Do resource bases enable social inclusion of students with Aspergers syndrome in a mainstream school. Landor, Floriane; Perepa, Prithvi; Support for Learning, Vol 32(2), May, 2017 pp. 129-143. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo

Search 4 Terms used:

Autism or ASD or ASC or autism spectrum disorder or autism spectrum condition or aspergers (no field selected)

Additional resource provision or **resourced provision or resource provision or resource unit or resource base or additional education provision or specialist resource base or specialist resource unit or **alternative education provision or resourced autism provision** (no field selected)**

Mainstream* or secondary school or secondary education or high school or primary school or school or **primary education (no field selected)**

Limiters included: English, peer reviewed articles.

Databases searched included: APA PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, Eric, education source.

Total articles found: 18 without doubles.

Number:	Articles
1.	<p>‘This school is 100% not autistic friendly!’ Listening to the voices of primary-aged autistic children to understand what autistic primary school should be like.</p> <p>By: Cunningham, Melanie. <i>International Journal of Inclusive Education</i>, Oct2022, Vol. 26 Issue 12, p1211-1225, 15p; DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2020.1789767, Database: Education Source</p>
2.	<p>Everyday experiences of inclusion in primary resourced provision: The voices of autistic pupils and their teachers.</p> <p>Warren, Amber; Buckingham, Kate; Parsons, Sarah; <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, Vol 36(5), Dec, 2021 pp. 803-818. Publisher: Taylor & Francis; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
3.	<p>“Camouflaging” by adolescent autistic girls who attend both mainstream and specialist resource classes: perspectives of girls, their mothers, and their educators.</p> <p>By: Halsall, Joanne; Clarke, Chris; Crane, Laura. <i>Autism: The International Journal of Research & Practice</i>, Oct2021, Vol. 25 Issue 7, p2074-2086, 13p; DOI: 10.1177/136236132111012819, Database: Education Source</p>
4.	<p>An evaluation of sensory diets and the impact on sensory processing, engagement and the well being of autistic children.</p> <p>Barnsley, Bethany; Bates, Lucy. <i>Good Autism Practice</i>, May2021, Vol. 22 Issue 1, p38-58, 21p, Database: Education Source</p>
5.	<p>Increasing Early childhood screening in primary care through a quality improvement collaborative</p> <p>Flower, Kori B.; Massie, Sara; Janies, Kathryn; Bassewitz, Jane B.; Coker, Tumaini R.; Gillespie, Robert J.; Macias, Michelle M.; Whitaker, Toni M.; Zubler, Jennifer; Steinberg, Darcy; DeStigter, Laura; Earls, Marian F.. <i>Pediatrics</i>, Sep2020, Vol. 146 Issue 3, p1-11, 11p; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2019-2328, Database: Education Source</p>
6.	<p>Creating ‘autism friendly’ education in an inclusive mainstream primary school</p>

	Lloyd, Eleanor. Good Autism Practice, Oct2019, Vol. 20 Issue 2, p13-26, 14p, Database: Education Source
7.	Supporting students with autism and PDA: a personal perspective from a 14-year-old student. Carroll, Finley. Good Autism Practice, May2019, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p27-28, 2p, Database: Education Source
8.	Perceptions of friendship among adolescents with autism spectrum conditions in a mainstream high school resource provision. O'Hagan, Siobhan; Hebron, Judith. European Journal of Special Needs Education , Aug2017, Vol. 32 Issue 3, p314-328, 15p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1223441, Database: Education Source
9.	Do resource bases enable social inclusion of students with Aspergers syndrome in a mainstream school. Landor, Floriane; Perepa, Prithvi; Support for Learning, Vol 32(2), May, 2017 pp. 129-143. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo
10.	Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parent and pupil perceptions Hebron, Judith; Bond, Caroline. European Journal of Special Needs Education , Nov2017, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p556-571, 16p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569, Database: Education Source
11.	Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: staff perceptions and satisfaction Bond, Caroline; Hebron, Judith. European Journal of Special Needs Education , May2016, Vol. 31 Issue 2, p250-263, 14p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543, Database: Education Source
12.	Editorial Garner, Philip. Support for Learning, May2013, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p50-51, 2p; DOI: 10.1111/1467-9604.12017, Database: Education Source
13.	Inclusion and the special educational needs (SEN) resource base in mainstream schools: physical factors to maximise effectiveness.

	McAllister, Keith; Hadjri, Karim; Support for Learning, Vol 28(2), May, 2013 pp. 57-65. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo
14.	<p>Peer acceptance of children with language and communication impairments in a mainstream primary school: associations with type of language difficulty, problem behaviours and a change in placement organisation.</p> <p>Laws, Glynis; Bates, Geraldine; Feuerstein, Maïke. Child Language Teaching and Therapy, v28 n1 p73-86 Feb 2012. (EJ957498), Database: ERIC</p>
15.	<p>ADHD and other associated developmental problems in children with mild mental retardation. The use of the 'Five-To-Fifteen' questionnaire in a population-based sample.</p> <p>Lindblad, Ida; Gillberg, Christopher; Fernell, Elisabeth; Research in Developmental Disabilities, Vol 32(6), Nov-Dec, 2011 pp. 2805-2809. Publisher: Elsevier Science; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
16.	<p>Inclusive provision options for pupils on the autistic spectrum.</p> <p>Frederickson, Norah; Jones, Alice P.; Lang, Jane; Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, Vol 10(2), Jun, 2010 pp. 63-73. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
17.	<p>Exploration of a 'double-jeopardy' hypothesis within working memory profiles for children with specific language impairment.</p> <p>Briscoe, J.; Rankin, P. M.; International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, Vol 44(2), Mar, 2009 pp. 236-250. Publisher: Informa Healthcare; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>
18.	<p>'There is more flexibility to meet my needs': Educational experiences of autistic young people in mainstream and alternative education provision.</p> <p>Goodall, Craig; Support for Learning, Vol 34(1), Feb, 2019 pp. 4-33. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>

Summary of articles found from all searches and their relevance to the literature review question.

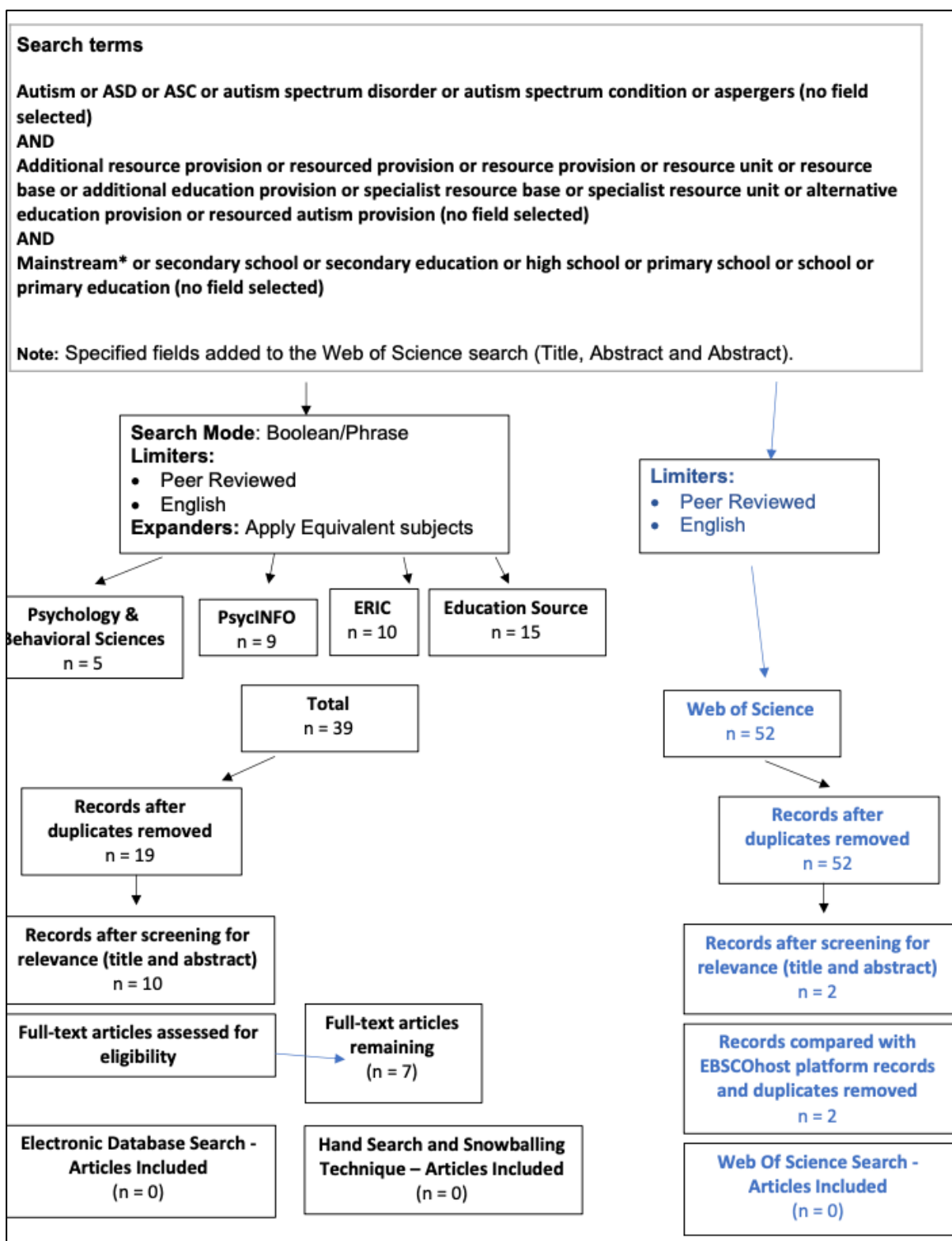
Number:	Articles	Relevance to literature question.
1.	<p>‘This school is 100% not autistic friendly!’ Listening to the voices of primary-aged autistic children to understand what autistic primary school should be like.</p> <p>By: Cunningham, Melanie. <i>International Journal of Inclusive Education</i>, Oct2022, Vol. 26 Issue 12, p1211-1225, 15p; DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2020.1789767, Database: Education Source</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
2.	<p>Everyday experiences of inclusion in primary resourced provision: The voices of autistic pupils and their teachers.</p> <p>Warren, Amber; Buckingham, Kate; Parsons, Sarah; <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, Vol 36(5), Dec, 2021 pp. 803-818. Publisher: Taylor & Francis; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	Yes
3.	<p>“Camouflaging” by adolescent autistic girls who attend both mainstream and specialist resource classes: perspectives of girls, their mothers, and their educators.</p> <p>By: Halsall, Joanne; Clarke, Chris; Crane, Laura. <i>Autism: The International Journal of Research & Practice</i>, Oct2021, Vol. 25 Issue 7, p2074-2086, 13p; DOI: 10.1177/13623613211012819, Database: Education Source</p>	Yes.
4.	<p>An evaluation of sensory diets and the impact on sensory processing, engagement and the well-being of autistic children.</p> <p>Barnsley, Bethany; Bates, Lucy. <i>Good Autism Practice</i>, May2021, Vol. 22 Issue 1, p38-58, 21p, Database: Education Source</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
5.	<p>Increasing Early childhood screening in primary care through a quality improvement collaborative</p> <p>Flower, Kori B.; Massie, Sara; Janies, Kathryn; Bassewitz, Jane B.; Coker, Tumaini R.; Gillespie, Robert J.; Macias, Michelle M.; Whitaker, Toni M.; Zubler, Jennifer; Steinberg, Darcy; DeStigter, Laura; Earls, Marian F. <i>Pediatrics</i>, Sep2020, Vol. 146 Issue 3, p1-11, 11p; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2019-2328, Database: Education Source</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.

6.	<p>Creating 'autism friendly' education in an inclusive mainstream primary school</p> <p>Lloyd, Eleanor. Good Autism Practice, Oct2019, Vol. 20 Issue 2, p13-26, 14p, Database: Education Source</p>	Not a study, a paper on setting up a resource provision.
7.	<p>Supporting students with autism and PDA: a personal perspective from a 14-year-old student.</p> <p>Carroll, Finley. Good Autism Practice, May2019, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p27-28, 2p, Database: Education Source</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
8.	<p>Perceptions of friendship among adolescents with autism spectrum conditions in a mainstream high school resource provision.</p> <p>O'Hagan, Siobhan; Hebron, Judith. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, Aug2017, Vol. 32 Issue 3, p314-328, 15p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1223441, Database: Education Source</p>	Yes
9.	<p>Do resource bases enable social inclusion of students with Aspergers syndrome in a mainstream school.</p> <p>Landor, Floriane; Perepa, Prithvi; Support for Learning, Vol 32(2), May, 2017 pp. 129-143. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	Yes
10.	<p>Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: parent and pupil perceptions</p> <p>Hebron, Judith; Bond, Caroline. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, Nov2017, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p556-571, 16p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569, Database: Education Source</p>	Yes
11.	<p>Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: staff perceptions and satisfaction</p> <p>Bond, Caroline; Hebron, Judith. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, May2016, Vol. 31 Issue 2, p250-263, 14p; DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543, Database: Education Source</p>	Yes

12.	<p>Editorial</p> <p>Garner, Philip. Support for Learning, May2013, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p50-51, 2p; DOI: 10.1111/1467-9604.12017, Database: Education Source</p>	No, not relevant in any way.
13.	<p>Inclusion and the special educational needs (SEN) resource base in mainstream schools: physical factors to maximise effectiveness.</p> <p>McAllister, Keith; Hadjri, Karim; Support for Learning, Vol 28(2), May, 2013 pp. 57-65. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	No, this is not a study, but rather an article.
14.	<p>Peer acceptance of children with language and communication impairments in a mainstream primary school: associations with type of language difficulty, problem behaviours and a change in placement organisation.</p> <p>Laws, Glynis; Bates, Geraldine; Feuerstein, Maike. Child Language Teaching and Therapy, v28 n1 p73-86 Feb 2012. (EJ957498), Database: ERIC</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
15.	<p>ADHD and other associated developmental problems in children with mild mental retardation. The use of the 'Five-To-Fifteen' questionnaire in a population-based sample.</p> <p>Lindblad, Ida; Gillberg, Christopher; Fernell, Elisabeth; Research in Developmental Disabilities, Vol 32(6), Nov-Dec, 2011 pp. 2805-2809. Publisher: Elsevier Science; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
16.	<p>Inclusive provision options for pupils on the autistic spectrum.</p> <p>Frederickson, Norah; Jones, Alice P.; Lang, Jane; Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, Vol 10(2), Jun, 2010 pp. 63-73. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	Yes.
17.	<p>Exploration of a 'double-jeopardy' hypothesis within working memory profiles for children with specific language impairment.</p> <p>Briscoe, J.; Rankin, P. M.; International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders, Vol 44(2), Mar, 2009 pp. 236-250. Publisher: Informa Healthcare; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.

18.	<p>Developing a case mix classification for child and adolescent mental health services: the influence of presenting problems, complexity factors and service providers on number of appointments</p> <p>Martin, Peter; Davies, Roger; Macdougall, Amy; Ritchie, Benjamin; Vostanis, Panos; Whale, Andy; Wolpert, Miranda. Journal of Mental Health. Aug2020, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p431-438. 8p. 4 Charts, 2 Graphs. DOI: 10.1080/09638237.2017.1370631. Database: Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection</p>	No, no relevance to additional resource provisions.
19.	<p>‘There is more flexibility to meet my needs’: Educational experiences of autistic young people in mainstream and alternative education provision.</p> <p>Goodall, Craig; Support for Learning, Vol 34(1), Feb, 2019 pp. 4-33. Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; [Journal Article], Database: APA PsycInfo</p>	No, alternative education provision is not the same as additional resource provisions.

7.2. APPENDIX B: PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM



7.3. APPENDIX C: CRITICAL APPRAISAL TOOL (CASP)

CASP Questions	Landor & Perepa, (2017)	Bond & Hebron, (2016)	Warren et al. (2020)	Hebron & Bond, (2017)	Halsall et al. (2021)	Frederickson et al. (2010)	O'Hagan & Hebron. (2016)
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes. The aim of this study was to build upon existing knowledge around factors which facilitate social inclusion of students with Asperger syndrome and to evaluate whether a resource base can enhance or hinder this process within a	Yes. The aim of this longitudinal study was to explore the views of staff working in 5 primary and 3 secondary school resource provisions in one local authority. A secondary aim was to extend the application of the model by Bronfenbrenner by focusing specifically on mainstream schools with	Yes. The aim of this small-scale study was to provide insights into how one resourced provision is experienced by primary-aged children and their teachers.	Yes. This study aimed to focus on gathering pupil and parent perspectives of mainstream schools with resource provision during their first year of admission (part of a larger longitudinal study).	Yes. The aim of this study was to explore how autistic girls who attend an ASD resource base attached to secondary mainstream schools may use differing camouflaging across different school contexts.	Yes. This study aimed to investigate the provisions that exist in mainstream education placements for pupils with ASD in schools with and without an autism resource base and sought to answer as listed in appendix D.	Yes. The study aimed to address the gaps within the current literature on influences for the development of friendships for adolescents with autism both at a contextual and individual level.

	secondary school setting	resource provisions as they develop over the period of three years.					
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes. Multiple sources of information were gathered.	Yes.	Yes. The use of a qualitative visual storyboard methodology was used to aid pupil communication. A multi-informant approach was also used.	Yes.	Yes. They used a multi-informant approach.	Yes.	Yes.
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Yes. The researcher used a qualitative case study design as it provides an intense and focused exploration of the situation.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. The researcher used a qualitative case study design as this was deemed the most suitable approach to investigate the individual and the contextual influences of friendship development.

<p>Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?</p>	<p>Yes. The participating school was chosen using purposeful sampling.</p>	<p>Yes. Participants were invited to interview on a strictly opt-in basis.</p>	<p>Yes. Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling and invited to participate in the study.</p>	<p>Yes. Participants were invited to interview on a strictly opt-in basis.</p>	<p>Yes. All participants were invited to participate.</p>	<p>Yes, all mainstream schools in the local authority were invited to participate.</p>	<p>Yes. The researcher was supported by the SENCo to help identify key pupils that met the inclusion criteria and then pupil and parents were invited to participate.</p>
<p>Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?</p>	<p>Yes. An analysis of school SEN policies was carried out to contextualise findings. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather views of staff members. Parents were asked to</p>	<p>Yes. This was a longitudinal study that two points of data collection, namely the first year of the provision and three years follow up. 66 interviews were conducted and included senior teachers, mainstream teachers, and resource</p>	<p>Yes. The visual storyboards were used to access the views of 5 consenting pupils during interviews. Semi-structured interviews with 6 members of staff from the resource base.</p>	<p>Yes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at three key points throughout the year T1: during the first term of pupil admission, T2: after six months, T3: after a full year. This resulted in 53 interviews.</p>	<p>Yes. <u>Interviews with adolescent girls consisted of:</u> Semi-structured interviews that incorporated three parts: interests and friendships, camouflaging and school views and experiences.</p>	<p>Yes. <u>Background information collection:</u> Cognitive, academic, and behavioural characteristics of pupils attending mainstream schools with and without ASD resource bases gathered through WASI, Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence,</p>	<p>Yes. Case study to investigate both individual and contextual influences. Semi-structured interviews</p>

	complete questionnaires.	<p>provision staff during the initial year.</p> <p>21 interviews were conducted at the three years follow up point.</p>			<p><u>Interviews with parents consisted of:</u></p> <p>Questions that were divided into four categories, namely diagnosis and impact of autism on their lives, relationships before and since joining the resource base, camouflaging skills, including differences between presentation in different contexts and positive and negative impacts of camouflaging.</p>	<p>Strengths, and Difficulties questionnaire.</p> <p><u>Qualitative data collection:</u></p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with staff.</p>	
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					<p><u>Interviews with Educators consisted of:</u></p> <p>Four sections, namely girls' involvement in class-based learning and their camouflaging skills, girls' relationships and camouflaging, girls' experiences and camouflaging in different contexts and positive and negative impacts of camouflaging</p>		
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Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?	No, there was no clear attempt to address this.	No, there was no clear attempt to address this.	No, there was no clear attempt to address this.	Only in the sense that the researcher took time in the interview to ensure participants were comfortable and understood there was no pressure to take part.	Only in the sense that the author used observations as a way to build up familiarity with the girls.	No. there was no clear attempt to address this.	No clear outline of this was mentioned.
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Yes. Although the statement was somewhat broad and didn't mention specific ethical committees.	Yes. Ethical approval was granted by the host institution.	Yes. The research was reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Southampton.	Yes. Approval to conduct the research was granted following ethical review by the host institution's Research Integrity Committee.	Yes. The study was completed in line with the Declaration of Helsinki and ethical approval was obtained from the Department of Psychology and Human Development at UCL Institute of Education.	Yes. Approval for all aspects of the project was obtained from the university ethics committee and from the local authority commissioning the research.	Yes. Ethical approval was granted by the host university. Standard ethical procedures for educational (BERA, 2011) and psychological research were followed.
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Yes. All three sources of data were analysed	Yes. Data was analysed using inductive and deductive	Yes. Interview transcriptions from both pupils and staff were analysed using a	Interviews were analysed using Nvivo (QSR, 2012). An initial inductive	Yes. Data was analysed using Reflexive thematic	Yes. Data was analysed using the staged procedure outlined by	Yes. Data was analysed using both inductive

	using thematic analysis.	<p>thematic analysis.</p> <p>Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Nvivo (QSR, 2012) was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews. An initial inductive thematic analysis was undertaken and then a further deductive analysis was subsequently conducted using Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecosystemic theory to locate the data within a broader theoretical framework.</p>	method of categorisation from Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003).	thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was undertaken.	analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	Vaughn, Shay-Shumm and Sinagub (1996).	and deductive thematic analysis.
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Is there a clear statement of the findings ?	Yes, in the abstract.	Yes. In the discussion.	Yes. In the abstract.	Yes. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecosystemic theory was also used to conceptualise and organise the complex interactions between home, local education systems, school systems and subsystems and their impact on pupil outcomes over time.	Yes. Themes are outlined clearly in the abstract and discussed further in the paper.	Yes, in the abstract.	Yes. The in the abstract and the three main themes are represented visually through a thematic map and then clearly discussed.
How valuable is the research?	Yes. The findings from the study highlight the importance of raising awareness of autism in mainstream school settings in the UK and consider alternative ways	Yes. The findings highlight the importance of schools who are aiming to develop resource provisions within their school consider key aspects, such as how the provision will fit within the wider	Yes. Findings were used to inform the schools inclusive practices going forward, having highlighted key areas for consideration. It also prioritises the underrepresented voice of the	Yes. The study highlights key aspects that a pupil benefits from if they are attached to a resource provision within a mainstream school.	Yes. The study highlights the experience of girls with ASD who use camouflaging strategies to help cope with their day-to-day experiences within a mainstream setting. It also	Yes. It highlighted that features in mainstream placements identified in previous studies as important to parents of children with ASD were more likely to be found in schools	Yes. The study highlights practical implications for schools both with and without resource provisions to modify their approach to promote friendships among

	of supporting this population of students.	school, both organisationally and philosophically and how systems within the local authority such as admission panels and networks will support this development.	children with autism.		<p>outlines how a resource base may be used to reduce the need for these strategies.</p> <p>This has implications on considerations of educating girls with ASD.</p>	<p>with ASD resource bases.</p> <p>However, it also found that schools without resource bases could make comparable provision given if the development of staff training and awareness were made a priority.</p>	adolescents with ASD and outlines directions for future research.
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7.4. APPENDIX D: TABLE OF THE BREAKDOWN OF ARTICLES

Article	Population (age, child or young people or staff or parents)	Method (design, data collection and data analysis)	Focus of study	Findings	Critique
<p>Frederickson, N., Jones, A. P., & Lang, J. (2010). Inclusive provision options for pupils on the autistic spectrum. <i>Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs</i>, 10(2), 63–73. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2010.01145.x</p>	<p>Staff across 26 schools:</p> <p>7 in schools with an ASD resource base</p> <p>19 in schools without an ASD resource base</p> <p>In some schools, additional members of staff joined the interview.</p> <p>Interviewee breakdown:</p> <p>14 of the interviews were SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs)</p>	<p>Background information collection:</p> <p>Cognitive, academic, and behavioural characteristics of pupils attending mainstream schools with and without ASD resource bases gathered through WASI, Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence, Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire.</p>	<p>This study aimed to investigate the provisions that exist in mainstream education placements for pupils with ASD in schools with and without an autism resource base and sought to answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do the characteristics of the provision received by pupils with ASD attending a mainstream school differ according to whether they attend a school with or without a specialist ASD resource base? 	<p>Pupils from schools without an ASD resource base spent a considerably greater amount of time in mainstream lessons than schools with an ASD resource base.</p> <p>There was a marked difference between schools with an ASD resource base, where almost all staff received</p>	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Range of the population of study was across a variety of school professionals.</p> <p>Several different schools both with and without ASD resource bases were included in the study.</p> <p>Limitations:</p>

	<p>or senior teachers with SEN management responsibilities, 9 were class teachers, 6 were heads of ASD resource bases, 6 were TA's and 2 were head teachers.</p>	<p>Qualitative data collection:</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with staff.</p> <p>Background information collected was extracted from the transcripts on the amount of time pupils spent in mainstream lessons, the support provided in mainstream lessons and the support available from professionals external to the school.</p> <p>Transcripts were analysed using the staged procedures described by</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What strategies are used by educational professionals working with pupils with ASD, and do these differ across mainstream and resource base settings? 3. To what extent do differences between placement types reflect the factors associated with parental satisfaction? 	<p>ASD-specific training and schools without a base, where only half of the SENCOs and fewer than half of teachers received training.</p> <p>Most strategies were used in higher proportions in schools that had an ASD resource base than those without an ASD resource base.</p> <p>Schools with ASD resource bases present as ASD-friendly environments (e.g., clear signs, symbols, and photos) in communal areas.</p>	<p>Study was unclear on whether the schools in the study were primary or secondary.</p> <p>Study was unclear of the model that each base subscribed to.</p> <p>Unclear of the geography of schools (i.e., inner, or outer London). This may impact on the demographics of pupils (e.g., whether this is a high need area and what might be the available funding for the local schools).</p>
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		Vaughn, Shay-Schumm and Sinagub (1996).		<p>Although two thirds of non-ASD resource-based schools had some use of visuals less than a quarter extended their use of visual aids to common areas.</p> <p>Higher levels of home-school collaboration was found in schools with ASD resource bases over schools without ASD resource bases.</p> <p>Schools with bases reported a higher percentage of strategies used. However, it appeared that in</p>	
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				either setting, it was possible to implement most of the strategies identified according to need.	
Halsall, J., Clarke, C., & Crane, L. (2021). “camouflaging” by adolescent autistic girls who attend both mainstream and specialist resource classes: Perspectives of girls, their mothers and their educators. <i>Autism</i> , 25(7), 2074–2086. https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211012819	Multiformat approach: 8 adolescent girls who were attending an ASD resource base attached to a secondary mainstream school, their parents (eight mothers) and their educators (six teaching assistants/aides and one senior staff member) across three schools in South-East England.	Qualitative design Interviews with adolescent girls consisted of: Semi-structured interviews that incorporated three parts: interests and friendships, camouflaging and school views and experiences. Interviews with parents consisted of:	The aim of this study was to explore how autistic girls who attend an ASD resource base attached to secondary mainstream schools may use differing camouflaging across different school contexts.	Four themes were identified from the findings: Theme 1 Inconsistencies, contradictions, and conflicts in attempts to camouflage. Theme 2 Using camouflaging to overcome challenges in making and	Strengths: Multiformat approach was used to help with triangulating information. Limitations: Small sample size Focused exclusively on autistic girls.

		<p>Questions that were divided into four categories, namely diagnosis and impact of autism on their lives, relationships before and since joining the resource base, camouflaging skills, including differences between presentation in different contexts and positive and negative impacts of camouflaging.</p> <p>Interviews with Educators consisted of:</p> <p>Four sections, namely girls' involvement in class-based learning and their camouflaging skills, girls'</p>		<p>maintaining friends</p> <p>Theme 3</p> <p>Camouflaging learning needs and the challenges of learning and inclusion</p> <p>Theme 4</p> <p>Consequences of camouflaging on social interaction, learning and mental health.</p> <p>Other key findings:</p> <p>Mothers and educators attributed increased camouflaging</p>	<p>Only interviewed mothers.</p> <p>Inherent challenges with eliciting the perspectives of autistic young people, with further consideration needed around the focus group being identified as camouflaging from multiple sources.</p>
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		<p>relationships and camouflaging, girls' experiences and camouflaging in different contexts and positive and negative impacts of camouflaging.</p> <p>Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).</p>		<p>behaviours in mainstream classes to increased social expectations. Educators reported that the girls felt little requirement to camouflage in resource base classes, yet some of the girls described still using camouflaging strategies across all school contexts.</p>	
<p>Hebron, J., & Bond, C. (2017). Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: Parent and pupil perceptions. <i>European Journal</i></p>	<p>Five primary and three secondary schools across Manchester, admitting pupils with ASD and a smaller number of pupils with SLI participated in the research.</p> <p>In total 16 parents/carers and 9 pupils (aged from 8-15)</p>	<p>Qualitative design:</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were conducted at three key points throughout the year T1: during the first term of pupil admission, T2: after</p>	<p>This study aimed to focus on gathering pupil and parent perspectives of mainstream schools with resource provision during their first year of admission (part of a larger longitudinal study).</p>	<p>Findings were presented in relation to the three main levels of Bronfenbrenner's model.</p> <p>Pupils were positive about</p>	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>The data combined parent and pupil views and found these were complimentary.</p>

<p><i>of Special Needs Education, 32(4)</i>, 556–571. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2017.1297569</p>	<p>years) were interviewed. Two pupils were siblings which meant that one parent was interviewed for two pupils.</p>	<p>six months, T3: after a full year. This resulted in 53 interviews.</p> <p>Interviews were analysed using inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was undertaken.</p>		<p>their experiences and tended to see themselves as being part of the school and mainstream lessons.</p> <p>They reflected on positive aspects, including positive relationships with staff and peers, high expectations and learning being fun.</p> <p>The resource provision enhanced this aspect by providing flexible, individualised support, quiet spaces and facilitating inclusion in</p>	<p>Limitations:</p> <p>The study was from one local authority.</p> <p>Approximately half the pupils came from a previously settled placement at one special school.</p> <p>6 out of the 18 focus pupils also had a primary need of SLI rather than ASD.</p> <p>The presented data may mask the importance of a particular issue for one group.</p>
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				<p>mainstream classes.</p> <p>At a family level parents reported reduced caring demands and positive impact on the family which they attributed to their child being settled and happy in their provision.</p> <p>Additional benefits included greater resources and staff expertise provided by the resource provision schools.</p> <p>In relation to pupil outcomes parents and</p>	
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				pupils were able to identify a range of positive outcomes, including academic progress and wider social and life skills.	
O'Hagan, S., & Hebron, J. (2016). Perceptions of friendship among adolescents with autism spectrum conditions in a mainstream high school resource provision. <i>Euro pean Journal of Special Needs Education</i> , 32(3), 314–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1223441	<p>9 participants in total, including:</p> <p>3 Adolescent students with Autism, a parent of each student and key teachers.</p> <p>All adolescents interviewed had a formal diagnosis of ASD or Aspergers and were attending a mainstream school and accessing a specialist autism resource provision.</p> <p>Were between the ages of 12-16 years old.</p>	<p>Qualitative design</p> <p>Case study to investigate both individual and contextual influences.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Nvivo qualitative data analysis.</p>	The study aimed to address the gaps within the current literature on influences for the development of friendships for adolescents with autism both at a contextual and individual level.	<p>Students in the study were found to have an understanding of friendship, although their parents interviewed often felt this was more of a theoretical view and did not always correlate with their experiences.</p> <p>All students expressed their desire for friendships and</p>	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Two mothers and one father took part in the interviews.</p> <p>Limitations:</p> <p>Students in this study were purposefully recruited, introducing possible sample bias.</p>

	<p>Known to have at least one friend.</p>			<p>also reported having experienced loneliness.</p> <p>Further contextual and individual influences included understanding of social rules, school environment, students' level of maturity and peer acceptance.</p> <p>This student found that the specialist resource provision was highly influential on student's development as well as providing students with a 'safe haven'.</p>	<p>Very small number of participants 9 in total.</p> <p>All adolescents interviewed were male.</p>
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				While not fully apparent in this study concerns were still raised regarding the provision and how students being associated with the provision may lead to an increase in isolation and bullying.	
Warren, A., Buckingham, K., & Parsons, S. (2020). Everyday experiences of inclusion in primary resourced provision: The voices of autistic pupils and their teachers. <i>European Journal of</i>	Primary aged pupils (between 9-11 years old) accessing a resourced provision in a mainstream primary school in the South of England. 6 parents consented for their children to participate and two declined. Pupils were provided with accessible project information and an assent form. One pupil did	A qualitative visual storyboard methodology was co-created by the researcher and school staff. Children were asked in their normal scheduled lesson to draw and write about 'their typical day at school' and reflect on their experiences and emotions of different parts of the	The aim of this small-scale study was to provide insights into how one resourced provision is experienced by primary-aged children and their teachers.	The study findings highlighted key areas of interest, including: The importance of friendships and peers. Where and how support was	Strengths: The use of a visual storyboard methodology to aid pupil communication. Multi-informant approach to triangulate information.

<p><i>Special Needs Education</i>, 36(5), 803–818. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1823166</p>	<p>not provide their assent to take part. In total, 5 pupils took part of the study, 3 pupils were 9 years old, and 2 pupils were 11 years old.</p> <p>1 male teacher and 5 female teaching assistants were interviewed.</p>	<p>day, including like/dislikes and who they generally spent their day with. This was used to access the views of 5 consenting pupils during interviews.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with 6 members of staff from the resource base.</p> <p>Interview transcriptions from both pupils and staff were analysed using a method of categorisation from Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003).</p>		<p>provided for pupils.</p> <p>Tensions between structured and unstructured periods.</p> <p>Transition points between more and less structured activities were found to be points of difficulty. This included transitions between home and school.</p> <p>Student/school identity</p> <p>The study found that pupils liked the dual identity</p>	<p>Limitations:</p> <p>Study used purposeful sampling to gain participants.</p> <p>Only one resource provision.</p> <p>Pupils' storyboards only represent one day – hence resulting in only a snap shot.</p>
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				<p>of being part of the resource provision and the mainstream school. They valued the routine and structure of their mornings within the provision as well as the friends they made there. Afternoons spent in mainstream classes was found to be anticipated and some pupils reported experiencing anxiety due to the environment feeling louder and busier than the resource base.</p> <p>Staff reported that pupils</p>	
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				‘coped brilliantly’ in the mainstream classes. But there was acknowledgement of the flexibility in how support was provided.	
Landor, F., & Perepa, P. (2017). Do resource bases enable social inclusion of students with asperger syndrome in a mainstream secondary school? <i>Support for Learning</i> , 32(2), 129–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12158	<p>7 members of staff participated in the study, which included the head of the resource provision, 4 teachers and 2 learning support assistants.</p> <p>8 parents of the students attending the resource base also participated.</p>	<p>Qualitative design</p> <p>A case study approach was chosen.</p> <p>An analysis of school SEN policies was carried out to contextualise findings.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were used to gather views of staff members.</p>	<p>The aim this study was to build upon existing knowledge around factors which facilitate social inclusion of students with Asperger syndrome and to evaluate whether a resource base can enhance or hinder this process within a secondary school setting.</p> <p>Specific research questions were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What practices are in place to promote the social inclusion of students with Asperger syndrome? 	<p>All three sources of gathered information were analysed using thematic analysis.</p> <p>Five key themes were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning social skills • A safe place • Peer awareness 	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Multiple sources of evidence were gathered.</p> <p>Limitations:</p> <p>Purposeful sampling was used.</p> <p>No student views were included this study.</p>

		<p>Parents were asked to complete questionnaires.</p>	<p>2. How is the social experience of schooling for these students perceived by members of staff?</p> <p>3. How do parents of these children perceive their child's schooling experience in terms of social experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSA support • Attitudes to inclusion <p>In general, it was found that having a resourced provision meant that parents and staff members perceived a positive experience of schooling for students.</p> <p>However, the findings were inconsistent and reflected some teachers' reservations about mainstream schools being able to meet the need of all</p>	<p>One secondary school with an attached resource provision for students with Aspergers.</p> <p>All the students within the resource provision were boys.</p>
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				<p>individual students on the spectrum.</p> <p>Highlighting that in spite of having resources within school, teachers' attitudes can be varied on the issue of inclusion.</p> <p>Staff also focused more on academic achievement and performance over social inclusion.</p>	
<p>Bond, C., & Hebron, J. (2016). Developing mainstream resource provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder: Staff</p>	<p>This study took place across 5 primary and 3 secondary school resource provisions that cater to students with autism and a small number of pupils with speech and language impairment, in Manchester England.</p>	<p>Qualitative design</p> <p>This was a longitudinal study that two points of data collection, namely the first year of the provision and</p>	<p>The aim of this longitudinal study was to explore the views of staff working in 5 primary and 3 secondary school resource provisions in one local authority. A secondary aim was to extend the application of the model by Bronfenbrenner by</p>	<p>Findings highlighted that initially schools focused on building their internal capacity and skill in delivering this complex and</p>	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>A range of both mainstream staff and resource staff were interviewed to provide a more</p>

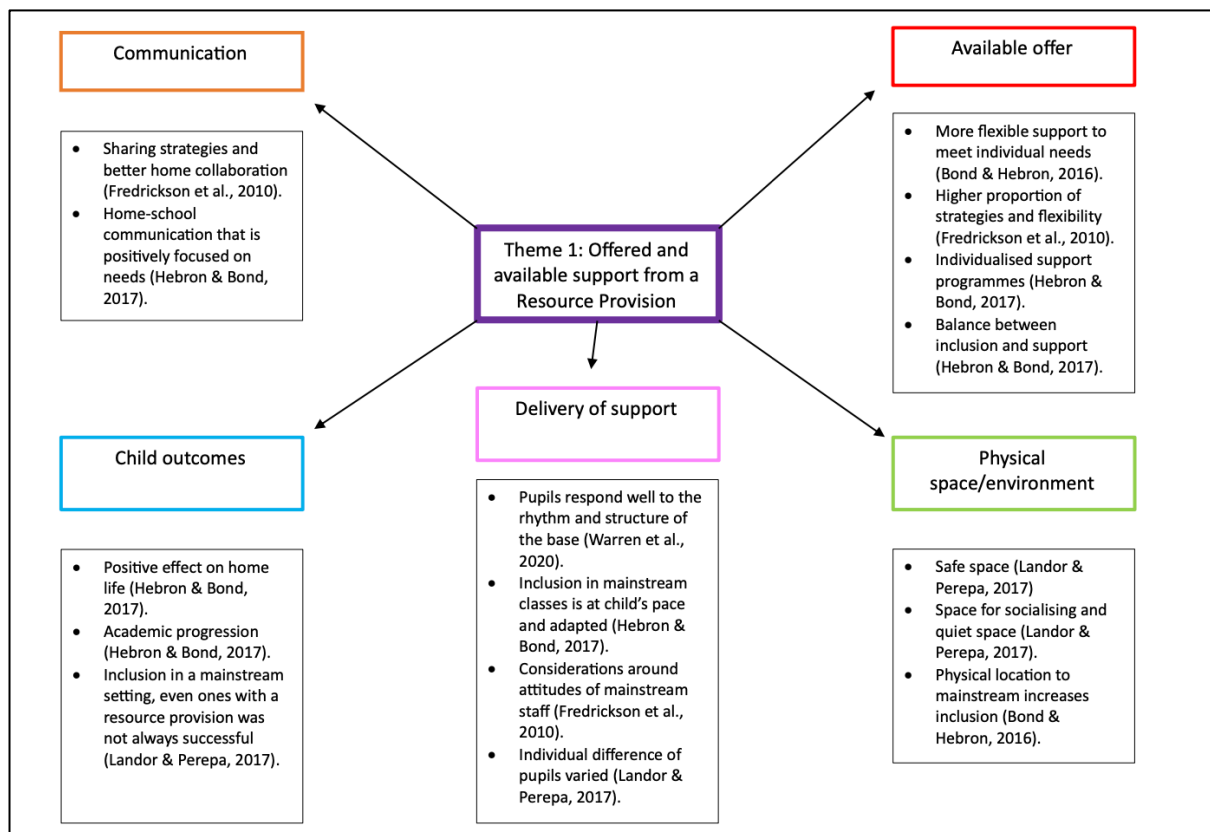
<p>perceptions and satisfaction. <i>European Journal of Special Needs Education</i>, 31(2), 250–263. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1141543</p>	<p>Participants included:</p> <p>Members of the senior leadership team (6x head teachers, 3x assistant head teachers, 1 SENCo).</p> <p>12x Resource provision leads, including 1x assistant lead.</p> <p>13x paraprofessionals.</p> <p>7x mainstream primary school class teachers (initial evaluation only)</p> <p>1x specialist teacher.</p> <p>Ages of staff ranged from mid 20s to mid 50s with the</p>	<p>three years follow up.</p> <p>66 interviews were conducted and included senior teachers, mainstream teachers, and resource provision staff during the initial year.</p> <p>21 interviews were conducted at the three years follow up point.</p> <p>Data was analysed using inductive and deductive thematic analysis.</p> <p>Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Nvivo</p>	<p>focusing specifically on mainstream schools with resource provisions as they develop over the period of three years.</p>	<p>multifaceted intervention.</p> <p>However, as time went on the focus began to broaden to within the local authority, including attendance at placement panel meetings.</p> <p>Common features across resource provisions included school wide inclusive ethos and positive staff attitudes. In addition, the commitment of senior staff and representation of resource provision staff at</p>	<p>comprehensive view.</p> <p>Longitudinal study with two data collection points, namely the first year of the provision and then the follow up at three years.</p> <p>A large number of participants were recruited for the first initial interviews.</p> <p>Limitations:</p> <p>Schools within the study are from one local authority.</p>
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	<p>majority of staff being between 31-40 years old.</p> <p>These were majority female staff apart from two primary head teachers and one secondary SENCo, one secondary provision lead and one paraprofessional.</p>	<p>(QSR, 2012) was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews. An initial inductive thematic analysis was undertaken and then a further deductive analysis was subsequently conducted using Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecosystemic theory to locate the data within a broader theoretical framework.</p>		<p>senior management meetings.</p> <p>The physical location of resource provisions was also a facilitator for inclusion.</p> <p>Findings also reported that resource provisions developed fluid systems which enabled the microsystems to work together, including sharing strategies between provisions, classroom and home; regular communication between provisions and</p>	<p>Many of the first pupils admitted were from special school placements which were closing.</p> <p>Data collection was focused solely on the school's staff.</p>
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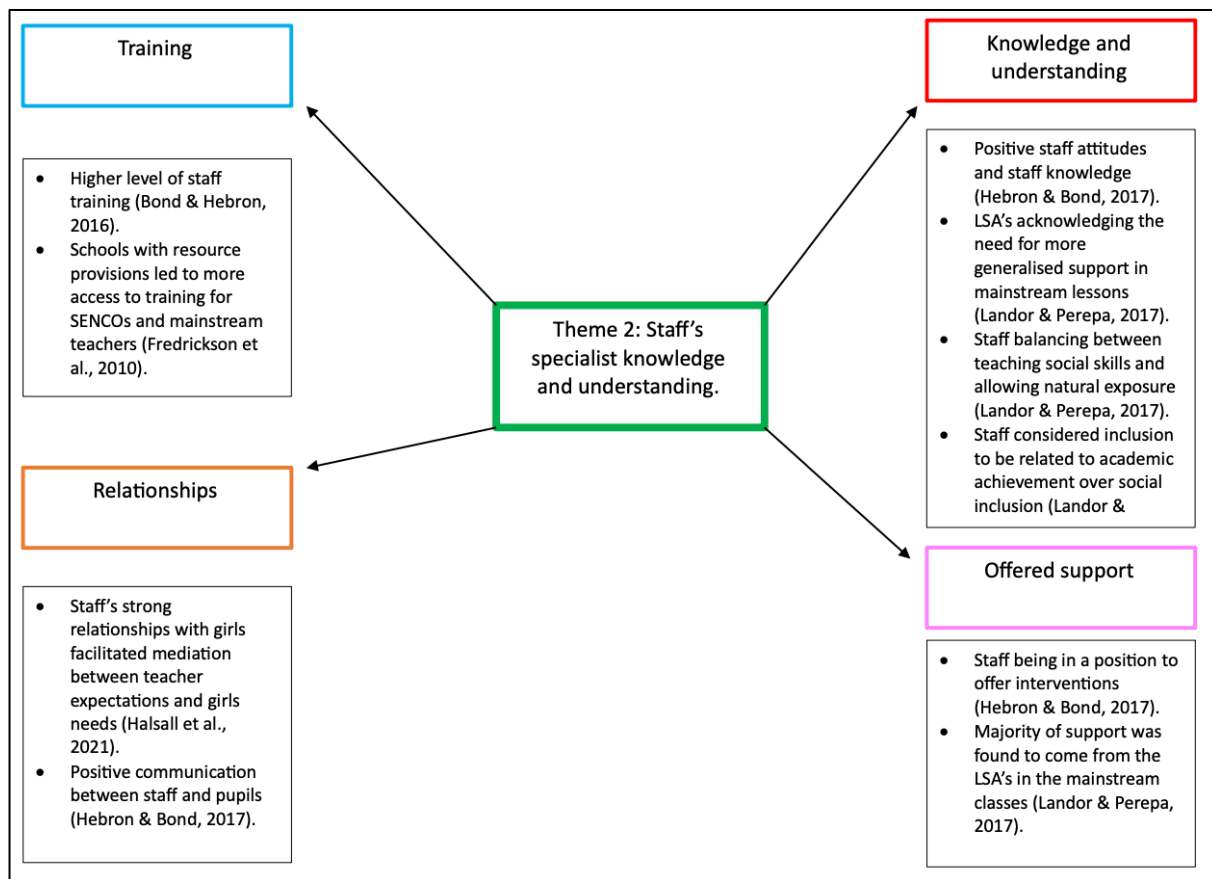
				<p>families and mainstream pupils benefitting from resource provision opportunities.</p> <p>Further benefits highlighted staff having time to get to know pupils and work more closely with families. Increased attention to transition planning. The interconnectedness between the resource provision and wider school enabled the provisions to be fully integrative within the school as a whole.</p>	
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7.5. APPENDIX E: VISUAL MAPS FOR LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES

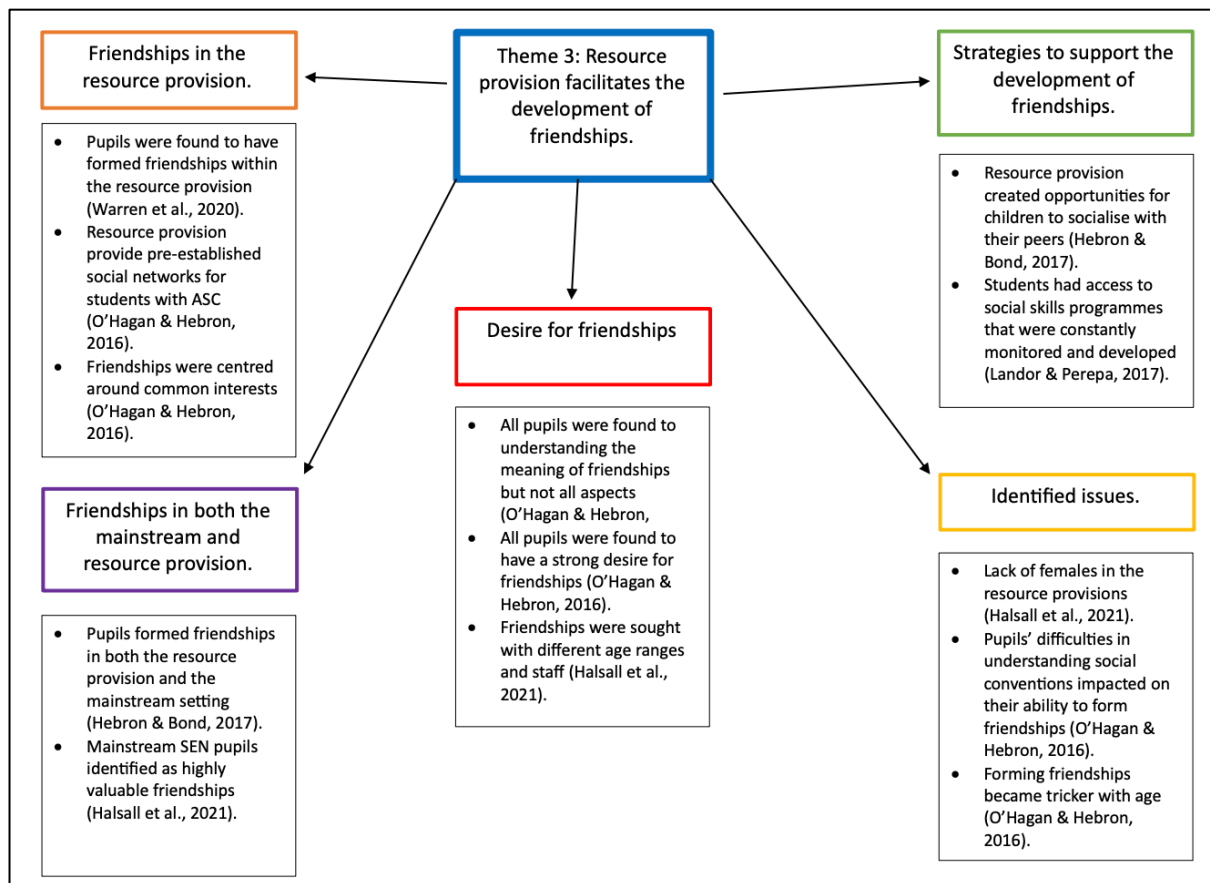
Theme 1. Offered and available support from a resource provision.



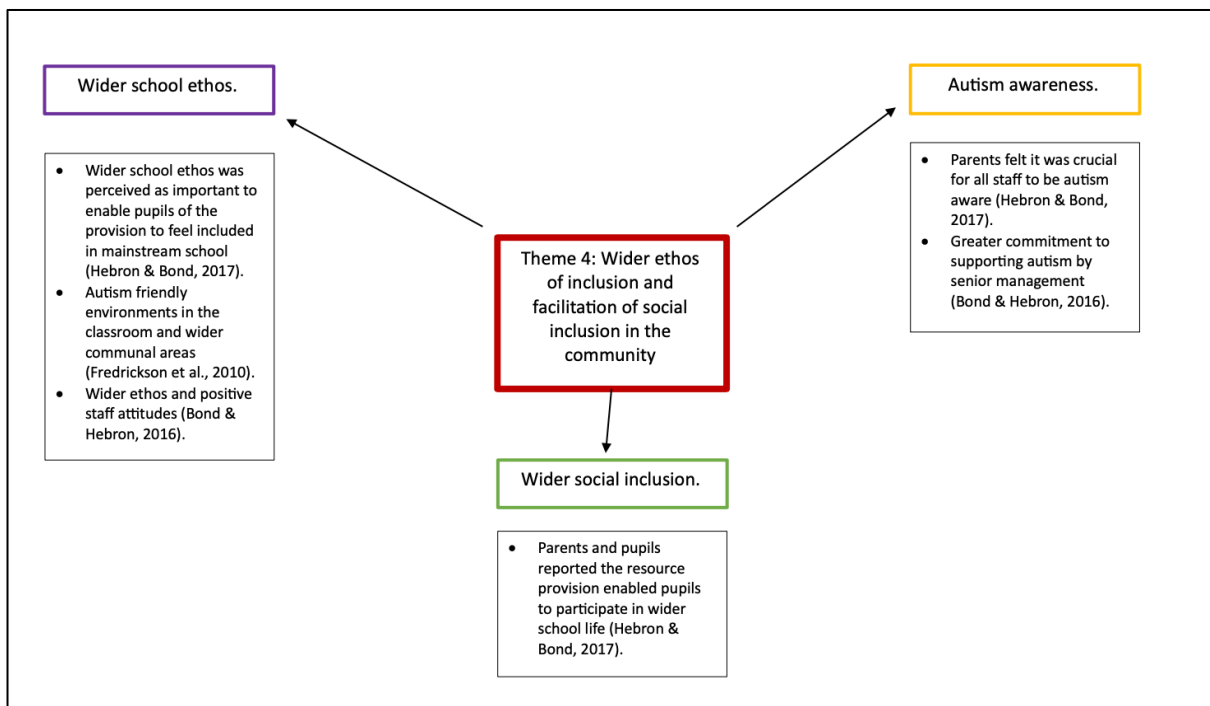
Theme 2: Staff’s specialist knowledge and understanding.



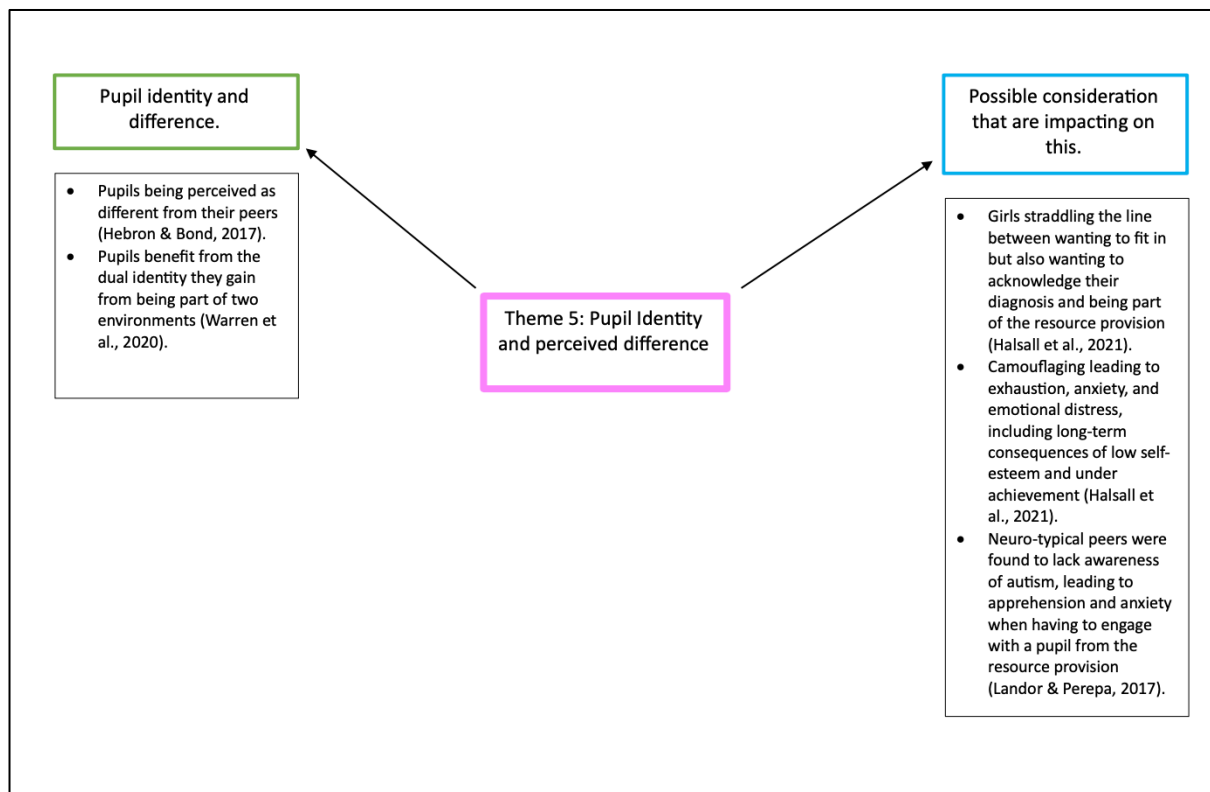
Theme 3: Resource provision facilitates the development of friendships.




Theme 4: Wider ethos of inclusion and facilitation of social inclusion in the community.



Theme 5: Pupil identity and perceived difference.



7.6. APPENDIX F: PARENT AND STAFF INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

The Tavistock and Portman  NHS Foundation Trust
<p><u>Information Sheet for Third Year Research Project</u></p> <p><u>Project title</u></p> <p>‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource unit in a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).</p> <p><u>Who is doing the research?</u></p> <p>My name is Angelique Witting. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist in my second year of studying for the Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational Psychology. I will be carrying out the proposed research project as part of my course requirements.</p> <p><u>What are the aims of the research?</u></p> <p>The aims of the research project are to explore how an additional resource provision may facilitate Inclusion for young people with autism in a secondary mainstream provision. I would like to explore how inclusion policy can be put into practice. How base staff support young people to access their learning and support their development. I would also like to explore how the young people enrolled in the base may experience the support offered and explore how it may contribute to their experiences of access to learning and their feelings on inclusion (e.g., school belonging). Finally, I aim to explore what may be some of the remaining barriers that staff and young people experience that may need to be considered for improvements.</p> <p><u>What does the research entail?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documentation <p>I will initially aim to explore provision documents such as any documentation that outlines the setting offer and expectations, policies, examples of individual education/behaviour plans for pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of setting <p>This will be a time boundary observation of the setting and will entail that I spend one week within the base setting. The observation will be a tool to develop a rich understanding of the settings norms and values and shed light into the settings culture and subcultures. This will also provide an opportunity to see how aims outlined in school policy are put into practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group with staff <p>The focus group will be for ARP staff members, including the leadership team (i.e., setting manager and deputy manager). This group will take place for 1 hour and will be held at the school setting. The focus will follow on from the initial analysis of the documentation of the setting and will aim to gain an understanding of the staff and leadership role within the setting. It will also be an opportunity to explore how staff may put the documentation into practice. Furthermore, it will be a space to explore</p>

the staff culture, values, and beliefs around inclusion and how this might contribute to answering the research question.

- Individual interviews with young people

All the pupils enrolled in the base will be invited to take part in the interviewing process. This will be a voluntary process and will be conducted face-to-face at the school setting. The interview phase is the last step of the data collection process and interview questions will be informed by the themes gathered from the previous steps in the data collection process. As part of the interview the young people will be asked to complete a sorting task (i.e., similar to the format of ‘talking mats’). The interview questions will then be elicited from the information gathered from the task.

Expected themes to be covered from the sorting task include:

- A breakdown of what strategies they find helpful (e.g., 1:1 support, therapeutic interventions, social skills interventions)
- School belonging
- Access to education
- Development of independent skills
- Emotional well-being in school (e.g., confidence, self-esteem)
- Sense of social inclusion (e.g., friendships, access to school clubs)

How will permission be sought to conduct the proposed research?

Following school agreement, I will be completing an application to the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee. Permission will also be sought from local borough’s Educational Psychology Service.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There is currently limited research in the UK on how an additional resource provision may support the facilitation of inclusion for young people with autism in a secondary school setting. The research aims to shed some light into how your setting goes about trying to achieve this. The research also offers the opportunity to gather both staff and young people’s views on how this might be experienced in daily practice. It offers the opportunity to identify what might be going well and what might be acting as a barrier toward success. Understanding what is working and what might need to be improved upon will help ensure best practice and identify possible next steps toward growth for the setting.

The research also aims to have a wider impact on the local borough’s autism practices. Understanding what young people find helpful from the setting and what they feel still needs to happen can help inform further provisions that are developed throughout the borough. It also highlights what is possible and what isn’t given the local constraints, including funding and allocation of resources.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

The research entails exploring quite a sensitive and often challenging topic of supporting inclusion for young people with ASD. This may open up difficult discussions regarding the challenges that may be experienced when supporting this population of young people and may identify ongoing challenges/barriers to being able to provide this support. This may result in staff experiencing distressing or uncomfortable feelings when discussing any challenges experienced. In addition, this research involves participation of vulnerable young people who may find it difficult to openly share their experiences and communicate their feelings. As the researcher, I aim to create a safe and supportive environment for both staff and young people to explore their experiences. Anyone who participates in any part of the study will be able to cease their participation at any point or request a break. There will also be an opportunity at the end of each step (i.e., observation, focus group or interview) for participants to ask questions or request to omit details. Furthermore, careful consideration around support services will be discussed and identified with the setting management team and offered to all participants should they feel they need further support. Finally, participants will be informed of their rights to withdraw from the study should they change their minds.

What will happen to the findings from the research?

The findings will form part of my thesis which will be read by examiners and be available at the Tavistock and Portman and University of Essex libraries. The research may also be published in a peer-reviewed journal. You will be given the opportunity to receive a short summary of my findings once all the data has been analysed.

Consent to participate.

As already stated, participation in the study is voluntary and individuals (both staff and young people) are not obliged to participate. Consent for participation will be sought throughout each step of the study and participants will be made aware of their rights to withdraw from the study up to the point where their data has been anonymised. Should participants choose to withdraw from the research study they may do so without needing to provide any reason and without any ramifications.

Confidentiality of research data.

All data gathered throughout the study, including reviewing documentation, focus group, observation and individual interviews will be anonymised and I will use pseudonyms to replace any identifying information of participants. This will include any direct quotes that may be included in the write up. The information gathered will not be used outside the purpose of this research project.

The focus group and individual interviews will be audio recorded and will be retained and stored on an encrypted and password protected electronic device. Once the research project has been completed, anonymised data will be stored in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy before it is securely disposed of, as outlined in the Data Protection Act (2018).

Please note: Confidentiality of information is further subject to legal limitations. Participants are also advised that should any safeguarding issues be disclosed or identified, I will be subjected to follow usual procedures and disclose relevant information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school setting.

Further information and contact details:

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet and consider my research proposal.

If you have any concerns about the research, you can contact Adam Styles who is my research supervisor and works for the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. AStyles@Tavistock.ac.uk

If you would like any further information, please feel free to contact me on AWitting@Tavistock.nhs.uk

Parent Consent Form

Research Title: ‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Please initial the statements below if you agree with them: Initial here:

1. I have read the information sheet and have had the chance to ask any questions that I may have.	
2. I understand that any participation in the study that my child takes part in is voluntary and they can withdraw at any point, and they don't have to provide a reason.	
3. I understand that my information from my interview will only be used for the purpose of this research project and won't be shared for any other reason.	
4. I understand that the findings from this research will be published in a thesis (project) and may be used in a presentation or published in a journal.	
5. I agree for my child's interviews to be audio-recorded.	
6. I understand that all attempts will be made to anonymise my child's information. However, I understand that the school will be named, and the sample size may be small. Therefore, I understand that there might be limitations to confidentiality.	
7. I understand that there may be further limitations to confidentiality relating to legal duties and concerns of a safeguarding nature.	
8. I am willing to allow Angelique access to read information about my child. This will include my child's individual education plan, behaviour plan or risk assessment.	
9. I will allow my child to be observed by Angelique during their time in the ARP and during some of their lessons in the main school building.	
10. I consent for my child to be interviewed.	

Your full name:Your child's full name:

Signed: Date:/...../.....

Thank you for your help

Angelique Witting.

School Staff Consent Form

Research Title: ‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Please initial the statements below if you agree with them:

Initial here:

1. I have read the information sheet and have had the chance to ask any questions that I may have.	
2. I understand that any participation in the study that I take part in is voluntary and I can withdraw at any point, and I don't have to provide a reason.	
3. I understand that the information from the focus group will only be used for the purpose of this research project and won't be shared for any other reason.	
4. I understand that the findings from this research will be published in a thesis (project) and may be used in a presentation or published in a journal.	
5. I agree for the focus group to be audio-recorded.	
6. I understand that all attempts will be made to anonymise my contributing information. However, I understand that the school will be named, and the sample size may be small. Therefore, I understand that there might be limitations to confidentiality.	
7. I understand that there may be further limitations to confidentiality relating to legal duties and concerns of a safeguarding nature.	
8. I am willing to be observed by Angelique during my time in the ARP and during some of the lessons that I accompany children to in the main school building.	
9. I consent to taking part in the focus group.	

Your full name:


Signed:

Date:/...../.....

Thank you for your help

Angelique Witting.

7.7. APPENDIX G: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Tavistock and Portman 
NHS Foundation Trust

Information sheet for Third Year Research Project

Dear Student,


Who am I and what am I doing?

My name is Angelique Witting. I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. I work with lots of children and young people in different schools.

I am going into my third year of training and as part of my course, I will be carrying out a research project called...

‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

What is the aim of my research?



I would like to find out about what it might be like for you to attend the ARP? Does the ARP and its teachers help make it easy to access your lessons in the mainstream classroom?

Who has given permission for this research?

The place where I am studying at called the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust has given me approval to do this research. I have also received permission from your school to do this research here.



Who can take part in this study?

I am looking for young people who are enrolled in the ARP and have been attending the ARP for at least one term.

What will the research look like?

I would like to be able to do three different things:

1. I would like to look over some documentation that explain how your teachers support you. This might be your individual education plan or behaviour plan or risk assessment.
2. I would like to spend some time observing you. This could be coming along to a lesson to see how you are getting on and/or observing what you like do in the ARP and/or joining an intervention session.

Why do I want to find out about your experience at the ARP?



Understanding what work well and helps you access your learning is very important and it helps your school and other professionals know what is working well for you. It is also important to understand what might not be working well or what you are still finding difficult. Your school and other professionals are working hard to support you and want to try and do their best.

What will happen after you have participated in the research?

I will be typing up all the information I have collected throughout the research into a project. This will be read by examiners and may be published later in a research journal. This means that other professionals can read about the research. I may also be asked by your school and other professionals to present the research findings. You will also have an option to hear about what I have found in my research if you are interested.

What will happen if I don't want to take part, or I change my mind?

You do not have to take part in the research if you don't want to or if you only want to take part in one part of the research and not another, that is also fine. If you do take part in the research, but later decide that you have changed your mind, that is also okay. You can stop at any time and don't have to give a reason.

Who will know what I have said or done if I take part in the research?

All your information will be anonymised. This means I will not use your name in my research, so no one will know exactly what you have said. I will explain this to you in more detail when I meet you, and you will have an opportunity to ask me any questions that you might have. Your teachers or parents will not be told what you have said, unless I think you or someone else might be at risk of harm. Only then will I need to tell them what you have shared.



Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you have any questions, please speak to (the ARP manager).

Angelique Witting 😊

Young Person Consent Form

Research Title: ‘Does it do what it says on the tin?’ – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource provision attached to a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder.

Please initial the statements below if you agree with them: Initial here:

1. I have read the information sheet and have had the chance to ask any questions that I may have.	
2. I understand that the information I share with Angelique, will remain confidential and only be used for this research. This means that my name will be changed, and Angelique will only share my information with my school or my parents if she feels there may be a risk of harm to me or to other people.	
3. I understand that the findings from this research will be published in a thesis (project) and may be used in a presentation or published in a journal.	
4. I agree for my interviews to be audio-recorded.	
5. I understand that I don't have to take part in the research, and I can stop taking part at any time.	
6. I am willing to allow Angelique to read information about me. This will include my individual education plan, behaviour plan or risk assessment.	
7. I am willing to be observed by Angelique during my time in the ARP and during some of my lessons in the main school building.	
8. I am willing to be interviewed.	







Your full name:

Signed: Date:/...../.....

Thank you for your help

Angelique Witting.

7.8. APPENDIX H: VISUAL CATEGORISATION CARDS TO AID YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMUNICATION DURING INTERVIEWS.

<p>I am able to attend my lessons</p> 	<p>I feel included in my school</p> 
<p>My class teachers know how to support me</p> 	<p>I can share my feelings with someone at school</p> 
<p>I struggle to understand my work or what's being taught in my lessons</p> 	<p>I don't have any friends at school</p> 

I feel worried about school



I have friends at school



I have adult at school who I trust



I feel like I don't belong



I feel pressure at school



The environment is too noisy and overwhelming



My teachers understand my needs and know how to help me



When something goes wrong the staff do not know how to help me



I have a safe space to use when I upset or need a break



My class teachers do not know how to help me



The staff in the access centre are helpful



The staff in the access centre don't help me



The other young people are
mean to me



When something goes wrong,
adults know how to support me



I like having a key worker



I enjoy coming to school



I dont feel safe at school



People at school don't
understand me



7.9. APPENDIX I: EXAMPLE OBSERVATION RECORD.

Observation day one (4/07/2022):

Where: Access Centre

What: Occupational Therapy Intervention

Who: Miss S and Molly Year 12

Session content:

- Miss gave Molly the opportunity to jump on the trampoline for 5 minutes.
- Miss introducing the activity – Darts game- using a visual aid to explain the process, breaking down the task helping Molly to understand the expectations.
- Positive rapport between Molly and Miss S, both laughing and collaborating in the session
- Miss S offers Molly frequent praise throughout the game.
- Allows Molly to make the choice for the next task.
- Supports Molly to add up the scores, allowing a good balance of autonomy and support. (i.e., supporting when Molly gets stuck on the calculations for scores but allows opportunities to for Molly to attempt them independently first).
- Molly chooses pattern making for the next task – “tricky fingers”.
- Molly spontaneously initiating conversation with Miss S during task
- Molly openly sharing that the task is both “annoying” and “difficult”
- Molly “do I get a salary for this?”
- Molly “my handwriting is illegible” – Miss supporting and validating her difficult while still trying to reframe in a positive light “yes, but you could be doctor.”
- Miss S is having to improvise as there are bits missing out of the next task. Together Molly and Miss S manage to work it out without having all the correct equipment. Both appear use to it.
- Miss S checking in with Molly about how her day has been going, how her lessons (business studies) have been going? If Molly is experiencing any difficulties with any of the other students?
- Molly asking for a different task and Miss S accommodating Molly and giving her choices for the change of task.
- Molly chooses Jenga.
- Molly and Miss S engage in the game together.
- Molly “I am going to fail at this soon”
- Miss S encourages Molly to still try and Molly continues to follow the game.
- Molly able to take turns well, both Molly and Miss S encouraging each other when it is the others turn.

Researcher’s reflections:

Session was calm and relaxed. Molly appeared able to engage well and find the space and session useful. Molly was able to openly communicate with Miss S when something was difficult and openly initiated and engaged in conversation with Miss S. Miss S used the session to also check in on Molly and explore how her week has gone. Providing a space to share any worries or things that might be going wrong. In a conversation with Miss S after the session, she shared that the access centre has not had any OT support come in for quite a while and sometimes she finds it hard to always know how to support her students and meet their needs without any updated training and support from an OT.

7.10. APPENDIX J: EXAMPLE EXCERPTS FROM RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIVE DIARY

Entry date: January 2022

My research has moved on quite a bit since my first entry. I have managed to submit and pass my research protocol and I have also made steps in having initial discussions with both my PEP on placement, and the Access centres new manager. Both parties have shown great interest in my research idea to conduct a case study of the unit to see how it functions and what might be going well and what might be the barriers to consider for improvements to meeting the needs of its enrolled students. My PEP shared that this research would fit well with the safety valve that is taking place in local borough that is concerned with the overspending in the borough and aims to increase the local provision within the borough as a step to counter some of this over expenditure. The Access Manager felt this research would be useful for the unit as a way of assessing what is working and what steps they can take to improve their practice. Almost as a way of doing a quality assurance. She also shared this would bode well for their NAS accreditation.

Entry date: June 2022

My research has gained ethical approval. In a recent conversation with my research supervisor, he has suggested that it would be good to gain as much data as possible before the summer holidays. I have been in conversations with the Access Manager and she has agreed to help accommodate me as well as they can given that its almost the end of the academic year. My aim is to try and do my observation days and focus group before the summer. We agreed for me to attend a staff meeting to share my research plans and as a way to be as transparent as possible with staff to avoid anyone feeling like I was there to judge them and their work.

Entry date: July 2022

Today was my first day on my observation. This was quite stressful for the unit to accommodate as there seemed to be quite a lot of staff shortages and everyone was running around trying to cover key students. I did manage to join some observations, but it was clear that staff seem to be quite stressed. I also attended the staff meeting at the end of the day to share when I would be holding my focus group and request participants to sign up. Everyone seemed open to this idea. Unfortunately, I did have this talk with staff after the Access Manager shared that she would be leaving the school. Staff were visibly upset by this news as she has only been at the school for a little under a year.

7.11. APPENDIX K: TRANSCRIPT TO CODE FOR FOCUS GROUP

The table below demonstrates some examples of how the researcher coded lines in the focus group transcript.

Key role of keyworker	
The differing nature of the keyworker to that of the teaching assistant	
Code	Line in transcript
Teaching assistants support any child in the classroom.	<i>"We are not teaching assistants because a teaching assistant can help with any child in the class" – Gloria line 311.</i>
Staff role	
Staff enabling students	<i>"...me is enabling the students or training them to become more responsible with their equipment..." - Sally line – 196.</i>
Staff going above and beyond.	<i>"...and how she was really supportive, and she was supporting the travel, going back home. That was really fantastic..." researcher line 260.</i>
Staff supporting parents.	<i>"Yeah, with E's mum, gosh I know the whole itinerary now. Its putting in that support and knowing what a person might need. Frankie" – line 262</i>

Staff having to step in and support student when teachers don't.	<i>"...he has got a lot going on" NH was like (breathing deeply x2) and I was like "NH it's going to be alright..." – Frankie line 306.</i>
Staff recognising and implementing a balance of support	
Staff not sitting next to students – (Velcro support).	<i>"I wouldn't sit next to them because I think it's fair, if they don't want that then that's fine" Gloria – line 267.</i>
Staff recognising that sometimes it's necessary to sit back.	<i>"I am very much a doer; I am hands on and don't like sitting back but sometimes it's necessary to stand back..." Frankie – line 313.</i>
Staff occasionally checking in on students.	<i>"I might let some of the lesson go and then I will go and check in "are you okay" "what about this, what about that" and then I will go back to where I was so" Gloria – line 271.</i>
Practical applications of support to access lessons	
Keyworker bringing lessons to access centre.	<i>"...I was bringing their lesson from the teacher..." Zara – line 38.</i>
Supporting students with note taking.	<i>"...more often than not I find a way to maybe write something on some paper, because I am always taking notes so if there is something on the board and I know they can't write quickly, so then I will write it down..." Gloria – line 267.</i>

<p>Students struggling to fill in worksheets.</p>	<p>“...they only had to do a few where the others had the whole sheet to do and I thought that that’s the sort of thing that, because it takes them so long to write...” Gloria line 294.</p>
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7.12. APPENDIX L: FOCUS GROUP THEME JOURNEY

Below the reader can see how codes (bullet points), turned into initial themes (blue lines), then into subordinate themes (green lines) and finally into superordinate themes (orange lines).

"It's not stock standard care"

A place for belonging
ARP – a place for security and safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No judgement space. ○ A place for a student to feel confident. ○ For students to feel secure. ○ A space to come back to. ○ A calm space to come back to. ○ Students doing detention in the access centre.
ARP – a place for sense of belonging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A place for a sense of belonging. ○ Not being separate. ○ Students struggle with acceptance.

Working toward building key skills
Developing social skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students not always understanding social graces. ○ Students needing to grow in their relationships. ○ Develop awareness of social cues. ○ Building a social network part of mainstream. ○ Helping them to develop their social friendships. ○ Helping students to grow relationships. ○ Student having time to talk to friends first.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student feeling supported by friends. ○ A's motivation to talk to others.
Supporting emotional development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building student confidence. ○ Helping them to move on. ○ Supporting students to tolerate mistakes from staff. ○ A's confidence as a student. ○ Development of A's confidence.
Working toward independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building independence. ○ Become more independent adults. ○ Training students to be more responsible. ○ Giving students ownership. ○ Students left to their own devices unless they need help.
Building life skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building life skills. ○ Dressing skills. ○ Building cooking skills. ○ Extra skills.

Recognition of student growth
Staff flexibility and adaptability to delivery of support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff having to adapt to student growth. ○ Staff allowing flexibility. ○ Staff being flexible and adaptable. ○ Staff difference in acceptance of pupil choice.
Student growth and development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "The way they develop is amazing". ○ Students not crying anymore. ○ "Students at different stages of development when we first get them".

- Students feeling safe.
- Students more open to difference.
- Students feel happy.
- Student used to stim a lot but doesn't anymore.
- Student now being in a position of power and influence.
- Students improving tolerance of unexpected changes.
- Staff support growth of students.
- Students growing in skills.
- Students always would fidget now doesn't need to.
- Students really maturing and developing.
- Students being able to work more.
- Students no longer needing to rock.
- Students always have room for growth
- We are trying to help them to grow and learn.
- Speaks volumes that A was able to share with the unit.
- For A to communicate what she needs, wants and to feel safe.

Students at the heart of the delivery of service

"It's not stock standard care"

- It's not a unit that just provides in a box.
- It's not stock standard care.
- Not a blanket approach like SEND.
- Different rules and policies.

Tailormade interventions

- Tailormade interventions to the individual.
- Access - uniquely accommodating students.
- Tailor made interventions in access.
- ARP money is for our student's support.
- No point in us being here if we don't consider these things – individuality of student.

Recognising individuality of student needs

- Recognising what works best for what child.
- Recognising their needs.
- ARP staff know what works for each student.
- Autism is not a blanket.
- Each student is an individual.
- Staff find different ways to support students.
- Staff recognising students' different levels of functioning.
- What works for one doesn't work for another.

Child Centred

- ARP staff always put the child first.
- ARP staff are on the student's side.
- Our students are the focus.
- Working at the student's pace.
- Being student led.

Incorporating student interests to develop skills

- Playing to student interests.
- Monopoly to develop turn taking skills.
- Monopoly to develop maths skills.
- Monopoly to develop money skills.
- Monopoly to develop understanding of how rent would work.
- Monopoly to develop team working.
- Monopoly to develop tolerance.
- Monopoly to develop patience.
- Monopoly as a time to blow off steam.
- Monopoly for social inclusion with mainstream students.

The Keyworker playing a central role to the delivery of support

Key role of the keyworker

The differing nature of the keyworker to that of the teaching assistant

- Keyworkers open to supporting other children if available.
- Considerations on how to support other students.
- Teaching assistants support any child in the classroom.
- Key workers being different from teaching assistants.

Staff Role

- Staff going above and beyond.
- Staff enabling students.
- Staff supporting parents.
- Staff being sensitive and mindful of their support.
- Staff having to step in and support the student when teachers don't.
- Staff teaching students tolerance of not knowing.
- Staff to support students.
- Staff supporting students' responses to incident with A.

Staff recognising and implementing a balance of support

- Staff not sitting next to students – (Velcro support).
- Staff being vigilant to if the student needs support.
- Staff not liking to sit back and do nothing.
- Staff recognising that sometimes it's necessary to sit back.
- Staff acceptance and adjustment of refusal of support.
- Key worker giving students space in the classroom.
- Staff occasionally checking in on students.

Practical applications of support to access lessons

- Keyworker bringing lessons to the access centre.
- Key worker having to step in to distract student from teacher.
- Key worker to accompany student during mainstream clubs.
- Supporting students with note taking.
- Students struggling to fill in worksheets.
- Students needing more time to focus.

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“We are the roses between the thorns”

Bridge between mainstream and student

- Building blocks between teacher and student.
- We are the rose between the thorns.
- Staff acting as a protective force field for students.
- Key worker being a communication bridge.
- ARP staff acting like a steppingstone.
- “We are the go-between”.
- Staff being a buffer between students and mainstream teachers.

Facilitating communication

- Key worker to help students to talk about their issues.
- Supporting students to talk about sensitive topics.
- Students needing to feel comfortable to be open and share information.

Importance of relationships

Matching the right staff to student

- Students being confident working with key worker.
- Matching the right adult to the child.
- Matching staff to student interests.
- Going to the right adult to communicate with the child.

Building strong and trusting relationships

- One-one relationships.
- Staff encouraging students to have faith in them.
- Building trusting relationships for open communication.
- Students benefit from building rapport with other staff.
- Students knowing, they can trust the staff.
- Building a good relationship between keyworker and student.
- Students knowing the key worker has what they need.
- Staff bonding with other students to anticipate change.

Student/staff reciprocity

- Students being intuitive to how staff are feeling.
- Students' growth inspires staff growth.
- Students knowing staff.
- Students showing care toward staff.
- Students being protective of staff.
- Students standing up for staff.
- If staff are upset, students check in.

The key is knowing the students

Staff anticipating student needs

- Anticipating student behaviour.
- Staff knowing their students.
- Staff being able to anticipate student needs.
- Staff understanding their struggles with change.
- Staff knowing what needs to be done.
- Staff still being there for the student.
- Staff being hands on.
- Staff support students with their confusion.

Staff knowing student difficulties

- Students not being able to cope with crowds.
- Students still needing reminders to concentrate.
- Students not finishing work.
- Difficulties with reading facial expressions.

Barriers to students accessing learning

Barriers in the classroom

Environment

- Too many distractions in the classroom.
- Lessons are too noisy.

Pace of lessons

- Lessons moving at a fast pace for students.
- Supporting students to not be behind in lessons.
- Giving students too many handouts to fill in.

Teacher's limited understanding of student needs

Teachers not taking accountability for knowing ARP students' needs

- Teachers given information about student needs.
- Teachers have forgotten the information about student.
- Teachers not knowing what they are doing with the student.
- Teachers not recognising student triggers.
- Class teacher not knowing students learning needs.
- Teachers not reading information about student.

Teachers not understanding staff roles in supporting key students

- Staff feeling teachers may not understand their roles.
- Staff worried that teachers are thinking that they are twiddling their thumbs.
- Teachers not knowing what we are for.
- Staff having to justify their actions.
- Teachers making assumptions on key worker role.
- Teacher not knowing how to relate to access staff.
- Teachers not knowing if they can ask us to do something.

Teachers' avoidance of ARP students during lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers avoiding teaching ARP students. ○ Teachers backing off which is not great. ○ Some teachers don't focus on the student.
Teachers not understanding student needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers just don't know the kids well. ○ Mainstream not knowing students as well as we do. ○ Mainstream teachers not understanding how our students work. ○ Teachers not recognising that things might happen for students. ○ Teachers not giving students enough time. ○ Teachers not understanding students being overloaded. ○ Teachers don't always give students what they need. ○ Mainstream teachers not recognising student's sensory needs. ○ Teachers get confused which student has what needs. ○ Teachers causing student upset due to not knowing them well enough. ○ Teachers making incorrect assumptions about students.

Key improvements
Prioritising student teacher interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers distinguishing between SEN and Access staff. ○ Teacher needing to be in a position of curiosity and openness. ○ Teachers needing to check in with the key worker about the student.
What could work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers working to know and include student voice. ○ Mainstream teachers needing to interact with students to get their voice.

Difficulties related to behaviour management
Teacher's style of behaviour management

- Mainstream teachers being shouty.
- Mainstream teachers being very loud and vocal.
- Teachers unintentionally being antagonistic.
- Teachers going overboard.
- Researcher feeling overwhelmed and shocked by teachers' behaviour.

Schools' behaviour management policy

- Students getting detention from mainstream.
- Mainstream involvement escalates incidents with students.
- Students and parents getting upset.
- Prevent it from escalating unnecessarily.
- Causing so much of an issue.
- Needing it to be dealt with straight away.
- When escalating staff having to involve line management.
- Better diverting to our line management.
- Our line management knowing the students the best.
- Line managers having to speak to heads of years.
- Head of years having to speak to senior leadership team.

Student barriers to accessing support

Sense of difference

- Students not wanting to be different.
- Students being paranoid about being in the ARP.
- Students being defensive.
- Students not wanting to be associated with the access centre.

Refusal of help

- How do staff help when students refuse support.
- Students not wanting staff to sit by them.
- Students refusing help.

Misunderstanding the purpose of the ARP

- Students needing to understand the purpose of the access centre.
- Students being too comfortable in the access centre.
- Students misunderstanding of the purpose of the access centre.

Students' recognition of available support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Students knowing that the key worker is there.○ Students understanding that there is extra support.○ Students knowing the class teacher is there.

- Students knowing that the key worker is there.
- Students understanding that there is extra support.
- Students knowing the class teacher is there.

Communication playing a key role in support

The emphasis of empowering the student's voice

Everyone has a say

- Everyone has a say.
- Everyone has an equal say.

Using their voice to communicate

- Pupil voice.
- Students confident in understanding and communicating ideas.
- Students being able to communicate with the class teacher.
- Students being able to communicate their feelings.
- Students to indicate if they need support.
- Students talking about issues that may come up with their key worker.
- Student having a say in how to tell others.

Supporting students to find their voice

- Key worker to help students to talk about their issues.
- Supporting students to talk about sensitive topics.
- Students needing to feel comfortable to be open and share information.

Clear and open communication in the ARP

Importance of communication to enable team work

- Methods of staff communication.
- Staff communicate through WhatsApp.
- Don't always read communication.
- Staff meetings to communicate student information.
- Communicating information sensitively.
- Importance of communication for staff.

- Communicating when students are having a bad day.
- Staff sharing student information when changing students.
- Clear communication between staff.
- Importance of communication and management.

Strong staff/parent communication

- Sharing information with parents on shared thinking.
- Sharing with parents what need to be done at home.
- Parents sharing what their child needs with staff.
- Importance of liaison with parents.
- Updating parents on what's going on at school.
- Sharing what staff are doing so it can be replicated at home.

Working hard for open/clear communication with staff-students

- Staff trying to give warnings about events and changes.
- Staff sharing information as it happens.
- Students wanting open communication from staff.

Barriers to communication

Staff not having all the information

- Students getting upset without all the information.
- Staff being open about personal circumstances.
- Students knowing latest gossip.
- Students being aware of staff communication.
- Staff being able to answer questions that might arise.

Lack of communication between mainstream and ARP staff

- Bad timing for unexpected changes or events.
- Staff not always having all the information to share with students.
- Using different techniques to support student than teacher.
- Key worker needing teachers to communicate with them.

Staff having to bridge communication between student and teacher

- ARP staff acting as a communication buffer.

- Key worker having to explain things to the teacher.
- Students struggling to communicate outside their key worker.
- Key worker communicating with the class teacher.
- Key worker being able to modify teacher communication to help student understand expectations.
- Teachers to use key worker as a communication support.

Outliers

- Know the children but don't work with all closely.
- Some teachers supporting students to complete work.
- School is a massive part of their lives.
- Seamless management of incident with A.
- Society being better and more open.

7.13. APPENDIX M: TRANSCRIPT TO CODE FOR INTERVIEWS

The table below demonstrates some examples of how the researcher coded lines in the young people's interview transcripts.

The central role of the staff/key worker to the positive delivery of support	
Individualised offer of support	
Code	Line in Transcript
Keyworker tailormade interventions to the individual	'It's having the interventions that are tailormade to the individual' - <i>Line 43</i>
Positive and trusting staff-student relationships	
Code	Line in Transcript
Acknowledges that sometimes staff can be loyal and helpful	Q: 'Would Miss J or Miss F not be loyal or helpful for you?' A: 'They will' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 379 -381</i>
Student feels she can only trust two key workers	Q: 'Do you have anybody else who you trust and are able to talk to?' A: 'Mmm' Q: 'Or is it only her?' A: 'Only her' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 386 -392</i>
Student trusts her key worker	Q: 'Yeah, and you put that you have somebody who you trust at school to talk to you, is that Miss J or is it somebody else?' A: 'Miss J' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 382 - 384</i>

Student enjoys having a key worker	Q: 'Okay and it says, you said that you enjoy having your key worker.' A: 'Yeah.' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 138 - 140</i>
No key worker = no person to love	'No person to love' - <i>Sarah, line 328</i>
No key worker = no person hug or give sweets	Q: 'Okay, so yeah, you're right there'll be no...' A: 'No person to hug' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 322 - 324</i>
Staff-student communication	
Code	Line in Transcript
Student has a key worker to share her feelings with	Q: 'Yeah, you're absolutely right it does count but is there anybody else that you share your feelings with?' A: 'Miss J' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 358 - 360</i>
Believes if she told ARP staff about issues, they would help	'If I really talked to them about it they would have but they've only really just heard about it last week on Friday, and stuff.' - <i>Emma, line 123</i>
How student is communicated with by key worker is important	'How they tell me to do my work' - <i>Max, line 276</i>
Practical support during lesson	
Code	Line in Transcript
Key worker writing the answer for student and student coping it into their books	'I tell them what to write in their paper.' - <i>Matthew, line 305</i>
Key worker helping me with my writing	'Key worker was helping you with your writing' - <i>Researcher, line 299</i>

It's not coming from them; its coming from me (key worker writing down students' ideas and responses)	'It's not coming from them, it's coming from me' - <i>Matthew, line 305</i>
Student missing classroom instructions and key worker supports with what to do	'I just ask my teacher what we're doing and my key worker' - <i>Matthew, line 281</i>
Key worker helping student to remember instructions for task	'Yeah, yeah yeah' - <i>Matthew, line 285</i>
Student saying an answer and the key worker scribing it down for them	'I'll tell them what to write on the paper and then I'll just write down, I'll just copy it down in my book.' - <i>Matthew, line 305</i>
Regular access to check ins	
Code	Line in Transcript
Key worker checking in on the student	Q: 'Right and so your key worker will normally just come in and check that you're okay.' A: 'Yeah.' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 319 - 321</i>
Key worker checks in throughout lessons	'If, um, my lessons are okay because right now my keyworker checks in' - <i>Emma, line 101</i>
Some key workers check in on students during lessons	'But most of the time they, *11:44 – inaudible * lesson they do come over and ask if I needed any help and see if I'm okay and stuff.' - <i>Emma, line 85</i>
Key worker checking if student experiences any problems	'If there's any problems, if there's any problems with my laptop,' - <i>Emma, line 101</i>
1:1 with key worker would consist of a check in about the week Some key workers check in on students during lessons.	'I have a one to one every single Wednesday with her' - <i>Emma, line 75</i>

Support with social development	
Code	Line in Transcript
Acknowledges staff can help with social difficulties	Q: 'What about with sometimes when there's conflict so that when there's fighting or when someone's irritated you like Max did when he stepped in with that rumour, do you not feel like the staff can help you then?' A: 'Yeah' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 283 - 285</i>
When behaviour gets out of hand, ARP staff do manage it.	'I think, but when it gets out of hand, they do handle it.' - <i>Freddy, line 281</i>
Pervious key worker encouraging fairness	'Last year, before Miss A left? She used to be mykey worker and she, is like she was all about being fair.' <i>Freddy, line 405</i>
Key worker supporting with understanding different perspectives.	'So if I did something that was wrong, for example someone was annoying me, and I physically went onto them, you know? She'd be like, "Okay, so he's done that, but you should have done that". So she see used to see like both sides of the picture or both sides of the coin' - <i>Freddy, line 405</i>
Key worker helping to understand what went wrong.	'You somebody to help you understand maybe what went wrong' - <i>Researcher, line 407</i>
Key worker preventing student from joining in on poor behaviour.	'That's like, the only time like, when I'm with my friends yeah and I have a teacher will like, say, like, my friends are messing around with you and the teacher will say 'No you can't do that'. Like I'm upset, why can't I do that and they can?' - <i>Freddy, line 189</i>
Practical support with learning	
Code	Line in Transcript
Gets key worker when having a test.	Q: 'What do you normally get for a test?' A: 'Maybe just a support worker.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 538 - 540</i>

Key worker supports by explaining test questions.	Q: 'And what do they do?' A: 'Sometimes they explain the question to me.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 542 -544</i>
Grade improved with key worker teaching student.	'So they got jumped from like a two or a three to like the seven.' - <i>Freddy, line 225</i>
ARP staff know how to support learning.	Q: 'Okay. All right, that makes sense and then does that also include things like, your learning, like academic?' A: Yeah. - <i>Researcher and Freddy, lines 83 - 85</i>
Key worker helping student to understand what they need to do.	'I noticed your key worker help you understand what you were meant to do.' - <i>Researcher, line 299</i>
Key worker not giving student the answer.	'I just tell them to write down the thing and I just write down what I think' - <i>Matthew, line 309</i>
Keyworker role and responsibilities	
Code	Line in Transcript
Key worker sends a kind email to teacher to explain need.	'My key worker, who might just send a kind email.' - <i>Molly, line 169</i>
Staff in access centre working to support students.	'Staff in the Access Centre, appear very committed to supporting the students' - <i>Researcher, line 267</i>
People just think it's a normal support worker.	'People just thinks it's a normal support worker. - <i>Molly, line 341</i>
Mainstream not making adjustments and ARP staff improvising.	'They tend to improvise and make solutions themselves.' - <i>Researcher, line 267</i>

Key worker trying to support parent suggested adjustments.	'The key support worker went to support and we've done it, we were one of the first people that done it.' - <i>Molly, line 261</i>
Key worker helps student to remain focused in lessons.	'I also saw them helping you to make sure that you focused on some of your work when you got a little bit distracted.' - <i>Researcher, line 310</i>
Key worker help student understand instructions.	'Key workers busy helping you to make sure that you understood the instructions.' - <i>Researcher, line 310</i>
Student feels supported by staff when things go wrong.	Q: 'Okay. This one over here when it says 'When something goes wrong, adults know how to support me', you put true. How do the adults support you Sarah?' A: 'They hug me' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 530 - 536</i>
Key worker support based on level of student need.	'So you have maybe more students that are like, less needy, and like, some people have one student are so needy for example' - <i>Freddy, line 369</i>
Key worker teaching GCSE lessons for ARP student.	'So what they did is they put him to do their lessons with them.' - <i>Freddy, line 225</i>
Staff encouraging peers to make social connections.	'I mean, I'd say yes, but kind of, because they were just saying "Go away", not like go away, but like, go do something else. Like, you can't just stay here all the time because, you know, you can't. So I was like, "Okay, fine". - <i>Freddy, line 169</i>
Matching 'best fit' Keyworker to student needs	
Code	Line in Transcript
We both knew that she would have been beneficial for my lessons (having an HTLA for English).	'So they try to put support that is good in those type of subjects. So for example, in English, I requested an HLT English in my lessons, which is Miss V because she knows I'm not the best English' - <i>Freddy, line 209</i>

Requesting to work with someone student already knows.	'She already does interventions with me.' - <i>Freddy, line 209</i>
Using key worker skills (geography) to teach ARP student.	'So there was one of the supports which got really good grades in geography, and I think history' - <i>Freddy, line 225</i>
Good key worker knows how to help with lesson content.	Q: 'So would you say that that is the difference between what makes a good key support worker and a key worker who is not so good?' A: 'One of them' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 269-272</i>
Student prefers to work with a key worker they like.	Q: 'Oh, Is there a reason, is it because of somebody who you might like better or is it somebody who's better at helping you?' A: 'Both' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 253-256</i>
Staff not having the skills to explain how to do something.	'They just keep telling me do what you can, do what you can but I can't do any of it' - <i>Max, line 240</i>
Student prefers to work with a key worker who knows how to help.	'Is it somebody who's better at helping you?' - <i>Researcher, line 254</i>
Student having a key worker knowledgeable about lesson content.	'Okay so that's why you had Miss ML in that lesson, because she is more, I guess, knowledgeable about the subject.' - <i>Researcher, line 82</i>
“The Access Centre is a unique selling point for the school”	
Offers flexibility for students	
Code	Line in Transcript
Staff being flexible to meet student study at home instead needs	'Three studies every day which for me was unfeasible to do in the study room. So we decided that I will go home and with Miss F, she arranged it.' - <i>Molly, line 277</i>

Flexibility if student can't learn much in lessons	'Some students that just couldn't go to lessons and couldn't learn much.' - <i>Freddy, line 229</i>
Flexibility to do some units independently (at access centre)	'I do some of the units on my own.' - <i>Molly, line 280</i>
I am now on a part-time table – more study time (spent in access)	'I now have a part-time timetable' - <i>Molly, line 277</i>
A provides a space for students to go	
Code	Line in Transcript
A place student can go to if he really needs it	Q: 'It just helps you sometimes. Any example of even just one time where you feel like it's helped you?' A: 'Sometimes I feel I really need to go, I can go.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 514 -516</i>
Student does some lessons in access	Q: 'Do you do any of your lessons in the Access Centre?' A: 'I do maths and learning for life' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 482 - 484</i>
Student eats lunch in the access centre	Q: 'What about for the lunch hall when you go get your lunch?' A: 'I go back to access and eat it' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 430 - 432</i>
Returns to access to eat because its quieter	Q: 'So you just quickly go get it and then you come back here where it's a bit more quiet.' A: 'Yes' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 434 - 436</i>
Yeah, also if there's a cover teacher, I try get to come here (access centre)	'Yeah also if there's a cover teacher I try get to come here and stuff' - <i>Emma, line 129</i>
Like the access centre as its away from everyone.	'Yeah. Well, not only like also like, in the school like itself, like, it's, it's quite away from everyone.' - <i>Freddy, line 109</i>

Offers a quiet space	
Code	Line in Transcript
Only ARP students allowed in access centre, allows for privacy	'So it's just better and there's also like, only like, access, students are allowed here. So, I get more like privacy kind of.' - <i>Freddy, line 109</i>
Only has access to quiet space during emergencies (run away)	'That's usually for emergencies only like if, like running away and stuff.' - <i>Max, line 400</i>
Sometimes having to request to use smaller therapy room	'Sometimes I sneak in here, of course with staff members permission' - <i>Molly, line 297</i>
Offers access to support around tests	
Code	Line in Transcript
Student gets more time with tests.	'Um I did my science test, um and I get to have more time so that feels nice' - <i>Emma, line 113</i>
Student gets extra time during tests	Q: 'Right? Okay. Do you get extra time for tests?' A: 'Like maybe five minutes.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 546 - 548</i>
Aims to individualise support	
Code	Line in Transcript
Individualised support strategies to support individual need	'I'm not good with anger or other emotions, I don't express them well and they give... these used to give me support in that.' - <i>Freddy, line 357</i>
Acknowledgement of different behaviour in the access centre	'Usually I don't behave well in the Access Centre' - <i>Freddy, line 193</i>

Student targets are personalised	'So every single student gets like three targets for the whole year and Access doesn't get more but like, they like are more targeted towards that person.' - <i>Freddy, line 349</i>
In access not everyone is the same, mostly different so each get their own support	'In Access not everyone is the same, mostly different so each gets their own support' - <i>Freddy, line 349</i>
Differentiation in behaviour management	
Code	Line in Transcript
In access detention is modified	'So sometimes they get that, that's just a little punishment. Sometimes they get detentions but not that long, like 5/10 minutes, yeah.' - <i>Freddy, line 277</i>
Different behaviour management in access than mainstream	'The keyworker won't let me do what other in class do' - <i>Matthew, line 521</i>
Offers Supports with social integration quiet space	
Code	Line in Transcript
Everyone is included in the access centre	'Everyone will properly include everyone' - <i>Molly, line 197</i>
SEND students getting similar support to access students	'So like they have like someone to talk to, they get given, I don't know if that's correct, but they get like support in like exams. So some people get like, pens that read for them or laptops and stuff.' - <i>Freddy, line 125</i>
Student spending break/lunchtime in access centre	'Mainstream, I never come here for lunch' - <i>Matthew, line 537</i>
Facilitates reasonable adjustments	
Code	Line in Transcript

Doesn't have to endure early line up in mainstream	<p>Q: 'Is that helpful because you know that you don't need to line up with the rest of the school?'</p> <p>A: 'Yeah, because I go up to tutor sometimes earlier.' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 503 - 505</i></p>
Student finds leaving lessons early helpful	<p>Q: 'Does does that help?'</p> <p>A: 'Yes.' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 425 - 428</i></p>
Student leaves class five minutes early to avoid crowds	<p>Q: 'So I noticed during my observation, that you get to leave the lessons a little bit early with with Miss J. Is that right?'</p> <p>A: 'Yeah. Scheduled five or two minutes early.' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 422 - 242</i></p>
ARP students have more flexibility to swap/drop lessons	<p>'Um and some students, for example in the access centre or in the access, you can swap, you can have three or four.' - <i>Emma, line 103</i></p>
Student may have option of dropping history for extra English	<p>'He's going to talk to Miss F to see if I could drop it and do an extra English, maths or science.' - <i>Emma, line 101</i></p>
Hoping she will get to sit by a window and clock for GCSE's	<p>'I wanted to sit near a clock and a window because I like a bright light on my paper so I can see the words more clearer and yeah.' - <i>Emma, line 117</i></p>
Allowed to leave lessons early to avoid crowds and noise	<p>Q: 'So I noticed during my observation, that you get to leave the lessons a little bit early with with Miss J. Is that right?'</p> <p>A: 'Yeah. Scheduled five or two minutes early.' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 422 - 242</i></p>
Student wears ear defenders to avoid noise	<p>Q: 'So this part over here you said 'The environment is too noisy and overwhelming', you put that under true. What do you mean by that?'</p> <p>A: I have ear defenders hello!' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 406 - 408</i></p>
For lines I get to go straight to the front	<p>'For lines I get to go straight to the front' - <i>Emma, line 129</i></p>

Is allowed to leave lessons 5 minutes early if she wants to	'Students we get to leave five minutes early if we want to. Um so that's nice to have the option' - <i>Emma, line 95</i>
Student has access to laptop in lessons	'In English and now also in English my key worker has now got me a laptop that I now use in English, media and history, um so that also helps me, um and yeah, but they do help me.' - <i>Emma, line 89</i>
Less worry because she knows she will get extra time in GCSE exams	'Um just again they give me extra time, for all the access centre people um I think also for access I'm not quite sure.' - <i>Emma, line 117</i>
Student hopeful she will get breaks during her exams	'Um but um, so in year six when I was doing my SATS, they kind of let us have a break in between' - <i>Emma, line 117</i>
For the first two weeks of year 10, get to drop or switch lessons	'Yeah so for the first two weeks for everyone in year ten, um yeah, you get for the first two weeks I think, you get to switch any sort of two' - <i>Emma, line 103</i>
What's working well in the Access Centre	
Students confidence in the general support offered	
Code	Line in Transcript
The access centre is excellent.	'The thing about the access center, it's excellent.' - <i>Molly, line 141</i>
Access support being individualised.	'Access support is mostly like, personal kind of, it's individual to the person.' - <i>Freddy, line 349</i>
Spending lots of time in the access centre.	'I'm here a lot, just because I like this place and people sometimes' - <i>Freddy, line 93</i>

<p>Most the time staff know how to help me.</p>	<p>'Most the time staff know how to help me' - <i>Molly, line 257</i></p>
<p>I like this place and the people sometimes.</p>	<p>'I like this place and people sometimes' - <i>Freddy, line 93</i></p>
<p>Sometimes likes having the access centre.</p>	<p>Q: 'Okay. All right. So when we're thinking about the Access Centre, okay, and all the teachers including Miss J, and Miss F, do you like having the access centre here?' A: 'Sometimes' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 495 - 497</i></p>
<p>Student feels she now lives in access centre.</p>	<p>Q: 'So your friends, do they, do you spend break time in lunchtime with them?' A: 'Yes, but now I live in Access' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 241 - 244</i></p>
<p>Student feels happy with the support she gets from the ARP.</p>	<p>Q: 'So it also sounds like you're happy with your support and you don't feel like anything needs to change.' A: 'Yes' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 622 - 624</i></p>
<p>Student feels access is doing a good job at helping her.</p>	<p>Q: 'I think that was my last question, okay. It sounds like, and you tell me if I've got it wrong, but it sounds like the Access Centre is doing a good job to help you to access school' A: 'Yes' - <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 618 - 620</i></p>
<p>Student acknowledges access centre is helpful.</p>	<p>Q: 'No, okay. I'm wondering so, I mean, I guess we have the Access Centre because it's meant to help you to access the mainstream school. It's meant to help you be able to attend your lessons, feel supported and understand what's being taught in class. It's also meant to help kind of manage the social part, so any difficulties with friendships, or maybe the part where you're talking about that you don't feel safe. And of course it's meant to be a space that you can come to when things are maybe going wrong or if you need to do independent study or if you need to do any of your therapies. Do you feel like the Access Centre works well like that?' A: 'It does.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 498 - 500</i></p>

ARP helps student to manage social/friendships.	'It's also meant to help kind of manage the social part, so any difficulties with friendships, or maybe the part where you're talking about that you don't feel safe.' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Acknowledgement of access centre feeling a bit supportive.	Q: 'Okay. So, I guess one of the other questions that I have, is the reason that we have the Access Centre is to support young people with autism. Okay, and the idea is that the school and the Access Centre would have a very good understanding of what autism is, and how to help young people with autism. Do you feel like that works?' A: 'Yes a bit.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 570 - 572</i>
Student sometimes feels ARP is supportive.	'Yeah, sometimes' - <i>Emma, line 73</i>
Access centre supporting mostly autism, SEND support other SEN.	'I don't really like know, but what I think is that access supports you with like your autism and like other things, but mostly your autism. Whereas SEN supports others students with like other disabilities, or just with, what's it called, studying and learning disabilities' - <i>Freddy, line 121</i>
Positive experiences with the access centre.	Q: 'Okay Yeah. Okay. It sounds a little bit to me, like your experience of the Access Center has been a positive one.' A: 'Yes.' - <i>Researcher and Freddy, lines 371 - 373</i>
ARP helps student to access mainstream.	'I guess we have the Access Centre because it's meant to help you to access the mainstream school.' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Student acknowledging, he wouldn't be able to cope without ARP.	Q: 'What if there wasn't an access centre, what if you just had to go to the mainstream school? Do you think that you would be able to cope?' A: 'No.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 506 - 508</i>
Student feels confident with the support ARP provides.	Q: 'No, you think they're doing everything they need to do?' A: 'Yeah' - <i>Researcher and Emma, lines 179 - 180</i>

Admits to liking access even though he doesn't come here often.	'I like it, I like it.' - <i>Matthew, line 553</i>
Access to support staff	
Code	Line in Transcript
Student feels no ARP = no one to help her with her learning.	'Nobody would be able to help you?' - <i>Researcher, line 350</i>
ARP staff improvising and making solutions themselves.	'They tend to improvise and make solutions themselves.' - <i>Researcher, line 267</i>
No ARP = no key worker.	Q: 'What happens, Sarah, if there was no access centre?' A: 'No key support worker and no person to give me sweets' <i>Researcher and Sarah, lines 318 -320</i>
Always finds ARP staff helpful if needed.	Q: 'Has there ever been a time where you haven't found the staff here at the access centre helpful?' A: 'No' - <i>Researcher and Emma, lines 156 - 157</i>
Space to support access to learning	
Code	Line in Transcript
ARP helps student to attend lessons.	'It's meant to help you be able to attend your lessons' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Does some of his lessons in access sometimes.	Q: 'So you do some of your lessons here?' A: 'Yep.' - <i>Researcher and Jack, lines 587 - 589</i>
A space to go to when student needs a break from lessons.	Q: 'Like if you needed to have a break from a lesson?' A: 'Mhm.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 518 -520</i>

ARP to do independent work.	'if you need to do independent study' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Can access the ARP to do independent work for some lessons	Q: 'When you come here during lessons, is it that you have to do independent work?' A: Mhm. - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 470 - 472</i>
Space for recreational times	
Code	Line in Transcript
Break and lunchtimes in access centre are good.	'Being on breaktime or lunch time in the Access Center is good' - <i>Molly, line 197</i>
Break and lunch times are easy in access centre.	'Inside the Access... I already said that about the break times and lunchtimes... Inside the Access Center are easy' - <i>Molly, line 241</i>
"It means I go to Access (safe space) I chill in there".	'It means I go to Access, I chill in there' - <i>Sarah, line 248</i>
Would like to use ARP to relax and have fun.	Q: 'Okay, what would you what would you like to do if you come here?' A: 'To just relax, do something fun.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 474 - 476</i>
Use ARP to watch videos or go on computers	A: 'I don't know, watch some videos or something.' Q: 'Oh, on like the computer?' A: 'Mhm.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 480 - 484</i>
Access to therapies	
Code	Line in Transcript
Access centre being for interventions	'As long as you've been there for interventions.' - <i>Matthew, line 221</i>

ARP to access therapies.	'If you need to do any of your therapies.' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Quiet and safe space	
Code	Line in Transcript
Access centre is quiet.	'Meaning it's quiet' - <i>Freddy, line 109</i>
Enjoys the access centre when he first arrives at school.	'When I feel a little, when I feel, when I like, when I come into, like when I come into school, I usually go here' - <i>Jack, line 501</i>
Student doesn't have a designated safe space.	'I don't usually have somewhere safe to go like for example, when I go right next to the corner, right next to a door it just feels like I'm safe.' - <i>Jack, line 325</i>
ARP helps student to cope sometimes.	Q: 'What does the Access Centre do for you that helps you to cope?' A: 'Mmm I'm not sure, it just helps me sometimes.' - <i>Researcher and Max, lines 510 - 512</i>
ARP is a space to go if something goes wrong.	'And of course it's meant to be a space that you can come to when things are maybe going wrong' - <i>Researcher, line 498</i>
Well managed and good facilities	
Code	Line in Transcript
Student feeling like access is managed well	'Because in my experiences, there hasn't really been like a bunch of bad, like, understanding or handling of situations or support so, yeah.' - <i>Freddy, line 325</i>
Encouragement of social integration between SEN and ARP students	
Code	Line in Transcript

<p>My friends can come play football in the access centre.</p>	<p>'So now what I do is I just get like a few of my friends to come over and play football.' - <i>Freddy, line 149</i></p>
<p>SEND students allowed to come to access for break/lunch times.</p>	<p>'I mean I think it's changed, I'm not sure but apparently students from Access are allowed to bring like one or two friends at break or lunchtime.' - <i>Freddy, line 149</i></p>
<p>Dislike for having to ask if a friend can come to access centre.</p>	<p>'Well, for example, there was a rule that once was 'you can bring friends, lunch or break time, but you must ask Q' which was head of Access Well, I mean, those rules have been on a piece of paper on the blueboard in the corridor for ages.' - <i>Freddy, line 337</i></p>
<p>Some SEN students can access the ARP sometimes.</p>	<p>'Um some do.' - <i>Emma, line 105</i></p>

7.14. APPENDIX N: INTERVIEWS THEME JOURNEY

Below the reader can see how codes (bullet points), turned into initial themes (blue lines), then into subordinate themes (green lines) and finally into superordinate themes (orange lines).

“The Access Centre is Excellent”
The Central Role of the Staff/Keyworker to the positive delivery of support
Individualised offer of support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyworker tailormade interventions to the individual
Positive and trusting staff-student relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges that sometimes staff can be loyal and helpful. • Student feels she can only trust two key workers. • Student trusts her key worker. • Student enjoys having a key worker. • No key worker = no person to love. • No key worker = no person to hug or give sweets.
Staff-student communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has a key worker to share her feelings with. • Believes if she told ARP staff about issues, they would help. • How student is communicated with by key worker is important.
Practical support during lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key worker writing the answer for student and student coping it into their books. • Key worker helping me with my writing. • It’s not coming from them; its coming from me (key worker writing down students’ ideas and responses). • Student missing classroom instructions and key worker supports with what to do. • Key worker helping student to remember instructions for task. • Student saying an answer and the key worker scribing it down for them.

Regular access to check ins

- Key worker checking in on the student.
- Key worker checks in throughout lessons.
- Some key workers check in on students during lessons.
- Key worker checking if student experiences any problems.
- 1:1 with key worker would consist of a check in about the week.

Support with social development

- Acknowledges staff can help with social difficulties.
- When behaviour gets out of hand, ARP staff do manage it.
- Pervious key worker encouraging fairness.
- Key worker supporting with understanding different perspectives.
- Key worker helping to understand what went wrong.
- Key worker preventing student from joining in on poor behaviour.

Practical support with learning

- Gets key worker when having a test.
- Key worker supports by explaining test questions.
- Grade improved with key worker teaching student.
- ARP staff know how to support learning.
- Key worker helping student to understand what they need to do.
- Key worker not giving student the answer.

Keyworker role and responsibilities

- Key worker sends a kind email to teacher to explain need.
- Staff in access centre working to support students.
- People just think it's a normal support worker.
- Mainstream not making adjustments and ARP staff improvising.
- Key worker trying to support parent suggested adjustments.
- Key worker helps student to remain focused in lessons.
- Key worker help student understand instructions.
- Student feels supported by staff when things go wrong.
- Key worker support based on level of student need.
- Key worker teaching GCSE lessons for ARP student.
- Staff encouraging peers to make social connections.

Matching 'best fit' Keyworker to student needs

- We both knew that she would have been beneficial for my lessons (having an HTLA for English).
- Requesting to work with someone student already knows.
- Using key worker skills (geography) to teach ARP student.
- Good key worker knows how to help with lesson content.
- Student prefers to work with a key worker they like.
- Staff not having the skills to explain how to do something.
- Student prefers to work with a key worker who knows how to help.
- Student having a key worker knowledgeable about lesson content.

"The Access Centre is a unique selling point for the school"

Offers flexibility for students

- Flexibility with being able to study at home instead of school (6th form).
- Staff being flexible to meet student needs.
- Flexibility if student can't learn much in lessons.
- Flexibility to learning in access if student can't go to lesson.
- Flexibility to do some units independently (at access centre).
- I am now on a part-time table – more study time (spent in access).

A provides a space for students to go

- A place student can go to if he really needs it.
- Student does some lessons in access.
- Student eats lunch in the access centre.
- Returns to access to eat because its quieter.
- Yeah, also if there's a cover teacher, I try get to come here (access centre).
- Like the access centre as its away from everyone.

Offers a quiet space

- Only ARP students allowed in access centre, allows for privacy.
- Only has access to quiet space during emergencies (run away).
- Sometimes having to request to use smaller therapy room.

Offers access to support around tests

- Student gets more time with tests.
- Student gets extra time during tests.

Aims to individualise support

- Individualised support strategies to support individual need.
- Acknowledgement of different behaviour in the access centre.
- Student targets are personalised.
- In access not everyone is the same, mostly different so each get their own support.

Differentiation in behaviour management

- In access detention is modified.
- Different behaviour management in access than mainstream.

Supports with social integration

- Everyone is included in the access centre.
- SEND students getting similar support to access students.
- Student spending break/lunchtime in access centre.

Facilitates reasonable adjustments

- Doesn't have to endure early line up in mainstream.
- Student finds leaving lessons early helpful.
- Student leaves class five minutes early to avoid crowds.
- ARP students have more flexibility to swap/drop lessons.
- Student may have option of dropping history for extra English.
- Hoping she will get to sit by a window and clock for GCSE's.
- Allowed to leave lessons early to avoid crowds and noise.
- Student wears ear defenders to avoid noise.
- For lines I get to go straight to the front.
- Is allowed to leave lessons 5 minutes early if she wants to.
- Student has access to laptop in lessons.
- Less worry because she knows she will get extra time in GCSE exams.
- Student hopeful she will get breaks during her exams.
- For the first two weeks of year 10, get to drop or switch lessons.

What's working well in the Access Centre
Students confidence in the general support offered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access centre is excellent. • Access support being individualised. • Spending lots of time in the access centre. • Most the time staff know how to help me. • I like this place and the people sometimes. • Sometimes likes having the access centre. • Student feels she now lives in access centre. • Student feels happy with the support she gets from the ARP. • Student feels access is doing a good job at helping her. • Student acknowledges access centre is helpful. • ARP helps student to manage social/friendships. • Acknowledgement of access centre feeling a bit supportive. • Student sometimes feels ARP is supportive. • Access centre supporting mostly autism, SEND support other SEN. • Positive experiences with the access centre. • ARP helps student to access mainstream. • Student acknowledging, he wouldn't be able to cope without ARP. • Student feels confident with the support ARP provides. • Admits to liking access even though he doesn't come here often.
Access to support staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student feels no ARP = no one to help her with her learning. • ARP staff improvising and making solutions themselves. • No ARP = no key worker. • Always finds ARP staff helpful if needed.
Space to support access to learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARP helps student to attend lessons. • Does some of his lessons in access sometimes. • A space to go to when student needs a break from lessons. • ARP to do independent work. • Can access the ARP to do independent work for some lessons.
Space for recreational times
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break and lunchtimes in access centre are good. • Break and lunch times are easy in access centre.

- “It means I go to Access (safe space) I chill in there”.
- Would like to use ARP to relax and have fun.
- Use ARP to watch videos or go on computers.

Access to therapies

- Access centre being for interventions.
- ARP to access therapies.

Quiet and safe space

- Access centre is quiet.
- Enjoys the access centre when he first arrives at school.
- Student doesn't have a designated safe space.
- ARP helps student to cope sometimes.
- ARP is a space to go if something goes wrong.

Well managed and good facilities

- Student feeling like access is managed well.

Encouragement of social integration between SEN and ARP students

- Ny friends can come play football in the access centre.
- SEND students allowed to come to access for break/lunch times.
- Dislike for having to ask if a friend can come to access centre.
- Some SEN students can access the ARP sometimes.

Student's experiences of social inclusion

Social Acceptance and Belonging

Students sense of belonging

- Student acknowledges he feels he belongs in school.
- I got a scholarship, and this is why I belong here.
- Student feeling included in school.
- Sense of belonging with his friends.

Students established friendships

- Student has two close friends.
- "They (students' friends) not a part of access or SEN they're part of mainstream."
- Balancing time spent in ARP with time spent with friends.
- Student feels more relaxed because she has friends.
- Also has a primary friend who knows her well.
- Student now has established friendships.
- Student has an established friendship.
- Some friendships in the access centre too.
- Student has friends at school.
- Students' main friendships are in mainstream.
- Friends are peers who usually talk to student.
- Sometimes play with other peers.
- Student has friends in both ARP and mainstream.
- Will talk to friends when not at school.
- Student feels he only has stuff in common with his friends.

Students' general social experiences

- Recognition that peers' actions are inappropriate but normalised.
- Doesn't acknowledge having any connections to other peers.
- Other secondary schools not having the same support.
- No experience of discrimination.
- Student assumes friends know about her autism.
- Most of like a couple of my friends have ADHD and I have autism.

Friends' acceptance of student attending ARP/having support

- Student sharing everything you can do in access with his friends.
- Student can share his feelings with his close friends.

- Friends know student access ARP.
- Students' friends knowing why they have a key worker.
- Friends know I go to access.
- Friends also want some of students support strategies.
- Feels friends are accepting and that they don't care that she has autism.
- Friends have been chilled about student being part of ARP.
- Student sharing the purpose of access with friends.
- Friends understand student.
- Student hoping friends accept the reason for attending access.

Difficulties in social connectedness

Students struggle with sense of belonging

- Student not wanting to be included with other students.
- I don't feel like I'm included with most students.
- I feel isolated from other students, like I really don't interact with them.
- Student feeling isolated.

Student's difficulties in social understanding/development

- Having to independently understand social situations.
- Initially using the access centre to avoid other peers.
- Student socially vulnerable to social influences from peers.
- Strong sense of fairness and retaliation.
- Strong sense of tit for tat.
- "When someone hits you, you got to hit them back."

Student's experience of friendship/peer difficulties

- Took over a year to establish friendships.
- Didn't get support for friendship issues because student didn't come to ARP.
- In year 9 I had, I struggled with anxiety a lot because of the friend's situation.
- Experiencing social difficulties with mainstream students.
- Student experienced a lot of friendship issues.
- Student not sharing why they go to access with friends.
- Other students don't understand student.
- Some social difficulties in access centre.
- Covid impacted on student initially making friends.
- Friendship issues caused student a lot of anxiety.
- Student doesn't see friends outside of school.

- Student wanting annoying peers to go to mainstream.
- Worries over being targeted by peers for written statements.
- Doesn't always share interests with friends.
- Other ARP students wind student up when upset.

Inconsistencies in ARP students experience of each other

- ARP students being close to each other.
- Being in the access centre and ARP peers get on my nerves.
- Finding some students to be annoying.
- Student struggles with other ARP peers.
- Student only having one friend in access centre.
- Some other students only getting support for tests.

Students' willingness to engage in support

Students struggle to be open to support

- Student choosing to deal with difficulties alone.
- Not feeling like he can go to ARP when having difficulties.
- Student believing in supporting himself.
- Openness for support dependent on who the key worker is.
- Frustrating when key workers keep telling me to do something I can't do.
- Student dealing with difficulties independently without support.
- I only come here if I have to.
- Student never coming to access for break or lunch times.
- Student worried about what others think if he uses the access.
- Only finds the staff helpful to enable him to do his work.

Students being teased for coming to access

- Student not caring if friends tease him for coming to access.
- Student unsure if teasing is playful or for real.
- Student can't identify if the teasing is playful or serious.

Students' worries about how others perceive them when accessing support

- I don't want them to be saying that you're the kid that always goes to access for everything.
- Accessing the ARP is impacted by friends teasing him.
- Having key workers follow student impacts on sense of belonging.

- Student told adult about his friends teasing him about access.
- Students' friends tease him whenever coming to access.
- Trying to avoid being noticed by others when using access.
- I just didn't come here often.
- Students understand others come to access, but he cares too much about what others will say if he does.
- Anytime I'm trying to get to the access I'm trying not to be seen by others.
- Student not always wanting to be followed by keyworker.
- Experiences embarrassment when being followed by key worker.
- Student not wanting to be judged for using access centre.
- Other students don't understand reason for key worker.
- If everyone's around, everyone's like, hey you're the kid that goes to access all the time and I don't want that to happen to me.
- I just wish I could make myself invisible and then just go here (access centre).

Students experience of bullying behaviour from peers

- Sometimes peers have made fun of my fidgeting.
- Student experiences moments of bullying behaviour.
- Student feeling like rumours are spread about him from ARP peers.
- Student not always feeling understood by peers.
- Adult just told friends to stop teasing student.
- Student experiences social difficulties with peers.
- Key worker sharing bullying behaviour with head of ARP.
- Doesn't feel like the key worker does enough to prevent bullying.
- Student struggles with the boys in mainstream.
- Other peers chase her out of areas and lock/block the doors.
- Can't spend time with friend in mainstream because she is chased away from the mainstream playground.
- Other peers are mean to student.
- Student feels other peers get too close to her.
- Peers continue to bully student despite key worker intervening.
- Student would worry about the boys without ARP support.
- Student gets chased out from the area she usually plays in by the boys.
- The boys bully student.
- Other peers call student names.
- Class teachers step in to tell the boys to leave student alone.
- Student staying in ARP to stay safe away from bullying.

Imbedding SEND support across the school ethos and culture

Mainstreams accountability/'buy-in' for SEND provision

Improved general accountability in mainstream setting

- Need wider recognition of autism (also undiagnosed).
- The school should consider the equality act.
- Equality Act – reasonable adjustments should be made.
- Mainstream need to take responsibility to make solutions.
- Drive for school policy on support ARP students.
- Reasonable adjustments being law.
- The mainstream needs alternative solutions for ARP students.

Mainstream students not understanding autism

- Students not understanding autism well enough.
- Acceptance needed for differences in coping strategies.
- Only having one autism assembly – no one pays attention.
- Students making incorrect assumptions about ARP students.
- Other students not understanding what the access centre is for.

SLT need more 'buy-in'/accountability for ARP students

- SLT school management need to be responsible for autism support.
- Needing senior leadership agreement to drop lessons.

Differentiated behaviour management/policy

- More than just online teacher training needed.
- Discrepancy between mainstream expectations and student needs.
- Careful consideration on detention needed for autistic students.
- The need for school to be more open and flexible.
- Support material needing to be laid out clearly.
- Teachers needing briefings on ARP students before teaching.
- Need for clear and consistent policies for autistic students.
- All students need to be engaged in autism inclusion assembly.
- Detentions should not be given to autistic students.
- Threatening detention should be banned.
- Drive for more intensive training that matches ARP support.
- Access centre to be incorporated into mainstream training.
- Clear structure and guidance for homework and course work.

Reasonable adjustments related to homework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions issued instead of detention for late homework. • Reasons for missing homework should be considered.
Improved Autism Friendly policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework detention policies do not match student needs. • Covid policies not matching student needs. • Mainstream lack clear systems of support for ARP students. • Note taking as part of school policy for accessibility. • School sometimes ignoring solutions for ARP students. • Detention for homework missing when I am anxious. • Sometimes solutions are last minute – not staffs fault. • Solutions take time to develop. • School is poor at giving notice about events. • School policies do not match with ARP staff support. • The school is quite strict. • Threatening detention/punishment leads to anxiety. • Mainstream not accepting parent adjustment requests.
Improved relations between mainstream and access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main improvement – relationship between mainstream and ARP staff. • Link between access centre and mainstream needs to be improved.

Improvement of autism training across the school
Access staff needing more training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it should be for the access centre, more specified training. • New staff needing at least two to three weeks of training. • Staff only getting basic training. • (student) Sharing training concerns with access staff. • Recognition that training can be tricky to facilitate. • ARP staff member not having a good understanding of autism. • ARP staff should require advanced training before joining. • ARP staff didn't consider other needs. • ARP staff making stereotype assumptions of autistic students.

- ARP staff training not done in advance but rather upon starting.
- Staff generalise their knowledge of ASD too much.
- Some access staff not being good in autism either.
- Recognition for staff needing more training.
- Staff don't understand how student functions.
- Staff needing training to be more flexible on understanding ASD.
- Supply staff not having enough training.
- Support workers deal with a lot of needs, student needs.
- ARP staff can be overconfident with their understanding of ASD.
- Staff not understanding students' autism and associated needs.
- ARP staff understand it well for not having it.
- Student feeling staff are perfect with training.
- Feels the staff in the ARP have a good understanding of autism.

Need for improved communication between stakeholders

- Need for teachers, Heads, and parents to share information.
- More information shared between students' stakeholders.
- Better sharing of information of need when student joins.
- Instead of reading information it should be a meeting (between staff and parents).
- Needing more in-depth sharing of info about student.
- Parent having to communicate need for covid adjustments.

Teacher/mainstream staff needing more training

- Feeling mainstream staff are not good at understanding autism.
- Training teachers on the equality act and EHCPs.
- Prioritising teachers understanding of autism.
- Belief that teachers don't pay attention to online training.
- Teachers know what autism is but don't understand it properly.
- Teachers do not understand intricacies of autism behaviour.
- Developing teachers' recognition of differences in autism.
- ARP staff sharing that teachers don't understand autism.
- Teachers needing training on autism before starting teaching.
- Mainstream lack understanding of personal needs of students.
- Teachers do not understand what autistic students go through.
- Student feeling mainstream staff don't get training on autism.
- Student feels teachers understand autism.

Improved general understanding of autism

- People not always understanding autistic stimming.
- Every autistic person is different but have similarities.
- We are all similar but different at the same time.

- Training for teachers and students.
- Better training for both staff and students needed.
- Current training not being enough.
- All staff including ARP staff, not understanding student.

A call for general awareness of SEN on a wider scale across school

- Autistic students being very different from mainstream students.
- Accessibility supports beneficial for other students too.
- Needing school recognition of undiagnosed needs.

Developing mainstreams understanding of Access centre

- More mainstream training about the access centre.
- Mainstream teachers needing more training to help ARP work.

Working toward student empowerment

Enabling and incorporating student voice

Students ability to communicate their needs

- Will only share his feelings with the staff in access centre.
- Only shares feelings with trusted and familiar adults.
- Student requesting support but not always provided.
- Student happy to ask for help from either the teacher or key worker.
- Student will communicate when she needs help in lessons.
- Student will ask key worker for help.
- If I need information I will go and ask.
- Only sometimes ask depending on the size of the problem.
- Student has key worker he can share his feelings with.
- May communicate with his key worker.
- Asking for help socially but not always feeling like he gets enough.
- Student able to ask for help.
- Student having to request high level of support for English.
- I will just say I need help.
- Able to put her hand up in lessons.
- When student experiences major problem student will ask for help.
- Opportunity provided for student to discuss if student wants to drop a lesson.
- Student will call key worker over when he has to.
- Student told his parents about teasing behaviour.
- I will talk to the class teacher but only in extreme cases.

Student knowing what works best for them

- Student knows how best to support themselves.
- Student wanting opportunities to share what works best for them.
- Student wanting to be included in sharing information about themselves.
- Acknowledgement that student needs to work harder, but student finding it hard to motivate themselves.
- So, they ask your opinion, your likes, your stories, and stuff. (Wanting a voice).
- Student wanting voice to be included in how to support him.

Students difficulties in communicating their needs

- Lack of confidence to communicate his needs.
- Student not being able to share concerns with his parents.
- Students having long term uncommunicated concerns.
- Student having to manage his feelings alone.

- Student just hoping difficulties will disappear by themselves.
- Doesn't feel like he can share his feelings with others.
- Student not always feeling safe to share information with staff.
- Student doesn't always ask for help.
- If confident I will sort the problem out myself.
- Student doesn't ask key worker for help.
- Student not wanting to express his feelings for fear of being annoying.
- Student having to support himself in lessons.
- Student just sorts it out himself.

Students' awareness and insight into themselves

Students own awareness/understanding of their needs

- I like reading but I can't read for too long because I need visual aids sometimes.
- I can't focus for too long.
- Student picky with what she can eat at home and school.
- Student can struggle with having to write a lot.
- Reading and writing it's not my...I'm not good at that.
- I really wish I could do, reading and writing.
- Researcher noting student struggled with reading during lesson.

Student 's own recognition of their needs

- Still moments of struggle even if independent.
- Student struggles with flexible thinking.
- Student experiencing misunderstanding of social situations.
- Oh God, I'm dreading writing this test at all, what am I going to do (GCSEs)
- (Student struggling to pay attention in lessons) – I'm really bored I just want to make the lesson go fast.
- Student still acknowledging that she struggles socially.
- Teaching students about metaphors and idioms related to autism.
- Acknowledgement that autistic people struggle with making inferences.
- Needing support in lessons with lots of writing.
- "If I could read and write and spell, oh God, I will be able, it would be so much better."
- Student knowing what to write but writing difficulty is the barrier.
- Only sometimes finds it hard to sort himself out.
- Struggles to understand lessons due to attention difficulties.
- Researcher acknowledging how challenging they found the lesson.

Students belief about their autism

- Student feels autism makes her smart.
- Autistic people are logical.
- They mostly change with the person and what their disability is.
- Why things might happen and why she feels the way she does.
- Autistic people kind of think in a straight line.

Students limited understanding of autism

- Student doesn't feel she has a good understanding of her own autism.
- Sometimes has felt confused while growing up about her autism.
- Feels she is developing her understanding more.
- Student feels she understands her autism.
- Student agrees that some autism education would be helpful.
- Only watched video on autism but believes what it says.
- No one spoken to student about autism.
- Student not understanding what autism is.
- Student struggling to pay attention to psychoeducation.

Others supporting students understanding of their autism

- Sometimes they (family) don't understand it because they don't have it.
- In primary she told friends about her autism.
- Mum supporting students understanding of autism with research.
- Mum helped her understand her autism.
- Staff supporting on psychoeducation for autism.
- Working with staff to recognise own autism difference.
- Nan helped student understand their autism.
- Student's brother has autism and feels they are kind of the same.
- Mum found new tricks for supporting student.

Students' sense of difference

- Student recognising differences between him and his peers.
- So, I isolate myself from them because we don't have much in common.
- Sense of unfairness cause other students can misbehave and I get told off.
- Student not wanting to leave lesson to get support.
- The key worker won't let me do it but then everyone else will be allowed to (behave inappropriately in lessons).
- Student worried about his reputation.
- Student feeling annoyed their behaviour is always scrutinised and corrected.
- Some children are allowed to do things I am not allowed to do.
- Feeling they are going to perform poorly in core subjects compared to his peers.

There's always room for improvement

It's not always perfect

Need for differentiation regarding Access rules based on student needs

- Desire for different rules for different students.
- Some access rules being childish and not age appropriate.
- Desire for access rules to be differentiated to age of student.
- Different rules may lead to favouritism.
- Student would change some access rules.

Environment in Access can be overwhelming

- Wanting more ARP staff vigilance during break times.
- Misassumption of meeting sensory needs in access centre.
- Blue room in access centre can be noisy and overwhelming.
- Sometimes finding the ARP noisy every day.
- Its because sometimes its half annoying and half noisy.
- Student acknowledges that ARP can be sometimes noisy.
- Struggles in access when people are annoying.

General views of students experience Access

- Not understanding some access rules.
- Student would rate the access centre a 5/10.
- Out of class access students just get told off in access.
- Student rating the access centre 5.5./10.
- Staff screening to be better.
- Access centre needing to provide clear guidance for teachers.

Support around managing changes

- The change of access centre not been a smooth transition.
- Recognition of lots of changes in the access centre.
- Consideration around minimising some changes is needed.
- The need for access centre to be used for adjustments.

Availability of resources

- Support resources are not always appropriate.
- Need for support to be sorted as soon as possible.
- Support not being enough due to staff shortages.
- Not having enough expertise in therapies (staff).
- Need for experience of working in the SEND department (staff).

A call for opening centre for friends

- Student friend not allowed to attend the access centre.
- Student shared desire to have friend to be able to visit ARP.

Limited spaces available

- Limited alternative spaces in the access centre.
- Lack of space being a main defect of the access centre.

The 'balancing act' to offer support

Staff knowing when to support and when to pull back

- Acknowledges that he can't always do the work by himself.
- I don't think so because I don't want any help.
- When student is focused, he doesn't need support in lessons.
- Can feel confident to support himself sometimes.
- Student finds this balance of support works well.
- Access centre balancing support based on student needs in lessons.
- Student having to share key worker with other students.
- Key worker to be more like teaching assistant – discrete support.
- Student not wanting key worker when they don't need help.
- Key worker needing to focus their support on the whole class.
- Sometimes student doesn't feel she needs key worker support.
- Student and key worker agreed to access ARP at least once a week.
- Student doesn't want help from class teacher.
- Not always a need for support in all lessons.
- Key worker getting the right balance between supportive – strict.
- Sometimes I'm just not supported (when needed).
- Student does like help when finding the lesson content hard.

- One important improvement is that staff can be more aware of when student needs support versus when they don't.
- Student feels key worker stands in the back and spies on her.
- Student acknowledges that sometimes he wants support.
- Staff to know when student doesn't need support.
- Doesn't need support in subjects he is confident in.
- Student doesn't need support in subjects they are good at.
- Because you feel confident that you can try to do things by yourself, you feel you don't need help.
- Student not receiving consistent support despite student not being able to read, write and spell.
- Student not always getting the strategies and support he needs.
- No key worker in some lessons were confident and independent.

Student growth = reduced need for support

- In year 7, needed more ARP time than student does not in year 10.
- When student made friends in mainstream, she didn't need to access the ARP as much.
- In year 9 student accessed half ARP and half mainstream.

General balancing of support

- Student only sometimes likes having a key worker.
- Student not wanting his key workers help in good lessons.
- Check ins offered but not needed.
- When I need help, I honestly don't care that the key worker is with me when I actually need help.
- Key worker rarely leaves ARP student to support other students.
- Key workers only support other students if they are sat near ARP student.
- Student always feeling like they are being watched by key worker.
- Student feeling like his behaviour is being monitored when others aren't.
- Student not wanting key worker to follow them wherever they go.

Factors impacting on staff support

Inconsistencies in accessing support

- Student didn't get help when asked for it.
- Inconsistency in staff being helpful.
- Student would like staff to be more helpful.
- Staff not always stepping in to support social incidents.
- Sometimes I get help.
- Not feeling like he got the help with social misunderstanding.

- Student not always supported by key worker.
- Student sometimes getting support from key worker.
- Feeling like staff could do more to help.
- Student feels key worker could check in on her more.
- Key worker in students' geography lesson was not being helpful.
- This is the first time I have had a key worker with me for learning for life, normally I only have one for science.
- Student not given a choice if he has support or not for lessons.
- Student not always having key worker support in hard lessons.
- Student has experienced a lot of different key workers.

Poor quality of support

- Increases students' frustration when support isn't helpful.
- Key worker doesn't get involved to prevent teacher shouting.

Students feeling "babied" by staff

- Student feeling annoyed by being treated as younger.
- Some ways I feel like they treat us a lot younger than we are and its annoying.
- Student not liking being treated like a baby.
- Student feeling staff in access treat him like a child.
- If some teachers who treat me like I am a child and I find that so annoying.
- When I go outside a teacher has to follow me. I don't know why they have to do that.
- (Student thinks key workers believe) This young person has autism, so I need to baby them.

Staffs not always understanding student needs

- Staff not understanding how to support students learning.
- Staff only sometimes understanding student's needs.
- Student feeling like staff don't understand him emotionally.

Relational difficulties between staff and students

- Key worker getting agitated when student gets distracted.
- They get agitated when I can do it.
- Sometimes key workers can be frustrating.
- I thought I'd done a lot of work and she was always nit picking at the tiniest details and that frustrates me a lot.
- Key worker focusing on behaviour management of student (student finds annoying).
- Lots of my key workers get agitated at me.

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Considerations around the delivery of interventions

Students' inconsistent experiences of interventions

- Student only does Lego therapy.
- Student finds Lego therapy helpful.
- Student understands purpose of Lego therapy.
- Student had social and emotional therapies input in year 7 only.
- Lego therapy I hated that.
- Occupational Therapy I liked.
- I liked the therapies with Ms L we used to do that.
- Student not being offered any structured social support/intervention.
- Handwriting intervention works sometimes.
- Only using access for interventions or when they have to.
- With all those interventions I wouldn't need teachers no more.
- Not having done therapies for a while.
- No current access to therapies only 1:1 key worker once a week.
- Student only has key worker on Wednesdays.
- Student only having reading intervention.
- Student not offered alternative writing support or intervention.

Students not always understanding purpose of intervention

- Knowing obvious reasons for some interventions but not all.
- Student not always knowing the purpose of interventions.
- Not feeling like he needed to be in the intervention/therapy.
- Doesn't feel like she needs more interventions.

Students not always finding interventions helpful

- Finding the occupational therapy fun, but not always helpful.
- Therapies not always targeted to meet the right need.
- Not all offered therapies being helpful.
- Therapies not always being useful.
- Only sometimes finding the therapies helpful.

Staff retention and recruitment
ARP staff leaving
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lot of well-known staff left.• Student being able to get staff to openly discuss why they left.• It was a coincidence that staff left at the same time.• Lots of staff leaving.• Staff removed as key worker and then left.• Loss of key support worker.• Struggled with adapting to loss of key worker.• Staff leaving for other jobs.• Student knowing why staff left.• Some staff left for personal reasons.
Difficulties with staffing levels (recruitment) in ARP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulties with staff recruitment.• Keyworkers having to balance support equally between students.• Key support workers have up to four students.• Each key support worker has from one to two, three or four key students.• Students sometimes having to accept lack of support staff.• Available support staff not always being consistent in lessons.• Last term a number of staff left.• Needing to adjust and get use to new key worker.• Inconsistency in support during tricky lessons.• Not having intervention to support maths or science.

Challenges for students to access mainstream (both learning and environment)

Mainstream accessibility issues for ARP students

Lesson adjustments needed

- Needing adjustments, like references on the board.

Classroom difficulties

- Class discussions difficult to process if not on the board.
- Alternative strategies needed for teamwork.
- In lessons – people saying too much – mind can't process.
- Lesson can be overwhelming.
- Mainly learnt to deal with the noise and teachers shouting.
- Students prefer teachers who aren't so strict with class rules.
- Sometimes struggles to see due to position in the classroom.
- Observation of class discussion being overwhelming.
- Sometimes I shutdown in lessons.
- Student can struggle to read some teachers handwriting.
- ARP students needing advanced warning about teamwork.
- Alternative arrangements needed for teamwork for ARP students.
- Some teachers trying to control disruption in the lessons, but not all.
- Other students being disruptive in lessons is annoying.
- In class expectations of behaviour is different from access – stricter.
- Discipline needed for other students who are disruptive.
- Student wanting to run away when lessons get too much.
- Student sitting at the back of class and not being able to see the board.

Environmental difficulties in mainstream school

- Break and lunchtimes being hard outside the access centre.
- Mainstream being too noisy and overwhelming.
- Student finds the mainstream corridors too noisy.
- Exposed ARP students to noisy environment.
- Lunch in mainstream is rowdy and dirty.
- Can find the school corridors overwhelming in-between lessons.
- ARP distance to mainstream = easier to stay in mainstream.
- Student doesn't find the sensory environment difficult to manage.

Students' struggles during break/lunch times

- Student sometimes not wanting to eat during break or lunchtimes.
- Student finding break or lunch times hard.
- Not feeling like engaging with others during lunch or break times.
- Not liking break or lunch times in mainstream.
- Student spending break/lunch times in mainstream.
- Student sharing access is for break times.

Limited access to quiet/safe spaces

- Student not having available quiet space for lunch.
- Student not having designated quiet space to work.
- Staff not using visual aids to support student in lessons.
- Student doesn't have safe space to use when upset or needs a break.

Teachers lack autism friendly teaching and management

Inconsistencies in teachers' management of ARP students' needs

Teacher's poor management of ARP students' needs

- ARP students need encouragement but not forced to do stuff by teachers.
- Like some teachers just don't know what I need or what can help.
- Teacher needing to check in when they don't have key worker.
- Class teacher won't come over and say like, how did you get on, she won't do that.
- Teacher not checking in on ARP student during lesson.
- Not needing teacher to check in when key worker is there.
- Not (no support) from class teacher because usually my class teacher is sitting by her desk.
- Student doesn't feel teachers support him.
- Feeling teachers don't support him – he can do it himself.
- Class teacher doesn't check in on student.
- Unsure if teacher knows he struggles with reading and writing.
- Class teacher leaving student alone during lessons.

Teachers' good management of ARP student needs

- Some teachers help student with lesson.
- Student feels teachers know how to help with lessons.
- Some teachers checking in on student a lot during lessons.
- Only some teachers manage to do that.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student liking when teacher comes to check in.
Inconsistencies in Teacher knowledge of ARP student needs
Teachers limited knowledge of ARP students' needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers not reading information on student that is shared. • Staff making incorrect assumptions of autistic student needs being academic. • Teachers either forget information or don't read it. • Teachers having too much to do to remember about ARP student needs. • Teachers not always understanding how to support ARP students. • Teacher's getting some information on students but not enough. • Some teachers understand, but not all of them. • (Researcher observation) – recognition that teachers didn't know ARP students. • Student not always feeling like teachers understand their needs. • Inconsistency in teacher knowledge of how to help. • Improvement needed with relationship with mainstream teachers.
Teachers' knowledge of ARP student needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student feels teachers understand her difficulties. • Student feeling more relaxed because teachers know her. • Student feels teachers understand her.
Teacher's not making reasonable adjustments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's not making reasonable adjustments for ARP students. • Avoid surprise tests for autistic students. • Autism inclusion not being frequent enough. • Needing notice about fire drills to avoid anxiety and sensory difficulties. • Experience of assignments being jumbled and unclear. • Mainstream teachers using non-autistic friendly teaching. • Teacher's needing to support with note taking. • Lack of reasonable adjustments being made. • Teachers not being able to support some ARP students. • Student needing teachers talk to him in access centre if something goes wrong. • Student preferring teachers to talk to him privately.
Teachers' poor behaviour management in lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm just trying to focus yeah, and you've got everyone shouting. • Class sizes may be impacting on teacher offering support.

- The teachers do shout in response to behaviour.

Need for differentiation in behaviour management for ARP students

Teacher shouting

- They kept raising their voice at me.
- Teachers who don't know him well will shout at him.
- Student wanting to run away when others are shouting at him.
- Teachers shout at him in moments when key worker is with him.
- Student feeling teachers shout at him – usually supply teachers.
- Some teachers will shout at student when key worker is there.

Students having to write statements

- School making me write statements about social incidents.
- Student not wanting to write statements.

Students being disciplined for autism behaviour

- Students being disciplined for autism behaviour.
- Individual student needs taken into account for rules.

Distinction between ARP student and other students

- ARP students are good in lessons and don't deserve detention.
- ARP students behaving both in class and outside of class.
- Other students knowing their behaviour and deserve detention.
- Recognition that other students' disruption deserve detention.
- Teachers use warning system to try eliminate disruption.
- Mainstream stricter with discipline than access

Student's perception of school

Feelings of anxiety and pressure related to school

Students experience of anxiety and pressure related to school

- Anxiety and pressure leading to feeling worried about school.
- Feelings of oppression.
- When being asked to read for school student felt pressure.
- "Back then I dealt with a lot more anxiety, but now I've gotten over it and stuff".
- Student doesn't feel pressure anymore.
- Doesn't feel worried if she doesn't understand.
- Long queues causing anxiety, especially with normies.
- Students school worries linked to feelings of safety at school.
- Not understanding things increasing feelings of pressure.
- Student feeling pressure at school.

Anxiety and pressure related to social experiences

- They don't like or don't want me to be in the lesson or to even be here (teachers and students).
- The bullying behaviour from boys increases pressure at school.

Anxiety and pressure related to tests/GCSEs

- At start of year 10, she doesn't feel too worried about GCSEs.
- Student experiences worries related to tests at school.
- GCSEs I'm scared for, that the one thing.
- Student feeling like they are going to fail GCSE's.
- Student experiencing a lot of worry around GCSE's.
- "I'm really scared for when it comes down, I'm just I'm going to fail."
- Tests increasing feelings of pressure.
- Acknowledges worry for GCSEs will increase when they get closer to the time.
- Feeling pressure due to exams and being in year 11.

Anxiety and pressure related to detention

- Pressure and anxiety to avoiding detention.
- High anxiety for forgetting things leading to detention.

Anxiety and pressure related to homework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has felt increased anxiety when she hasn't finished homework. • Too anxious and too pressured to do homework. • Heightened anxiety when work and expectations are unclear.
Anxiety and pressure related to having to contribute voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to contribute voice to what works can feel like pressure. • Having to write statements increases pressure and worry.

Students experience of 'trust'
Feeling of trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes student can trust ARP staff. • She (Key worker) left the school, she was my favourite key worker.
Feelings of distrust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wish I could trust someone, but I don't usually trust a lot. • Student suspicious of mainstream teachers' intentions. • Suspicious of teachers being too nice to him. • Student feels other people lie to him. • Student doesn't feel people are loyal. • Student not always trusting of other peers. • Student sharing, he doesn't trust anyone at school. • Student feels peers lie to him. • "Everything backfires" • Student not having an adult they can trust. • Student feeling watched by key worker even when work is easy. • I don't trust my key worker. • I feel like some of the teachers are on to me.

Students' perception of school
Positive perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student enjoys coming to school, enjoys learning. • Student feels safe at school. • Student rates the mainstream an 8/10. • The main factor that makes me come to school is my future. • The reason I came to this school was because of the access centre. • Student feels people at school understand her. • Secondary school different from primary, rules, lessons, overall environment.
Negative perceptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't like coming to school, just annoying and boring and stuff. • Only sometimes likes coming to school, like everyone else. • Student doesn't feel she would manage the mainstream without the ARP. • Would find mainstream too difficult. • Sometimes in a way I'd fake being sick and fake being ill, so I didn't have to come to school. • Students first two years of school impacted by covid. • Didn't have clear information on available support during covid. • Feeling like she only got a good understanding of school in year 9 and 10.

Outliers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth formers get extra study time. • Students having to buy their own support resources. • Student finding break/lunchtimes hard, doesn't want to eat. • Student eats lunch in the mainstream lunch hall. • Student has designated safe space near head teacher's office. • Paperwork done in Italy leading to no primary support. • I want to get a job. • SEN students have access to support room. • When information was made clear student came to school (Covid). • During covid a mixture of online/face to face learning in ARP. • Students mum knows his friends' parents.

7.15. APPENDIX O: ETHICS FORM

Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC)
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

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)

FOR ALL APPLICANTS

If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters. You need only complete sections of the TREC form which are NOT covered in your existing approval

Is your project considered as 'research' according to the HRA tool? (http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/index.html)	Yes
Will your project involve participants who are under 18 or who are classed as vulnerable? (see section 7)	Yes
Will your project include data collection outside of the UK?	No

SECTION A: PROJECT DETAILS

Project title	'Does it do what it says on the tin?' – An exploratory case study into how an additional resource provision in a secondary mainstream school facilitates inclusion for young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).		
Proposed project start date	July 2022	Anticipated project end date	May 2023
Principle Investigator (normally your Research Supervisor): Adam Styles			
Please note: TREC approval will only be given for the length of the project as stated above up to a maximum of 6 years. Projects exceeding these timeframes will need additional ethical approval			
Has NHS or other approval been sought for this research including through submission via Research Application System (IRAS) or to the Health Research Authority (HRA)?	YES (NRES approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	YES (HRA approval)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you already have ethical approval from another body (including HRA/IRAS) please submit the application form and outcome letters.			

SECTION B: APPLICANT DETAILS

Name of Researcher	Angelique Witting
Programme of Study and Target Award	Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and Educational psychology (M4)
Email address	AWitting@Tavi-port@nhs.gov.uk
Contact telephone number	+447787115896

SECTION C: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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?

YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If YES , please detail below:	
Is there any further possibility for conflict of interest? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you proposing to conduct this work in a location where you work or have a placement?	
YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
If YES , please detail below outline how you will avoid issues arising around colleagues being involved in this project:	
<p>The proposed Educational Psychology research project will be conducted in a school that is one of my allocated schools on my second- and third-year placement. Although this may possibly be considered a conflict of interest, this has been thoughtfully considered and discussed with the Lead and Assistant Lead of the school that is involved in the research and clear boundaries have been identified between placement related responsibilities and research responsibilities. This has also been discussed with both my placement Principal Educational Psychologist and placement supervisor, who have agreed to support making sure the boundaries remain between roles.</p> <p>In addition, the benefits in this instance outweigh the potential conflict of interest. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a good rapport and well-established professional relationship with Senior Leadership and some of the staff in the school • The young people who attend this school are already somewhat familiar with seeing me around the building and therefore the hope is that they will not be disturbed by my presence. They may also feel more comfortable to engage in interviews or be a part of the observations. 	
Is your project being commissioned by and/or carried out on behalf of a body external to the Trust? (for example; commissioned by a local authority, school, care home, other NHS Trust or other organisation).	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<small>*Please note that 'external' is defined as an organisation which is external to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (Trust)</small>	
If YES , please add details here:	
<p>My local authority has partly commissioned my research project and are hoping to use the findings to inform their ongoing plans that are associated with their safety valve planning (i.e., using the findings towards future ASD provision planning in the local borough).</p>	


<p>Will you be required to get further ethical approval after receiving TREC approval?</p> <p>If YES, please supply details of the ethical approval bodies below AND include any letters of approval from the ethical approval bodies (letters received after receiving TREC approval should be submitted to complete your record):</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If your project is being undertaken with one or more clinical services or organisations external to the Trust, please provide details of these:</p>	
<p>More specifically the Additional Resource Provision attached to a secondary mainstream school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.</p>	
<p>If you still need to agree these arrangements or if you can only approach organisations after you have ethical approval, please identify the types of organisations (eg. schools or clinical services) you wish to approach:</p>	
<p>The school involved in the proposed research has provided consent for the research to go ahead in their setting. My local authority has also read through my research proposal and provide their consent. Please see appendix for a copy of these consent emails.</p>	
<p>Do you have approval from the organisations detailed above? (this includes R&D approval where relevant)</p> <p>Please attach approval letters to this application. Any approval letters received after TREC approval has been granted MUST be submitted to be appended to your record</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/></p>

SECTION D: SIGNATURES AND DECLARATIONS

APPLICANT DECLARATION

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 ethical principles and to keep my supervisor updated with the progress of my research

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am aware that for cases of proven misconduct, it may result in formal disciplinary proceedings and/or the cancellation of the proposed research. • I understand that if my project design, methodology or method of data collection changes I must seek an amendment to my ethical approvals as failure to do so, may result in a report of academic and/or research misconduct. 	
Applicant (print name)	Angelique Witting
Signed	
Date	23/04/2022

FOR RESEARCH DEGREE STUDENT APPLICANTS ONLY

Name of Supervisor/Principal Investigator	Adam Styles
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Supervisor –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student have the necessary skills to carry out the research? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Is the participant information sheet, consent form and any other documentation appropriate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent suitable and sufficient? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Where required, does the researcher have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Signed	
Date	

COURSE LEAD/RESEARCH LEAD
Does the proposed research as detailed herein have your support to proceed? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Signed	
Date	

SECTION E: DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

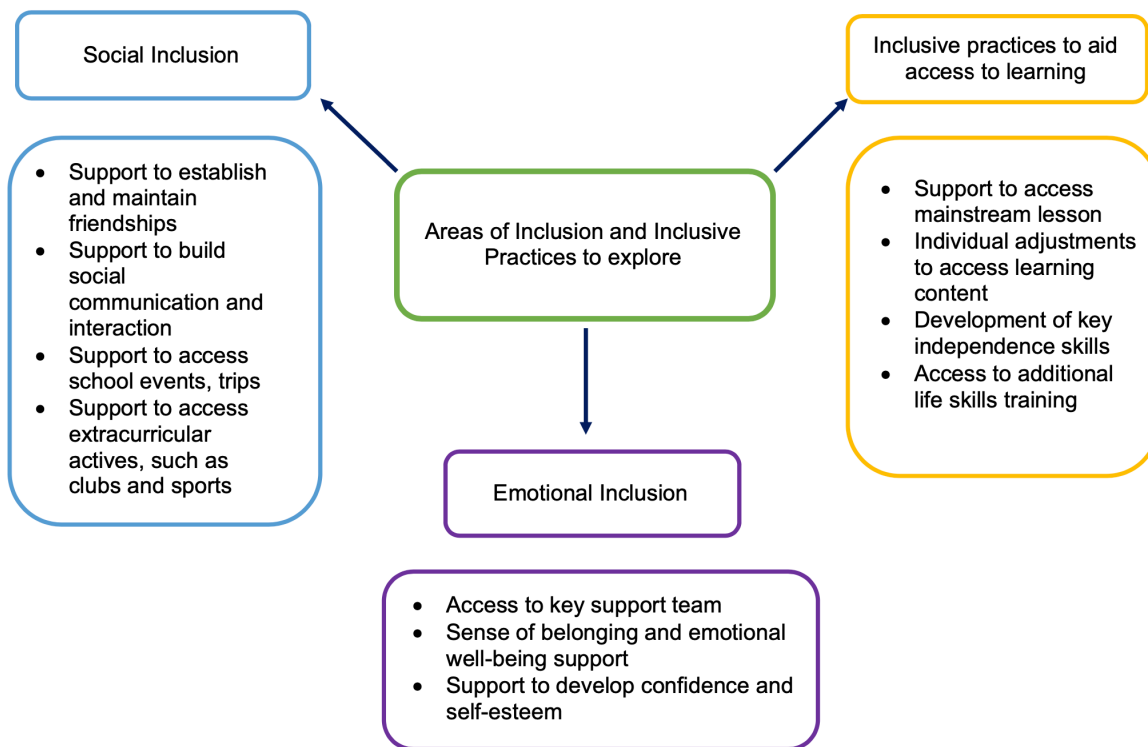
- 1. Provide a brief description of the proposed research, including the requirements of participants. This must be in lay terms and free from technical or discipline specific terminology or jargon. If such terms are required, please ensure they are adequately explained (Do not exceed 500 words)**

The researcher is proposing a case study into one specific additional resource provision (for pupils with autism spectrum disorder) located in their placement borough. This additional resource provision (ARP) is attached to a secondary mainstream school and is the only available ARP attached to a secondary school within the local borough. The aim for this proposed research is for the researcher to explore how this ARP may help support their enrolled pupils to access the mainstream environment, including how it supports access to learning, social inclusion, and development of independence (please see figure below that outlines areas of exploration. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change following the first three phases of the case study, i.e., following the observation, review of documentation and focus group).

The researcher aims to invite all staff working within the ARP (i.e., senior leadership team and the teaching assistants) to participate in the study. The aim of this phase of the study is to gather as much information about what the ARP offers and how it might be implemented and experienced by staff in daily practice, including what they feel is going well and what they may experience as barriers when trying to facilitate and support the areas listed in the figure below.

A main focus of research in this study is that of the young people's experience of being enrolled in the ARP and their experiences of receiving support (which will be identified through the documentation review and focus group with staff) to access the mainstream environment and their experience of inclusive practices listed in the figure below. Participants invited to be interviewed will need to be enrolled in the ARP (i.e., have a

diagnosis of ASD that requires support over and above what the Special Educational Needs department in the mainstream setting can provide) and have at least been attending the ARP for no less than a term.



- 2. 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)**

The aim of the proposed research study is to gain detailed and in-depth insight into how an ARP in a secondary school works to support inclusion and inclusive practices for pupils with ASD. The study aims to do this by exploring what the ARP sets out to do in support of inclusion and how the young people who are enrolled in this ARP experience this in daily practice (i.e., by identifying what strategies employed by the ARP that help facilitate inclusion and access to learning and what might still be the remaining barriers).

Last year the government refreshed the national strategy for improving the lives of people with ASD and their families across England. It built on and replaced the preceding autism strategy, 'Think Autism' which was published in April 2014, and which solely related to provisions and supports for adults. This new strategy extends the scope to include children and young people for the first time and recognises the importance of ensuring early intervention and the right to support across their lifetime.

This strategy highlights 6 key themes aimed at improving access to education and support for young people with ASD and includes a drive toward improving educational professionals' understanding of ASD and the subsequent inclusive cultures within schools. They share a commitment to embedding autism as a priority for educational leaderships and supporting schools to improve the educational experiences of those pupils with ASD. Furthermore, they

identify the crucial need for these children to get the right school provision and aim to open 24 new provisions specially for children with ASD across England.

The aims of this strategy can already start to be noticed at a local level (i.e., within the borough where the author is on professional placement), specifically regarding talks about increasing the local ASD provisions available for these young people. Currently, in the author's borough of professional placement, there are only three available ARPs at primary level and one ARP available at secondary level. This has resulted in a number of young people, especially at a secondary level needing to be placed in out of borough provisions. Subsequently, this has increased the spending on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

In a recent conversation with the author's placement Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP), he shared that as part of the boroughs Autism Strategy (2021-2023), there is a drive toward reducing the number of young people being placed in provisions outside of the borough by working toward increasing the number of local options, with a particular focus on developing more ARPs in secondary school mainstream settings. During this conversation the PEP shared an interest in exploring the borough's current secondary school ARP, with the aim of exploring what daily practice may entail and how it supports young people with ASD and facilitates inclusive practices. These findings would be used to inform future development of additional ARPs.

Furthermore, in a recent discussion with the setting during a planning meeting (the setting of interest is the one of the authors allocated schools), this research idea was tentatively put forward to the leadership team who expressed their openness to engage in the research. The provision lead shared the settings aim of moving toward being recognised as a centre of excellence and thought the results of the study could also be used to inform their current and future practice, including shedding light on their pupils' views.

3. 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)

The proposed research design that best fits with the aims of conducting an in-depth exploration of one specific setting (i.e., the local ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school), is that of a case study.

For this case study the author proposes to gather data from four sources, namely, through documentation, a focus group, an observation, and interviews with young people.

- Review of documents

The researcher will aim to explore documents such as any documentation that outlines the setting offer and policies.

- Focus/reflective group with ARP staff members, including leadership (i.e., setting manager and deputy manager)

The focus will follow on from the initial analysis of the documentation of the setting and it will be an opportunity to explore how they may put the documentation into practice, particularly in relation to the inclusion figure above (section E.1). Furthermore, it will be a space to explore the staff culture, values, and beliefs around inclusion and how this might contribute to answering the research question. The researcher will aim to voice record this group for the purpose of transcribing.

- Observation of the setting

Observation is a key element to gathering a more comprehensive picture of the setting, which is less accessible through interviews alone.

Although, the author acknowledges that informal observation will occur throughout the process of research (e.g., during interviews and the focus group), the author would like to propose the addition of a formal period of observation. The time

boundary for this observation will be one week and the aim would be to allow the researcher a more immersive experience of observation of the setting. The researcher will aim to keep a reflective journal throughout the research process to aid reflexivity. The observation will be recorded in this journal.

- Young people interview

Pupils enrolled (approximately 28 pupils) in the setting will be invited to take part in the interviewing process. Participants will be asked to complete an initial sorting/categorising task (please see appendix for examples). Similar to a 'Talking Mats approach' developed by Joan Murphy (1998) and using cards similar to the 'Risk and Resilience School Well-Being Cards' designed by Dr Jerricah Holder, however these will be customised to fit with the setting's offer of support and the pupils experiences. For example, the cards will aim to include the settings specific interventive practices, such as having a 1:1 teaching assistant accompany a pupil to their mainstream lessons or engaging in a therapeutic intervention, such as a social skills group or sensory exercises.

The aim of this initial sorting task is to aid the pupil's vulnerability to having social communication difficulties. The researcher will then use this visual tool to help facilitate the interview process and will derive most of the interview questions from the pupils sorting responses to gain further information about their experiences.

Interviews will be voice recorded and pupils will be given the option of having these conducted online (with or without the camera on). Furthermore, pupils will be given the option of having their key worker or parent present should they feel they need the additional support.

Data analysis

The researcher aims to use Reflexive Thematic Analysis to analyse the data collected and will aim to blend both an inductive and deductive orientation to the data analysis process. This will result in each phase having its own orientation to data coding.

In phase 1 (i.e., review of documentation) and phase 3 (i.e., observation), the researcher will take a deductive orientation to coding. Here the researcher will draw from concepts of inclusion and inclusive practices from literature to shape codes.

In phase 2 (i.e., focus group with staff) and phase 4 (i.e., interviews with pupils), the researcher will take an inductive orientation to coding. Here the researcher will aim to 'give voice' to participants views, thoughts, and experiences.

While each phase will be initially analysed individually the researcher will aim to repeatedly compare themes between phases to identify if there will be any overarching themes throughout the study.

Each phase will be taken through these 6 stages of data analysis (as seen in figure 2). However, it is important to note that these steps are not meant to be linear and unidirectional, but rather the researcher will be moving back and forth between the stages to aid reflexivity and deepens the understanding of the data.

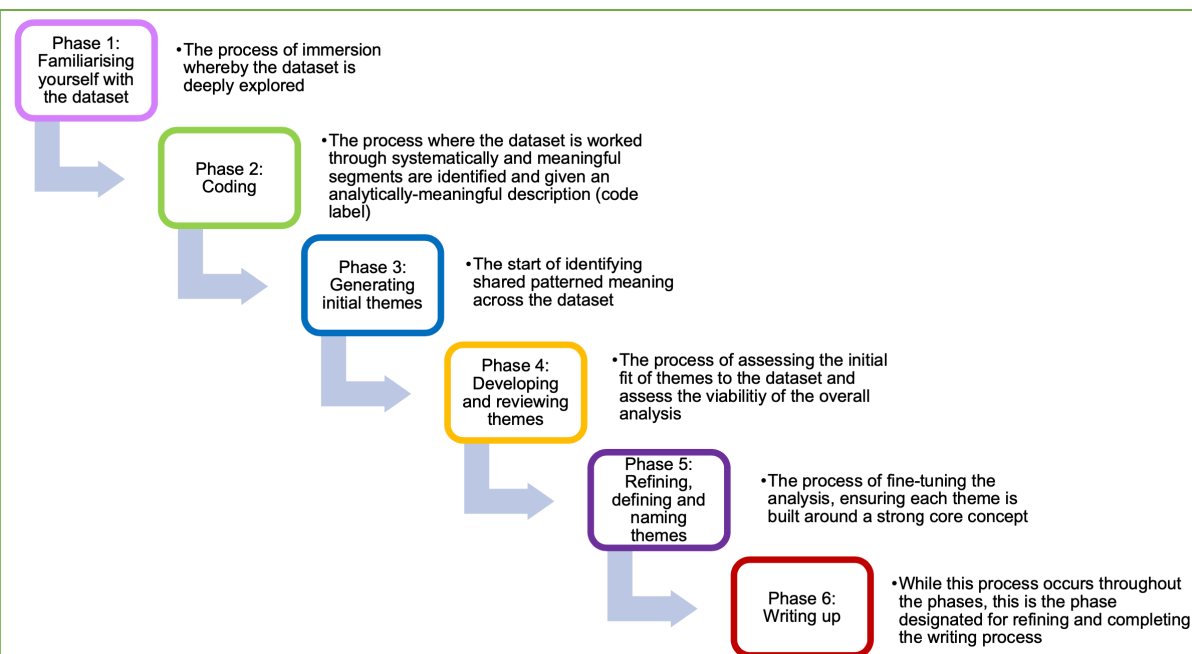


Figure 2: a depiction of the 6 stages of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2021, p. 35).

Reflexivity of the researcher

Throughout the proposed study the researcher aims to keep a reflexive journal that can be used in supervision sessions to aid reflections and challenge thinking.

Reflexivity is at the heart of the thematic analysis process in this proposed study. It recognises the researcher's subjectivity in the process and urges the researcher to consider any bias that could impact on thinking about their interpretation of the data and their meaning making of their own experiences throughout the research process. In addition, it involves the researcher reflecting on their assumptions, expectations, choices, and actions during the research process (Finlay & Gough, 2003).

SECTION F: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

4. 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 these criteria are in place. (Do not exceed 500 words)

The research setting will be an ARP attached to a secondary mainstream school in the local borough where the researcher is on placement.

The researcher will be using purposive sampling for this study (i.e., participants invited to take part in this study will be taken from the ARP staff members and leadership and the pupils specifically enrolled in this setting). All participants who meet the inclusion criteria will receive a copy of the information sheet and consent form either by email, for parents or face-to-face for staff and young people). The researcher will also attend a staff meeting to introduce herself and provide information about the study and answer any initial questions. Young people who meet the inclusion criteria may be approached by either the senior leadership team or their key worker to discuss possibly taking part in the research study.

Sample size at this moment is unclear as all staff and participants who are attending or working at the ARP will be invited to participate unless they fall within the exclusion criteria. The aim of using an open invitation with limited exclusion criteria is to model an inclusive approach and to avoid 'cherry picking' participants.

Exclusion criteria will include:

- Only participants who have been attending or working at the ARP for no less than a term (i.e., four months) will be invited to participate in the study. Allowing them to have a good level of experience and knowledge when contributing to focus groups or interviews.
- Only pupils who are enrolled in the ARP will be included in this study (i.e., no ASD pupils who are in the mainstream setting will be included as they will not have the relevant experience, knowledge and insight into the support offered by the ARP).

5. Please state the location(s) of the proposed research including the location of any interviews. Please provide a Risk Assessment if required. Consideration should be given to lone working, visiting private residences, conducting research outside working hours or any other non-standard arrangements.

If any data collection is to be done online, please identify the platforms to be used.

All phases of this study will be conducted in the ARP setting and will be face-to-face. It has been agreed with the senior leadership team of the setting that the focus group with staff will be held in the large classroom on site and the individual interviews will be held in one of the break rooms in the setting. All individual interviews will be held during school hours where there will be support staff and at least one senior staff member on hand in the event of any risk or distress for the young person.

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

- Students or Staff of the Trust or Partner delivering your programme.
- 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.

² '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)

³ Proposed research involving participants with whom the investigator or researcher(s) shares a dependent or unequal relationships (e.g. teacher/student, clinical therapist/service-user) 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.

7. 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)
- 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
- children are automatically presumed to be vulnerable.

7.1. If YES, what special arrangements are in place to protect vulnerable participants' interests?

The young people being interviewed and observed in their school setting will all have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The researcher has carefully considered how best to support their understanding of consent to participate in the study, including involving parents to co-consent if a young person would like to participate and having a modified consent form that aims to support their understanding of what they are consenting to. In addition, further consideration has been given to support their understanding of the interview questions, including modifying the structure of the interview format to incorporate visual aids to support both receptive and expressive communication. Finally, careful consideration has been had with the senior leadership team of the ARP of how best to support a young person or staff member who may experience any unintentional distress caused by the study. This includes both external and internal avenues of support that the participants can access should they feel the need to.

If YES, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check *within the last three years* is required.

Please provide details of the "clear disclosure":

Date of disclosure: 26 June 2020

Type of disclosure: Enhanced Certificate
--

Organisation that requested disclosure: Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
--

DBS certificate number: 001701986099

(NOTE: information concerning activities which require DBS checks can be found via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>). Please **do not** include a copy of your DBS certificate with your application

8. 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.

9. 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)

- Consent form made using more visual aids
- Young person is supported by parents and key worker to understand what they might be consenting to.

SECTION F: RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

10. 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
- Themes around extremism or radicalisation
- 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 (please ensure Section G is complete)

11. 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 is a minor risk that participants (i.e., staff who engage in the focus group and young people who take part in the interview) experience psychological distress by exploring and discussing difficult experiences that they have had or are still having. As mentioned in in

question 7.1 the researcher has worked with the senior leadership team of the ARP to identify both internal and external avenues that participants can access should they need further support.

Young people who engage in the interview process will also have access to their teaching assistant following the interview should they need time to debrief. Furthermore, parents of the young person will be made aware of when their child is going to be interviewed and if their young person experiences or communicates any distress or worry, during or following the interview process their parents will be made aware.

12. 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 worked with this population of young people for over 6 years prior to joining the course and is familiar with possible trigger points and signs that may communicate the young person is experiencing distress or anxiety. The researcher is skilled at de-escalation techniques and understands the importance of terminating the interview process before the young person is pushed to a point of risk.

13. 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, 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.

The potential benefits for taking part in the study will be somewhat different for each phase of the study:

- For staff who agree to participate in the focus group will have an opportunity to share their views and experiences of working in the setting and with the young people. They will be able to share what they find works well for them and to share information on the potential remaining barriers to daily practice.
- For the young people who are participate in the interview process they will also have an opportunity to share their views and experiences.

- Overall, the senior leadership staff of the setting will have access to the findings of the research, and this may contribute to their ongoing and future practice. The findings may also support and help inform their aim of becoming a centre of excellence.

14. 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)

Careful consideration has been taken in the form of discussions with the setting and it has been agreed that the researcher will have access to individual behaviour plans and risk assessments for all pupils who consent to take part in the observation and interview process. This allowing the researcher to have an insight into possible trigger points for the young people. Young people who would like to participate in the interview process but also are identified as potentially having a higher level of risk of emotional or physical responses will have key staff who know them well on hand should the need arise. All young people involved in the interviews will also be given the option of having a parent or key worker in the room during the interview.

Both staff and young people will have a choice to participate in the different stages of the study and it will be made clear that there are no consequences should they refuse to participate or decide to pull out at a later stage.

The researcher has aimed to provide support and debriefing opportunities for all participants of the study. The researcher's placement supervisor and PEP has agreed to be available should participant need any additional or more targeted support following their involvement in the study.

15. 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.

Senior staff (i.e., assistant lead and lead of the setting) will have access to the settings lead EP.

Staff who are involved in the observation stage and/or the focus group will be offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns with the assistant lead and/or lead of the ARP. Additional support from the Lead EP will be available, should staff wish to discuss or debrief following their involvement.

Young people involved in the observation stage and/or the interview process will be given an opportunity to debrief with their key worker (or they can access either the assistant lead or lead of the ARP) should they need it. This is communicated in both the information sheet and will be verbally reiterated after the interview.

16. Please provide the names and nature of any external support or counselling organisations that will be suggested to participants if participation in the research has potential to raise specific issues for participants.

Mind

Support for children and young people

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/useful-contacts/>

Anxiety UK

Supporting young people who experience anxiety

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

On my mind

Information for young people to make informed choices about their mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/>

Off the Record

Counselling for young people

<https://www.talkofftherecord.org>

Relate

Support for children and young people

<https://www.relate.org.uk>

Samaritans

Support for both adults and young people who need to talk.

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

17. 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)

N/a

18. Does the proposed research involve travel outside of the UK?

YES NO

If YES, please confirm:

I have consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for guidance/travel advice? <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/>

I have completed a RISK Assessment covering all aspects of the project including consideration of the location of the data collection and risks to participants.

All overseas project data collection will need approval from the Deputy Director of Education and Training or their nominee. Normally this will be done based on the information provided in this form. All projects approved through the TREC process will be indemnified by the Trust against claims made by third parties.

If you have any queries regarding research outside the UK, please contact academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk:

Students are required to arrange their own travel and medical insurance to cover project work outside of the UK. Please indicate what insurance cover you have or will have in place.

19. 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. Please also clarify how the requirements will be met:

SECTION G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND WITHDRAWAL

20. 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:

21. 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:

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

Clear identification of the Trust as the sponsor for the research, the project title, the Researcher and Principal Investigator (your Research Supervisor) 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 or other ethics body.

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 [Trusts 's Data Protection and handling Policies](https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/).:
<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/policies-and-procedures/>

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@tavi-port.nhs.uk)

Confirmation on any limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

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

- 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 research project is part of a degree
- 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.

SECTION H: CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

24. 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.

25. 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.

SECTION I: DATA ACCESS, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

26. 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:

27. 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: In line with Research Councils UK (RCUK) guidance, doctoral project data should normally be stored for 10 years and Masters level data for up to 2 years

28. 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.
- Research data will only be stored in the University of Essex OneDrive system and no other cloud storage location.
- 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 UK.
- Research data will be encrypted and transferred electronically outside of the UK.

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).

Essex students also have access the 'Box' service for file transfer:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/box>

- Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers.
- Collection and storage of personal sensitive data (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs or physical or mental health or condition).
- 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 University of Essex OneDrive 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.

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

N/A

30. Please provide details on the regions and territories where research data will be electronically transferred that are external to the UK:

N/A

SECTION J: PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

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

- Peer reviewed journal
- Non-peer reviewed journal
- Peer reviewed books
- Publication in media, social media or website (including Podcasts and online videos)
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Promotional report and materials
- Reports compiled for or on behalf of external organisations
- Dissertation/Thesis
- Other publication
- Written feedback to research participants
- Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
- Other (Please specify below)

- Presentation to Local EPS Team (Second and Third Year Placement)

SECTION K: OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES

31. 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)?

N/A

SECTION L: CHECKLIST FOR ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

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

- Letters of approval from any external 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)

- Letters of approval from locations for data collection
- Questionnaire
- Interview Schedule or topic guide
- Risk Assessment (where applicable)
- Overseas travel approval (where applicable)

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

The interview material for the young people is just an example of the types of visual cards that will be used during the interview process. This is not an exhaustive list as additional cards may be included in the material following the review of documentation, focus group and observation.