What Makes Children Feel Safe in School?
An Evaluation of the Preventative Model for Behaviour in a Local Authority with a Focus on Children's and Adults' Perspectives of Safety.

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Abstract

This small scale study explores pupil and staff perspectives about what makes pupils feel safe in school. This is from the perspectives of children and staff who have been part of a project to reduce exclusion and improve attendance. The present study explored perceptions of Head Teachers and senior management about the impact of the project on children's feelings of safety. The study also explored the relationship between the implementation of the project from the perspectives of children and staff, and the initiatives put in place in relation to feeling safe. The participants were 24 children and 15 members of participating schools' senior management teams, who were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The study also tracked exclusion and attendance figures. Thematic analysis was used to analyse interviews and descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests used to analyse exclusion and attendance data. Key findings were that children associated feeling safe with being protected and having their emotional needs met. Adults and children determined children's feelings of safety. The behaviour of peers and school behaviour management had an impact on children's feelings of safety. Children reported that specific places in school such as the playground had a role in maintaining feelings of safety, as did the school curriculum, the local community and the security of the school. The necessity for targeted work on learning and the emotional development of children to keep children safe was also a key finding. Project funding was used by schools to develop the curriculum and to employ and train additional staff. Schools reported that the playground was a key factor in maximising pupils' feelings of safety. Effective school systems which monitored and supported pupils' needs facilitated implementation of the project. Interventions that made children feel safe were significant in reducing levels of exclusion and unauthorised absence.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Safety and the national context

The government's ongoing commitment to ensuring child safety is evident from the 2003 green paper, *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003). The paper identified five outcomes for children and young people:

1. Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and enjoying a healthy lifestyle.
2. Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect.
3. Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.
4. Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour.
5. Economic well being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their potential in life. (p. 6).

In order to keep children safe, an understanding of what makes them feel safe is required; however, there is a paucity of research in this area. Keeping children safe from harm and neglect is not only about the physical aspect, but is also about promoting children's emotional well being. This means adults working with children and young people need to ensure that children are nurtured and cared for so that they are fully able to access learning thus facilitating their development into emotionally literate young people.

Children's emotional well being in relation to safety is promoted by Educational Psychologists (EPs) and is an area of extreme importance, particularly in a changing climate where children spend more time in settings other than the home.

The creation of children's centres and extended schools (schools offering a range of extended services in addition to basic education) means that children are spending more time in the care of professionals. In essence this means that settings are more accountable with regard to how they contribute to developing

pupils' emotional well-being. Schools' contributions to pupil's well-being are now assessed under new inspection arrangements (Hallam and Rogers, 2008). It is argued here that, in the light of this increased responsibility and accountability placed on practitioners, that all adults working with children need to be equipped with knowledge about what makes children feel safe. The current study focuses on 'what makes children feel safe in school'.

The present study explores perspectives of safety from children and staff who have been part of a project aimed to reduce exclusion (PM4B). The study also aims to evaluate to an extent the process and impact of PM4B on perspectives of safety.

1.2 The Preventative Model for Behaviour

In the Local Authority studied (the Authority), in 2006/7 there were no permanent exclusions of children in special schools, children in care or in the primary phase, reflecting the Authority's considerable emphasis on targeted prevention. For the purpose of anonymity, the employing authority is referred to as 'the Authority' throughout. The number of permanent exclusions from secondary schools fell from 30 to 17, which seemed to be the result of a number of behaviour initiatives in secondary schools. However, there was a total of 1431 fixed-term exclusions from 2006 to 2007.

The Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B) is a partnership strategy between the Authority and mainstream primary schools to promote early intervention in order to prevent challenging behaviour escalating and to meet government initiatives on exclusion. Schools applied to participate in the project, and eleven schools received funding to implement PM4B in 2007. In addition to a criterion of zero permanent exclusion, to be eligible to receive funding schools had to meet a particular percentage in relation to the number of:

- Fixed-term exclusions;
- Eligibility for free school meals;
- Pupils with Emotional Behavioural Difficulty Statements (EBD);
- Pupils at school action plus for EBD, and

- Referrals made to the Initial Assessment Team (equivalent of Social Services).

Infant and junior schools received funding to the value of £60,000 and primary schools received £80,000 per annum. Schools were able to use the funding flexibly but first they had to complete a 'Children at Risk' audit and a 'Primary Behaviour Audit' in order to develop an action plan identifying their needs in terms of pupil behaviour and how they would spend the funding, i.e., to fund physical provision or wider behaviour support, according to their own needs. Action plans were reviewed jointly every term with a representative of the Authority.

Thus whilst the present study explores perspectives of safety, by so doing it also evaluates to an extent the process and impact of PM4B on perspectives of safety.

1.3 The relationship between safety, behaviour, exclusion and attendance

This study explores pupil and staff perspectives of what makes pupils feel safe in school. For the purposes of this study two definitions of school safety are used. Mabie (2003) defines a safe school as:

> A place where the business of education can be conducted in a welcoming environment free of intimidation, violence and fear. Such a setting provides an educational climate that fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for every child. It is a place free of bullying where behaviour expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced and fairly applied. (p.4)

Duke (2002) offers:

> One where teachers can teach and students can learn in a warm, encouraging and nurturing environment. (p.11)

In schools with a high rate of exclusions, exclusions have become synonymous with behaviour. This may be attributable to the fact that there are currently no procedures for measuring reliably the overall behaviour of pupils in schools. Hallam, Castle and Rogers (2005) also suggest that this has led to reliance on levels of exclusion to assess changes in behaviour.

Indeed schools with high exclusion rates often do cite aggressive, disruptive and non-compliant behaviour as the main reasons for exclusions. Such behaviours disrupt, and minimise opportunities for, teaching and learning. Conversely, safe schools are characterised by the fact that teachers can teach and students can learn. This would suggest that high-excluding schools, being characterised by poor behaviour, are not safe. Thus a sample from a project to improve behaviour and reduce exclusions would be an appropriate sample from which to explore pupils' perspectives of safety.

Just as with behaviour, there are difficulties in monitoring the extent of attendance at school. Poor attendance at school is a major source of discontent among teachers and hinders teaching and learning (MacBeath et al., 2004).
With regard to attendance, authorised absences are infrequent, legitimate periods of time away from school whereas unauthorised absences are illegitimate and generally prolonged absences from school. The present study focuses on unauthorised absence as it impacts on teaching and learning. Schools with larger than average unauthorised absence are characterised by lack of opportunity for teaching and learning. This is the opposite of safe schools. Figures indicate that unauthorised absence has remained at 0.48 percent in primary schools and just over one per cent in secondary schools nationally (Hallam and Rogers, 2008). In the same period (2006/7) unauthorised absence was 0.58 percent in primary schools and 1.29 percent in secondary schools in the Authority, both of which are higher than national figures.

Persistent non-attendance by specific pupils takes up valuable time for teachers on the pupils' return. Thus, instead of teaching new concepts, teachers take time to cover old material. When pupils find it difficult to catch up this can present itself in poor behaviour which in turn leads to exclusion. Poor behaviour also prevents teaching and learning from taking place. Safe schools are characterised by maximum opportunities to teach and learn in a warm environment. Using Duke's definition of safety, unauthorised absences prevent teachers from teaching pupils and pupils from learning. This would suggest that schools with poor behaviour and unauthorised attendance, where there are minimal opportunities to teach and learn, are not safe. The present study uses a sample from a project to improve behaviour, reduce exclusions and improve attendance.

1.4 The role of the researcher and local authority officer with regard to safety

The researcher is employed as a Trainee EP in a Local Authority (LA) and carried out the research within this authority.

The Authority, in response to the national safety agenda and government calls for consultation with young people, carried out two studies entitled the 'Tell Us' survey (2007) and 'Being Young in the Authority' (2006). These studies are discussed briefly in order to explain how the present study, focusing on perspectives of children feeling safe in school, developed. The studies were commissioned by the Children and Young People's Strategic Board. The purpose of both studies was to allow children and young people in the Authority the opportunity to have their say on a number of issues directly related to the five key areas within the Every Child Matters agenda.

The surveys revealed a number of positive features about children and young people in the Authority, with 53 percent having been involved in a decision-making group, 60 percent studying full time, 79 percent saying they hoped to achieve five or more GCSEs with grades of A*–C, and 46 percent predicting they would go on to university to complete a degree.

The studies identified some areas of concern, which indicated that young people within the Authority had concerns about bullying and being safe. Children and young people reported that 20 percent had been physically attacked, 16 percent racially abused and 42 percent threatened, while 34 percent of children and young people worried about travelling to and from activities to the extent that it prevented them from participating in activities in their spare time.

In response to the findings, the Authority carried out a consultation. A strategy for supporting young people called 'Being Safe in [the Authority]' was prepared by representatives of the Authority, the NHS, Police, Children and Learning Service, the voluntary sector and in consultation with other professionals and young people. The document was disseminated to schools and other relevant agencies,

setting out the commitment of all agencies to make the Authority a safer and happier place for young people.

The present study reflects the researcher's personal interest and commitment, as an EP in Training and as an employee of the Authority, in ensuring the safety of children and young people within the Authority. This research is contributing to work promoting the safety of children and young people undertaken nationally by the government (DfES 2003, DCSF 2009), and locally in the Authority; with the focus of the present study being on eliciting what makes children feel safe in schools.

1.5 Local community context and safety

Children's feelings of school safety are determined by their communities (Mijanovich and Weitzman, 2003). Hence community factors influence behaviour within school, with schools being reflective of the local community (National Institute of Education, 1978). To provide a context for the study it is pertinent to have some understanding of the demographic features of the Authority.

Unemployment levels in the Authority are comparatively high at 3.4 percent, compared with the national average of 2.5 percent and the regional average of 1.9 percent. The overall percentage of young people aged 16 to 18 who are classified as NEET (not in employment, education or training) was above average, at 8.5 percent in March 2007, compared with the regional average of six percent. This has reduced over the last three years and there has been an overall increase in participation in further education and work-based learning for young people aged 16 to 18 since 2004/5.

1.6 The role of the trainee EP and aims of the present study

With their knowledge of psychological frameworks and child development, EPs are in a particularly strong position to support the emotional development of children and their feelings of safety. The present study offers the opportunity to explore what children feel makes them safe in school in relation to particular initiatives that have been implemented as a result of an anti-exclusion project. It

raises the possibility of identifying specific interventions that have been successful and that can be shared with other settings to create safe schools.

The researcher evaluated PM4B on behalf of the Authority, however, the PM4B project was in place prior to the researcher joining the Authority. Originally there was no specific focus on eliciting children's perspectives of what made them feel safe. However, as an EP in training, the researcher wondered why this was the case and whether children's perceptions of safety were linked with the initiatives put in place as a result of PM4B. In the light of current research, an interest in children's feelings of safety from a professional perspective and a personal experience of school exclusion, the researcher decided to explore safety.

The present study explores what makes children feel safe, from the perspective of staff and pupils. It also explores the process of implementing PM4B from the perspective of staff in order that the factors that hindered and facilitated the project can be shared with other schools implementing PM4B in the future.

The study explores the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of children about what helps them feel safe in school?
2. What are the perceptions of Head Teachers and senior management about the impact of the Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B) on children's feelings of safety?
3. Is there a relationship between the implementation of PM4B from the perspectives of children and staff and the initiatives in place in relation to feeling safe?

Literature relevant to the study is reviewed in chapter two. In chapter three methodological considerations are presented, including the pilot and design of the research instruments. The findings and analysis are presented in chapters four, five and six. The implications of the findings, the contribution of the study to educational psychology practice and final conclusions are drawn in chapter seven.

1.7 Summary

The researcher is employed as a Trainee EP in a Local Authority and carried out the research within this authority. Previous studies indicated that young people living in the Authority had concerns about safety in and around the Authority. This was addressed by a consultation and development of a strategy to support young people. The present study however, focuses on what makes children feel safe in school, exploring perspectives of safety from children and staff. The study grew out of PM4B a project aimed at the reduction of exclusions and improvement of attendance. The project was in place prior to the researcher joining the Authority and initially there was no specific focus on eliciting children's perspectives of safety. However, the researcher felt this was a pertinent and unexplored area of research. A sample from a project to improve behaviour and reduce exclusions and unauthorised absence was chosen because safe schools are characterised by opportunities for teaching and learning, whereas the behaviours for which pupils are excluded reduce opportunities for teaching and learning. Similarly, regular unauthorised absence means that there are fewer opportunities to teach new material as teachers have to cover old material when absent pupils return. This would suggest that high-excluding schools and schools with high levels of unauthorised absence are not safe.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2. 1 Children's perceptions of safety at school

2.1.1 Safe schools

In the context of this study it is important to distinguish between what is understood by feeling safe and what that means in a school environment. There is a difference between what a safe school should be like and what makes it feel safe. Mabie (2003) asserts that whilst the description of a safe school reflects the vision or goal, making a school feel safe is an ongoing process involving a number of people, policies, and programmes. Particular areas in school present everyday challenges to children, such as toilets, play areas and corridors (Cowie and Oztug, 2008). Recommendations have been made that include patrolling such areas in schools, listening to the peer group and being aware of the diverse places in which children feel unsafe (Cowie and Oztug, 2008).

2.1.2 Children's perceptions of safety at school and bullying

The lack of research from the child's perspective on safety at school is worrying in the light of findings from Childline 2005, a service that allows children to telephone and speak to counsellors about a range of issues. This service reports that children frequently use the service to discuss what makes them feel unsafe within schools, with major factors being relationships within the peer group.

Luiselli et al. (2005) suggest that issues within the peer group, including problems such as violence, bullying and similar behaviours, create unsafe learning environments that pose a threat to the school population. Munn and Lloyd (2005) further highlight the association between safety and bullying: safe schools are those which are free of violence. Notably Munn and Lloyd found children reported being excluded for acts of violence against other children and other behaviour synonymous with bullying.

Bullying is widely defined as a 'systematic abuse of power' (Rigby, 2002); it is now generally recognised as being a subset of aggressive behaviour (Farrington,

1993; Olweus, 1999; Smith and Brain, 2000). Victims of bullying commonly experience depression and low self esteem (Hawker and Boulton, 2000), psychosomatic symptoms (Williams et al., 1996) and increased suicidal thoughts, which in extreme cases can result in suicide (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999). The effects of bullying can have a long term impact on the victim, sometimes lasting into adulthood (Furniss, 2000). Bullying can be verbal (teasing and taunting, threats) or psychological (systematic social exclusion, spreading nasty rumours), or can be physical (for example hitting, damaging belongings). The legal framework for school discipline (DfEE, 1999) mentioned bullying as a specific discipline problem and provided national guidelines to tackle it as part of a circular on social exclusion. These specified the role and responsibilities of the school including Head Teachers and governing bodies regarding bullying as part of their responsibilities.

Further evidence for the association between bullying and safety is seen in the work of Cowie and Oztug (2008). They found that one-fifth of their sample reported bullying as the reason they felt unsafe, and the most common suggestions for making schools safer referred to actions against bullying. This would suggest that initiatives to reduce bullying behaviour, reduce poor behaviour and exclusions could increase children's feelings of safety. This is a focus of the present study which reviews behaviour improvement practice alongside children's perspectives of what makes them feel safe.

2.1.3 Children's perceptions of safety at school and peer mediation

One way to reduce bullying is by the use of peer support systems. These involve looking out for pupils who appear lonely, often in the playground, by trained pupils. Lane-Garon and Richardson (2003) studied the impact of peer support on feelings of safety on a sample of 300 children. A year after the intervention, children, both mediators and non-mediators, perceived the school to be safer. However, large numbers of pupils received training and researchers attributed this as a contributing factor to increased perceptions of school safety. Naylor and Cowie (1999), however, found no difference in the incidence of bullying in a sample of 51 schools with established peer support schemes and in schools without peer support schemes. It is a matter for concern that Cowie and Olafsson

(2001) reported an increase in bullying three terms after the introduction of a peer support system. It seems that the evidence relating to peer support lacks consistency.

Cowie and Oztug (2008) and Cowie et al. (in press) compared children's perceptions of feelings of safety with and without a system of peer support, finding little difference in perceptions of safety between the two groups. Cowie and Oztug (2008) found that most children felt safe in the classroom: 17 percent of the sample indicated that they felt unsafe at school because of lack of protection from intruders, 45 percent of the sample cited 'bullies/ being bullied' as a cause for feeling unsafe, and 44 percent suggested reducing bullying as a way to make school a better place. The most common explanation for feeling safe referred to the support or presence of other people. Overall there were no significant differences between children who had peer support and those who had no peer support in school.

The findings from Cowie and Oztug (2008) are particularly relevant as the present study explores children's feelings of safety in relation to, where and why children feel safe. Cowie and Oztug report that a comparatively high combined percentage of both peer support and non-peer support (70 percent) offered no answer to the question why they felt unsafe in school. In the light of the adverse outcomes associated with feeling unsafe, particularly in relation to bullying, the current study offers the opportunity to explore the notion of safety in greater depth.

2.1.4 Children's perceptions of safety at school and the local community

Researchers argue that schools are reflective of the local community, since children live within these communities. Mijanovich and Weitzman (2003) suggest that youths living in 'better' neighbourhoods are least at risk of feeling unsafe. In their telephone survey of youths aged ten to eighteen in five economically distressed cities and suburbs in the US, findings revealed eight percent of youth respondents reported feeling unsafe on the day prior to the interview, and 15 percent reported feeling unsafe at school.

Kitsantas et al. (2004) suggest that feelings of safety in a community affect adolescents' perceptions of their school environment, thus adolescents judge their safety in school in terms of the safety of their community. This is reinforced by evidence that changes in the community affect the emotional well-being of students and may enhance or disrupt the safety in a school (Elliott et al., 1998). Although these studies explored the perceptions of adolescents, research on the impact of community safety on school safety is relevant, particularly since studies carried out in the Authority indicated that pupils in the Authority had concerns about the community.

Further research that provides empirical evidence for relationships between community safety and perceptions of safety in school includes the School Safety Study (National Institute of Education [NIE], 1978). This first national assessment of school safety found that the greater the exposure to violent behaviour by students in the neighbourhood where they lived, the greater the trouble they experienced in schools. Interestingly this echoes findings of the study undertaken by the Authority that children's feelings of safety are mediated by the wider community.

Historically two main approaches have been employed by researchers to determine safety at school. The first is from the perspectives of those in the school (students and staff), and those outside of school (parents and other community members).The second approach uses statistical data to monitor the incidence of specific behaviours to gain an insight into perceptions of school safety. Often these approaches have been used in isolation. However the use of statistics in isolation, indicating low incidence of violence or other unsafe behaviours, does not indicate whether pupils feel safe in schools. The present study seeks to address this.

Whilst US studies such as Kitsantas et al. (2004), have explored school safety perceptions in adolescents, the UK has much work to do in comparison with other countries. Much of the research on school safety has been carried out in the US and in Spain.

In the light of the behaviours reported by excluded children (Munn and Lloyd, 2005), and the rise in numbers of recorded exclusions, one of the challenges that

is faced within the UK is to develop safe schools free of violence (Kitsantas et al., 2004). Most of the behaviour for which pupils are excluded appears to be in the form of child-on-child aggression or threats of aggression, with an inter-relationship with bullying in many cases. Hayden and Dunne (2001) found that two-thirds of children excluded were bullies, victims or bully-victims. Given the clear association between bullying, safety and exclusion, attention now turns to exclusion.

2.2 Rates of exclusion: The current picture

Duke's definition (2002) of a safe school implies that when teachers are unable to teach and children unable to learn they do not feel safe. Factors often cited as preventing the processes of teaching and learning include poor and challenging behaviour.

National school exclusions showed a dramatic increase during the 1990s (Hallam, Rogers and Castle, 2005). Official records of exclusions rose from 2,910 in 1990/1991 to 12,700 in 1996/1997. Permanent exclusions rose steadily over a period of five years, finally reaching
15,000 in 1998 (DfEE, 1998). In 2004/05 there were 10,000 permanent exclusions; 85 percent from secondary schools, 12 percent from primary schools and three percent from special schools. There were 389,560 fixed-period exclusions in 2004/05, 85 percent from secondary schools, 11 percent from primary schools and four percent from maintained special schools (Hallam and Rogers, 2008).

The reasons for exclusion vary from minor incidents to serious criminal offences. Most school exclusions are due to some form of indiscipline or unacceptable behaviour in school (Duncan and McCrystal, 2002). In 2004/05 31 percent of permanent exclusions and 27 percent of fixed-term exclusions were due to persistent disruptive behaviour (Hallam and Rogers, 2008). Research would suggest that schools that have been part of a project to reduce exclusions and improve behaviour would be a relevant sample from which to elicit perspectives of what makes children feel safe in school.

Although it would appear there has been a reduction in the number of exclusions in the ten years since 1998, there has been ongoing debate about the accuracy of such figures. Many claim that they underestimate the problem of school exclusion and are more problematic than the data suggest. Indeed a number of studies comparing exclusion amongst different schools reveal varying practices.

Munn et al. (2001) explored the nature and extent of exclusion from 1994 to 1996 in schools in Scotland. They revealed a wide diversity of policy with regard to exclusion, and a large number of similarities, such as lack of systematic collation and analysis of exclusion statistics, lack of strategic overview over cost and quality of alternative off-site provision including monitoring of provision. It is problematic that nearly one-third of the entire school population in Scotland did not participate. The schools used do not provide a basis for generalisation. They were not randomly selected but stratified to maximise opportunities of collecting data from Head Teachers who had experience of using exclusions (Munn et al., 2001).

Similar to Munn et al., Stirling (1996) suggests that exclusion figures are an underestimation, citing the use of informal and unofficial exclusions. Informal exclusions can take a number of forms, including parents being advised by schools to take their children to another school to avoid permanent exclusion (Gordon, 2001; Vulliamy and Webb, 2001). Such advice is not recorded by a local authority as exclusion. Other researchers cite the use of 'internal exclusions', whereby children remain within school but do not access mainstream learning but instead are placed in a room used for 'difficult' children (Bourne et al., 1994) or made to sit in a corridor outside their classroom (Cohen and Hughes, 1994).

2.3 Why schools exclude – behaviour and other factors

Exclusion from school is seen as a reflection of behaviour that teachers deem unacceptable. Duncan and McCrystal (2002) state that:

> 'While the reasons for exclusion vary from relatively minor incidents to serious criminal offence, almost all school exclusions are due to indiscipline or unacceptable behaviour in school' (p.178).

Hallam, Castle and Rogers (2005) suggest that behaviour is measured by exclusion rates as a result of lack of common ways to measure behaviour.

Teacher reports indicate that the common perception is that violent and aggressive behaviour is getting worse in schools (Hart, 2002; Derrington, 2008).

Exclusion rates differ amongst schools. Determining factors include the wider community, school culture, resources, staff needs and the child's behaviour and personal circumstances. Schools are seen as the key agencies to tackle and reduce exclusion and they have a number of goals associated with tackling social exclusion.

With regard, to policy it has been easier to measure the success of schools in terms of achievement, i.e., GCSE, A-Level and School Attainment Tests (SATs).There has been much debate about government targets to improve literacy and numeracy. Concerns focus on the immense pressures that schools face to achieve, particularly as some argue they result in less time working with children with special educational needs or who have challenging behaviour. Rustique-Forrester (2000) found that teachers increasingly place importance on performance indicators like attainment levels, rather than the individual needs of children. Ability to meet attainment targets has become a major indicator in the increased number of school exclusions (Gerwitz et al., 1993; Ball, 1998). Furthermore Wright et al. (2000) argue that school cultures that are outcome-led rather than needs-led can further isolate and alienate the lowest attaining pupils. Indeed in a social exclusion framework the Head Teacher's power means that in essence they can select whom they want to teach. This often means that those that are excluded are those that are 'hard to teach' and 'hard to reach'.

2.4 The profile and outcomes for excluded children

Much is known about the characteristics of the children most vulnerable to exclusion (Parsons, 1999). Pupils with special educational needs and boys are over-represented in the official statistics (Hayden 1996; Osler, 1997; Osler and Hill, 1999), as well as those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, African-Caribbean pupils and children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Hayden, 1997).

The outcomes for permanently excluded pupils are poor. Many of the pupils who are excluded and at risk of exclusion are the most vulnerable children in society,

thus exclusion serves to further exacerbate already limited circumstances. School exclusion can have serious lifelong consequences for children and young people. In the long term, lack of access to education reduces the ability of young people to attain basic academic qualifications such as GCSEs. Few children from residential or secure units realise their educational or employment ambitions (Daniels and Garner, 1999; Riddell and Tett, 2001). School exclusion is not only associated with poor academic attainment for young people but with other factors such as a reduced sense of belonging, self-esteem and socialisation of acceptable behaviours. In addition exclusion is associated with the higher likelihood of teenage parenthood, imprisonment, homelessness and unemployment (Graham and Bowling, 1995). This further reduces the young person's ability to gain employment or access higher education.

2.4.1 Social exclusion and school exclusion

Social exclusion is an area that has been widely researched both in the UK and internationally. Macrae et al. (2002) distinguish between stronger and weaker versions of social exclusion. Stronger definitions attempt to identify the role played by influential gatekeepers and policy effects, which contribute to the reinforcement of exclusion. Weaker interpretations of the term focus on the position of the excluded, such as that used by Walker and Walker (1997):

> 'Being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society'. (p.17).

Long-term issues for past and present UK governments have been child poverty statistics and social order problems such as truancy and crime, with educational attainment seen as the panacea. Persistent concerns led to the formulation of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 1997, with a key priorities being to reduce school truancy and school exclusion. The SEU saw social exclusion as what happened when individuals or areas suffered from linked problems. These included unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (SEU, 1997).

Researchers have shown that school exclusion can lead to long-term social exclusion (SEU, 2000). A number of studies of young people who met definitions of social exclusion had school exclusion amongst other factors in common. Other factors included few or no academic qualifications, inconsistent education experiences, reliance on state benefits and persistent involvement in petty crime (Pearce and Hilman, 1988; Ball et al., 2000).

Exclusion rates are highest in areas that are defined as socially deprived, and McManus (1995) claimed that 20 percent of school exclusions were attributed to poverty in the catchment area. Parsons (1999) collected data from 400 schools within the UK, concluding that a number of social factors, including the number of children receiving free school meals, had a significant role in determining the rate of exclusions within a school. Macrae et al. (2002) found that many parents had themselves been excluded from school or at the least had experienced difficulties with school. Exclusions seem to be a perpetuating cycle for the victims and their families.

2.5 Impact of exclusions

Exclusion is an ongoing process and the cost of exclusions is high, not just emotionally to the child and their family but to the state. There are administrative costs and additional resources, such as support in special units or alternative educational provision. In addition to these costs, there are costs involving external professional input to support the potential long-term social, emotional and occupational consequences (Parsons, 1996, 1999).

Parsons and Castle (1998) developed a model to estimate the costs to public services of school exclusion in England based on data gathered from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The findings indicated that the cost of educating a pupil in the first year of exclusion was double the cost for a year of mainstream education. During this first year of exclusion, excluded pupils received less than ten percent of full time education. They estimated that school exclusions cost England 71 million pounds in 1995/96 and over 81 million in 1996/97. These costs may appear alarming, however, they should be regarded cautiously because the projected costs are estimates, calculated from data collected over

two years from only six of the 150 LAs in England. Data were not collected in a systematic way but involved *gross costing* of exclusions in three LAs and the *individual costing* of just ten cases of exclusion. Limitations exist in that the study assumes consistencies and regularities such as constancy and evenness of exclusion trends as well as in approaches to monitoring and recording of exclusions amongst LAs in England: these are not the case (Munn et al., 2001).

However; the valuable contribution that Parsons and Castle (1998) make should not be overlooked. The figures presented did not consider other financial implications for the child, parent or services such as police, health and social services who were not able to identify the personal cost of 'permanently excluded pupils'. These costs are not included within the gross or individual costings supplied. Parsons and Castle further argue that estimates were not inclusive of expenditure for reintegrating pupils back into school or long-term costs associated with lack of skills to become citizens (i.e., the cost to tax payers for social security benefits, prison sentences and administrative costs). In addition, non-quantifiable costs such as distress to families were not included in estimates of exclusions. Exclusions are a significant expense to the state, the pupil, their family and the community.

2.5.1 Impact on community and school

Interviews with parents for the CRE study (1996) highlighted reoccurring words used by parents to describe the effects of exclusion: 'stress', 'strain' and 'worry'. In extreme cases parents reported illness, and nervous breakdown, as well as having to give up work as a result of school exclusion. Lawrence and Hayden (1997) corroborate the CRE findings, describing stresses such as bad housing, poverty and illness as factors associated with the families of excluded pupils. Young (1999) found that pupils not attending school were frequently involved in high levels of crime within the community. The effects of school exclusion are wide reaching and have an adverse impact not only on the excluded child and his or her family but also on members of the wider community.

The culmination of poor behaviours is bound to have an adverse effect on class members and teaching staff. Donovan (1998) argues that general disobedience

and unacceptable behaviours result in exclusions and serve as an unwelcome model for peers. Teachers' management skills can be challenged to the extent that pupils' learning can be disrupted (Charlton et al., 2004).

Luiselli et al. (2005) argue that the development of effective discipline methods is essential to provide a safe learning environment. Similarly Steer (2009) advocates the consistent use of rewards and sanctions without focusing solely on the development of punitive measures to improve behaviour.

Current research reports the views of excluded children: some identify schools as causal factors, some highlight lack of consistency in school practices. Some research evaluates success criteria with regard to low exclusions (Munn et al., 2000; Gordon, 2001; Lloyd et al., 2001; Lloyd and Peacock, 2001; Vulliamy and Webb, 2001). This research is valuable because it highlights causal factors and types of behaviours and offences for which children are excluded. There is, however, a general lack of research focusing on the perception of children as witnesses to the behaviour of excluded children, but who are not themselves excluded. By exploring perceptions of safety from this group the present study potentially gives a voice to a group which is underrepresented in the literature.

2.6 Initiatives to reduce exclusions

Concern about exclusions and student behaviour has produced many programmes focused on intervention and prevention, including use of social skills training, system-wide behavioural intervention and modifications to academic curricula. There are a number of studies which focus on behaviour improvement and exclusion, however, few research studies focus on primary aged children (Hayden 1997). Most recently this has been addressed by research such as the evaluation of the Primary Behaviour and Attendance (Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw, 2006). This evaluated attendance and behaviour in primary schools following a series of interventions.

Exclusion from primary schools is worrying, as it is during formative years that pupils begin to attain the basic skills in life such as reading, writing and understanding of social relationships. Hayden (1996) suggests that education and socialisation interrupted by exclusions in primary years is difficult to 'replace' later.

Although official records would show that permanent exclusions have been relatively low, primary exclusions increased steadily in a pattern similar to that of secondary schools in the late 1980s (DfEE, 1999b). Despite this there appears to have been more of an initiative to reduce exclusions in secondary schools.

2.6.1 National initiatives

Hallam and Castle (2001) evaluated a series of pilot projects funded by the then DfEE, which had the reduction of exclusion and indiscipline as their principal aim. There were three types of projects: In-school centres (ISCs) and on-site centres where pupils were withdrawn for intervention and support for short periods; Multi-disciplinary Behaviour Support Teams (MDBSTs); and secondment of mainstream teachers to off-site special units, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). In the first year of the project the overall reduction of exclusions for schools using MDBSTs was 20 percent and for ISCs 4.3 percent, as opposed to a national rise of two percent (DfEE, 1998). Findings indicated that both MDBSTs and ISCs could be effective in reducing school exclusions. Not all projects were successful in reducing exclusions, indeed there was wide variation.

The setting up of a MDBST and ISC was not itself a guarantee of reduction in exclusions. Rather common factors were that projects that were effective in reducing exclusions were those implemented with the full commitment of school management, involved the whole school, included parents and placed responsibility on pupils for managing their own behaviour. Other commonalities were the establishment of systems that facilitated identification of pupils causing concern, types of behaviour and the monitoring of progress and communication. Hallam and Castle found that no single intervention was more effective unless the above conditions were met. This is consistent with findings that the systems in place in schools do not need to be identical but should reflect the individual priorities and needs in schools (Hamill and Boyd, 2000; Hallam and Rogers, 2008). Hallam and Castle (2001) suggest that schools should not look for singular interventions as a 'cure-all'. Amongst other recommendations, schools should encourage the consistent use of school behaviour policies, rewards and sanctions, and share good practice amongst colleagues in school and across schools.

Hallam, Rogers and Castle (2005) evaluated the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP). Thirty-four Local Authorities were funded to improve amongst other things pupil behaviour, exclusions and attendance in selected secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. Schools were part of phase one or two, and had a menu of measures based on existing good practice to choose from. These included Behaviour Education Support Teams (BEST) and development of whole-school approaches. Whole-school approaches promoted good behaviour and extended use of school premises for a range of services, activities and additional learning opportunities for pupils, their families and the wider community.

There were a number of key findings, including that, in BIP phase one, BESTs were most commonly used (97 percent), followed by the use of Behaviour Audits and Lead Behaviour Professionals (91 percent). BIP phase one secondary schools showed reductions in the incidence and duration of fixed-term exclusions and a small but significant increase in permanent exclusions (reflecting national trends). BIP phase two secondary schools showed a statistically significant reduction in permanent exclusions. There were no statistically significant changes for either fixed or permanent exclusions in primary schools.

BIP was most successful in improving attendance and attainment and reducing exclusions in those schools that provided strong support through the use of audits and appointment of Lead Behaviour Professionals (LBP) and learning mentors, and built on existing provision. LBPs played a pivotal role in the extent to which BIP was successful, raising the status of pastoral support and behaviour management. The LAs that were least successful were those that invested few resources in whole-school policies and invested more resources on alternatives to exclusion and at-risk pupils.

2.7 Differences in practice between low and high excluding schools

Since the 1990s there has been a growth in the amount of support available to schools to reduce exclusions. The number of initiatives that exist in the UK to reduce exclusions may suggest a comprehensive system of support for schools. In reality support has fitted in with government agenda rather than specific needs of schools, as in the PM4B, which allows schools to spend funding in a way that

supports their needs. Provision has been made on area-based eligibility (i.e., Education Action Zones) and time specific (e.g., specific types of behaviour support projects) for only some LAs and then only for those schools better able to complete the paperwork and thus most successful in making a bid to a programme (Hayden, 2003).

Hayden (2003) conceptualises support that is available for behaviour in schools in four tiers, with tier one being the apex and tier four the base of the pyramid:

(1) Tier one – Out of school provision. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), home tuition, vocational and other provision in further education (FE) colleges. National programmes in some LAs.

(2) Tier two – Combination and reintegration programmes. Part-time at school, part-time at a PRU or FE college (sometimes with a view to full re-integration). National programmes in some LAs.

(3) Tier three – In school and intensive support. Withdrawal rooms or Learning Support Units (LSUs) offer group work and individual work coming from core services such as Education Welfare Service (EWS), Educational Psychology, or a wide variety of special time-limited projects such as BIP, BESTs, learning mentors and Connexions.

(4) Tier four – Whole school – including policies and strategies, home school agreements, individual pupils and curriculum.

(Hayden 2003, pp. 634-635)

Munn et al. (2001) found four key factors of school ethos determined the inclusiveness of schools, one of which was the curriculum on offer. They found that lower excluding schools recognised the importance of providing all pupils with maximum opportunities to experience success other than academic attainment. Such schools offered an informal curriculum of clubs and societies. Schools also incorporated opportunities for personal and social development, with some timetabling and creating specific syllabuses to develop this. In contrast, higher

excluding schools tended to have few out-of-school activities, with their main focus being to teach the academic curriculum and use of learning support teachers to extract pupils experiencing difficulties from the mainstream classroom.

McLean (1987) explored the factors that influenced low exclusion rates in six schools and found common factors were child-centred ideologies that allowed teachers to make allowances for children experiencing distress. Flexible discipline systems were also key components, with referrals to senior staff that passed the problem on discouraged, while referrals that sought advice and support were encouraged.

Educators have long expressed concerns that low exclusion rates conceal poor practice and informal non-recorded exclusions. Munn et al. (2001) urge educators to consider the need to create constructive out-of-class activities as ways to minimise opportunities for fighting and other exclusionable behaviours. They highlight the importance of low excluding schools being encouraged to share practice in order to instil confidence that provision of high quality curriculum is being achieved alongside reductions in exclusions.

Shared communication between practitioners is essential. However the researcher argues that the focus should not entirely be focused on adult perspectives. Since practice is directed at pupils, pupils' perspectives should be considered.

2.8 Voice of the child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1991) is the pre-eminent international guiding framework that sets standards for children's rights. Article 12 of the UNCRC (1991) states that:

> 'Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.' (UNCRC, 1991: Part I, Article 12)

It is only in recent years that research has begun to examine the understandings and perspectives of the child and the young person (James and Prout, 1990). Although recent attempts to provide insights into the world of children and young adults claim to represent such perspectives, they have been undertaken from adult perspectives. Real life experiences of children and young people cannot be inferred nor assumed by adults (Lloyd-Smith and Tarr, 2000). Indeed some acknowledge that adults have limited understanding of children's lives and experiences (Clark and Moss, 2001). Continued criticism of policy and research for failing to address the views and opinions of children and young people based on their own experiences (France et al., 2000) has led to demands for research that explores the experiences of children and young people, recognising them as experts of their own lives (Langsted, 1994). Such demands call for representations from a range of backgrounds including those from marginalised backgrounds (Galloway et al., 1998; Pomeroy, 2000; Cruddas, 2001). Recently the benefits of consulting with children and young people have been identified: particularly improving teaching and learning and fostering democratic school ethos (Flutter and Ruddock, 2004). Strong cases are also presented for increased involvement of children and young people from a citizenship perspective (Roche, 1999; Devine, 2002).

Ruddock (1996) is a key proponent of taking pupils' opinions into account. She refers to a 'participation ladder' in which pupils can go from being consulted about their school experience to being involved more fully as partners in research and decision making. Indeed Ruddock's groundbreaking work is drawn from data collected from pupils as the research objects. These data demonstrate the ability that pupils have to make valuable judgements, and for that reason there is much to learn from pupils.

A key aspect of using the pupil as researcher to elicit the pupil's voice, as documented in the Learning School project (MacBeath et al., 2004), is the age of the pupils and the absence of status or thought for the participant's opinion. MacBeath et al. argue that this allows for more honest and open dialogue and a perspective which adult participants may not be able to access.

The researcher acknowledges that research exploring the perceptions of excluded pupils is important because it illustrates ineffective ways of workings within the

school system (Munn and Lloyd, 2005). However, research in this area does not take into account the voice of the child that sits alongside the excluded child, often working in a climate potentially perpetuated by fear and behaviour disruptive to their learning. Attempts to give a voice to the voiceless are exemplified in the work of Kinder et al. (1997), Wise and Upton (1998), Pomeroy (2000) and Wise (2000). Such approaches to research have the potential to give a voice to those who not had the opportunity to have their say.

Clark and Moss (2001) note that there are pitfalls to 'giving children a voice' or 'listening', since such terms assume that children want to be heard, and do not respect the right to privacy. They argue that listening is a right, not a duty and some children may wish to remain silent or choose not to participate in research or consultation. However, Flutter and Ruddock (2004) argue that it is important that the views of a diverse range of children are heard and participation is not afforded only to the articulate and literate. Noye (2005) takes a different perspective, arguing that the term 'voice of the child' needs careful critique or the widespread use of such terms will lead to a 'chicken soup' effect – where the children's voice is held out as an unquestionable good to be endorsed by all, which is argued to be a dangerous side effect of children's rights discourse (Sloth-Nielson, 1996, p.377). An inherent problem with this is that goodwill dissipates when the rhetoric needs to be put into practice – particularly when it is associated with cost or is at odds with popular opinion.

The findings of Kilkelly et al. (2005) add credence to arguments that children should be given opportunity to decide if they want to participate. The study evaluated the law, policy and practices which impact on children's lives against the standards in the UNCRC. The main aim of the study was to identify areas where children's rights were 'ignored or underplayed'. A main finding was that the most important issue to children was not having a say in decisions made about them. Kilkelly et al. (2005) concluded that children's views were not listened to. When they were, they were afforded only minimalist tokenistic opportunities.

There are many barriers to the implementation of Article 12, particularly that it is dependent on the cooperation of adults who may not be committed, or who may have a vested interest in not adhering, to it. Additional difficulties include the use

of inclusive methods that allow children from a range of backgrounds and ages to be heard. The current research aims to address this.

2.9 Research aims of the current study

Despite the government's agenda on children's safety, there is lack of research exploring what makes children feel safe. Cowie and Oztug reported 70 percent of their sample had no answer to why they felt unsafe in school, a key area of research requiring exploration.

Models that have been developed to estimate costs of exclusion indicate they are high to public services (Parsons and Castle, 1998). Although official exclusion figures are a significant cause for concern, researchers suggest that they are an underestimation (Munn et al., 2001). In addition to public costs, researchers have identified a perpetuating cycle of social exclusion for vulnerable victims of exclusion and their families (Macrae et al., 1997).

The UNCRC criticised the UK government's failure to solicit views of school children (1995). Recommendations were made to take further steps to promote, facilitate and monitor systematic, meaningful and effective participation of all children in society. However, research to reduce exclusion has tended to explore from the perspective of the excluded child. The present study addresses the recommendations made by the UNCRC, considering feelings of safety from the perspective of children unrepresented in literature; those not at risk of exclusion but who experience challenging behaviour.

Psychological and child development theories are central to the training of EPs including ways in which to elicit the child's perspective. Indeed there is much evidence suggesting that EPs make valuable contributions to intervention and support for children and young people who present and experience difficult behaviour (Lown, 2005). EPs have a knowledge that consists of psychological theory, problem solving and research (Frederickson et al., 1991). Baxter and Frederickson (2005) reviewed three issues of the journal *Educational Psychology in Practice* published between March and September 2003. They found that EPs had researched a number of areas including children's writing, peer tutoring of

thinking skills, social behaviour and the resilience of children in public care. It is evident that EPs have a wide research base. In addition, Baxter and Frederickson also found that EPs had researched bullying and non attendance. In the light of links between exclusion and feelings of safety within a primary context, the present study makes a valuable contribution to a growing body of research by EPs and other professionals that can be shared amongst schools.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Philosophical assumptions about the research

Five philosophical assumptions led to the researchers choice of research method; ontological, rhetorical, axiological, methodological, and epistemological assumptions. These had practical implications for designing the research.

Ontology is the researcher's stance towards the nature of reality (Creswell, 2007). In the present study, the researcher embraces the idea of multiple realities with the aim to report them. The researcher's belief in multiple realities is evident from the choice of data collection and analysis, i.e., interview and thematic analysis, which allows the development of themes from participants' perspectives and thus their reality.

Rhetorical assumptions about the language of the research and which terms to use were made as a result of the interaction with participants and this interaction is reflected in the use of language within this paper.

Axiological assumptions are the values that researchers bring to research and their impact on interpretation of data. Every researcher carries a whole set of values and chooses to view the research in light of these values (James and Prout, 1990). Morrow and Richards (1996) warn that 'adult researchers must be aware that they have the power to interpret data in any way that they please' (p.103). This is supported by Davis (1998), who takes issue with unawareness of professional and personal preconceptions, suggesting that reflective inquiry is a way to overcome such difficulties. In the present study, the researcher takes a reflective stance, openly reporting possible biases including those that arise as a result of using interviews, interpreting drawings and promoting 'the voice of the child'. The way in which such bias may have influenced the interpretation of data is discussed in this chapter, as is the ways in which the researcher attempted to overcome them.

'A paradigm or worldview is a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Guba, 1990, p.17). These beliefs have been called a number of things including epistemologies, how the researcher knows what she or he knows (Cresswell, 2007). Researchers can use multiple paradigms in their research that are compatible, such as constructionist and participatory worldviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The present study aims to make sense of the meanings that others have about the world and uses constructivist and interpretive approaches. These approaches acknowledge that the task of the researcher is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge, hence the use of interview in the present study to acquire multiple perspectives.

3.2 Methodological considerations

A mixed method approach combines quantitative and qualitative data during research within a single study. The present study utilises both qualitative data from interviews and quantitative data from the Authority on exclusions and attendance by tracking the data from 2007 and 2008. The purpose of doing so within this study stems from the researchers perception that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to identify what makes children feel safe. Used together, quantitative and qualitative methods support one another allowing for a more robust analysis (Green, Caracelli, and Graham 1989; Miles and Huberman 1994; Green and Caracelli 1997; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998).

The present study is predominantly a qualitative study that arose out of a large behaviour project (PM4B) that was in existence prior to the researchers' employment and training in the Authority. Prior to the start of the project, the Authority collected a series of baseline data. The researcher felt that the opportunity to explore children's feelings of safety in the context of a behaviour initiative would make a valuable contribution to educational psychology practice and research generally; particularly in light of the paucity of research in this area in the UK and internationally.

3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used for a number of reasons, including as a method of data collection that is compatible with a range of data analyses (Willig, 2001). Semi-structured interviews were used with staff and pupils. Staff were interviewed individually and pupils interviewed in groups. The use of semi-structured interviews in the present study allowed the participant the opportunity to shape their own account in their own words, articulating what was important in an authentic and meaningful way (Fielding, 2001). Semi-structured interviews were used with open-ended questions allowing the interviewee a voice that resonates throughout the study. The aim of the present study was that in-depth qualitative research was undertaken in a way that would offer a unique perspective on the issue of school safety.

Semi-structured interviews were used with staff as they had the additional advantage of offering the opportunity to clarify responses and pick up on interesting responses and underlying thoughts in a way not possible in questionnaires. Interviews with staff were carried out individually in order to maximise opportunities for honesty and to put participants at ease.

Semi-structured interviews were also used specifically with pupils, given that researchers such as Morrow and Richards (1996) argue children are a powerless group within society and are not in a position to challenge ways in which research findings that involve them are presented. Matthews (1998) argues that putting the children's perspective onto the agenda and encouraging them to talk in a group is seen as a way of empowering children. Alard (1996) further suggests that facilitating children's opinions helps the empowering process. For all of these reasons, interviews were used in the present study.

The aim of semi-structured group interviews with children was to gain an understanding of the children's perspective of what makes children feel safe in school. However, there are associated disadvantages in the use of interviews with children, such as bias.

Group interviews were used with the children since they offer the possibilities for challenging, extending and exploring statements (Willig, 2001).

Robson (2002) argues that using group interviews with children has many advantages over individual interviews, including:

a) Putting the participants at ease, i.e., being in a group with peers may prove less daunting than being on their own.

b) They are an effective way of collecting data from a range of people at the same time.

c) It is an effective time saving method when working with busy schools.

Considerations were made with regard to group dynamics, as Willig (2001) argues that participants should interact with one another in the same way that they interact with peers outside the research, the expectation being that all participants remain actively involved in the interview. In order to ensure this, careful consideration was made with regard to gender distribution in groups. In order to avoid participants not wanting to talk in front of their peers, a range of year groups were represented during interview.

One disadvantage of group interviews is that the process needs to be well managed to ensure that all individuals have a chance to air their opinions. However, rapport building and interview management are part of training to become an Educational Psychologist and the researcher was able draw on these skills during group interviews.

3.2.2 Drawings

In order to maximise opportunities for expression, drawings by children were used in the present study. Drawings depicted where children felt safe and were used in order to gain an understanding of the children's perspectives of feeling safe in school.

Proponents of participation rights argue that research involving children:

' requires adults to show patience and creativity by adapting their expectations to a young child's interest, level of understanding and preferred ways of communicating.' (UNCRC, 1991Para.11).

Thus childrens' preferences for participation should be taken into account by researchers. During the United Nations Special Summit on Children's Rights in 2002, children and young people identified the use of drawings as one of the best

ways to involve young children in meaningful and effective participation. Article 13 of the UNCRC also states that children's right to freedom of expression includes a right to impart information 'either orally, in writing or print, or in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice'. These findings were part of the reasons that drawings were used in the present study.

A number of researchers employ the use of drawings for other purposes. Crook (1985) argues that 'it is widely accepted that the content of children's drawings may provide insight into their feelings and thoughts about the world'. Guilleman (2004) asserts that methodologically drawings have two purposes; these being visual products and to produce meaning. Thus through the process of producing a drawing, the drawer is simultaneously constructing knowledge about the drawing and their situation. Rose (2001) agrees that drawings are visual products and that they are also visual records of how the drawer understands their condition at that particular time. Rose argues that for these purposes drawings can be used effectively to understand how people see their world. The drawings in the present study thus provide a visual representation of feeling safe from the perspective of the children in the study.

Researchers also cite the use of drawing as an appropriate way to encourage young children and children with language difficulties or other difficulties that hinder their opportunities to share their experiences. Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) argue that drawings enable children to communicate their thoughts more easily than is permitted via other methods. However, Driessnack (2005) is critical of the use of drawings which do not permit the use of the child's own words to describe the drawing, but instead offer a clinician's or researcher's interpretation. Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) suggest that discussion with children about their drawings creates valuable opportunities for children to have their ideas and explanations heard and understood. In the present study, the researcher explored with the child what they had drawn, explicitly allowing the children to use their own words and sentences to describe their drawings instead of offering the researcher's interpretation of the drawing.

Coyne (1998) used drawings to establish rapport and reduce anxiety in their sample. Drawings were used for a similar purpose in the present study, in addition to being used to understand better children's perspectives of where they felt safe

in school. The space offered to children to participate must be a safe place. This means that children should be able to express their views without fear of rebuke or reprisal (Lundy, 2007). This is particularly important within school contexts, where children may face the consequences of speaking out. In the present study consideration was made with regard to the place of data collection and the anonymity of participants.

The present study recognises the need for more awareness by researchers with regard to respecting children's views, not only as a model of good pedagogical practice and policy making but as a legally binding obligation. It is also committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of their linguistic abilities, are able to participate; hence the use of drawings as a means of collecting data.

3.3 Case studies

Hartley (1994) argues that case studies are tailor made for exploring new phenomena or behaviours that are little understood. Therefore, the approach is particularly useful for responding to *what* and *how* questions about a set of events (Leonard-Barton, 1990). In the present study, case studies were used to identify how funding was used and what interventions were implemented. Thus, case studies were also used to explore changes in exclusion and attendance data over time.

Researchers such as Sykes (1990) have argued that certain kinds of information can be difficult or even impossible to tackle by means other than qualitative approaches such as the case study. There were three main purposes for the use of case studies in the present study. One of these being comparative – to identify practices amongst schools. The other two purposes were to identify contextual factors and features that facilitated the implementation of PM4B.

There are virtually no specific requirements guiding case research. This can be considered a strength of using case studies, because it allows tailoring of the design and data collection procedures to the research questions. In the present study, the case studies allow exploration of research question three (question three explores the relationship between the implementation of PM4B from the

perspectives of children and staff and the initiatives in place in relation to feeling safe). Case studies also typically combine data collection such as statistics and interview data. This triangulated methodology provides stronger substantiation of constructs and answers to research questions, which is the case in the present study which combines the use of interview, statistics and drawings.

Case studies can involve single or multiple cases. The problem of single cases, however, is limitation in generalisability (Eisenhardt, 1989). For these reasons the present study involves multiple case studies of all eleven PM4B schools. In relation to the research question, it is possible to make generalisations about the implementation of PM4B because all PM4B schools are used as case studies.

3.4 Ethical considerations and consent

There are many implications associated with working with a vulnerable group, such as children. Indeed Christenson and Prout (2002) argue that the use of children as social actors has meant new ethical dilemmas and responsibilities for researchers. Many researchers assert that there is a power balance that exists between adults and children (Eder and Fingerson, 2002). In this study every attempt was made to minimise the gap. Part of this process involved acquiring consent from every participant in the study.

'Informed consent' is essential in research and has been written into the code of practice for the British Psychological Society. For consent to be valid, it should be given by a competent person having the capacity to make the decision. The development of children has been divided into three stages by researchers keen to identify the stage at which competent consent can be given by children. The first stage consists of early childhood. The second stage is the 'Gillick competent child' and the third is the child of 16–18 years (Kenny and Grubb, 1998).

The stage of development most appropriate to the present study was that of the 'Gillick competent' child since the study did not use participants from the second or third stages. McHale et al. (1997) argue that there is no limit after which all children suddenly become competent. Barton and Douglas (1995) define 'Gillick competency' as:

'A competent child who has sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him or her to fully understand what is proposed and also sufficient discretion to enable him or her to make a wise choice in his or her own interests.' (p.125 -126).

In the present study, consent by the children was deemed to be valid as all children were considered competent persons with the capacity to understand what was proposed and make the choice whether or not to engage in the research.

However in order not to burden children with complete autonomy in deciding whether to engage in the research, the researcher also sought consent from the parents of the participants. Thus both children and their parents were made aware of the purpose of the study, so that all parties were able to make fully informed decisions as to whether they or their child participated in the research. This was achieved by ensuring that parents and children were fully briefed about the project before they gave consent, and the children also given the opportunity to opt out of the process if they wished.

The way in which information was shared with children was framed in words familiar to the children, to ensure that their understanding of the research increased and thus informed their final decision and consent to participate in the process.

In order to ensure that children felt safe, the interviews took place in the school environment, in a room in which they felt comfortable. This was negotiated with the group beforehand, and young participants were given the option of choosing an adult from the school whom they wished to sit in on the interview, if they felt more comfortable with another adult present.

In addition to the implications associated with working with children there were a number of ethical considerations that had to be made with regard to the adult participants. Thus both adult and pupil participants were advised that they could withdraw from the interviews at any stage, and during the interviews the researcher was vigilant for any signs that indicated children were feeling pressured or distressed. In addition, a signal had been agreed with pupils if they wanted to terminate the interview.

Both adult and pupil participants were informed from the outset that their responses were confidential, and their permission was requested before recording. Participants who were willing to be recorded were informed that the transcripts that would be created from the interviews would be kept securely, and any quotes used would be anonymous.

Participants were offered the opportunity to see copies of the transcripts after the interview, should they wish to confirm the accuracy of the information recorded.

The researcher submitted a case for the research to the board of ethics at the University of London. The researcher also worked alongside senior members of staff at the Authority and also liaised with her research supervisor to ensure that she adhered to British Psychological Society Codes of Conduct and authority regulations and guide lines.

3.5 Pilot studies and research questions

The interview schedules were generated from the research questions. Research question one was explored during the interviews with the children. Research Questions two and three were explored during interviews with the staff. Spradley (1979) described four different types of interview questions; descriptive, structural, contrast and evaluative questions. In the current study questions are based on this conceptualisation. Descriptive questions prompted the interviewee to provide a general account of the process. This included questions such as: 'What do you think schools can do to make schools a safer place?'. Structural questions were about eliciting the interviewees' frameworks of meaning they used to make sense of the world. This included questions such as: 'What does safe mean?'. Contrast questions required interviewees to make comparisons between experiences. Contrast questions included questions such as: 'Are there any initiatives that worked better than others?'. Evaluative questions were about the respondents' perceptions about safety and PM4B. Evaluative questions included the question: 'What has worked well for you following the project?'

3.5.1 Children

Kvale and Brinkman (2008) argue that it is important to use age-appropriate questions, avoid long and complex questions and present one question at a time when interviewing children. Pupil interview questions were piloted on two groups of a total of ten pupils from one of the eleven schools (see appendix one for pupil pilot interview schedule). Parental permission was obtained and consent sought from the pupils themselves. Pupils were interviewed in groups of five in order to have a small group. Pupils were chosen by staff on the basis that they were confident to talk with new people and were paired with someone from their social group. Children understood the questions. This was evident in that children were asked if they needed clarification after every question was presented and nobody did. In addition the responses that children gave were appropriate to the questions asked. For example, when children were asked 'What sorts of things do you think can make children feel scared in school?', children's answers included 'Shouting can make children feel scared in school'.

Both groups of children indicated that they preferred to draw whilst being interviewed rather than at the end of the task. Following the pilot, amendments were made to the procedure which included smaller sized groups, because it was found to be difficult for all five children to have a chance to participate during the interview. The pilot brought about other amendments, including the inclusion of the drawing task during the interview in response to the children's approach to the task. Changes were also made to the questions, making them more child friendly and accessible for the pupils.

For instance, following the pilot, a question was introduced that asked children where they felt safe. The introduction of this question was attributable to children, during the pilot, naming a variety of different places in which they felt safe, and the researcher wanted to capture this. It seemed, too, that in the pilot the questions were very generic and impersonal, however, as a result of the pilot, the researcher made the questions specific to participants. For example, a question that asked, 'What do children do if they don't feel safe at school/ is there anyone to help them?', was changed to 'What do you do if you don't feel safe at school/ is there anyone to help you?'. This was changed because, during the pilot, pupils found it

difficult to answer from the perspective of other pupils, but were able to answer with confidence questions that were asked in relation to their own personal experience. In addition to asking questions based on the experience of respondents, following the pilot pupils were given the opportunity to discuss safety further. This was achieved by introducing the question, 'Is there anything else you want to say about feeling safe?'

3.5.2 Adults

Interview schedules were piloted on four teachers, including one Head Teacher and a Deputy Head Teacher. As in the pilot interviews with the children, permission was sought and participants were fully debriefed before the pilot with regard to being able to withdraw from the interviews at any time. The confidentiality of transcripts and the way they were to be transcribed and disseminated was also discussed. Participants understood the questions.

The questions, 'What has worked well for you following the project?' and 'What would you say hasn't worked so well?', were added to the interview schedule following the pilot. These questions were introduced at the start of the interviews to encourage staff to evaluate the process using a solution-focused approach. EPs use solution- focussed approaches during consultation and the researcher chose this approach because it is future-focused, goal-directed, and encourages participants to focus on solutions, rather than on the problems that led to involvement in the project. However, because the purpose of the study was also to evaluate PM4B, the negative aspects of the process also needed to be explored. For this reason the question, 'What would you say hasn't worked so well?' was introduced to the schedule.

Questions were also broken down in order to ensure that they were answered fully. Thus the pilot question, 'What impact did the funding have on the behaviour and exclusion in school overall?' was changed to the questions; 'What impact did the funding have on the behaviour in school overall?' and 'What impact did the funding have on the exclusion in school overall?'. This was in order to ensure that the researcher was able to elicit information.

The order in which questions were asked was also changed. For example, in the pilot, a question on pupils' feelings of safety was asked towards the end of the interview. However the researcher found that this led to the question not being explored or answered in enough detail. Since pupils' feelings of safety was one of the main research questions the researcher asked this question earlier in the main study. (See appendix two for revised staff interview schedules).

3.6 The Sample

The eleven schools selected to take part in PM4B were chosen by the Authority prior to the researcher joining the Authority. They were chosen on the basis that they met a specific percentage in relation to fixed-term exclusions and eligibility for free school meals. Data on fixed-term exclusions and free school meals for all schools in the Authority was collated. Data was ordered according to those schools with fixed-term exclusions and free school meals higher than national averages. Following this, eleven schools were selected. These were the eleven schools with the highest fixed-term exclusions and percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Eligibility for free school meals was used as an indicator for selection to support the findings of researchers such as Parsons (1999), who found that a number of social factors including the number of children receiving free school meals had a significant role in determining the rate of exclusions within a school.

Schools in the project received funding in either April or January 2007. At the time of this study, schools receiving funding in January 2007 were in receipt of the funding for sixteen months in comparison to the April-funded schools, that at the time of the present study had been in receipt of funding for thirteen months. For these reasons, interviews with pupils and staff are taken from January-funded schools since they had received the funding for the longest time. All schools in the project were chosen as case studies in order to identify differences in practice and the impact of this on children's feelings of safety.

The researcher requested permission from all eleven participating infant, primary and junior schools to participate in the interviews. Two schools declined the

interviews on the basis that the Head Teachers were on sick leave. Head Teachers or members of the senior management team in each school were interviewed for consistency. Of the five January schools, three were used for pupil group interviews as a result of staff sickness. Staff in schools were instructed to select pupils who were sufficiently confident to participate in interviews. The researcher was also specific with regard to the gender and age range that she wanted to interview (see Table 1). Twenty-four pupils were selected for interview.

Of the 24 pupils selected for interview following the pilot, an equal sex sample was used, consisting of twelve males and twelve females. This was important to obtain a sample that was equally representative of genders and year groups. The year groups were equally represented, with four pupils from each of the year groups, one to six, selected. Within each group children from a different year were represented. This was done in order to ensure that each group interview had perspectives from different year groups. The sample selection for the interviews (excluding the pilot sample) is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample distribution

School	Group	Male	Female	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
2	1	2	2	1	1	-	-	1	1
2	2	2	2	1	-	1	1	-	1
4	3	2	2	-	1	1	1	1	
4	4	2	2	1	-	-	1	1	1
10	5	2	2	-	2	1	-	-	1
10	6	2	2	1		1	1	1	
Total	**6**	**12**	**12**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**
24									

Each interview group was given an interview number. For example, in School 2 the researcher interviewed group 1 and group 2. Table 1 indicates the total number of participants and the number of males and females within each group. In group 2 there were two male and two female participants. The table also shows the year groups of the participants. In group 2 there was one pupil from each of Year 1, 3, 4 and 6.

3.7 Evaluation and control groups

Increasingly more services require practitioners be more accountable for the way in which they spend money and the practices that they employ. In addition researchers have long argued that when projects have been implemented it is important to find out what has worked, and why there were successful or not.

Evaluation indicates whether new or old practice is better, based on evidence such as service indicators, data or service-user perception. The researcher notes that the success of projects depends on a range of factors such as relationships between the people involved or the characteristics of the setting in which the project is implemented. In the present study, the impact of the project is assessed by eliciting perceptions from PM4B participants and by measuring the impact of PM4B on attendance and exclusion figures.

Experimental approaches to evaluation typically deliver some sort of intervention to an experimental study group that receives the intervention or programme. The performance of the experimental group is compared with a control group matched in all characteristics other than that they do not receive the intervention. A control group was not used in the study for two main reasons. The allocation of participants to an experimental or control would have removed the choice of the participant (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), and schools in the project were selected on very specific criteria. In addition, because of the limited incentive for schools to undertake such a rigorous procedure without the monetary value that the project schools received, a control group was not considered appropriate.

Some would suggest that a lack of control group raises questions about how generalisable the findings of the study are. However, it could be argued that if 'a given experience is possible, it is also subject to universalisation' (Haug 1987:44, in Willig, 2001). Thus although it is not possible to identify how many other children share the same perceptions about safety, once it has been identified through qualitative research we are able to say that it is available within a culture or society (Willig, 2001). If the assumption is made that the experiences as perceived by the participants in the present study are socially constructed, to

some extent it is possible to agree with the findings of Kippax, that 'each individual mode of appropriation of the social ... is potentially generalisable' (Kippax 1998: 25, cited in Willig, 2001).

Willig argues that another way to solve the problem of generalisability is to use accumulative techniques within studies. In the present study both staff and pupil perceptions of what make children feel safe were considered. Triangulation is a technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources. In particular it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. In the present study triangulation was used. Thus instead of relying on data collected in one instance, the study compared data against related data in a separate instance.

Representativeness was not an issue for the case studies as the aim of the case studies was to understand the internal dynamics of the case (Willig, 2001).

3.8 Analysis of interviews and drawings

During the interviews respondents, were recorded with their consent, as note taking would not have permitted detailed analysis of interviews. In addition note taking distracts both the interviewer and interviewee, interfering with eye contact, and it inhibits the development of rapport between both parties.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, hence the quotes that are presented contain slang and local dialect. Because the researcher was interested only in the content of the interview, non-linguistic features of speech were not transcribed. Transcripts were then analysed using thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the present study qualitative data/transcripts were entered into Nvivo, a form of computer software that is used in qualitative analysis. Nvivo was used because it allows researchers the opportunity to manage, access and analyse large amounts of data. The software allowed the researcher to code, review and make comments about all transcripts. The researcher felt that this would allow her to keep a perspective of all the data,

without losing its richness or the closeness that is critical for qualitative research. Diagram 1 shows the process of coding.
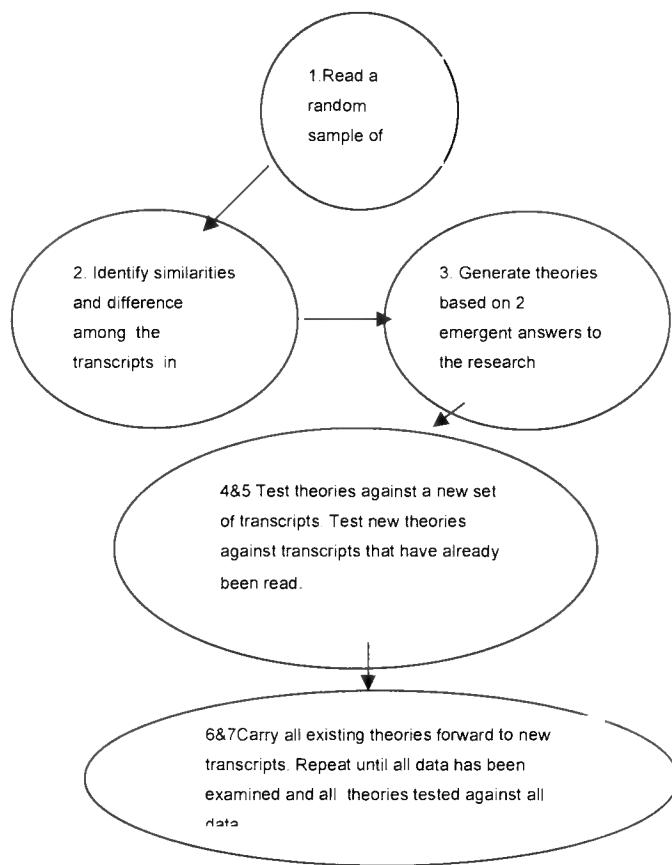
Diagram 1: The process of coding

Diagram 1 is a visual representation of the way in which the data was coded. The diagram shows that the data was analysed using the following steps:

1. Reading a random sample of scripts;
2. Identifying points of similarity and difference among these transcripts in relation; to the research questions;
3. Generating theories, on the basis of two, describing emergent answers to the research questions;
4. Testing theories against a new set of transcripts;
5. Testing new theories against transcripts that have already been dealt with;
6. Carrying all existing theories forward to new transcripts;
7. Repeating the above process until all data have been examined and all theories tested against all data. (Cooper and McIntyre, 1993).

To ensure inter-rater reliability, themes and transcripts were shared with a group of five trainee EPs in order to ensure that coding and themes generated were realistic. One script with themes was presented, and trainee EPs first had to code individually, according to themes, they then had to review a set of quotes and come up with code names. There were fifteen codes which had to be applied to the script, and fifteen quotes that had to receive theme titles. After the task had been completed by the trainees, the researcher shared the original coded transcript and codes with the group, comparing the codes generated and transcripts coded by the trainees. There was total agreement (100 percent) with the coding of the transcript into themes, however, there was more variability with regard to the actual names given to codes. For instance, the theme named 'Other children' by the researcher was called 'other peers' by one of the trainees. Similarly the theme 'Characteristics of a safe place' was called 'what makes a safe place' by a trainee in the group. Group discussion led to agreement that the titles meant the same thing.

3.9 The research design

The present study used a mixed method approach. The study utilised both qualitative data from interviews and quantitative data from the Authority on exclusions and attendance by tracking the data from 2007 and 2008. Triangulation was used to cross check data from multiple sources and to search for regularities in the data. Attendance and exclusion data were tracked during the course of the study and collected in 2007 and 2008. Quantitative data taken from attendance and exclusion figures were entered into SPSS and used to measure changes in attendance and exclusions. Qualitative data was drawn from pupil interviews and pupils' drawings, and used to gain pupil perspectives into what makes children feel safe in school. Qualitative data was also generated from staff interviews and used to explore changes in staff confidence and to explore staff perspectives on pupils' feelings of safety. Case studies were used in order to explore the relationship between the implementation of PM4B from staff and pupil perspectives and the initiatives in place in relation to feeling safe. Data from staff interviews was also used to gain staff perspectives on what processes affected the implementation of the project and the impact of the project on pupils' feelings of safety and the confidence of staff in managing behaviour.

3.10 Carrying out the research

3.10.1 Exclusion and attendance data

Participants

Participants were from eleven infant, primary and junior schools. Schools received their funding in January or April of 2007. Exclusion and attendance data from schools receiving funding in January are presented separately from schools receiving funding in April.

Instruments/ Data

a)   School participation figures (attendance levels).

b)   Exclusion figures on the incidence of fixed term exclusions.

Procedure

The researcher gathered the data on fixed-term exclusions in all participating schools in the Authority, from the Knowledge and Information Team. This was reviewed in the periods of time; January 2006 to 2007, January 2007 to 2008, April 2006 to 2007 and April 2007 to 2008. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Data on attendance, including unauthorised and authorised attendance for all schools in the Authority, was also gathered from the Knowledge and Information Team. The data were reviewed in the periods of time; April 2006 to April 207 and April 2007 to April 2008. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

3.10.2 Children's interviews

Participants

Twenty-four children, from Year 1 to 6 from three of the original participating eleven infant, primary and junior schools were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The researcher held two group interviews in each school, with each group consisting of four children. Two pilot interviews were also held in one of the schools. Children from an infant, primary and junior school were chosen to reflect the range of schools involved within the project. Staff selected children they felt would be confident in a group. Permission to carry out the research has been granted by the Head Teacher, teachers and the ethics committee at The Institute of Education.

Procedure

Parental consent was obtained for each of the children interviewed. An example of the consent letter can be found in the appendices (see appendix five). Following that, the consent of each child was obtained. A room was identified by staff as a room where children felt comfortable. The researcher then asked the group of four children whether the room was somewhere they were happy to be interviewed, and also gave participants the option to have a member of staff sit in on the interview. Each participant was advised of the confidentiality of the interviews, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Participants' consent for recording was sought and the reason for recording explained. Participants were informed that recordings would be used to make transcripts, which would be kept securely. Participants were advised that they would not be identifiable from the transcripts. The researcher offered participants the opportunity to view transcripts once they had been completed, in order to confirm that their views were represented accurately.

Before the interview started a non-verbal signal was agreed upon that children could use if they no longer wanted to engage in the interview and the researcher observed participants for adverse reactions to the interview.

Participants were read a pre-written script which included being asked to draw a picture of a safe place at school. They were then asked a series of questions (see appendix three for interview schedule). At the beginning of each interview the term 'safe' was explored as a group, this was done to give the children the opportunity to describe the meaning of 'safe', instead of letting the researcher's definition of what 'being safe' meant prevail.

Children were asked questions to gain their perspective on safety. Questions asked were: where they felt safe in school and what made it safe for them; where other pupils felt safe in school and if there were any things that made children feel unsafe in school. Further questions explored what children did at school if they felt unsafe and recommendations that children would make to improve children's feelings of safety in school. At the end of the interview pupils were given the opportunity to discuss their pictures, what they had drawn and their interpretation.

During the interviews, three children had to leave for various appointments before the drawing tasks were completed. This meant that they did not complete their pictures and for these reasons their pictures are not used in the study. However, their responses during the interview were used as part of the data because they all remained for the entirety of the interviews.

3.10.3 Staff interviews

Participants

Fifteen members of staff from nine of the original participating infant, primary and junior schools were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The sample included ten Head Teachers, two Acting Deputy Heads and three members of the Senior Management Team. Permission to carry out the research has been granted by the Head Teacher, teachers and the ethics committee at The Institute of Education.

Procedure

Consent was obtained from each of the staff members interviewed and from the Head Teacher of each school. A room was identified by staff as a room that was conducive to interviewing and not liable to frequent interruptions. Each participant was advised of the confidentiality of the interviews, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Consent for recording was sought and participants were informed that recordings would be used to make transcripts. Participants were informed that transcripts would be kept securely and that they would not be identifiable from the transcripts. The researcher offered participants the opportunity to view transcripts once they had been completed, in order to confirm that their views were represented accurately.

Participants were read a pre-written script and then asked a series of questions (see appendix four for interview schedule). Questions explored staff perceptions of children's feelings of safety and the impact of PM4B on children's feelings of safety and on behaviour. The researcher asked questions about the way in which funding was used and if any initiatives worked better than others. Questions were asked about the process of PM4B including local authority support and ways in which it could be improved for future schools.

3.10.4 Case studies

Participants

All eleven schools were used as case studies and individual profiles of each school are presented in chapter six.

Project schools one to eleven

All schools had passed their inspection reports and were average sized schools. Many pupils experienced relatively high levels of social deprivation and families' social circumstances were below those typically found in the UK. Some pupils had complex needs and an above average proportion of pupils were eligible for free schools meals. Pupils' movement into and out of the schools was high and the schools had a greater than average number of pupils who joined or left the school at different times during the year. There was diversity of cultural backgrounds, with pupils coming from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and of these a large majority are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils whose first language was not English was greater than that found nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry was very low. Children's skills and knowledge when they started in Nursery was well below those expected: particularly in their language, mathematical, personal and social development. There was a higher than average proportion of pupils who had learning difficulties. In the project schools there had been considerable changes of staffing during the last five years

Instruments

a)   Exclusion figures on the incidence and duration of fixed term exclusions.

b)   Attendance figures

3.11 Summary

The present study grew out of PM4B, a behaviour project in the Authority, and the researcher saw the opportunity to add to this project by exploring children's feelings of safety. A predominantly qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was employed to explore what makes children feel safe. Ethical considerations were made with regard to selection of the sample and implementation of the present study. Pilot studies of both pupil and adult interview schedules led to changes in interview schedules. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 24 pupils and 15 staff from the Senior Management Team. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allow the participant's perspective to be conveyed whilst allowing the researcher to clarify and expand on areas of interest. Staff were interviewed individually. Multiple case studies of all eleven schools were undertaken in order to make generalisations about the implementation of PM4B in relation to the research questions. Pupils were interviewed in groups whilst completing a drawing task at the same time, this was in order to put participants at ease. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, and exclusion and attendance figures were analysed using SPSS.

Chapter Four: Children's Perceptions of Safety

4.1 Themes from pupil interviews

Eight themes emerged from the analysis of the data. Theme one, 'feelings about safety', revealed the positive association of feeling safe and the impact of feeling unsafe. Theme two indicates that specific characteristics of adults had an impact on children's feelings of safety; these included the experience of staff and personal traits. The theme 'behaviour' suggests that the behaviour of pupils and the way in which schools managed behaviour had an impact on children's feelings of safety. Themes four and five, 'characteristics of a safe place' and 'playground', reveal that children felt safe in specific places provided that certain factors were in place. Analysis of the data revealed that 'other children', the 'school curriculum' and the 'security' of the school all had a role in maintaining children's feelings of safety. Theme nine revealed the impact of the local community on children's feelings of safety. The themes are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes from pupil interviews

Theme	Theme title	Perceptions
1	Feelings about safety	
2	Characteristics of adults	
3	Behaviour	Use of rewards and sanctions is positively regarded by

		the children
		Clear behaviour expectations are positive
		Varying responses from children to poorly behaved peers
4	Characteristics of a safe place	Designated spaces that children went to when feeling unsafe
		A safe place is like a sanctuary with a protective function
		A safe place has a therapeutic function
		Should be timetabled for targeted children
5	Playground	The playground can be a safe place
		Safe play was a positive factor for children
		The playground can be unsafe for other children, particularly at lunchtime
		Lack of activities and unstructured games in the playground made children feel unsafe
6	School curriculum	Access to extracurricular clubs made children feel safe.
		Circle time made children feel safe.
7	Security	Perceptions of physical security of the school determined children's feelings of safety
		Lack of security made children feel unsafe
		Fire was regarded as a threat to children's feelings of safety
8	Local community	Events that have happened in the local community continue to make children feel unsafe
		Children feel that the local community is unsafe
		Outside agency involvement was needed to make the local community safer

Interviews were transcribed verbatim; hence the quotes may contain slang and local dialect. The year group and gender of pupils is reported. For instance, Y1G indicates the quotation is from a girl in Year One.

4.2 Theme One: Feelings about safety

Pupils felt that feeling safe has positive outcomes particularly in terms of the positive impact on how they felt and their enjoyment of their school experience generally. One pupil commented that:

'When you do feel safe... you feel good'. (Y1G)

Pupils felt that being in a safe school made them feel good and it was a right for every child:

'Everyone should feel safe because this is a safe school and it's really good to be in a school like this – it's really, really nice to be in a school like this.' (Y3B)

An example was given about the impact on a pupil who had left the safety of one school to another that they perceived to be less safe:

'Lots of people enjoyed it in the school. Even children that left. There was this girl called X. She didn't want to leave but she had to move to a different school because she couldn't be here in year five. But she said that she misses this school and we saw her the other day and she likes it (old school), and plus there aren't lots of people in that new school and plus people are more bullies. (Y5B)

Pupils felt that feeling unsafe had negative outcomes and was associated with a negative feeling. One pupil remarked that when they felt unsafe:

'You can feel worried.' (Y1G)

Apparent was that fighting made children feel unsafe. One pupil described their experience of joining a new school:

'All I could see was fights, fights and more fights and I didn't really feel safe and I went home and said I feel safe here 'cos I want people around me to love me and help me.' (Y4G)

It would appear that feeling loved and protected facilitates pupils' feelings of safety. One pupil in particular described feeling upset and unsafe as a result of observing fighting. For this same pupil observing fighting was associated with feeling unsafe because of the association between the break-up of her parents' marriage and a loss of security:

'When there's fights I get really upset. when I was little my mum and dad weren't together – I was three – it reminds me of how they broke up.' (Y3G)

Children reported that feeling safe made them feel protected.

'Safe means that I know that no-one is gonna do stuff to me' and *'no-one can get ya.' (Y6B)*

Another pupil commented that:

'It means having someone to look after me.' (Y2B)

One pupil commented that:

'I feel safe when I know loads of people are around me and everyone is watching me.' (Y6G)

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It seemed that pupils associated safety with being protected from harm. Children felt that staff carried out that function in school:

'They do look after us.' (Y4G)

Another pupil expanded on this, explaining the particular actions that made him feel that he was protected and that consequently made him feel safe. Thus, in addition to staff looking after them, staff were always:

'.....on watch for you and caring for you and thinking about you and so that's why it's safe.' (Y2B)

Pupils described feelings of safety as having people to care for them and to protect them, with the positive association of feeling safe. Children appeared to perceive that feeling safe was about being nurtured and they discussed issues about having opportunities to grow and develop emotionally. It was also important that the children reported that feeling safe was linked to their emotional well-being. This was especially the case when specific children had targeted support to manage emotional issues that caused them concern. One pupil described the impact of having regular support from a counsellor when he suffered from a significant loss:

'I go to her and she makes me feel safe, yes. 'Cos she talks about the week and all the stuff. 'Cos I had a problem and I.. . I will say it now – my grandma and my grandpa left – in school it came playing into my mind and I wasn't focusing and I told her and now I'm pretty OK – not forgot about 'em but it's better. I feel really safe with her.' (Y4B)

Pupils felt that certain adults and children in school could make them feel safe. Some children felt that adults made them feel safe:

'There is Ms X and Ms X. They protect us.' (Y1B)

Alternatively, some pupils commented:

'I feel safe around my good mates.' (Y6B)

Pupils seemed to think that situations determined who made them feel safe and in some cases they would approach the person they felt could help them. Thus some would:

'Talk to your friends if you don't want to talk to adults.' (Y6G)

Whereas in other situations they would go to the teachers because:

'There are lots of teachers to look after you.' (Y2G)

Whether children went to adults or children, the general consensus was that adults and children made children feel safe and as one child commented:

'The adults and all the people – even your friends make it safe'. Because: *'they are just there'.(Y3G)*

Children reported that the poor behaviour of other children made them feel unsafe. Although children within the study reported feeling safe, they commented that sometimes:

'We don't really feel safe in our classroom because everyone makes too much noise.' (Y5G)

'Everyone in the class just keeps shouting and back-chatting the teacher.' (Y5B)

'When the classroom is really loud cause everyone is screaming in the classroom and then like not really listening to the teacher and when I'm trying to listen to the teacher.' (Y1G)

In addition to low level misbehaviour, the recurring behaviour of two or three children made children feel unsafe at times:

'Some kids are still messing around, like we had two kids called X (one) and X (two) [known to Ed Psych service which has worked with both – one has seen severe domestic violence] and they was rolling around fighting. In Literacy as well, child X (three) … We are safe in Literacy but X (three) is one of the baddest people – he was sitting in class on Friday and he just kept rocking on his chair and Ms told him stop and he didn't stop and then exactly the same today, he got three 'oh dears' in one minute.' (Y2G)

Children chose children that made them feel safe, one child commented that he never felt unsafe, saying:

'No, I don't – I am friends with some of the strong people and some of the weaker people but the people who are on good ground are my good mates and they are all really strong.' (Y5B)

His reasoning was that although he was friends with some of the children that he

perceived to be 'weaker', he had also made friends with some of the children that were 'really strong'.

Also important was that friends were a supportive, safety inducing factor. One child commented that he felt safe and supported by being with his friends, saying:

> 'Like X I am safe because I always hang around my friends and if someone tries to attack me...[doesn't finish]'. (Y2B)

> 'I feel safe with my friends, they look after me'. (Y1G)

4.3 Theme Two: Characteristics of adults

It was evident that adults made children feel safe. This was apparent from the interviews and the drawings in which 10 out of 24 children drew adults. Pupils were able to identify staff that made them feel safe and analysis of the data revealed that staff who made children feel safe had particular characteristics. Pupils reported that understanding and empathetic adults made them feel safe and commented that staff:

> 'They always understand you.' (Y6G)

> 'They know what is wrong if you are upset.' (Y4G)

Experienced staff were reported to make children feel safe. Pupils suggested that in order to make their pupils feel safe, other schools:

> 'They can get some better teachers.'(Y5B)

One pupil described feeling safe in her/his school but felt that for some pupils feelings of safety were susceptible to changes of staff who had limited experience of the school setting and rules:

> 'Say they have a supply teacher and people can... 'cos if the teacher is new and they don't know the rules or anything.' (Y5B)

In addition to staff experience, pupils felt that the positive personality characteristics of adults made children feel safe. These characteristics included adults that helped the children to solve their problems:

'X [family worker] she talks to you, telling you about all your problems and they sort it out.' (Y2G)

Other characteristics included adults who either just listened to children or were there:

'You are talking to adults and there is someone here.' (Y2G)

Children reported that feeling safe made them feel protected. They felt that adults had a supportive and protective function when children were feeling unsafe. When pupils were asked what children did if they were feeling unsafe, they identified a number of adults that made them feel safe. Pupils felt that a class teacher was the person they would go to if they were feeling unsafe.

'Say someone bullied me or something I would just go and tell a teacher.' (Y1B)

'Child one: I tell the teacher and they sort it out for you – you don't have to sort it out for you. Cos then they just go crying – that's just mean.
Child three: I tell the teacher as well.' (Y3G)

'I would go to one of the teachers in the classroom and tell them what's wrong.' (Y3B)

This was also reflected in the children's drawings, with two children specifically naming teachers as the adults who made them feel safe. Figure 1 shows a pupil with a teacher, this pupil said: 'I feel safe when I am next to a teacher'. The picture shows both the adult and child depicted in equal size, suggesting perception of equality and approachability. The brightest parts of the picture are the smiles on both the adult and child, reinforcing the finding that feeling safe has positive outcomes and makes children feel good.

Figure 1: 'I feel safe when I am next to a teacher'

It was apparent that other adults in the school, not just the teachers, provided a protective function.

Figure 2: 'I feel safe with a lunchtime assistant'

Some pupils, as in figure 2, drew pictures of the adult who made them feel safe. The adult in this picture looks happy: this is evident from the brightly coloured clothing and smile. This supports the children's perception that the positive personality characteristics of adults make children feel safe. Fourteen pupils commented that they felt safe with family workers. The pupil who drew figure 3 drew both herself and the family worker looking happy and chose mainly bright primary colours to colour her picture. In this picture, the child is slightly larger than the family worker which suggests how comfortable she felt with this particular

adult. The child who drew the picture commented that she would go to the nurture room if she was feeling unsafe. She would then be with the Behaviour Support Assistants (BSAs) and the family workers:

> 'You could, whenever you get into a fight or are angry at someone and think you might fight someone, you can go into the lodge and Mrs X and Mrs X just take care of it.' (Y4G)

Figure 3: 'I feel safe in the family room with Ms X'

While a number of perspectives about the positive characteristics of adults emerged, adults shouting was a less positive theme that children reported made them feel unsafe. Specific adults made children feel unsafe. These adults did not universally make all children feel unsafe, however, as seen in the following extract.

> '[X] does all the football and she is scary.' (Y4G)

Another pupil disagreed, saying:

> 'She is good.' (Y3B)

Another pupil then commented:

> 'And that is why all the boys like her.' (Y5G)

4.4 Theme Three: Behaviour

Good behaviour was perceived to make children feel safe in school, in particular the effective management of behaviour. The children's acknowledgement of

systems to reward behaviour was evident in that they regarded the use of rewards and sanctions positively:

> 'When you know you have tried your best. When you do know that they reward you really good. Sometimes if you get loads of merits you get a postcard home saying well done.' (Y6B)

Pupils also knew that the consequences for poor behaviour and loss of golden time meant that:

> 'If you lose some you have to stay in with Ms X [Head Teacher].' (Y1G)

Pupils valued the rewards and sanctions systems and felt that it was imperative that:

> 'You have to make sure you don't lose any.' (Y2B)

Some pupils suggested the type of sanctions that pupils should have:

> 'I think there should be a couple of rooms for good people and the people that are bad go to into their own rooms with the Head Teacher and they do hard work and things if they are bad.'

A number of pupils were in agreement with one pupil, saying:

> 'I was thinking of – when Year threes come to school – Year six go down to them in their class and be in their class - if Year threes are bad they go the Mr X [HT] and the other people who are bad go to another class and have to look after – help them and tell them "stop to be bad".' (Y4G)

Pupils not only perceived behaviour expectations to be positive, but the clarity of the expectations was evident in that pupils included an example of what would happen if children had:

> 'Playground fights and Mr X [Head Teacher] has come up with a new rule saying like any violence – you just get sent home – just like that.' (Y3B)

When pupils were asked what other schools could do to make it safe for their pupils, analysis indicated that clear behaviour expectations would help, with one pupil suggesting that schools could:

> *'Put some more joyful things in and when people are naughty they get excluded quickly.' (Y4G)*

Another pupil suggested that schools adopted their own school's practice, saying that:

> *'I think Mr X's [Head Teacher] violence rule – if there is any violence they should get excluded and not be allowed to leavers disco if they are Year six.' (Y6B)*

There were also individual responses from children about poorly behaved peers. Thus some pupils internalised their behaviour, one pupil commented that:

> *'You feel scared.' (Y2G)*

This was supported by another pupil who agreed that they also felt:

> *'Really, really scared.' (Y3G)*

However, the behaviour in response to other pupils' poor behaviour was not uniform. Thus in the following extract, whilst child one sought support from teachers, child two retaliated:

> *'Researcher: Is that what you do? You tell an adult?*
> *Child two: No.*
> *Child one: Yeah.*
> *Researcher to child three: You don't tell a grown up, why?*
> *Child two: Because...[interrupted by child one]*
> *Child two: Yes he sorts it out by beating them up.*
> *Child one: Yeah.' (Y2B and Y2G)*

A justification for retaliating was that:

> *'It hurts them back and they take some of their own medicine.' (Y2B)*

4.5 Theme Four: Characteristics of a safe place

The presence of designated spaces that children went to when feeling unsafe was important. These often involved spaces away from the classroom such as the family room.

Figure 4: 'I feel safe in the family room'

Family rooms and family workers are common to all schools in the Authority. Schools were funded to employ family workers and create family rooms in order to facilitate better relationships between schools and families. Figure 4 is a pupil's picture of himself in the family room feeling safe. The picture shows the pupil calming down and his body is becoming less rigid. A number of pupils commented that they went to the family room frequently, and said that if a child was feeling unsafe that they would tell him/her to:

> *'Come here really [family room] – tell the teacher and then you stay here and do some stuff and you really do feel safe.' (Y6B)*

Pupils also felt safe in nurture rooms and rooms created specifically to work in small groups or one-to-one, often with children who needed additional pastoral care. In one school they named their space the Lodge and all the children in the interviews from this school named the Lodge as a space in which they felt safe.

One pupil said:

'I feel safe in the Lodge because we have adults to protect us.' (Y5G)
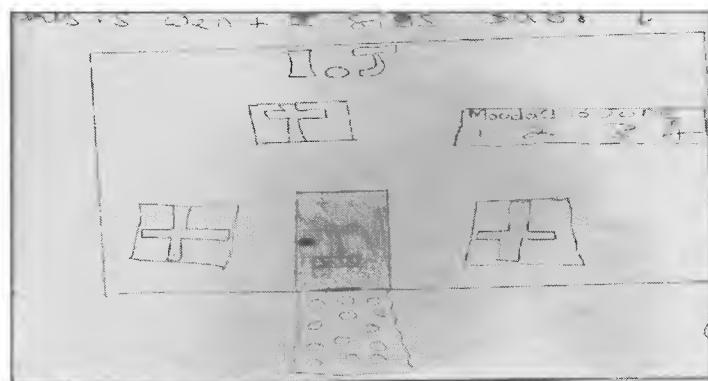
Figure 5: 'This is where I go to feel safe – lodge'

One of the pupils drew the lodge, see figure 5. The lodge looks inviting with its coloured door and welcome mat; this is further evident in that the pupil commented that this was his/her chosen area of safety. In another school they named their space Snowdrop and a pupil commented:

'I feel safe in Snowdrop – the one down there.' (Y4B)

Other pupils agreed that the classroom was a place in which they felt safe. Comments included:

'Classroom, 'cos there is loads of people and our teacher is here with us.' and *'It's a classroom; there are lots of kind people there.' (Y3G)*
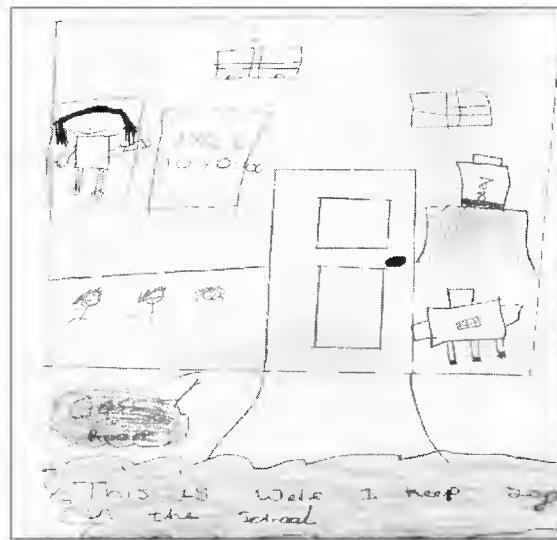
Figure 6: 'This is where I keep safe in the school'
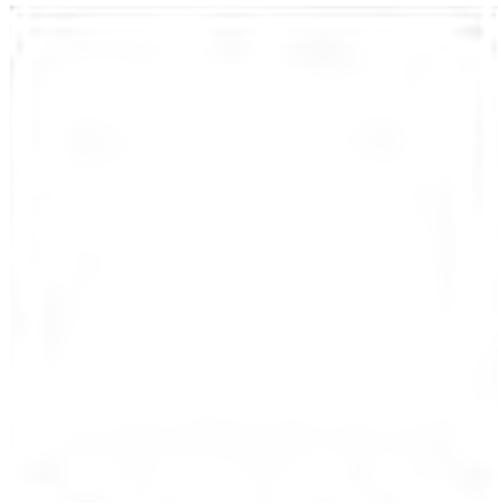
Figure 7: 'I feel safe in the classroom '

Figures 6 and 7 show the classroom as a place of safety for pupils. Both pictures show pupils and staff smiling and happy, supporting pupils' perceptions that feeling safe makes children feel good.

Pupils felt that other schools should create specific spaces in order to help their pupils feel as safe as they did, suggesting:

'What they can do is get rooms where you can go if you don't feel safe.' (Y5B)

Other pupils agreed, suggesting that the spaces needed provision for adults to listen to the children:

'I think they should get a room – not physically build one – that would be a lot of money, but say if there is a room that they don't use very often – they should have it and then should have X [Counsellor] and they should have places where people go if they are feeling unsafe/sad they can just come in and talk to them and feel better. I think that is what they should have.' (Y4B)

Safe places were perceived to be like a sanctuary with a protective function. Descriptions of safe places included a place that you could go to be looked after and a place to stop you getting in trouble:

'I think it means when you are in a place where people look after you and like say you are in a fight, people can stop you being in a fight and it means to look after people.' (Y2G)

A safe place was also a place pupils went to when they were angry to obtain adult support:

'You could, whenever you get into a fight or are angry at someone and think you might fight someone, you can go into the lodge and Mrs X and Mrs X just take care of it.' (Y1G)

One child commented that:

'Children go there for lessons in the mornings because they struggle in class.' (Y5B)

Children reported that safe places had a therapeutic function. Children felt that safe places helped them in many ways, including with their learning and the adults who helped them:

'They help you with doing your work so you can understand it more and you can do work faster'. (Y2G)

Some pupils commented that a safe place helped them talk about issues. One child said:

'We communicate, we say stuff that we shouldn't have done or we should have.' (Y3G)

One child added he needed the extra support because:

'It's better to get more attention than other people so you come here and you have a little chat.' (Y3B)

When thinking of ways that other schools could help their pupils feel safer, a number of pupils commented that extra staff to talk to and rooms to talk in would make children feel safer. For instance:

'Get some staff in that you can talk to and make them some rooms where you just can talk to them separately – like talk to an adult separately.' (Y6G)

Children felt that safe places should be timetabled for targeted children who needed the additional support:

'I'm going there this afternoon – me and some other people, we stay there for the whole afternoon.' (Y6B)

Adding that he found it useful to work with the adults every week because:

'They talk to you.' (Y6B)

Although a number of pupils felt safe in areas designed to support children who found the classroom overwhelming at times, some pupils felt safe in a variety of places, including the classroom, with one pupil reflecting:

'I feel safe in lots of different places, classroom is one.' (Y5B)

Figure 8: 'I feel safe in the playground and in the classroom'

The use of more than one safe place within school is also evident from figure 8, as the pupil has drawn the classroom and the playground. Although it is hard to distinguish between staff and pupils in the picture, within each of the spaces pupils and staff are smiling.

4.6 Theme Five: Playground

The playground emerged as a main theme in children's perceptions of feeling safe in school. They perceived that the playground could be a safe place. Children commented that:

'On the playground we have playground games.' (Y1G)

'The playground is safe outside.' (Y4B)

'You don't get hurt in the playground.' (Y3G)
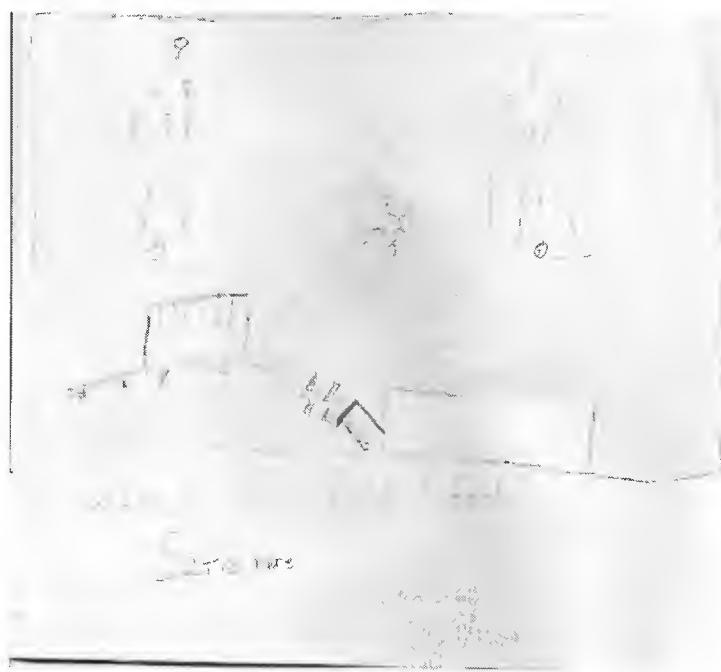
Figure 9: 'This is the field, I feel safe here'

Some pupils named the playground and some pupils named the field as an area where they felt safe. Figure 9 is a pupil's picture of the field as their chosen place of safety. Figure 9 shows a climbing frame, pupils playing football and in the centre a group of children holding hands.

When asked which adults they could go to, a number of children named lunchtime support workers as the adults that children would go to if they were feeling unsafe:

'The lunchtime/dinner people and the people on the playground or field.' (Y6B)

In one school another factor that had made children feel safe in school was that:

'Mr X has installed cameras outside.' (Y1B)

Safe play was an important positive factor for the children. One child commented that they felt safe on the playground in their school because:

'There are adults to look after you and there is loads of children and you can play safely.' (Y1G)

Some children felt that the playground could be unsafe for other children, particularly at lunchtime. One child commented that some games, one in particular, made some of his friends, but not him, feel unsafe at times, reasoning that:

'It's not physically dangerous but not scary either – a game where you don't want to hurt people but that's the meaning of the game – say rugby for example.' (Y4B)

A lack of activities and unstructured games in the playground was also reported to make children feel unsafe. The following extract describes the children's feelings before and after their playground was redeveloped:

'Yeah, there wasn't any of that, it was just plain, plain like you know the floor on the playground – just hard core. It was just that – no painting.' (Y2B)

'But when I came over again I thought wow, two football pitches and a maze.' (Y5G)

'I've never been in the Year one, and two and reception and nursery when it happened but they have built in the playground – one's got a climbing frame and the other has a little step and a bit where they can play.' (Y3G)

'It's like… we have a field out there and they have both, a playground and a ramp which is grass. So I think they have a brilliant place outside.' (Y6B)

4.7 Theme Six: School curriculum

The school curriculum also impacted children's feelings of safety. Children reported that access to extracurricular clubs made them feel safe. In one school a new Head had created extra clubs:

> *Child one: To have a little bit more fun in school, he put in more enjoyable clubs and after school clubs. All the girls were getting really fed up with all the footballing and stuff so he started some girlish clubs - it's improved.*
> *Child two: Karate, netball and we have constructive games in these cupboards, dancing, trampoline, and football. There is stuff after school most Mondays – African drumming, sewing.*
> *Child two: When Mrs X [old HT] was here there was nothing – but we still did miss her 'cos she was a good teacher, but Mr X [new HT] he does more fun games and things like that. (Y6G and Y4B)*

Pupils commented on how they felt about the new clubs:

> *'I quite enjoy it. It's got loads of options. Before we just had after-school club and football on Fridays, that's it.' (Y6G)*

Pupils commented that the availability of extracurricular clubs made them feel safe:

> *'I forgot to say this – clubs make you feel safe as well, like gymnastics clubs I go to, cricket and netball and tennis, they make you feel safe as well. And the people that do it.' (Y6B)*

Pupils felt that circle time made children feel safe:

> *'We do circle time to help us and all what we done in our week.' (Y5G)*

4.8 Theme Seven: Security

Security in school was important and children's perceptions of the physical security of the school determined their feelings of safety. One child commented:

> *'Inside school is safe because you have glass windows.' (Y1B)*

Another said that:

> *'There is adults and no-one can get in. It's very hard.' (Y2G)*

Pupils recommended that other schools could be safer if they:

'Put some gates up – right there and tell when it's play time you can't get out and when it's home time the teachers go out and unlock it and they get out.' (Y5G)

Another commented that schools could put up:

'Big walls, then nothing can get inside – if people are like scared and they think there is monsters inside they can't get in.' (Y4B)

Lack of security made children feel unsafe and there was a fear that people from outside could get into school:

'Someone could break in and 'cos there is not usually really many people in the hall we wouldn't be able to see them. Then they could break in, just go upstairs. Anything could happen – all they have to do is break through one piece of glass. Do you know the fence outside? It's not really very safe 'cos somebody could just jump over. When they lock the gates in the mornings the gates are locked and people just jump over that and go in and muck about in the playground.' (Y5G)

Fire was also regarded as a threat to children's feelings of safety. Children discussed the impact of practice fire alarms going off:

'I don't like it when the fire alarms go off.' (Y1G)

'The other week it kept going off twice.' (Y1G)

And what would happen if there really was a real fire:

'If the fire alarm went off and there was real fire and we were stuck in the building and all the teachers were out there then there is nobody to help you.' (Y4B)

And where they would go:

'I think X [family workers' hut] because you are not really crowded and if there is a fire you are not going to get really injured. 'Cos in a crowded place you could get hurt.' (Y3G)

4.9 Theme Eight: Local community

The local community influenced children's perceptions of what made them feel safe. Events that had happened in the local community continued to make

children feel unsafe. One child commented that local events were discussed between friends and made them feel unsafe:

> *'When something happens to someone, yeah – not in school but outside school and then when you are in school, yeah – everyone is chatting about it and everyone is scared and it's just when you are coming out of school, something happened to someone like they got run over or something like that. That does make you scared.'* (Y5G)

Relevant too was that children felt that the local community was unsafe:

> *'They should put up a wall and then we can't see all the bad things happening outside.'* (Y2G)

> *'No, it's all fine inside the school but they should block out the outside environment - like I was playing a football match and there was a boy on a motorbike and he was making so much noise he was putting me off.'* (Y4B)

The perception was that outside agency involvement was needed to make the local community safer.

> *'Have police in school – in the alley-way so if someone does come up and start shouting at us they can sort them out.'* (Y3G)

One pupil described how he felt the police should have helped in an incident involving a member of the community:

> *'The police should have been there 'cos the people is supposed to be round our school 'cos there is like loads of perverts in the area cause the man must have lived local 'cos the police done a whole big search of the area of where he could have gone.'* (Y6B)

4.10 Summary

Children in the present study reported feeling safe and perceived feeling safe to be positive. Feeling safe was associated with being protected and having their emotional needs met. Children reported that adults and other children had an impact on feelings of safety. The behaviour of their peers and school behaviour management also had an impact on children's feelings of safety. In particular, children regarded rewards and sanctions and clear behaviour expectations

positively. Children reported feeling safe in specific places such as the family room and nurture room. These places often included places to talk. The wider school curriculum, the local community and the physical security of the school also had a role in maintaining children's feelings of safety.

Chapter Five: Staff Perspectives of Safety

5.1 Themes from staff interviews

Eight themes emerged during analysis. 'Feelings about safety' was a key theme, suggesting that facilitating children's feelings of safety was a priority for schools. Staff perceived the use of PM4B funding to provide additional activities for children made the children feel safe. However, there were differences between schools in that some schools perceived pupils to feel safe prior to PM4B, whilst some schools felt that pupils only felt safe after PM4B was implemented. All schools agreed that PM4B enhanced feelings of safety. Other themes reveal what facilitated the implementation of PM4B, such as the process of implementing PM4B and effective school systems. Successful school systems were those that identified, consistently monitored, and supported pupils' needs. Successful school systems involved all staff, had a positive school ethos and reviewed school policies. Theme four explores the impact of PM4B on behaviour, whilst another emerging theme was 'Emotional well-being', and the necessity to use the funding for targeted work for the emotional development of children. The theme 'Learning' highlights the association between learning and behaviour and the use of PM4B funding to support the learning of pupils. Themes 'support' and 'staff' reveal the role of staff in implementing PM4B successfully and the ways in which funding was used to support pupil interventions and to train staff. The theme 'playground' suggests that the playground is a key factor in maximising pupils' feelings of safety and indicates that this was an area of school that was developed in a number of ways through the use of PM4B.The themes are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Themes from staff interviews

Theme	Theme title	Perceptions
1	Feelings about safety	Children's feelings of safety an area of priority for schools. Some staff perceived children to be safe prior to PM4B with some staff feeling children felt safe post PM4B. Provision of additional activities made children feel safe.
2	PM4B process	PM4B part of a process of change. Positive impact of PM4B on schools. Action plans helped focus staff. Authority supported staff.
3	Successful school systems	Reviewed policies including behaviour. All staff involved in PM4B. Staff worked together. Key worker system set up to target key children. Necessity for positive school ethos. Staff shared practice and communicated with each other. PM4B had positive impact on whole school.
4	Behaviour	Experience of challenging behaviour. Application of consistent rewards and sanctions. Decreases or static fixed term exclusions as a result of PM4B. Improvements in behaviour management following PM4B.
5	Learning	Relationship between challenging behaviour and learning issues. Some children with challenging behaviour experienced difficulties accessing mainstream learning. Funding allowed schools to provide support for learning. Schools provided an alternative curriculum. Funding facilitated small group learning for challenging children. PM4B facilitated inclusive practice.
6	Playground	Lunchtime a key time for challenging behaviour. PM4B allowed development of playground. Funding used to employ and train lunchtime staff. Use of funding to engage pupils at lunchtime. Activities reduced the number of playground incidents. Post PM4B playground makes children feel safer. General reduction in playground and lunchtime incidents.
7	Support and emotional wellbeing	Specific interventions used and valued. Nurture rooms particularly valued by staff. Planned intervention. Funding used to support children. High level of emotional need in school. PM4B used to support emotional needs of children.

8	Staff	Employed and trained new staff.
		Role of staff perceived to be supporting children.
		Issues with recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled staff.
		Before PM4B staff felt stressed.
		Increased opportunities to teach and increase in confidence of staff in managing behaviour.

5.2 Theme One: Feelings about safety

Children's feelings of safety were a priority for schools. One Head commented that their whole school ethos was based on keeping children safe:

> *'It's based on the fact it's the happy, safe, secure children that learn. If children are not happy, safe and secure then what are we doing about that?'*

Staff from all the schools commented that children felt safe in their school, however there was variability in that some schools perceived children to be safe prior to PM4B while some schools considered that children felt safe after the implementation of PM4B. Even where pupils were perceived to have felt safe before the project there was evidence that PM4B had enhanced this:

> *'We have got some data that shows that when, before we had this provision in place, we did go through and we have been through quite a turbulent time in terms of a local primary school closing. We had a large influx of children so we did go through a very turbulent time, but we have got data that shows before we had the nurture provision children felt safe, since then the percentage of children that feel safe or very safe has gone up so we are in the high nineties now.'*

In other schools staff felt that PM4B increased feelings of safety, particularly through the creation of safe places for those most vulnerable:

> *'The children actually have an area that they do feel safe and secure. I mean one of our children she will go and access mainstream lessons now but in the early stages she would go out for fifteen minutes and then come back [to the lodge] and that was to make sure everybody was still there and the provision was still there and the staff were still there and then she would go off again back to her lesson [in mainstream]. It's that – the provision itself gives the children a secure place to be.'*

> *'I think the children in the nurture group they have a safer environment. It's a smaller group and [the children] spend a lot of time doing the speaking and listening, talking about conflicts – things that might have happened at playtime and things like that, so I think it provides the children with a safe environment there.'*

Staff felt that the provision of additional activities made children feel safe.

*'Giving the children activities to join in with has made them feel safer in my opinion...
you can see it in the way they play now, it is so different'.*

' I think some of the. . particularly the girls, it's given them more feeling of safety'

5.3 Theme Two: PM4B process

Staff perceived PM4B to have enhanced all pupils' feelings of safety and the
process of implementation was instrumental to its success. The Senior
Management Team (SMT) felt that PM4B was part of a process of change that led
to changes in behaviour:

*'I think it's difficult to put it just down to PM4B because it's not just down to that. What
it's done is enabled staff to feel that they were supported in dealing with incidents of
behaviour so because we were able to put into place this planned intervention. We
weren't fire fighting anymore, it was planned intervention. Therefore that has fed
through to the children because staff feel less stressed about dealing with behavioural
issues because the numbers are coming down, children therefore are more happier.
It's like a cycle really. I think everybody feels much more comfortable and certainly as
a school it is a much calmer place where there is much more quality learning going on
now.'*

It would appear that some staff perceived that PM4B enhanced pupils' feelings of
safety by making the school calmer:

*'It also benefits the rest of the children because we are able to run anger
management and social skills groups. A few weeks ago we had a group of girls who
were causing a few problems and we were able to do some quick intervention work
with those girls over a three-week period on a daily basis to try and calm things. It has
made a huge difference and the school is a lot calmer.'*

Staff felt that the use of action plans helped focus staff and the Authority
supported staff. Staff felt that they had the right amount of support, commenting
that:

*'Because we have also had termly meetings with the Head of Behaviour Support and
the rest of the behaviour team so we have had quite a lot of support available and a
lot of support in terms of talking to other Head Teachers about how it's been going
and what they have done. I think generally that was the right level of support.'*

5.4 Theme Three: Successful school systems

Successful school systems emerged as a process that affected the implementation of PM4B and hence enhanced pupils' feelings of safety. Schools felt this was key in helping children feel safe. Schools reviewed policies including behaviour. Staff felt this had helped them to develop strong behaviour policies which in turn, helped pupils to feel safe. One Head Teacher commented that:

> *'We have a very strong behaviour policy and the children generally know that we deal with issues and they feel secure in our systems of rules and rewards and sanctions.'*

It was important that all staff were involved in PM4B. One Head commented that staff working together had a significant impact on the implementation of the project:

> *'It's just huge the difference that it has made. I just think that is part of the consistency because people are working together and behaviour support staff are supporting midday supervisors at lunchtime which really helps.'*

Staff felt that the shared responsibility for behaviour management had led to a shift in attitudes amongst staff which was positive. Staff commented that:

> *'Now it's the whole school rather than "You are the behaviour support assistants, you can deal with it". It's having a whole school impact.'*

A number of schools set up a key worker system to support key children. This helped to ensure that the needs of individuals were met. One Head Teacher explained the role of the key worker in their school, saying:

> *'Once we have identified those we have set up our key worker system - so the key worker is the person who will oversee that child's behaviours and emotional needs on a day to day basis but will also spend time, once a week. The key worker also has a PSP time with the child who is identified. They also have an IEP for their learning but they also have a behaviour target on that. They also have a pastoral support plan, PSP, and that is the focus for the key worker's time with that child. A half hour which is also a reward and thinking time as well.'*

Schools perceived that the implementation of the project was influenced by school ethos. Staff felt the success of the project was attributable to the ethos which was conveyed the children. One Head commented:

> *'Hearts and minds, hearts and minds of staff, ethos, values, principles that are conveyed to every element of the community.'*

In order for whole school involvement, including an effective key worker system and staff to work together, there was the need for constant communication about vulnerable children:

> *'We have weekly vulnerable children's meetings – which involve myself, my deputy, my two family workers and my two BSAs where we actually talk about all of the children who we feel are vulnerable. So staff can actually refer a child to our meeting if they have a concern for that child so they are quite involved there and then they get feedback on how we are going to deal with that.'*

> *'We have constant communication. We have a weekly meeting, but actually we very rarely make that because we are communicating about concerns which were raised by children, staff and parents. We log those, file them here as concerns (shows folders).'*

5.5 Theme Four: Behaviour

Pupils perceived that the poor behaviour of other pupils made them feel unsafe. Similarly all schools reported challenging behaviour prior to the project. One school described the adverse impact on children's feelings of safety:

> *'I would say, and it sounds dramatic but I came into a war zone. It was real – the anger, the frustration, the aggression and the violence. I had been in two challenging primary schools as a Head. I had experienced quite extreme need. When I came here I thought, oh my goodness! The first few months, I mean, I consider myself a successful Head, someone who knows what they are doing – I really thought I had lost the plot because it was so extreme… Children's behaviour communicates where they are emotionally and the communication was they were unsafe, really frightened, angry and frustrated with life. That's not everyone, but it felt very unsafe out there.'*

Previously it was noted that pupils highlighted the application of consistent rewards and sanctions in making them feel safe. This was echoed in staff comments:

> *'We have revised the behaviour policy to make it a more positive thing – it made us think about what were our rewards and we have a celebration assembly every Friday afternoon and we have extended the number of rewards we give in there.'*

> *'We tried different systems of rewards and sanctions and when we had the disruptive children we were very good at crisis management but we weren't very good at making sure children who were good all the time were rewarded because we were spending so much time dealing with the naughty children.'*

Pupils perceived that clear behaviour expectations made them feel safe. Similarly staff felt that the project had allowed them to put resources in place that improved behaviour management. Staff commented that:

'It has allowed us to manage the behaviour.'

'The management of behaviour has got so much better and staff have been equipped with a variety of strategies.'

Despite staff perceptions of the improvement of behaviour management there was variability in fixed-term exclusions between schools. One school explained that they had experienced fewer exclusions:

'It had a very positive impact I think it's very measurable because what we have seen is fewer incidents where we've had incidents of fixed term exclusions.'

'Two years ago it was fifteen [fixed-term exclusions], two or three last year, this year I'm pretty certain it's down to one and that person now goes to another school where they have a behaviour unit and they spend half their week in that behaviour unit and half in the normal school.'

However in some schools there continued to be children receiving fixed-term exclusions:

'We still have a core number of children who have had one/two incidents of fixed term exclusions but those are for fewer days and there are less of them. So yes the number of fixed term exclusions has come down dramatically.'

'Actually this year we have excluded one more child than previous years but we are still only talking four or five for one day. But overall no – it's stayed the same. Which in a way is good because I think the behaviour challenges have got more. But I have only ever done it for one or two days that's all.'

5.6 Theme Five: Impact on learning

Pupils and staff both associated feeling safe with behaviour and behaviour management. Schools reported that children with challenging behaviour experienced difficulties accessing mainstream learning. One school commented that prior to PM4B:

'We had a few children that were struggling to access mainstream classes.'

PM4B funding helped in supporting the learning of pupils with challenging behaviour and schools felt that PM4B facilitated inclusive practice:

'Funding enabled us to put in place a package of behaviour support for the children and that package included having a specific unit if you like in place so that children with behavioural difficulties who found perhaps being in a mainstream class difficult had a small nurture group to go to and we could actually provide that facility for them.'

'That has helped with putting some children into small groups and giving them additional help with their learning.'

Just as pupils perceived that poor behaviour had an impact on their feelings of safety and learning, schools reported the provision of learning support for children with challenging behaviour reduced poor behaviour and facilitated learning opportunities. In some schools this was achieved by provision of an alternative curriculum:

'It's had a massive impact – in fact we are providing an alternative curriculum for those very needy children and those children who are the children who are not coping in the classroom.'

'Enabling us to support the children who have an adverse effect on the other children's learning in the class which meant that other children have been able to learn.'

5.7 Theme Six: Playground

Pupils perceived that lunchtime the playground could be an unsafe place. Similarly staff reported that lunchtime was a key time for challenging behaviour. One school commented that prior to PM4B:

'You would be picking up situations that over spilled from lunchtime so there was all of that happening very frequently whereas now it's decreased 95 percent.'

Schools used their funding to improve breaks and lunchtime. One school commented that the funding from PM4B had been used to enhance pupils' feelings of safety by physically making the school more secure:

'Money allowed us to do the playground marking, the equipment, and CCTV and security doors as well because we have this money. So that's been excellent, that's been really, really helpful to us at dinner times.'

in order to facilitate breaks and lunchtimes, funding was also used to employ and train lunchtime staff:

> *'I have two part-time behaviour assistants who also work in classes with children in very much the same way and they also have been responsible for getting the system, organising the system, getting the system set up at lunchtime, training play leaders and getting equipment. They are out and about at lunchtimes as well to help the lunchtime period. That's three extra members of staff that I have been able to appoint because of this and that's made such a big difference.'*

> *'PM4B money has been put towards supporting the midday supervisors at playtime and lunchtime and the children play with them at those times.'*

The role of lunchtime staff was perceived to be to engage pupils at lunchtime. One school commented that this had enhanced pupils' feelings of safety:

> *'And we have brought in lunchtime play leaders – again more adults out and they will naturally feel safer because there are more adults and they are all more engaged in activities.'*

Just as pupils reported that a lack of activities made them feel unsafe, staff reported that lunchtime activities contributed to a reduction in lunchtime incidents:

> *'The playground has dropped all playground incidents quite considerably because the children now have something to do.'*

> *'We employed two play leaders to manage some activities…at lunchtimes and that has drawn in children who would otherwise be involved in other types of things.'*

The last quote supports the perception that activities reduced the number of playground incidents. Indeed, children who would otherwise be involved in poor behaviour were engaged in lunchtime activities. Schools felt that the post PM4B playground made children feel safer, and that there was a general reduction in playground and lunchtime incidents:

> *'So the impact of PM4B – the fact that the children are more entertained and therefore we don't have as many lunchtime detentions and children getting sent in for fights at lunchtime.'*

5.8 Theme Seven: Support and emotional well-being

Pupils perceived that feelings of safety were determined by their emotional well-being. Similarly interventions to support emotional well-being were used and valued by schools:

> 'They have some groups… and do social skills, anger management, circle time, circle of friends, all these things that try and remove some of these barriers to learning.'

> 'We do buy in some counselling time. Those key children have access to that but also below those key children we have a whole raft of children below those with immense need. It's about prioritising and getting similar mentoring systems and counselling systems for those children.'

Pupil perceptions indicated that feeling safe was linked to opportunities to develop their emotional well-being. Similarly schools recognised high levels of emotional need, as such PM4B was used to support emotional needs of children. In one school, the Head Teacher explained about one group they ran to support emotional development:

> 'We have snowdrop on a Thursday afternoon for year five – for their social skills. They often bake lovely cakes and biscuits as part of that. They have circle time and they do an activity – cooking, sewing, construction – and they have PSP where they look at their individual target with their key worker who works really hard. It's about promoting reflection, self awareness, emotional literacy building, resilience through building self-esteem – and it's also about saying, 'Hang on a minute what's happened this week, what are you going to do about it?''

In another school the funding from PM4B was used to support emotional needs of children reactively. The Head Teacher explained that:

> 'She would be proactive so we could pick up on children with self-esteem issues, anger management issues, things going on at home – you know, mental health issues and at the same time we could be reactive, so if a child had a bad day there could be someone that could go in the class to support them/that child or pull that child out of class.'

Nurture rooms were particularly valued by staff. One Head commented that:

> 'The funding enabled us to put in place a package of behaviour support for the children and that package included having a specific unit, if you like, in place so that children with behavioural difficulties who found perhaps being in a mainstream class difficult had a small nurture group to go to and we could actually provide that facility for them.'

They were particularly valued because of the impact they had on development of

behaviour policies and management:

> '*I think as a result of the nurture group we are in the process of looking at our whole behaviour policy. So that has also an impact on everybody in school, all the adults, in terms of their self-esteem and their kind of confidence in dealing with behavioural issues.*'

Pupils' perceptions were that access to safe places and thus intervention needed to be timetabled. Similarly planned intervention was seen by schools as a preventative measure rather than as response to inappropriate behaviour. Staff commented that:

> '*It's not a drop-in centre as such, we don't send our naughty children there; we actually use it for planned intervention with specific children and that's been the main success I think.*'

> '*We were able to put into place this planned intervention. We weren't fire fighting anymore, it was planned intervention.*'

Funding was used to support children and on training to support staff. Some schools had invested a lot of their resources on training, one commented of PM4B:

> '*It's allowed us to train people up, we have done an awful lot of training this year.*'

5.9 Theme Eight: Staff

Pupils reported that adults made them feel safe and many schools employed new staff. Schools commented that:

> '*The funding... has allowed me to employ a behaviour assistant and a learning mentor.*'

> '*The ability to employ extra adults. That has been what the big issue has been. The real benefit is that I now have extra adults above and beyond what I had.*'

Just as pupils reported that adults had a supportive function, staff also perceived that the role of staff was to support children. Staff commented that new staff had supported children, which had impacted in a number of ways:

> '*It is the extra bodies, giving the children something extra to do with their time.*'

'Enabling us to support the children who have an adverse effect on the other children's learning in the class which meant that other children have been able to learn.'

One school commented on what they felt would have happened had they not been able to recruit a teaching assistant in a year six class using PM4B funding:

'If we had had just these two classes in Year six and not had the additional teaching assistant I think the staff would have been under a lot of pressure and we would have had a lot of staff absenteeism because certainly those children were extremely challenging.'

Duke (2002) argues that in safe schools there are opportunities to teach. In the present study staff perceived that there were increased opportunities to teach and thus there was an increase in staff confidence in managing behaviour. This would reinforce staff perceptions that PM4B enhanced pupils' feelings of safety. Indeed many schools commented that PM4B had allowed them to use funding in such a way that allowed teaching to take place uninterrupted:

'I think it's given the teachers a chance to teach.'

'I think teachers think/feel they can teach now without having to deal with lots and lots of behavioural incidents before they could start teaching.'

One Head noted that the confidence of support staff in managing behaviour had increased:

'But it is definitely the support staff who feel more equipped to cope with behaviour in school and that really stood out. That was the big revelation from this. They now feel much more confident.'

'I think it just makes everybody more confident to deal with difficult situations.'

'That has also had an impact on everybody in school, all the adults, in terms of their self-esteem and their kind of confidence in dealing with behavioural issues.'

5.10 Summary

All staff reported that PM4B had enhanced pupils' feelings of safety. Similar to reports by children, the provision of additional activities for children was perceived by staff to make children feel safe. Effective school systems which identified, consistently monitored and supported pupils' needs facilitated the implementation of the project. Just as children associated feeling safe with the development of

their emotional well-being, schools also reported using funding for targeted work on the emotional development of children. Schools reported using funding to support the learning of pupils with challenging behaviour. Just as pupils identified the key role of adults in making them feel safe, schools reported employing and training additional staff to support pupil interventions. Schools identified the playground as a key factor in maximising pupils' feelings of safety and this was also reinforced by the children.

their emotional well-being, schools also reported using funding for targeted work on the emotional development of children. Schools reported using funding to support the learning of pupils with challenging behaviour. Just as pupils identified the key role of adults in making them feel safe, schools reported employing and training additional staff to support pupil interventions. Schools identified the playground as a key factor in maximising pupils' feelings of safety and this was also reinforced by the children.

Chapter Six: Case Studies

6.1 Case Studies

Individual case studies for all schools are presented with school demographics, including ethnicity, special educational needs and socio-economic status (measured by free school meals). The way in which schools used their funding and employed specific interventions is explored. Multiple case studies of all eleven schools are used in order to make generalisations about the implementation of PM4B in relation to the third research question. This question explores the relationship between the implementation of PM4B from the perspectives of children and staff and the initiatives in place in relation to feeling safe.

6.1.1 School One

School one was an average sized junior school serving a large housing estate on the edge of the Authority. Over half the pupils were White British whilst the remaining pupils came from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Seventeen different languages were represented in the school. Pupils' attainment on entry was very low and there was a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. A well above average proportion of pupils was eligible for free school meals.

This school saw a reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (five). There was no change in the level of unauthorised absence, which remained at 0.2.

They developed a key worker system, supported pupils at risk and developed their curriculum. They reviewed school policies and employed and trained staff. Specific interventions included mentoring, playleader-led games and regular circle time. Funding was also spent on developing the school playground and provision of lunchtime activities.

6.1.2 School Two

School two was a larger than average sized primary school. Children's level of skills and knowledge when starting nursery was well below that expected, particularly in language, maths, and personal and social development. Over half the pupils came from minority ethnic backgrounds and were in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils whose first language was not English was greater than found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals was higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities was average. The school had a small number of looked after children. The current Head Teacher, senior teachers and some other staff took up their posts after May 2005.

School two saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (three). There was no change in the level of unauthorised absence, which remained at 0.9.

School two spent their funding on developing the curriculum, breakfast-orientated activities, booster learning classes and lunchtime activities. Specific interventions employed were social skills, anger management and circle time. They also spent funding on employing and training staff.

6.1.3 School Three

School three was an average sized primary school. It was previously an infant school and amalgamated with the partner junior school in 2008. Two-thirds of the pupils came from outside the area. Half the pupils were from White British backgrounds, and others were from twelve different minority ethnic groups and were at an early stage of learning English. Overall, families' social circumstances were below those found typically. The school had an above average number of pupils who had learning difficulties or disabilities.

School three saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (two). There was no change in the level of unauthorised absence, which remained at 0.9.

They spent funding on developing key worker systems, developing the curriculum and reviewing policies. Specific interventions included social skills work, lunchtime clubs and regular circle time. They also trained and employed staff and provided lunchtime activities.

6.1.4 School Four

School four was a large primary school. Many pupils experienced relatively high levels of social deprivation and had complex needs. The proportion entitled to free school meals and those identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities was well above the national average. Over a quarter spoke English as an additional language. Pupils movement into and out of the school during the year was high. School four previously had funding from two behaviour initiatives including BIP.

Of all the January schools, school four had the largest decrease in the reduction of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (six). There was no change in the level of unauthorised absence, which remained at 0.8.

Funding was used to set up a key worker system and to support pupils at risk. Specific interventions included social skills, anger management, mentoring and learning support for pupils. Other interventions included counselling, playleader-led games, lunchtime clubs, breaktime activities and regular circle time. They developed the curriculum and physically redeveloped the school, provided additional lunchtime activities and employed and trained new staff.

6.1.5 School Five

School five was an average sized school. Less than half of the pupils were White and of British heritage, a quarter Asian and a fifth were of mixed race; the remainder were black. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties was well above average, as was the percentage at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils that joined the school part way through the year was higher than usual.

School five saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (two). There was an increase in the level of unauthorised absence of 0.4 percent, from 0.2 per cent (2006/7) to 0.6 per cent (2007/8).

Funding was spent on key worker systems, developing the curriculum and reviewing school policies. Funding was also spent on physically developing the school, training staff and providing lunchtime activities. Specific interventions included lunchtime clubs, circle time and playground marked games.

6.1.6 School Six

School six was a larger than average junior school. Most pupils were White British. The proportion of pupils who spoke English as an additional language was average. The proportion entitled to free school meals was also average, as was pupils who had learning difficulties or disabilities. There had been considerable changes to staffing during the last five years.

School six saw a decrease in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (eight). There was a decrease in the level of unauthorised absence of 0.1 percent.

Funding was used to put in place key worker systems, support pupils at risk and develop the curriculum. Funding was also used to review school policies, provide lunchtime activities, and train and employ additional staff. Specific interventions that were put in place included setting up a nurture room, providing anger management and playleader-led games.

6.1.7 School Seven

School seven was situated in a relatively disadvantaged area. The school intake had a high ethnic mix with many pupils from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was well below expectations. Many children had poor language and social skills. There was a high number of pupils moving in and out of the school during the year, and mobility levels impacted on the attainment.

School seven saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (six). There was an increase in the level of unauthorised absence of 0.6.

School seven used their funding to develop key worker systems, support pupils at risk and develop the curriculum. Funding was also spent on booster learning classes, physical school development, lunchtime activities and staff training. Three interventions were put in place; mentoring, lunchtime clubs and breaktime activities.

6.1.8 School Eight

School eight was a larger than average junior school. Over one-third of pupils came from minority ethnic groups, with those with English as an additional language above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals was double the national average and a significant proportion had complex or social emotional needs. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties was above the national average.

School eight had the second biggest increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (eighteen). There was a decrease in the level of unauthorised absence (0.6).

School eight spent their funding on a key worker system, supporting pupils at risk and developing the curriculum. Funding was also spent setting up breakfast orientated activities and physical school development. They set up a nurture room for planned intervention with specific children, including anger management and social skills work.

6.1.9 School Nine

School nine was a smaller than average school. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was well above average. More pupils than nationally spoke English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities was also above average. There had been significant changes to teaching staff in recent years and the school had

experienced some difficulty in appointing staff. Standards on entry were below those expected for the children's ages overall, particularly in early reading, writing and calculating skills.

School nine saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (two). There was a decrease in unauthorised absence of 0.2.

School nine used funding to put in place a key worker system, support pupils at risk and develop the curriculum. Funding was used to put in place breakfast orientated activities, employ additional staff and staff training. They put in place three interventions; a nurture room, social skills groups and anger management.

6.1.10 School Ten

School ten was a larger than average size junior school situated in an area of high social deprivation. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals was high. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs was also high. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need was below average. Pupils entered the school with well below average standards. Approximately half of the pupils came from minority ethnic groups and an above average percentage spoke English as an additional language.

School ten saw an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (twenty nine). There was an increase in unauthorised absence of 0.3.

The school spent funding supporting pupils at risk, curriculum development and reviewing school policy. Funding was also spent on booster learning classes, additional lunchtime activities and staff training. Specific interventions that were put in place included anger management, playleader-led games and lunchtime clubs. Circle time and breaktime activities were also put in place.

6.1.11 School Eleven

School eleven was larger than average. Pupils came from a wide range of backgrounds, the proportion entitled to free school meals was above average.

Though attainment on entry was high for a few pupils, for many more it was well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities was above average. The majority of pupils were White British, with a significant minority coming from several ethnic minority groups.

School eleven saw a decrease in the number of fixed-term exclusions following PM4B (one). There was an increase in unauthorised absence of 0.2 percent.

Funding was spent on developing the curriculum, implementing a key worker system and reviewing school policies. Funding was also spent on physically redeveloping the school, providing additional lunchtime activities and employing additional staff and training. Specific interventions implemented included social skills, anger management, playground friends and regular circle time.

6.2 Funding Distribution

Data were analysed in order to gain an understanding of the way in which funding was used by schools.

Table 4: Funding use by PM4B schools

School	Key worker	Pupils at Risk	Curriculum development	Policy review	Breakfast Oriented activities	Additional staff	Booster learning classes	Physical school development	Playground development	Additional lunchtime activities	Staff training
1	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
2			X	X	X	X	X			X	X
3	X		X	X		X				X	X
4	X	X	X			X		X		X	X
5	X		X	X				X		X	X
6	X	X	X	X		X				X	X
7	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X
8	X	X	X		X			X			
9	X	X	X		X	X					X
10		X	X	X			X			X	X
11	X		X	X		X		X		X	X

Brief descriptions of the categories adopted to describe each initiative are presented in 6.2.1. Some of the categories are based on those used in the

evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (Hallam, Castle and Rogers, 2005).

6.2.1 Categories of support

Key workers
This includes the development of systems to identify pupils in need and provide ongoing support to pupils.

Pupils at risk
Includes those measures implemented specifically to support those pupils at risk from exclusion, for instance, counselling and anger management.

Curriculum development
Any school initiatives to develop the curriculum including mentoring, targeted social skills work, circle of friends, circle time and development of nurture groups.

Breakfast oriented activities
Refers to initiatives carried out before school started, including providing children with breakfast in order to help them access learning for the remainder of the school day. This included a breakfast mentoring club and an unnamed group for children who found accessing the curriculum particularly difficult.

Additional staff
Refers to additional staff employed in schools using PM4B funding. This included lunchtime assistants, teacher assistants and behaviour support staff.

Booster learning classes
This includes any additional support for the learning of pupils, including homework clubs and booster learning classes.

Physical school development
This refers to funding being used to alter schools physically, i.e., the provision of new buildings and redevelopment of existing spaces.

Policy review

Refers to the review of behaviour management policies and changes that included the introduction of new reward systems.

Playground development

Includes redevelopment or changes to playgrounds, such as mini football pitches and playground marking.

Additional lunchtime activities

This refers to the provision of activities such as lunchtime clubs and playground activities used to engage children.

Staff training

Refers to training to develop understanding of pupils' needs and how to manage them, including training of lunchtime staff.

Exclusion and attendance data were tracked during the intervention, see tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Exclusion and attendance figures for January PM4B schools

School code	Exclusions 06/07	Exclusions 07/08	Change in exclusions	Unauthorised absence 06/07	Unauthorised absence 07/08	Change in unauthorised absence
1	7	2	**-5**	0.2	0.2	0
4	29	23	**-6**	0.8	0.8	0
7	2	8	**+6**	1.4	2.0	+0.6
8	20	38	**+18**	0.8	0.2	-0.6
10	36	65	**+29**	1.0	1.3	+0.3
Total	**94**	**136**	**+42**	**4.2% (0.84)***	**4.5% (0.9)***	**+0.3% (0.06)***

* Figures in brackets are an average.

Table 6: Exclusion and attendance figures for April PM4B schools

School code	Exclusions 06/07	Exclusions 07/08	Change in exclusions	Unauthorised absence 06/07	Unauthorised absence 07/08	Change in unauthorised absence
2	9	6	-3	0.9	0.9	0
3	10	12	+2	0.5	0.5	0
5	1	3	+2	0.2	0.6	+0.4
6	13	5	-8	0.5	0.4	-0.1
9	1	3	+2	1.2	1.0	-0.2
11	4	3	-1	1.1	0.9	-0.2
Total	**35**	**35**	**0**	**4.4% (0.73)***	**4.3% (0.71)***	**-0.1% (0.02)***

* Figures in brackets are an average.

Four schools saw reductions in fixed-term exclusions, albeit small: schools one, four, six and eleven. Seven schools saw increases in fixed-term exclusions: schools three, five, seven, eight, nine and ten. There was an increase of 42 fixed-term exclusions for the schools receiving funding in January. There was no difference in the number of fixed-term exclusions for the schools receiving funding in April.

Four schools saw decreases in unauthorised attendance (schools six, eight, nine and eleven). Four schools saw no change in their levels of absence (schools one, two, three and four). Three schools saw increases in unauthorised absence (schools five, seven and ten). Overall there was an increase of 0.3 percent in unauthorised attendance for January schools following PM4B and a decrease of 0.1 percent in unauthorised attendance for April schools following PM4B.

Three of the schools that experienced increases in unauthorised attendance were those schools that also experienced increases in fixed-term exclusions: schools five, seven and ten.

In order to assess change in fixed-term exclusions and attendance data, the researcher considered the t-test. The t-test has a number of assumptions underlying its use, including normal distribution, random sampling and power. Normality of the distribution of fixed-term exclusions and attendance were assessed by using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic (see Table 7).

The distributions of data in the present study were normal. Although the data met some of the assumptions for use with a parametric test, the sample size and hence the power of the test violated other assumptions. For these reasons the non-parametric equivalent of the repeated measures t-test, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used. There are difficulties with using non-parametric tests in that they are less sensitive than parametric tests with regard to detecting differences. They are, however, useful when you have a very small sample, i.e., six or less (Field, 2005), or when your data do not meet all the assumptions of parametric tests (Pallant, 2006).

A significant value of less than .05 indicates a deviation from normality

Table 7: Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics for PM4B schools

	Exclusions 06/07	Exclusions 07/08	Unauthorised absence 06/07	Unauthorised absence 07/08
Jan	D(5) = 0.19 $p > 0.5$	D(5) = 0.17 $p > 0.5$	D(5) = 0.26, $p > 0.5$	D(5) = 0.27, $p > 0.5$.
April	D(6) = 0.17 $p > 0.5$	D(6) = 0.2, $p > 0.5$.	D(6) = 0.17, $p > 0.5$	D(6) = 0.2, $p > 0.5$.

There were no significant decreases or increases in fixed-term exclusions or unauthorised absence for January- or April-funded schools (see Table 8).

Table 8: Change in exclusion and attendance

	Exclusions	Unauthorised absence
Jan	Z = -1.084, $p > .05$	z = -.272, p >. 05
April	Z = -.742, $p > .05$	z = -.368, p >.05

6.3 Differences between schools

Although there were no statistically significant differences in attendance and unauthorised absence overall, there were individual reductions in some schools. Hence it seemed relevant to explore how funding was used in relation to changes in attendance and fixed-term exclusions.

6.3.1 Fixed-term exclusions

Five schools (schools one, two, four, six and eleven) successfully reduced the incidence of fixed-term exclusions. There are similarities in the use of funding among these schools.

Table 9: Allocation of funding by schools that reduced exclusions

School	Key worker	Pupils at Risk	Curriculum development	Policy review	Breakfast Oriented activities	Additional staff	Booster learning classes	Physical school development	Playground development	Additional lunchtime activities	Staff training
1	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
2			X	X		X		X	X	X	X
4	X	X	X			X		X		X	X
6	X	X	X	X		X				X	X
7	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X
11	X		X	X		X		X		X	X

They all spent funding on staff training (four out of five also implementing key worker systems, and four engaged additional staff), developing their curriculum, and providing lunchtime activities.

Where schools had increases in exclusions, there were no commonalities (see Table 10).

Tabie 10: Allocation of funding by schools that increased exclusions

School	Key worker	Pupils at Risk	Curriculum development	Policy review	Breakfast Oriented activities	Additional staff	Booster learning classes	Physical school development	Playground development	Additional lunchtime activities	Staff training
3	X		X	X		X				X	X
5	X		X	X				X		X	X
9	X	X	X		X	X					X
10		X	X	X			X			X	X

Relevant though is the lack of additional staff employed.

6.3.2 Unauthorised absence

The way funding was used in schools that successfully reduced unauthorised absence shows some similarities (see table 11). Funding was used by all to put in place support for key workers and curriculum development.

Table 11: Funding distribution by schools that reduced unauthorised absence

School	Key worker	Pupils at Risk	Curriculum development	Policy review	Breakfast Oriented activities	Additional staff	Booster learning classes	Physical school development	Playground development	Additional lunchtime activities	Staff training
6	X	X	X	X		X				X	X
8	X	X	X		X			X			
9	X	X	X		X	X					X
11	X		X	X		X		X		X	X

However; with the exception of schools eight and eleven, funding was used to put in place support for pupils at risk, staff training, key workers, curriculum development, and additional staff. School eight did employ and train staff, however, they had difficulties maintaining this during the project as the following quote reveals:

> 'We have only just managed to sort out the recruitment of the learning support unit. We did try in the autumn term to recruit someone but we got so few applications.'

Similarly school eleven employed a member of staff whose role was to support pupils at risk:

> '*I appointed a teacher… the plan was she would be proactive so we could pick up on children with self-esteem issues, anger management issues… Unfortunately she left… I then re-advertised and didn't get anyone applying so I then re-advertised.'*

It would seem that the schools that successfully reduced unauthorised absence were those that consistently used funding to support pupils at risk, trained staff, had key workers, developed their curriculum, employed additional staff and provided training.

Table 12: Funding distribution between schools in unauthorised absence

Funding use by schools which saw decreases in unauthorised absence	Funding use by schools which saw no change in unauthorised absence	Funding use by schools which saw increases in unauthorised absence
Curriculum development	Curriculum development	Curriculum development
Training staff	Training staff	Training staff
Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff	
Key worker systems		
Support pupils at risk		

Commonalities between schools that saw increases in unauthorised attendance were that they all trained existing staff and developed their curriculum, however they failed to employ additional staff, put in place key worker systems and support pupils at risk (see Table 12).

Commonalities between schools that saw no change in attendance figures were that they developed their curriculum, and employed and trained additional staff. However, they failed to implement key worker systems and support pupils at risk.

6.3.3 Relationship between unauthorised absence and exclusion

School six was the only school that reduced exclusions and unauthorised absence. The researcher duly notes that few generalisations can be made from this.

Table 13: Differences in funding distribution of schools

Funding use by schools which reduced exclusions	Funding use by schools which reduced unauthorised absence	Funding use by schools which reduced exclusions and absence
Key worker systems	Key worker systems	Key worker systems
Curriculum development	Curriculum development	Curriculum development
Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff
Training staff	Training staff	Training staff
Additional lunchtime activities	Additional lunchtime activities	Additional lunchtime activities
	Support pupils at risk	Support pupils at risk
		Review school policies

Schools which successfully reduced the incidence of exclusion but did not reduce unauthorised absence all spent funding on key worker systems, developing their curriculum, employing and training additional staff and providing lunchtime activities (see Table 13).

Schools which reduced unauthorised absence and did not reduce exclusions all spent funding on key worker systems, developing their curriculum, employing and training additional staff, providing lunchtime activities and supporting pupils at risk.

In addition to using their funding in these ways, school six also spent their funding on pupils at risk and reviewed school policies. This would suggest that, in order to reduce exclusions and unauthorised absence, schools need to put in place a key worker system, additional staff and lunchtime activities. They also need to train staff, develop the curriculum and review school policies.

6.3.4 Pupil perceptions of safety and funding

Pupil interviews were analysed for mention of PM4B initiatives (see Table 14).The most commonly mentioned interventions were the nurture room, mentioned 20 times during interviews. Social skills type activities were mentioned six times, counselling and circle time were mentioned four times. These three interventions were mentioned a total of 34 times during the interview as making children feel safe. Notably they fall into the categories of pupils at risk and curriculum development.

Table 14: Number of times PM4B funded intervention mentioned by pupils

Number of times intervention mentioned by children	Nurture room	Social skills	Anger management	Mentoring	Counselling and psychotherapy	Learning support	Play leader led games	Playground marked games	Playground friends	Lunchtime clubs	Circle time	Break time activities
	20	6	0	0	4	2	11	0	0	18	4	0

Lunchtime clubs were mentioned 18 times during interviews with children as making them feel safe and playleader-led games were mentioned 11 times: a total of 29 times. These two interventions fall into the category of additional lunchtime activities.

Table 15 shows children's perceptions of what makes them feel safe and the funding distribution of schools. In addition to adults making children feel safe (a theme explored in chapter four), the present study would suggest that interventions put in place by schools that made children feel safe were measures to support pupils at risk, curriculum development and additional lunchtime activities.

Table 15: Children's perceptions of what makes them feel safe and the funding distribution of schools

Children's perceptions of interventions that make them feel safe	Funding use by schools which reduced exclusions	Funding use by schools which reduced unauthorised absence	Funding use by schools which reduced exclusions and absence
Curriculum development	Curriculum development	Curriculum development	Curriculum development
Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff	Employing additional staff
Training staff	Training staff	Training staff	Training staff
Additional lunchtime activities	Additional lunchtime activities	Additional lunchtime activities	Additional lunchtime activities
	Key worker system	Key worker system	Key worker system
Support pupils at risk		Support pupils at risk	Support pupils at risk
			Review school policies

Developing the curriculum, employing and training additional staff and providing lunchtime activities were all common among schools that reduced exclusions and attendance. This would suggest that interventions that make children feel safe contribute to the success of reducing exclusion and unauthorised absence.

6.4 Summary

There were no significant decreases or increases in fixed-term exclusions or unauthorised absence for the schools, irrespective of whether their funding began in January or April. There were, however, measurable reductions in individual schools. All the schools that lowered exclusions also either maintained

unauthorised attendance levels or reduced them. All the schools that experienced increases in unauthorised attendance also experienced increases in fixed-term exclusions.

An exploration of funding in relation to attendance and fixed-term exclusions revealed relationships between childrens' feelings of safety, exclusion and unauthorised absence. Children's perceptions of what made them feel safe referred to measures to support pupils at risk, development of the curriculum, employing and training additional staff and providing lunchtime activities. Similarly, with the exclusion of measures to support pupils at risk, these were common among schools that reduced exclusions and attendance. This suggests that interventions that make children feel safe are important in reducing levels of exclusion and unauthorised absence.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

The researcher argues that what makes children feel safe is best ascertained from the child's perspective, thus in the present study pupil perceptions of what makes them feel safe were elicited. Similarly, Cowie and Oztug (2008) have long been urging practitioners and government to listen to children about the diverse places in which they feel unsafe.

The children in the study were able to articulate clearly their feelings about safety and it was evident that feeling safe had positive outcomes as children associated feeling safe with feeling good, protected and immune from danger. Conversely feeling unsafe had negative outcomes. This was evident in that children described the negative feelings they experienced, such as worry and in some instances recollection of difficult personal experiences such as separation of parents and domestic violence.

7.1 What helps children feel safe in school?

In the present study, children interviewed revealed that they felt safe in school. None of the children indicated that they were feeling unsafe in school, although some children had reported feeling unsafe previously. Staff interviews indicated differences in staff perceptions of base line feelings of safety prior to the study; hence, whilst some staff reported that pupils felt safe prior to PM4B, others reported that they only began to feel safe after PM4B. Staff were in agreement that children's feelings of safety appeared to have increased as a result of their involvement in the project. Thus the ways in which schools used their funding and the factors that children perceived made them feel safe were explored in order to identify relationships between them.

7.1.1 Adults

Children identified the role of adults as instrumental in making them feel safe. This supports Cowie and Oztug (2008), who found the most common explanation for feeling safe referred to the support or presence of other people. It was apparent that there were common characteristics shared by the adults whom they identified as making them feel safe. Children reported that adults who made them feel safe were understanding, empathetic and able to recognise when children were upset; they also supported children when they experienced difficulties with social interactions. Characteristics also included being approachable and responsive when the children had worries and problems. Adults listened and allowed children to talk.

Many of the children described the comfort of staff 'caring' for them. Pupils perceived that staff knowledge and experience of school systems determined their feelings of safety. Thus they felt safe when adults knew school rules, rewards and sanctions and were able to apply them consistently. Children reported feeling safe with these adults as there were fewer opportunities for manipulation by their peers. In the present study, children felt that adults supported and protected them. If they were feeling unsafe they would go and share their worries and problems and receive support and guidance.

Similarly schools reported using funding to employ and train new staff. Staff reported that higher staff ratios led to less pressure on existing staff, increased opportunities to teach and increased confidence of staff in managing behaviour. These findings support the definition of Duke (2002) that in safe schools there are increased opportunities to teach and learn.

7.1.2 Behaviour management

Behaviour management in school had a significant impact on children's perceptions of what made them feel safe. Children valued clear behaviour expectations and were able to recall whole school behaviour expectations. It appeared that knowledge of the consequences of their actions led to a reduction of specific behaviours by the children in the study and their peers. In addition

rewards and sanctions were clearly valued and made children feel safe. It would appear that clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour led to fewer instances of inappropriate behaviour that make pupils feel unsafe. The findings of the present study would suggest that a consistent approach to behaviour management, including clear behaviour expectations and implementation of rewards and sanctions, makes children feel safe. Indeed a number of schools mentioned reviewing their behaviour policies and practice as a result of PM4B.

Charlton et al. (2004) found that when behaviour was poor teachers' management skills were challenged and pupils' learning was disrupted. The present study reinforced the findings of Charlton, with staff reporting that there were more opportunities to teach and engage pupils as result of targeting behaviour through PM4B. Similarly pupils reported that poor behaviour interrupted their learning and meant that they were unable to listen to the teacher.

7.1.3 Safe places

Children had places that they identified as 'safe' and they went to when feeling unsafe. Common characteristics emerged about 'safe places'. Children felt that some pupils required regular and consistent access to their safe place in order to maintain their feelings of safety. Some pupils reported accessing their 'safe place' on a daily basis and for a number of purposes.

Some spaces were allocated for the purpose of working with specific children or small groups. School staff reported using funding to change physical features and in some instances create specific spaces for children. Ten children during interviews reported feeling safe in places that been designed away from the classroom, such as the family room or nurture room. Other children revealed that they felt safe in their classroom, which is consistent with Cowie and Oztug (2008). In the present study, this was further supported through the drawings produced by eight children who drew their classrooms.

Although there were differences in where pupils felt safe, there were also common characteristics of a safe place. These were the presence of an adult and the opportunity to get away from any sources of stress or irritation which caused them

to feel unsafe. Thus safe places were perceived to have a therapeutic function to soothe. For others such places were used regularly to help develop skills in those areas that they ordinarily found difficult, such as social skills and anger management, both of which develop emotional literacy. If schools are to provide safe spaces for pupils it is important that practitioners understand why such spaces are perceived as 'safe' by children and their function in maintaining and promoting feelings of safety and emotional well-being.

7.1.4 The playground

Children felt that the playground could be a safe place that provided access to a variety of games and had visible support staff. In schools that were perceived to be safe, staff engaged pupils in games and supported their play. For children who would not ordinarily be able to engage with their peers, the use of staff to facilitate games was an informal way to develop social skills and build peer relationships. Safe play was a positive factor for children, thus opportunities to play games that did not involve them getting physically hurt were valued. In addition to the physical aspect of safety, games supervised by play leaders allowed children to learn the rules of games they would not otherwise join in.

Similarly staff reported that, having identified lunchtime as a key time for challenging behaviour, funding was used for lunch- and break times. Funding was used to employ and train lunchtime staff and develop the playground. Schools reported variation in how staff were used and the way the playground was developed. In some schools this involved physical change or opportunities to play. In all schools, however, the main objective was to improve playground conditions and to engage pupils at lunchtime. It would appear that, in PM4B schools, engaging pupils at lunchtime was an effective way of making them feel safe; this was supported by pupils reporting that lack of structured games and activities made them feel unsafe. The findings support those of Murphy et al. (1983) who reported a reduction in disputes by more than half following the introduction of playground games.

The playground is a place in which children spend a significant amount of time. Thus practitioners need to ensure that children feel safe there. The present study

suggests this can be achieved by providing children with opportunities for safe play and with adequate resources, including play equipment, games and skilled supervisors. The present study supports existing research emphasising the importance of the role of the playground in making children safe.

7.1.5 Learning and the school curriculum

The school curriculum on offer made children feel safe in the present study. Similarly schools reported a relationship between challenging behaviour and learning issues. They reported that children with challenging behaviour experienced difficulties accessing mainstream learning. Thus the present study supports the findings of Hayden (1997), who reported that pupils with special educational needs are over-represented in exclusion statistics. Schools in the present study reported using funding to provide support for learning; conversely children reported that safe places included those places that they were able to access when learning in class became difficult. The findings of the present study together with Hayden's study have implications for the way in which EPs work with schools. This would suggest that EPs can support schools in development of inclusive practice. There also appears to be a role for supporting the development of spaces away from the classroom that children can access when learning becomes overwhelming. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are over represented in exclusion figures, thus EPs are in a position to reduce instances of poor behaviour and exclusion whilst also supporting the emotional needs of children.

Cowie and Oztug (2008) recommended improving and varying activities in schools to make pupils feel safe. Wright et al. (2000) further argue that schools focusing only on academic attainment isolate and alienate low attaining pupils. Both of these findings are supported by the present study. In the present study, pupils' perceptions were that access to extracurricular clubs made them feel safe. There was no specific club mentioned that schools put in place which appeared to make children feel safe, however, children felt safe when a range of activities was available to them.

In addition schools reported supporting learning by providing an alternative individualised curriculum for some pupils. For other pupils more general small group support was made available. Schools were able to identify and minimise the barriers to learning. They increased the participation of pupils with challenging behaviour by providing resources that supported their achievement. The findings from pupil and staff interviews support the notion that supporting children's learning makes them feel safe.

7.1.6 Interventions and targeted emotional support

Children reported feeling safe as a result of support that targeted their emotional well-being. For some pupils this was generally available through whole class development, such as circle time. For other children this support was individual and specific to them. In one instance, a child described feeling safe as a result of being able to meet with a counsellor who supported him when his grandparents moved away.

Similarly staff interviews revealed that schools identified high levels of emotional need in school and used funding to support this. This was achieved in a number of ways including curriculum provision, staff employment and training. It was also achieved by implementing interventions that specifically built pupils' resilience, self-esteem and emotional literacy, and promoted reflection and self awareness. These findings support the pupils' perceptions that in order to feel safe schools need to support the emotional well-being of pupils. The findings also support the findings of McClean (1987) who found that schools with child-centred ideologies made allowances for children experiencing distress.

Children reported that circle time made them feel safe, further supporting the association between feeling safe and continued opportunities to develop emotional well-being. This is particularly evident in that circle time boosts interpersonal skills, strengthens relationships and enhances self-confidence. Through its co-operative activities and discussion, circle time ensures that each child has a chance to contribute, be listened to and feel valued, all of which the present study identified as the opportunities provided by adults that children perceived made them feel safe.

Specific interventions were valued by staff, including social skills groups, anger management and counselling. Social skills groups were mentioned six times by pupils in interviews and counselling was mentioned four times. Anger management was not mentioned at all during interviews, however seven of the eleven PM4B schools used it as an intervention, thus it seems that there are differences between pupils and staff in the value placed upon intervention. However there was agreement about the value of some interventions. Nurture rooms were particularly valued by staff because of the positive impact they had. This was supported by pupils who mentioned nurture groups twenty times during interviews.

There were no specific interventions that were put in place by all of the schools or which were common to schools that successfully reduced fixed-term exclusions or unauthorised absence. This is similar to Hallam and Castle (2001), who found that single interventions were not effective unless specific conditions were met. Schools reported finding it beneficial to use interventions in various ways and as appropriate. This included planned intervention for those children that required it and putting flexible intervention in place to target crises. Similarly pupil interviews suggested that safe places were those places in which pupils accessed interventions. Both pupils and staff perceived that children felt safe when their emotional needs were met.

7.1.7 Security and the local community

In addition to the factors already mentioned, children's perceptions of the physical security of the school determined their feelings of safety. Children felt safe in those schools that they perceived protected them from external harm. This included high visibility measures such as large gates, walls and other structures that kept the school contained and impenetrable from the outside.

McManus (1995) found that exclusion rates were highest in those areas that were socially deprived or socio-economically disadvantaged. This too was reflected in the exclusion data in the present study. The demographics of the local community and schools indicate that the sample was taken from a population that was socio-economically disadvantaged. Mijanovich and Weitzman (2003) found that

participants living in socio-economically advantaged neighbourhoods were at least risk of feeling unsafe. The present study thus adds credence to their findings, since the local community determined children's feelings of safety and children reported that the local community made them feel unsafe. Children's perceptions were that outside agency involvement was needed to make the local community safer. For some children this meant that the police should get involved in incidents that occurred in or around school. In the children's opinion, the knowledge that such support was available would make them feel safe.

7.2 What makes children feel unsafe?

Cowie and Oztug (2008) raised concerns about the need to find out what makes children feel unsafe. In their study, 70 percent of their sample had no answer to why they felt unsafe. The findings of the present study found the following areas made children feel unsafe:

7.2.1 Behaviour of peers

Poor behaviour of other children can make children feel unsafe. Many researchers such as Luiselli et al. (2005) and Cowie and Oztug (2008) highlight the issue of bullying in school. Although the children in this study were aware of the consequences of bullying in school, unlike the findings of Cowie and Oztug (2008), they did not mention bullying as a factor that made them feel unsafe. However, this may have been because of the clear consequences for pupils that engaged in such behaviour in the schools studied.

In the present study a number of children in the study referred to observing behaviour by other pupils that disrupted their learning. Disruptions to learning included excessive noise, not listening to the class teacher and individual children being generally uncooperative and talking back to the teacher. It was evident that some children had felt unsafe as a result of this behaviour. Other behaviours that were also referred to less frequently were children fighting with one another. These descriptions of observed behaviour by the children in the present study

mirror the disruptive and non-compliant behaviours that are often reported by schools (Luiselli et al., 2005).

Definitions of safe schools by Mabie (2003) and Duke (2002) refer to places free from intimidation, violence and fear, in which teachers can teach and children can learn in environments characterised by encouragement and warmth. This would suggest that some of the behaviours reported by pupils in the present study would cause pupils to feel unsafe, however, other factors mediated whether behaviour caused pupils to feel unsafe.

In one school children mentioned two specific pupils who were constantly disruptive, yet children felt safe in their company. Children described how these children were consistently given 'oh-dears' (sanctions) when they were non-compliant. The researcher was able to identify the pupils as she observed further discussion by the children about these pupils, both having had a high level of emotional need as a result of complex backgrounds including domestic violence, divorce and abandonment (attachment).

The findings of the present study suggest that the behaviour of other pupils can make children feel unsafe. However, there was a general consensus that some pupils 'couldn't help it', and if sanctions were used consistently applied to them, children did not feel unsafe. This would confirm the findings of Luiselli et al. (2005) that the establishment of effective discipline practices is critical to provide a safe learning environment. The children clearly felt safe because of the reinforcement of sanctions for negative behaviour. The findings suggested that children empathised and felt safe with children who were disruptive if they knew something about their personal circumstances or understood their behaviour was not intentional. This is not to suggest that schools discuss the personal circumstances of pupils with their peers, nor was it the case in the present study. However, it was evident that children felt safe if they understood behaviour was not malicious but caused by a particular issue beyond the child's control.

7.2.2 Adults

Adults' behaviour was a factor that determined children's feelings of safety: adults shouting made children feel unsafe. However, not all adults in school made children feel safe, just specific adults made children feel unsafe. It should be noted that these adults did not make all children feel unsafe. Indeed other children named these staff members as making them feel safe and having the characteristics that had been identified earlier in this chapter as making children feel safe (i.e., empathy, experience, positive personality characteristics). The individual preferences and perceptions of safety appeared to be attributable to pupils' personal interests, therefore whilst the games leader made one child feel safe another child found this adult 'scary'.

Some schools reported difficulties with recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled staff. This would support the pupils' perceptions that staff who make pupils feel safe are those who have particular characteristics. It is understandable that children will feel safe around those adults who share their interests and, as with curriculum provision, children will engage with what they can relate to. In the present study, schools employed a range of staff which meant that pupils could identify with someone who reflected their own interests and made them feel safe. Being shouted at made children feel unsafe and was a recurring point of discussion in each of the pupil interviews and was also raised by some staff. In their employment, staff are not permitted to shout at one another and such behaviour in the workplace would be deemed unacceptable and could lead to disciplinary action. The use of such strategies is also not suitable for use with children. However, schools need to consider what drives staff to use such strategies by monitoring behaviour and then using the outcomes to support staff. Strategies could include behaviour management, effective differentiation and alternate strategies to engage all pupils.

7.2.3 The playground

The playground was named as an area that could make children feel unsafe, supporting the findings of Cowie and Oztug (2008). However some of their other findings with regard to unsafe places were not consistent with these findings of

the present study. These include the finding by Cowie and Oztug that toilets, corridors/stairs and other places where there was movement between lessons and journeys to school caused pupils to feel unsafe. This difference in findings may be attributable to the different samples used. The sample from the Cowie and Oztug study comprised adolescents in secondary school who had opportunities to go to school alone and are required to move from lesson to lesson or between upper and lower schools. This was not the case in the present study as the sample were primary aged children who receive all their lessons in one classroom and would go to and from school with a parent or carer.

Children reported that lack of activities and unstructured games in the playground made them feel unsafe. This was particularly pertinent in those schools where children were able to compare and contrast changes that had taken place in the school outdoor area. The findings indicated that pupils felt unsafe prior to redevelopment of their playground and the provision of activities and/or trained play leaders.

7.2.4 School security and the local community

When children were discussing what made them feel safe, a number of children revealed that lack of security in school made them feel unsafe. There were fears about insufficient security that could lead to potential break-ins or attacks from people outside the school community. Similar to Cowie and Oztug (2008), pupils referred to feeling unsafe as a result of the possibility of intruders or strangers coming into school.

In the present study, children identified fire as something that made them feel unsafe. Although none of the schools had previously had a fire it would appear that the drills and vigilance that had been taught to pupils led to the perception that fire was a threat to their safety. The findings of the present study would suggest that schools and fire safety professionals have achieved their aim since children were vigilant and did understand the threat to their safety associated with fire.

Children felt that the local community was unsafe, reinforcing the findings of the studies carried out by the Authority (The Tell Us survey (2007) and Being Young in [the Authority] (2006)). The findings of the present study support some of the findings of Kitsantas et al. (2004), whereby children felt the local community was unsafe and this determined feelings of safety in the school environment. Kitsantas et al. (2004) found that students bring behaviours into the school community from their communities. This study has also found that children discuss events that happen in the local community and this determines their feelings of safety.

7.2.5 Impact of the project on attendance and fixed-term exclusion figures

The impact of PM4B on attendance and exclusions was variable. Statistical analyses revealed no significant reductions in unauthorised absence or exclusions. Some schools saw reductions in unauthorised absence and exclusions, whilst some schools had increases in unauthorised absence and exclusions. The findings of the present study are similar to those found by Hallam, Castle and Rogers (2005) in the evaluation of BIP, who found no statistically significant changes for fixed-term exclusions at primary school. There are generally lower levels of exclusion in primary school than secondary school.

Researchers assert that exclusion figures are frequently used to assess behaviour as there are no other measures. In the present study although there was no overall significant decreases in exclusions, the perceptions of staff and pupils elicited indicate that the project was successful in improving behaviour and making children feel safe. Researchers have long argued that exclusion figures should be used cautiously in the light of the varying practice among schools (Stirling 1996; Munn et al., 2001).

It is important that the initiatives and activities that pupils named as making them feel safe correlated with those introduced by schools to reduce exclusions. Schools which enhanced children's feelings of safety and reduced exclusions had some commonalities. The schools which successfully reduced the incidence of exclusion spent funding on key worker systems, which worked by identifying the

individual needs of pupils. They employed and trained additional staff. Similarly children reported that the presence of adults made them feel safe.

These schools also developed their curriculum and provided lunchtime activities. This supports the findings of Munn et al. (2001), who found that low-excluding schools recognised the importance of providing pupils with maximum opportunities to experience success, offering an informal curriculum of clubs and societies in addition to the academic curriculum.

Although there were no statistically significant decreases in the number of fixed-term exclusions, the present study has identified common factors between low-excluding schools that enhance pupils feelings of safety. This would suggest that interventions that make children feel safe contribute to the success of reducing exclusion and unauthorised absence.

7. 3 Processes affecting the implementation of PM4B

Staff and pupil reports indicate that the project facilitated children's feelings of safety and that it benefited all pupils in the school. School staff reported common processes that facilitated the implementation of PM4B. Schools felt that the use of action plans helped staff to focus and decide how to use the funding.

Generally it was felt that PM4B was part of a process of change that led to positive changes in school systems and behaviour. Schools that benefited from PM4B and perceived it to be beneficial were those schools that had effective school systems which enabled them to execute their projects consistently. Effective systems were those in which schools reviewed all policies including behaviour and involved all staff, including midday supervisors and members of the senior management team. Staff also shared practice and communicated with one another regularly. In some schools, keyworker systems were set up. This meant that children at risk of challenging behaviour and/or exclusion were continuously monitored and supported. Within successful systems the necessity for a positive school ethos was conveyed to pupils.

Additionally, schools that perceived their projects to be successful were those that made changes led by the needs of the cohort. The present study supports the findings of Hallam and Castle (2001), who found that amongst other things projects that were most effective were those that were implemented with the full commitment of school management and involved the whole school. The findings of the study also led them to recommend that schools encourage the consistent use of school behaviour policies, rewards and sanctions, and shared practice amongst colleagues in schools and across schools. These findings are consistent with the findings of the present study.

7.4 Limitations of the study

There is no reason to suppose that children's perceptions of what makes them safe in the present study would not be replicated in another study, particularly in the light of the capability of the children to articulate their thought processes. The pupils were all clearly capable of reflecting critically on their perceptions of safety and what made them feel safe. The use of an accumulative approach such as triangulation to cross check data from multiple sources and to search for regularities in the data was a strength of the study. This was achieved by eliciting staff and pupil perspectives of safety, and using exclusion, attendance data and drawings. However, the limitations of the methodology should be taken into account.

The interview data was based on self report, and therefore may have been subject to social desirability bias (Fowler 1995), whereby respondents over-report or under-report. Schmitt (1989) argues that the sole use of self-report measures is an unacceptable methodology. However, the extent to which studies based solely on self reports affect research conclusions is debated. Indeed, Spector (1987) concludes that there is little evidence of this being problematic in studies. In addition the researcher assured the respondents that their responses would be confidential. The researcher attempted to address this by not using self-report measures as the sole form of methodology. Thus a range of data including fixed term exclusions and absence were collected. However, the researcher duly notes that research participants, particularly children, may have felt inclined to respond

in a way that they perceived the researcher wanted them to. Thus, they may have under-reported behaviours deemed inappropriate by researchers, such as bullying, and over-reported behaviours viewed as appropriate in the context of the study.

Similarly the researcher acknowledges that adult research participants may have felt inclined to over-report the positive elements of PM4B because they had received funding to participate in the project.

Another limitation of the study was the small size of the sample. This was affected by a number of things including staff sickness. The size of the sample has implications of how generalisable the findings are. Similarly the lack of a control group raises issues of generalisability, however, the researcher asserts that the use of a control group was not viable in light of the lack of reward or incentive for a control school. Some schools in the project had been funded by behaviour projects and this may have had a positive impact on their attendance and exclusion figures. However, at least one school which had decreases in exclusion figures had not previously received funding from other projects.

It may be suggested that the use of case study is a limitation. Academics argue that this method lacks rigour and is inferior to rigorous methods where there are more explicit guidelines for the collection and analysis of data. The central arguments against using case studies are that researchers disagree about the definition and purpose of carrying out case studies. Case studies have been regarded as a design by some (Cook and Campbell, 1979), as a qualitative methodology by some (Cassell and Symon, 1994), and as a research strategy by others (Yin, 1989). However, in the present study the researcher was very clear about the interpretation and purpose of the case study. Case studies were used to explore the relationship between the implementation of PM4B from the perspectives of children and staff and the initiatives in place in relation to feeling safe.

With regard to ethical consent, the researcher noted that the informed consent of child participants was elicited and the children were perceived to be competent according to the definition of 'Gilllick' competency.

Informed consent is defined by Broome and Stieglitz (1992) as:

> A process between subject and researcher involving disclosure, discussion and a complete understanding of a proposed research activity, and which culminates in the individual freely expressing a desire to participate.
> (pp. 147-52).

This concept of consent in itself has limitations, in that it assumes that the child is competent to engage in such a process. Furthermore there are numerous problems associated with deciding if a child should be considered competent, 'Gillick competent', partially autonomous or wholly autonomous.

Whilst the researcher made it clear that participants could withdraw from the process at any time, and was vigilant for signs of discomfort and the pre-agreed withdrawal signal, there were potential difficulties with consent during the interview stage. Broome and Stieglitz (1992) argue that consent should be an ongoing process in the research. Thus consent should not only be obtained at the start of the study, but there should be continuous renegotiation during the interviews. Furthermore Broome and Stieglitz argue that children may find it difficult to withdraw as they view the researcher as an expert and an authority figure. They may also be concerned that they will suffer negative consequences if they withdraw.

In addition to asking for the children's consent, the researcher also sought consent from the parents for their children to participate in the study. This was done to safeguard and protect the children's interests and integrity. However, it could be argued that the consent letter in appendix five appears to inform parents rather than request their consent for their child's participation. Whilst the letter does inform parents of the purpose of the study, it does not discuss potential harm, right to withdraw, potential benefits or procedures. Such information is crucial if parents are to make informed decisions about their children's participation in the study. The letter does however invite parents to contact the researcher if they do not wish their child to participate in the study. However, this invitation to contact the researcher assumes that the parent has the competency to act in the best interests of their child and that they have knowledge about research and the consequences and potential harm that can arise as a result of engaging in research.

The researcher recognises that 'consent' is normally reserved for competent participants and the problems associated with its use in the present study. 'Assent' is used for approvals from less than competent participants, such as children. The notion of 'assent' may have been more appropriate in the present study in the light of differing opinions on competency. 'Assent' is a moral requirement to acquire the closest approximation of consent one can achieve within the child's capacity to understand. The use of such a term does not make the assumption that children are mentally capable of understanding the nature and purpose of what is intended nor that they understand the possible outcomes and consequences of participation. This however is the assumption with 'consent'.

The present study evaluated PM4B. Although it did not use a traditional model, which would have used a control group, the effectiveness of PM4B was judged on the statistical analysis of overall differences in exclusion and attendance data before and after PM4B, and staff perceptions. Pawson and Tilley (1997) have been critical of such approaches and advocate an approach to evaluation called 'realistic evaluation'.

Pawson and Tilley argue that realistic evaluation is strongly influenced by people, and that people are a critical factor in any intervention in a social context and that it is the people that cause the programme to work, not the programme itself.

Within realistic evaluation, those involved in implementing specific programme mechanisms are interviewed or observed to determine the impact of the programme. In the present study the researcher did interview the key users of PM4B – staff and pupils. The researcher does note, however, that the use of the realistic evaluation approach in the present study may have helped resolve some of the issues associated with evaluation.

From a professional practice perspective, EPs have historically used drawings as part of their work and it was important to the researcher to include them in the present study. The use of visual methodologies has been subject to criticism in the past, particularly with regard to the interpretation of them. It is commonly claimed that interpretation of drawings is subjective and ambiguous (Guillemin, 2004), however in the present study this was eliminated by asking the pupils to record their interpretation of their own picture. The use of drawings in the present

study was twofold in that it engaged the children and relaxed them and also provided rich and important information on children's perspectives of what makes them feel safe.

The use of drawings in social science has largely been used only with children. Indeed there is a lack of studies using drawings with adult participants. This may be for a number of reasons, including the perception that drawings are most appropriate for those who are unable to express their perceptions orally or in writing, such as children. In retrospect the researcher could have used drawings with the adults in the study, particularly as the use of drawings in the present study has supported the exploration of children's perspectives of what makes them feel safe in school.

The present study has developed the researcher's personal learning. The findings from the study will be used to develop the researcher's professional practice as an EP and to facilitate children's feelings of safety in schools. A number of methodological considerations had to be made and this required the acquisition of a new skills and knowledge base by the researcher. This included skills to design interview schedules and employ appropriate interview techniques. In particular there were a number of considerations that had to be made as a result of working with such a vulnerable group. There were, however, a number of constraints which included time and word limit of the thesis.

EPs are advocates for the voice of the child and in recent years the concept of pupil voice has developed by continuing to elicit pupil voice whilst using pupils as researchers. The University of Cambridge has developed a Student Participation Initiative called The Learning School Project, which has been advocated by key authors in the field such as MacBeath et al. (2004), Sutherland (2002) and Sutherland and Nishimura (2003). The project, involving six schools across three continents, worked by inviting senior students from each school in the network to move from school to school to conduct research over a ten-month period. In recent years the project has focused on a range of topics with the most recent being 'pupil voice and participation'. The effectiveness of the project suggests that future work researching children's perspectives of safety could be elicited by using pupils as researchers and participants.

In the future it would be useful to explore pupils' feelings of safety prior to their school's involvement in PM4B and afterwards, to monitor changes in feelings of safety. This is particularly crucial since the success of PM4B means that it will be rolled out to schools in September 2009. Similarly it would be useful to compare feelings of safety in control schools and PM4B schools. The benefit for participation for control schools would be the dissemination of the findings of the present study, which could be used to enhance pupil's feelings of safety.

7.5 Conclusions and key messages

The study suggests that the curriculum on offer is instrumental in enabling children to feel safe. The findings that access to extracurricular clubs makes children feel safe would suggest that there should be provision of a variety of activities in schools. These should reflect a range of interests and abilities, thus allowing all children irrespective of their learning ability a chance to participate in school life. As such schools should be encouraged to offer such provision.

The findings of the present study would suggest that schools should consult with pupils about their playground and what, if any, changes they would like to see. This is imperative in order that play areas are designed by and considered to be safe by their primary users. The Learning School Project and the present study highlight the need for this in redressing the power imbalance which still seems to marginalise students' voices and roles in decision making in schools (SooHoo, 1993). It was evident from those schools that spent money on training, such as providing training on games for lunchtime supervisors, that those schools saw improvements in the engagement and behaviour of children in the playground. Children also revealed that playtime activities and additional staff made them feel safe.

The findings of the present study would suggest that some children benefit from an additional space to go to if they need to speak to an adult or need time alone. The study found that access was different for individual children. Depending on their level of emotional need, some children needed few opportunities for support i.e., a form of drop-in place, whereas some children needed continued and regular opportunities to develop skills that develop their emotional literacy through anger

management and social skills work. For other children with less demanding emotional need, the classroom is appropriate. Indeed, in the present study children reported feeling safe in their classrooms.

EPs work with children with a range of difficulties including social communication difficulties and other factors that make social interaction difficult. In the present study, children reported that other children, their friends, made them feel safe. Thus friendships are a mediating factor with regard to children's feelings of safety. The present study would suggest that children who are unable to develop friendships are at risk of feeling particularly vulnerable and unsafe, as friendships are perceived as a mechanism to keep children feeling safe. Thus EPs have an important role in helping schools facilitate children's feelings of safety. In some instances, schools will require support from EPs to train staff or personally set up social skills groups or 'circles of friends'; an inclusive approach to support children experiencing social difficulties in school.

Children revealed that they felt safe in school, despite some of the challenging behaviour they witnessed. Many children mentioned the consequences and school sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. The children's observations that the lack of understanding of school rules by some staff led to manipulation and subsequent feelings of being unsafe is important. Clear procedures for ensuring that all agency and non-permanent members of staff are made aware of school rules should be implemented.

Staff felt pupils' behaviour affected their ability to teach effectively. This was supported by children's perceptions that poor behaviour impeded their learning. Behaviour was facilitated in the PM4B schools by employing and training staff and in some schools by the creation of nurture groups and specific spaces to support those pupils that needed it. Following PM4B, staff commented positively on the additional support and how it relieved pressure and maximised opportunities for learning. Teaching and learning is deemed to be the crux of the teacher's role, however the present study highlights the importance of management of children's behaviour, particularly as it facilitates children's learning and opportunities for teachers to teach.

The present study found commonalities in project implementation between schools which were able to reduce exclusions and schools which pupils reported made them feel safe. These were; keyworker systems, and employment and training of additional staff. Similarly children reported that curriculum development, lunchtime activities and the presence of adults made them feel safe. The study has identified practise that reduces exclusions and makes children feel safe in schools.

The present study supports the findings of Kitsantas et al. (2004), and highlights the impact of community safety on children's perceptions of what makes them feel safe in school. The researcher agrees that if students are to have the perception that their school is safe they also need to perceive their local community as safe. The outcome of previous local Authority research suggests there is clearly a role for the continued joint work of the whole community to ensure school safety and perceptions of school safety. However, this needs to be taken a step further to ensure that this work is carried out within schools, as they are the main stakeholders.

7.6 Summary

Children's perceptions of what made them feel safe were adults and other children. The behaviour of peers and behaviour management also determined feelings of safety. In particular, children regarded rewards and sanctions and clear behaviour expectations positively. The employment of staff with appropriate skills and characteristics appeared to be of importance. Similarly, staff perceptions would suggest that in order for children to feel safe within school, amongst other things, there needs to be good behaviour management and employment of staff. Staff perceived that PM4B had enhanced pupils' feelings of safety. Effective school systems facilitated the implementation of the project. The present study did identify a relationship between the implementation of PM4B from the perspectives of children, staff and the initiatives in place, in relation to feeling safe. An exploration of funding in relation to attendance and fixed-term exclusions revealed relationships between children's feelings of safety, exclusion and unauthorised absence.

Promoting children's feelings of safety is of paramount importance particularly in light of the positive association of being safe. For particularly vulnerable pupils who have had traumatic experiences, feeling safe is a way in which to overcome personal difficulties and build resilience. Whilst schools support all pupils' emotional well-being through the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning curriculum and PSHE, the findings of the present study would suggest that schools also need to provide additional specific and targeted emotional support, particularly for those pupils who display challenging behaviour. With their detailed understanding of children's emotional, social and behavioural development, EPs have a key role to play in supporting schools.

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Appendix One: Pupil Interview Schedules

Pilot Children's Interview Schedule

This is a semi-structured interview for use with children to determine the impact of PM4B on their feelings of safety.

The purpose of the interviews is to determine what helps make children feel safe in school, and consider the impact of the changes brought about by PM4B on their feelings of safety.

The questions asked in the semi-structured interview may have to be modified for some children depending on their age and language comprehension.

Children will be interviewed in small groups and all children asked to take part in the interview will be told the following:

I am going to ask you some questions about the things that make you feel safe at school.

The interview will be recorded so that I do not miss anything you say, but nobody will know who said what, so don't feel shy or embarrassed to say what you think.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please let me know using this signal (get children to agree on a signal).

---

1. What does safe mean?
2. Do children feel safe in your school?
3. Do you feel safe in school? (Ask only if not answered in Q2)
4. What sorts of things do you think can make children feel scared in school?
5. What do children do if they don't feel safe at school? Is there anyone to help them?
6. Do children tell someone if they don't feel safe?
7. What do you think schools can do to make schools a safer place?
8. What things have happened at your school to make children feel safe?
9. Can you draw a picture of X?

Children's Interview Schedule

This is a semi-structured interview for use with children to determine the impact of PM4B on their feelings of safety.

The purpose of the interviews are to determine what helps make the children feel safe in school, and consider the impact of the changes brought about by PM4B on their feelings of safety.

The questions asked in the semi-structured interview may have to be modified for some children depending on their age and language comprehension.

Children will be interviewed in small groups and all children asked to take part in the interview will be told the following:

I am going to ask you some questions about the things that make you feel safe at school. While I ask you the questions do you think you could draw me a safe place in school?

The interview will be recorded so that we do not miss anything you say, but nobody will know who said what, so don't feel shy or embarrassed to say what you think.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please let me know using this signal (get children to agree on a signal).

---

1. What does safe mean?
2. Can you tell me where you feel safe in school?
3. Do other children feel safe in your school?
4. What makes it safe in school? (Ask only if not answered in Q2)
5. Are there things that don't make you feel safe in school? Can you give me an example?
6. What do you do if they don't feel safe at school? Is there anyone to help you?
7. Is there anything that the school could do to make it a safer place for you?
8. Is there anything else you want to say about feeling safe?
9. Can you tell me about your picture?

Appendix Two: Staff Interview Schedules

Pilot staff interview schedule

This is a semi-structured interview for use with school staff to determine their perspectives about PM4B and the factors that facilitated the process.

The questions asked in the semi-structured interview may have to be modified for some staff depending on their involvement in the budget process.

All staff asked to take part in the interview will be told the following:

I am going to ask you some questions about your school's involvement in the Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B). The questions that you are being asked today will be used alongside other data to determine how effective the PM4B process was and make it easier for other schools who will undertake the process.

The interview will be recorded so that I do not miss anything you say. This information will not be identified as your personal perspective, but will be used alongside other interviews that are being carried out.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please indicate. This interview will be transcribed and transcripts will be kept securely.

---

1. What did you have to do get PM4B funding? Were there any ongoing requirements that you had to fulfil in order to keep the funding?

2. Tell me about the termly reviews of action plans and the audits and questionnaires you had to complete (if they don't refer to them in Q1).

3. How did you feel about those requirements?

4. What would have made the completion of the paperwork easier?

5. How did your school use the PM4B funding?

6. What impact did the funding have on the behaviour and exclusion in school overall?

7. What impact did PM4B have on the children's feelings of safety? How do you know this?

8. What impact did PM4B have on staff confidence in managing behaviour?

9. Were any staff more involved in the PM4B process than others?

10. What support did the school receive from the local authority?

11. Is there anything that you feel would have made the process easier?

Staff interview schedule

This is a semi-structured interview for use with school staff to determine their perspectives about PM4B, and the factors that facilitated the process.

The questions asked in the semi structured interview may have to be modified for some staff depending on their involvement in the budget process.

All staff asked to take part in the interview will be told the following:

I am going to ask you some questions about your schools involvement in the Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B). The questions that you are being asked today will be used alongside other data to determine how effective the PM4B process was and make it easier for other schools who will undertake the process.

The interview will be recorded so that I do not miss anything you say. This information will not be identified as your personal perspective, but will be used alongside other interviews that are being carried out.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please indicate. This interview will be transcribed and transcripts will be kept securely.

---

1. What has worked well for you following the project? (Can you give me an example?).

2. What would you say hasn't worked so well? (Can you give me an example?).

3. Are there any initiatives that have worked better than others?

4. What impact did PM4B have on the children's feelings of safety? How do you know this?

5. What did you have to do get PM4B funding? Were there any ongoing requirements that you had to fulfil in order to keep the funding?

6. Tell me about the termly reviews of action plans and the audits and questionnaires you had to complete (if they don't refer to them).

7. How did you feel about those requirements?

8. What would have made the completion of the paperwork easier?

9. How did your school use the PM4B funding?

10. What impact did the funding have on the behaviour in school overall?

11. What impact did the funding have on the exclusion in school overall?

12. What impact did PM4B have on staff confidence in managing behaviour?

13. How might some staff members be more involved in the PM4B process than other staff?

14. What support did the school receive from the local authority?

15. Is there anything that you feel would have made the process easier?

Appendix Three: Pupil Interview Transcript

Children will be interviewed in small groups and all children asked to take part in the interview will be told the following:

I am going to ask you some questions about the things that make you feel safe at school. While I ask you the questions do you think you could draw me a safe place in school?

Child 1: Somewhere like a room?

Researcher: Anywhere it could be ...

Child 1: Like in the school?

Researcher: It could be in school, it could be people that you feel safe with.

The interview will be recorded so that I do not miss anything you say, but nobody will know who said what, so don't feel shy or embarrassed to say what you think.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please let me know.

Pupil Transcript – WS110016

QUESTIONS

Researcher: What does safe mean?

Child 1: It means... To me it means where... safe is not just about physically safe, it can be safe as feeling safe, 'cos like say if you felt safe with someone 'cos someone's feelings are safe to you – and you knew they are here. Physically safe is when you are in danger of dying. That's physically but it has two kinds of meaning.

Child 2: Safe means that – I know that no-one is gonna do stuff to me or like very – I feel very good. I feel like on top of the world.

Child 3: Erm, it means like – basically the same as child 2.

Child 4: It means having someone to look after me.

Researcher: Can you tell me where you feel safe in school?

Child 1: I feel safe at school in the classroom.

Child 2: I feel safe when I know loads of people around me and everyone is watching me.

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Child 3: I feel safe in snowdrop – the one down there – no, my classroom is X. Snowdrop is – you know that corridor along… I go there; I'm going there this afternoon – me and some other people we stay there for the whole afternoon. We do circle time to help us and all what we done in our week. We communicate, we say stuff that we shouldn't have done or we should have, and we have PSP – which is like free time. I feel safe there 'cos we all like bunch together and there is only one girl and there is Ms X and Ms X, so that's where I feel safe.

Child 4: In the classroom.

Researcher: Do other children feel safe in your school?

All Children: Yeah.

Researcher: What makes it safe in school? (Ask only if not answered in Q2)

Child 1: The adults and all the people – even your friends make it safe.

Child 2: Yeah.

Child 1: They're always on watch for you and caring for you and thinking about you and so that's why it's safe.

Child 2: I do feel safe because the adults – mostly adults but some particular adults Ms X (Family worker) and Ms X – they make me feel more safe.

Child 3: The teachers, 'cos there are lots of teachers to look after you.

Child 4: Teachers as well.

Researcher: Are there things that don't make you feel safe in school. Can you give me an example?

Child 1: Yeah, like when we are all running about and we don't really look where we are going and it can be a little scary sometimes. I'm not saying I'm scared or anything but when you are coming around the corner and they are all running and they are all coming at you – and you are dodging out of the way that makes you feel a little unsafe and when people/teachers get angry and shout a bit after people say 'huh' and jump up because we are doing our work and if somebody behaves bad and they go 'stop doing that', shout, then we all go 'huh' like that, and we're scared a bit – but not physically – feeling wise – yes.

Child 2: Erm, is, like, when something happens to someone, yeah – not in school but outside school and then when you are in school, yeah – everyone is chatting about it and everyone is scared and it's just when you are coming out of school, something happened to someone like they got run over or something like that. That does make you scared.

Child 1: There was a boy in school – X – he was in Year 6 last year.

Child 2: It wasn't last year, two years ago.

Child 1: Two years ago, and he 'erm was coming… (It was a Sunday or Saturday wasn't it) He was coming on his bike down and was a car coming he got run over didn't he?

Child 2: No, the car hit the bike and it hit his head and he got brain dead.

Child 1: He was in hospital.

Child 3: He did die.

Child 1: No, he was alive.

Child 3: It was in the paper.

Child 1: He was alive wasn't he?

Child 4: Yeah.

Child 1: He came back to school and everything, don't you remember? He nearly died because he had a thing on his brain.

Researcher: But he is OK now and that is good to hear. Anything else about not feeling safe?

Child 4: Really like… I don't know.

Child 1: When we are doing sport – it's not physically dangerous but not scary either – a game where you don't want to hurt people but that's the meaning of the game – say rugby, for example. When that's on – the girls – not me in particular because I like rugby – I don't think the girls they feel safe because they are like [mimics fear].

Child 2: Not just the girls.

Child 1: Well some boys

Child 2: Some boys.

Researcher: What do you do if you don't feel safe at school/ is there anyone to help you?

Child 2: Just come here [Family room].

Child 1: Tell a teacher.

Child 2: Come here really – tell the teacher and then you stay here and do some stuff and you really do feel safe.

Researcher: What is it about this room that makes you feel safe?

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*Child 3: You are talking to adults and there is someone here and you have got…
sometimes… It's better to get more attention than other people so you come here
and you have a little chat.*

**Researcher: What is it about the adults makes you feel safe? What is it that
is special about these adults?**

Child 4: When they talk to you.

Child 3: They always understand you.

Child 1: Hmmm (affirms – agrees with Child 3).

*Child 1: I'm not being mean or anything but some teachers like, not Ms X (Head
Teacher) but Ms X, for example, and sometimes it is somebody else's fault but
like she doesn't know that because she wasn't there. I'm trying to talk and she
doesn't listen because she thinks it's me that done it but it actually wasn't. So
sometimes they don't listen to me when I'm trying to say something and I get a bit
angry.*

*Child 3: Yeah, but… there's like people, they don't know the story so they have to
put the story together.*

Child 1: All right but…

*Child 1: There's another thing we have started something with X. She is a bit like
a counsellor, I come up to her – do you?*

Child 2: I have done it once.

*Child 1: I come up to her and Tuesday – she is on holiday now but she will come
back. I go to her and she makes me feel safe yes. Cos she talks about the week
and all the stuff. 'Cos I had a problem and I… I will say it now – my grandma and
my grandpa left – in school it came playing into my mind and I wasn't focusing and
I told her and now I'm pretty OK – not forgot about 'em but it's better. I feel really
safe with her.*

**Researcher: Is there anything that the school could do to make it a safer
place for you?**

Child 4: Like if they didn't have a gate or that to get one.

*Child 3: Because like, get some staff in that you can talk to and make them some
rooms where you just can talk to them separately – like talk to an adult separately.*

*Child 1: Er, I think they should get a room – not physically build one – that would
be a lot of money, but say if there is a room that they don't use very often – they
should have it and then should have X (Counsellor) and they should have where
people if they are feeling unsafe/sad they can just come in and talk to them and
feel better. I think that is what they should have.*

Child 2: Some as X (Child 1)

Researcher: Is there anything different that has happened in school that made it look different? Anything changed around school?

Child 3: Yeah, these [points to uniform].

Child 4: Yeah, they used to be red.

Child 1: You know Snowdrop I told you about – that used to be a garage, they changed it and now they have put new flooring.

Researcher: Has anything happened outside in the playground?

Child 1: Yes when we last… it was about two years ago, na, three years ago.

Child 2: It was ages ago – we were in Year one and they were in Year two and we had to talk about what we wanted in this next new playground for when we come up to it. And it was like painting on the ground – like the mazes and the football pitches.

Child 1: Yeah, there wasn't any of that, it was just plain, plain like, you know, the floor on the playground – just hard core. It was just that – no painting. But then when we came I thought same old playground – but when I came over again I thought, 'Wow, two football pitches, a maze and wow like that they made it'.

Child 3: I've never been in the Year one, and two and reception and nursery when it happened but they have built in the playground – one's got a climbing frame and the other has a little step and a bit where they can play.

Child 4: It is so when it rains they can stay outside and they don't get wet.

Child 1: It's like… we have a field out there and they have both, a playground and a ramp which is grass. So I think they have a brilliant place outside.

Researcher: Is there anything else you want to say about feeling safe?

Child 3: Everyone should feel safe because this is a safe school and it's really good to be in a school like this – it's really, really nice to be in a school like this.

Child 4: It feels nice to feel safe.

Child 1: Erm, yes when you do feel safer – and it's not just safe in school – you feel good. When you know you have tried your best. When you do know that they reward you really good. Sometimes if you get loads of merits you get a postcard home saying well done. I forgot to say this – clubs make you feel safe as well, like gymnastics clubs I go to, cricket and netball and tennis, they make you feel safe as well. And the people that do it.

Researcher: Can you tell me about your picture?

Child 3: The classroom and the field.

Researcher: Is that where you feel safe?

Child 3: [nods head.]

Child 1: I'm drawing Ms X.

Child 2: I've drawn the playground.

Researcher: Is that where your feel safe?

Child 2: Yes.

Child 4: I've drawn the classroom.

Researcher: Is that where you feel safe?

Child 4: Yes.

Appendix Four: Staff Interview Transcript

I am going to ask you some questions about your school's involvement in the Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B). The questions that you are being asked today will be used alongside other data to determine how effective the PM4B process was and make it easier for other schools who will undertake the process.

The interview will be recorded so that we do not miss anything you say. This information will not be identified as your personal perspective, but will be used alongside other interviews that are being carried out.

If you want to stop the interview at any time please indicate. This interview will be transcribed and transcripts will be kept securely.

Researcher: What has worked well as a result of the project (Can you give me an example?)
Respondent: The funding enabled us to put in place a package of behaviour support for the children and that package included having a specific unit, if you like, in place so that children with behavioural difficulties who found perhaps being in a mainstream class difficult had a small nurture group to go to and we could actually provide that facility for them. So for me personally, I think, the success of this is that nurture group – being able to set that up. It's not a drop- in centre as such, we don't send our naughty children there; we actually use it for planned intervention with specific children and that's been the main success I think.

Researcher: What would you say hasn't worked so well (Can you give me an example?)
Respondent: Honestly, no. Because without that funding we won't really have been able to put that nurture provision in place, and actually has not just allowed us to put that nurture group in but has allowed us to put on social skills activities. It has allowed us to really focus on those specific children who really do find working in a large group of a class of 30 difficult for one reason or another. So I honestly can't find anything that has been negative about it.

Researcher: Are there things that you have put in place that have worked better than others?
Respondent: I think as a result of the nurture group we are in the process of looking at our whole behaviour policy. So that has also an impact on everybody in school, all the adults, in terms of their self-esteem and their kind of confidence in dealing with behavioural issues. So what it's impacted on is, yes, we have got our nurture group which is focussed on our most challenging children but actually it's filtered down. The class teachers are now dealing much more with the lower level behavioural incidents that happen and even those and some flash points we are finding that the senior leadership team are not called out to go out and deal with things very often now.

Researcher: What impact did PM4B have on the children's feelings of safety/ how do you know this?

Respondent: We have got some data that shows that when, before we had this provision in place, we did go through and we have been through quite a turbulent time in terms of a local primary school closing. We had a large influx of children so we did go through a very turbulent time, but we have got data that shows before we had the nurture provision children felt safe, since then the percentage of children that feel safe or very safe has gone up, so we are in the high 90s now.

Researcher: What did you have to do get PM4B funding/ were there any ongoing requirements that you had to fulfil in order to keep the funding?
Respondent: The requirement is that the funding is used for specific, a very specific thing, and we have to report on how we use the funding. We have to do an evaluation now because it has been running for a year, so that's the requirement, but we had to show very clearly how we were going to use the funding. It just couldn't disappear into a hole in the budget. So we had to put in an action plan. We had to do an audit beforehand. We had to do a survey of the pupils and parents and all of that fed into our action plan.

Researcher: How did you feel about those requirements (if they don't answer in question1/1a)
Respondent: I think something that might have made it easier is to think about the timings because obviously as a school we do always survey parents and schools – well we don't always do it at the same time, so I think we need to tie up surveys to do with specific initiatives with a general survey because I am in a position where I have just had this year – I did survey my parents in September. I also surveyed them at the end of December for Ofsted. We had other surveys that have gone out, to do with walking to school and doing a travel plan and things like that, and now I have to survey them again and it's, it can – parents can feel it's death by survey really. I think it's a question of looking at the whole picture so you are not keeping on. It did feel as if at one time I did send a survey every week for one thing or another.

Researcher: How did your school use the PM4B funding?
Respondent: It went on establishing that nurture group, so this year's funding is actually going to keep that going and to keep it established, because that is enabling us to keep going really. We already had the staff in place but the funding allowed us to keep those staff and to put money towards the actual building itself. It's a two-classroom mobile classroom that came in. We put that funding alongside our funding for our family room and now we have a whole unit where we have our family worker and together that really works well.

Researcher: What impact did the funding have on the behaviour in school overall? On the incidence of fixed-term exclusions, numbers of children at school action plus/number of children on reduced timetables
Respondent: It had a very positive impact. I think It's very measurable because what we have seen is fewer incidents where we've had incidents of fixed-term exclusions. So that is a measurable one. There are fewer major incidents in school that take up the time of the senior leadership team – as a result of looking at our behaviour policy we introduced a red and amber policy card system and initially when that came in the… amber card is sent to a member of staff and they

know that teacher needs some support. Red card would come down to the office and I or the deputy or assistant Head would come down straight away to assist that teacher and remove that child from the class. Initially we were having three to four red card incidents a week. I can't remember the last time there was a red card incident. Probably about a month ago. I think that all goes to show that the level of incidents has come right down. I don't think there are fewer children at school action plus for behaviour, but what is happening is that they are being – the provision that we are making for those children is better. We have got a couple on a reduced timetable, one of whom is virtually full time and the other one we are slowly increasing his time, so yes we are not having any children going on a reduced time table but who we did have are coming into school more, as that definitely is as a result of funding. We have had the Ed Psych in and I expect this has actually confirmed our process and approach to this as being the right process for those children. It's actually reduced the number of days, it's also reduced the number of different children who are having fixed term exclusions. We still have a core number of children who have had one/two incidents of fixed term exclusions but those are for fewer days and there are less of them. So yes the number of fixed term exclusions has come down dramatically.

Researcher: What impact did PM4B have on staff confidence in managing behaviour?
Respondent: I think it's difficult to put it just down to PM4B because it's not just down to that. What its done is enabled staff to feel that they were supported in dealing with incidents of behaviour, so because we were able to put into place this planned intervention, we weren't fire fighting anymore, it was planned intervention. So staff felt that because it was planned intervention they were being much more supported and that has had an impact on how they deal with things. Therefore that has fed through to the children because staff feel less stressed about dealing with behavioural issues because the numbers are coming down, children therefore are more happier. It's like a cycle really. I think everybody feels much more comfortable and certainly as a school it is a much calmer place where there is much more quality learning going on now I think. It's enabling – I think teachers think/feel they can teach now without having to deal with lots and lots of behavioural incidents before they could start teaching.

Researcher: How might staff be more involved in the PM4B process than others?
Respondent: I don't think they were all as involved in the whole process but they were all informed and involved in the outcomes of it. I think that at the particular time when we were putting it into place the capacity for staff to become fully involved was quite low simply because they were dealing with lots and lots of incidents and they just didn't have the time. They wanted somebody to tell them what was going to happen to help solve the issues. Now that it's up and running and it's more in place now, staff are much more involved in what is happening and we have regular issues that come up we can discuss and things and we have weekly vulnerable children's meetings between – which involve myself, my deputy, my two family workers and my two BSAs, where we actually talk about all of the children who we feel are vulnerable. So staff can actually refer a child to our meeting if they have a concern for that child, so they are quite involved there, and then they get feedback on how we are going to deal with that – is it that we are going to involve family workers, is it that the child might access social skills groups…we have a breakfast mentoring session where children came in and we

have some one-to-one time. So from that point of view staff are much more involved now.

Researcher: What support did the school receive from the local authority?
Respondent: The support was available if you needed it at the end of a phone. We had regular meetings/review meetings with the head of behaviour and tuition and other members of the local authority which was very useful. We had support to fill in the forms in the beginning and conduct the audits. But I think having done all that you need to get to the position to put in place the initiatives that you have decided are right for your school. So I think the amount of support we have had and the amount of evaluations has been right. Because we have also had termly meetings with the Head of behaviour support and the rest of the behaviour team so we have had quite a lot of support available, and a lot of support in terms of talking to other Head Teachers about how it's been going and what they have done. I think generally that was the right level of support. If we needed more we could access more, but we didn't.

Researcher: Is there anything that you feel would have made the process easier?
Respondent: This is an initiative that I think is quite crucial and actually I think it should be rolled out to all schools because if we are going to go down to 5 area alliances (restructure of areas) where people can access things locally then I think that X authority – as everybody else does – has very challenging circumstances. Some of our families live in really deprived conditions. This initiative has allowed us as a school to really target those children that need it. If all schools had provision to do things like this, we would find there would be less pressure on places like x,x [behaviour provisions] and we need to get earlier with intervention. That's my opinion.

Appendix Five: Parent Consent Letter

Dear Parents

As you know you have been involved in a Local Authority initiative to prevent challenging behaviour and make schools a calm and happy environment where children can learn and feel safe.

Many of you completed questionnaires about how your child feels at school; these were used to understand how safe you think your child feels about school. We also asked your child to fill in a questionnaire in school.

In the next few weeks your child will be asked some questions in a small group to find out more about their feelings of safety in school, and the information will be used to ensure that we continue to make school a nicer place for your child.

If you have any questions or do not wish your child to participate in this study please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix Six: School Information Letter

Dear Colleague,

As part of your involvement in the Preventative Model for Behaviour (PM4B) you have collected a range of information that you have used to decide how to spend the funding you received to promote early intervention, prevent challenging behaviour escalating and to meet government initiatives on exclusion.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the model all schools will be invited to discuss the process and consider what facilitated it with Melernie Meheux, an Educational Psychologist in Training. Schools can choose from their Head Teacher and/or members of the senior management team to be interviewed. All interviews will be confidential and data will be used to support the next set of schools that will be involved in the model.

Please also choose six children that you feel will be suitable for an interview in a small group discussion about their feelings of safety in school.

Attached is a letter for parents explaining what will be involved and asking for parents to give their permission for their child to be involved.

If you have any questions please contact me.

Yours sincerely