Extra-curricular activities in English secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer participating students? How do they inform EP practice?

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

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Abstract

Research has indicated extra-curricular activities (ECAs) to be beneficial to those who participate in them. These potential benefits relate to students' academic, social and emotional and physical development. Despite the common occurrence of ECAs in English secondary schools, there is a lack of research in this specific area. Much of the existing literature appears to omit what motivates students, both in their participation and choice of ECAs.

This research, adopting a multi-informant approach, aimed to provide further insights into ECAs within the context of English secondary schools. The research aimed to provide greater clarity as to how school-based ECAs may be defined and their rationale. The research also aimed to provide further insight into their potential associated benefits and the motivation of students who choose to participate in them.

Forty-eight participants (20 students- aged 11-15, 14 parents, 10 ECA leaders and 4 senior leaders) across four schools, in a south-east England county, were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Each interview was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Fifteen main themes, which related to four research questions, emerged from the analysis.

The current findings indicated a wide variation in the availability, type and context of ECAs taking pace in English secondary schools. The findings also highlighted ECAs as potential environmental contexts to further support students' academic, personal, social and physical development, as well as influencing parent views. Students' participation in ECAs was found to be influenced by a range of factors- who was involved, individual differences, perceived associated benefits and individual features of the ECAs.

There were a number of implications for Educational Psychologists' (EPs) emerging from this research. These related to: EPs exploring students' learning and social, emotional and mental health in ECAs, EPs developing schools' awareness and understanding of school-based ECAs and EPs highlighting features of ECAs which help to create a positive learning environment.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I will outline a perceived problem which I believe, as the researcher, needs further exploration. This will be followed by my statement of the aims, rationale and justification of the research. I will then provide the reader with a discussion on the relevance of the current research, in relation to Educational Psychology Practice.

1.0.1 Points of reference for the reader

- I will provide a context to referenced literature when that literature is first cited. I hope this will avoid unnecessarily repeating methodological details.
- Some of the text within this thesis appears in *italics,* to convey emphasis of point to the reader.

1.1 Problem Statement

Many schools in England offer additional activities outside the formal curriculum. These are often called ECAs. There is some English-based evidence, mostly from undergraduate students, that engaging in such ECAs has, arguably, a number of associated impacts. The literature review (Chapter Two) will show that very little English-based research has been done in the context of secondary-schools, where nonetheless, it appears anecdotally, there are many ECAs.

ECAs are interesting because they potentially offer the opportunity for a range of different social interactions between teachers and students, their peers and others, which may have an impact on the students' experiences in school. The issue therefore arises, from an EP perspective, as to how this potential context for relational development actually works. What are ECAs? Why do schools offer them? What do students gain from participating in them? What are the motivations for students?

This study intends to investigate that gap in the literature (see Chapter Two), not only paying attention to the views of the providers and organisers of ECAs, but also the students who actually take part in them. This will represent a second novel element in this research. It is of significant importance that EPs engage with the relational, emotional and social understanding of students, in order to support students in doing their work. However, it could be said that EPs have a role which is greater than is envisioned at present.

1.2 Aims of the current research

This research aims to provide greater clarity as to how English secondary school-based ECAs may be defined. It also aims to understand schools' rationale overall for running ECAs. It is hoped the research will provide further insight into the potential benefits associated with school-based ECAs, acknowledging different stakeholders' perspectives – participating students, their parents and the schools. Finally, the research aims to provide new insight into what motivates English secondary-school aged students in their decision to participate in school-based ECAs.

1.3 Rationale and Justification of the current research

Over recent decades, there has arguably been a growing realisation that school education may have been too heavily focused on purely academic development. Consequently, it could be argued that this has been to the detriment of encouraging the development of strong positive social and emotional well-being among young people (YP) (Faupel, 2006). In terms of the proposed research, this might be reflected in the fact that the existing literature is largely focused on undergraduate students. Undergraduate students, as will be discussed later, represents late adolescence. Less attention, however, has been paid to students in early adolescence.

Research investigating ECAs, from an American context (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a, 2006b; Shulruf, 2010) and an English context (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson, Clark, Walker, & Whyatt, 2013), have long been interested in the relationship between adolescents' participation in these activities and the potential links with social outcomes, academic achievement and educational attainment. Such literature appears to indicate that participation in ECAs is a productive use of adolescents' leisure time, whilst providing distinct opportunities for growth and development. This includes growth beyond academic development alone. ECAs may arguably be the much needed answer to addressing the growing concern, previously stated, that schools are too focused on academic development.

Students attending UK schools are considered to have greater availability of ECAs when compared to other OECD countries (OECD, 2010, 2016). Indeed, the UK is considered to be one of the top countries in the world for offering its students opportunities to participate in ECAs. This could be partly explained by different government policies, which since the 1990s has placed greater demand on schools to offer additional opportunities to their students. Ofsted (2016) updated their school

inspection procedures and recommendations to include observations of ECAs in schools. Ofsted (2016) believe ECAs can enable students to extend their knowledge, understanding and to improve skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities.

Although ECAs appear to have a significant presence within the UK education system (OECD, 2010, 2016), little research has been carried out on ECAs within the context of English secondary schools. Indeed, the majority of research pertaining to ECAs and secondary-school aged students originates from outside of England, with a large collection of research predominantly originating from the United States of America (USA). This can thus undermine the generalisability of key findings, given the marked difference in the educational and social contexts between England and the USA. One such key contextual difference between the two relates to school set-up. Following the initial formative years of mandatory education, (that is primary education in England and elementary education in the USA), children in England progress to secondary school (11-18 years old), whereas their counterparts in the USA firstly attend middle school (11-14) before progressing to high school (14-18). Much of the research pertaining to ECAs within the USA has centred on students in high school. The data reflected within such findings is therefore, arguably relevant to the latter years of adolescence, as opposed to the earlier years, which the current research aims to explore further.

According to literature (Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, & Patton, 2018; UNICEF, 2011), individuals go through multiple stages of adolescence. Currie et al. (2004) views adolescence as a particularly vulnerable period in an individual's life. Adolescents can experience significant changes in biological, psychological and social behaviour. These changes can lead to compromises in an individual's ability to sustain or promote health-related outcomes. Behavioural changes may also indirectly influence an individual's capability to engage in learning and psychosocial development (Currie et al., 2004).

Given the arguably complex nature of adolescence, secondary school-aged students, whilst going through adolescence, may not be governed by the same motivational factors as undergraduates, i.e. using the opportunities of ECAs to enhance their career prospects. Also, the benefits which secondary school students may gain from ECA participation may differ from their university-aged counterparts, e.g. the development of social skills may be more prevalent amongst younger adolescents

whereas university students may have already mastered their social interaction with others. Students, who are of secondary-school age, are more likely to be influenced by their peers, as opposed to those who are of university age (UNICEF, 2011). One might argue this impacts YP's desire to form friendships as a result.

Of the little research undertaken within the UK context to date, studies exploring younger adolescents participation in ECAs is particularly lacking. Secondary school-aged students are of particular interest in the current research, not only due to the stage of adolescence in which they find themselves, but also with regards to their recent transition from primary education. This is a potentially vulnerable period for YP, as students seek to develop a sense of belonging within their new school, as well as develop social networks with their new fellow peers. For some of these students, participation in ECAs may have begun during their primary school years, e.g. a student being part of a school football club in primary school. It is, however, important to consider the potential stronger influence of parents during those primary years. Participation in secondary school-based ECAs is more likely to be determined by students' own personal choice, than that of their parents. Exploring the views and experiences of secondary school-aged adolescents, may therefore provide greater insights into what personally motivates them in taking part in school-based ECAs.

Due to the focus of UK literature on university students, there is a gap in research exploring the potential benefits of ECA participation, as well as those motivational factors encouraging secondary school students to participate in school-based ECAs. I believe the current research can contribute to closing this gap, by drawing on existing psychological theories to offer a new perspective. The potential new perspective may complement some of the existing theoretical frameworks which have been put forward to help our understanding of ECAs.

Whilst interest in ECAs has arguably been growing, in reviewing relevant literature (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a, 2006b; Greenbank, 2015; Hoffmann, 2006; Roulin & Bangerter, 2013; Shulruf, 2010), there appears to be a lack of clarity as to what constitutes as ECAs. Shulruf's (2010) meta-analysis (of pre-dominantly US-based literature) defined ECAs as those which are school-sponsored and external to the core curriculum. Whilst Shulruf (2010) provided a workable definition of ECAs, he also acknowledged the potential lack of consistency across existing literature, in relation to how ECAs were defined. In much of the pre-existing literature, researchers failed to present a definition of ECAs, despite claiming to investigate the potential

associated benefits. The lack of a clear definition and the lack of substantive English-based research on ECAs arguably highlights gaps within this field.

As interest in ECAs has developed, English-based research (Greenbank, 2015) has aimed to explore the motivation of undergraduates participating in ECAs. This research has found students' motivation to be linked with a desire to increase their own employability. The comparison between secondary school students and undergraduates is arguably different regarding their different stages of adolescence, as highlighted earlier (pages 11-12). One might tentatively question, therefore, whether the motivational factors can be linked or generalised between both.

1.4 Relevance to EP Practice

A key function in the role of EPs is to promote the academic and emotional development of children and young people (CYP) aged 0 – 25 (DfE/DoH, 2015). As a core function underpinning their work, EPs profess a number of important drivers in supporting YP: a) promoting a sense of inclusion; b) supporting positive social, emotional and mental health; c) promoting an opportunity for achievement and success; d) supporting the safety of students; e) promoting the opportunity for YP to meaningfully participate in society (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010).

My psychological stance, as a practitioner, has been influenced by my professional training at the Institute of Education. A key theoretical framework which underpins this specific Doctorate programme is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Eco-systemic Model (ESM). The ESM (see figure 1) acknowledges that understanding an individual is a complex process. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the environment (home, school and community) in which a person lives must be fully examined in order to fully understand that person. Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to such multiple environments as ecological systems. The ESM (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) has influenced my personal motivation, with regards to the current research, as I believe it is important to consider a child's development in a holistic way, taking into account the varying contexts in which YP live their lives.

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Eco-systemic Model

MACROSYSTEM
Attitudes and ideologies of the culture

EXOSYSTEM

MESOSYSTEM

MICROSYSTEM

Industry

Social services

Family   Peers

INDIVIDUAL
(sex, age,
health, etc.)

School   Church

Mass
media

Health services

Neighbors

Local politics
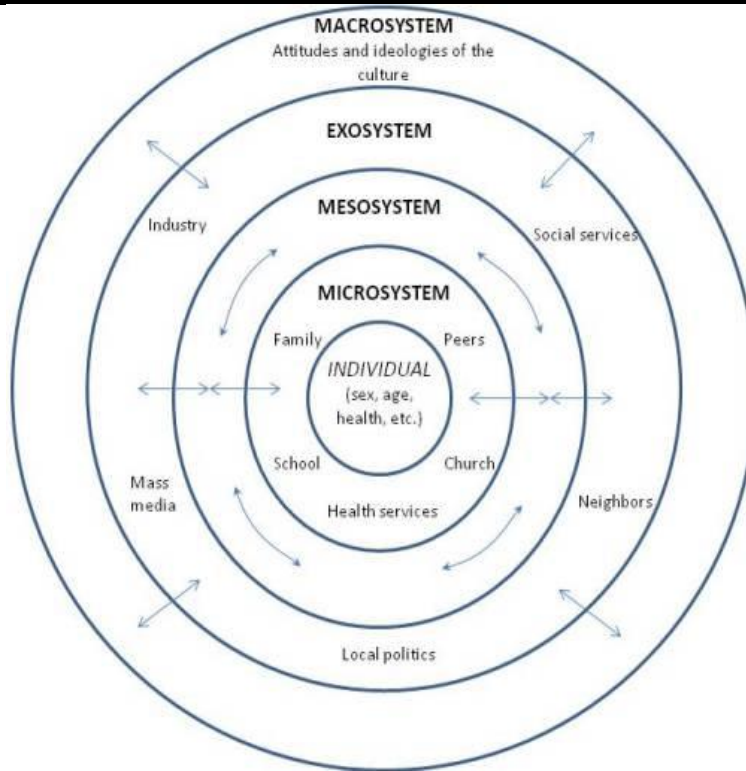
Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) argued for the profession of Educational Psychology to advance psychological knowledge in as many areas as possible. With this in mind, it is important to reflect on the range of contexts YP operate in*, including the various contexts within their school setting*. Previous US-based literature has considered the potential importance of ECAs as developmental contexts within the lives of YP (Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, 2004; Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003). ECAs are not isolated from other developmental contexts. In adopting Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework, ECAs are embedded within the mesosystem of schools and families. The mesosystem refers to the second level of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ESM. It is situated between the microsystem and exosystem and consists of interconnections between two microsystems (see Figure 1). Consequently, the mesosystem affects YP directly, as YP are able to actively engage and socialise with others in the mesosystem.

Our primary focus, as EPs, is often the family and school (school in terms of the formal curriculum). EPs aim to promote the learning, attainment and healthy emotional development of YP by encouraging schools, and other settings, to develop systematic ways of supporting students. One hypothesis is that students' participation in school-based ECAs may support their holistic development (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). However, the role of ECAs is arguably under-recognised by many EPs. If we are going to work holistically, it is proposed that EPs should give greater consideration to

ECAs as a context for learning and development, using them as part of the support mechanism in YP's learning.

A further key function of EP involvement is the assessment of YP's strengths and areas of need. If ECAs are found to be an important learning context for YP, they then could offer an important context in which EPs might assess YP's strengths and areas of need.

It is hoped this research will contribute to EPs' understanding of ECAs within the school context by providing them with a greater understanding of ECAs: (i) what they are; (ii) the current rationale underpinning their operation; (iii) the current perceived benefits; and (iv) the reasons why YP actively participate in them.

In this chapter a perceived problem was outlined, with a statement of the aims, rationale and justification of the present research. I then provided a discussion on the relevance of the current research to Educational Psychology Practice. This leads me to outline the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

1.5 Thesis Structure

In Chapter Two, I will review relevant literature pertaining to ECAs, in order to give an overview of the research area. I will put forward an argument as to why further understanding of ECAs, within the context of English secondary schools, is needed.

In Chapter Three, I will provide details regarding the research design and methodology.

In Chapter Four, I will outline the research findings.

In Chapter Five, I will discuss the research findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, as well as new emerging themes. I will discuss potential implications for professional practice. This will lead me to highlight perceived strengths and limitations of the current research, and possible future directions for subsequent research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Chapter Overview

In this literature review, I will examine how ECAs have been defined within previous research. This will lead me to explore how ECAs have developed within the context of the UK. I will then examine previous literature in regards to the rationale attributed to ECAs, as well as potential associated benefits. The literature review will then focus on exploring the motivation of students' participation in ECAs.

Before reviewing existing literature, I feel it is important to provide some initial context as to the rationale behind the included literature. See Appendix XII for information regarding the strategy followed during the literature search.

2.1 Rationale for included literature

It appears much of the previous research pertaining to ECAs has originated from outside of the English context. Due to the lack of substantive English-based research, it is important to also draw on international research. This will, it is believed, help us better understand what ECAs are, what their purpose is, what the potential associated benefits are and what the motivational factors for YP's participation are. It is also important to highlight that the research included within this literature review covers ECAs across contexts, i.e. school-based, university-based and external contexts.

2.2 Characteristics of ECAs

Research exploring ECAs has often been linked with investigating the benefits which come from ECA participation, yet there appears to be a lack of understanding as to what ECAs are. Whilst all forms of extended provision and opportunities for YP have been considered important and influential in leading to positive outcomes, a question as to how ECAs differ emerges. Previous research has been inconsistent in presenting a clear perspective as to what constitutes as ECAs. This often leaves readers having to sift through research sections, in order to arrive at a personally perceived definition of ECAs. Key themes which have emerged from existing literature provide initial insights as to a possible definition of ECAs. These themes relate to ECAs being considered as: i) a diverse range of activities; ii) separate to the formal curriculum; and iii) context for developing skills. Each theme will be discussed separately in the sections below.

2.2.1 Diverse range of activities

Previous literature has either alluded to, or explicitly stated, ECAs as being a diverse range of activities. Within England, studies of university-based students' extra-curricular participation has highlighted the lack of an agreed definition of ECAs (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013).

Greenbank (2015) explored the engagement of undergraduate students (n=21) in ECAs at an English university, as well as factors influencing their decision to participate. Thompson et al. (2013) also explored the nature and value of ECA engagement from the perspective of students (n=30) attending an English university. In establishing the lack of an agreed definition within pre-existing literature, both Thompson et al. (2013) and Greenbank (2015) employed a definition which was wide-ranging for the context of their respective studies. One component of this definition referred to ECAs incorporating a varied typology, including: part-time employment; volunteering; participation in sporting and cultural activities; and work placements. Similar to the findings for university undergraduates and ECAs, further English-based research (Bertram et al., 2017) illustrated school-based ECAs as also being diverse.

Bertram et al.'s (2017) study of ECAs in English secondary schools has recently contributed to an arguably under-researched field. In their report, Bertram et al. (2017) highlighted a varied typology of activities which make up ECAs, including sports clubs, creative arts, academic subject-related clubs, volunteering and work experience. Bertram et al.'s (2017) report is significant in offering much needed insight regarding ECAs availability to English secondary school students, given the lack of research on ECAs in this educational context. Bertram et al.'s (2017) research did not, however, only focus on school-governed ECAs, but rather, the research incorporated all ECAs linked to the participating secondary schools, including ECAs associated with externally-governed organisations. One could argue that the emerging definition of school-governed ECAs could be somewhat skewed, as externally-governed organisations may be a confounding variable. In order to support the view of ECAs as being diverse and varied, further research into secondary school-based ECAs is arguably needed.

Whilst previous literature has referred to ECAs as been varied and diverse, further definable characteristics have emerged from existing research. This has related to ECAs being considered separate to the curriculum of an educational institution.

2.2.2 Separate to the formal curriculum

English-based research has asserted that ECAs are separate from an organisation's formal curriculum. Greenbank's (2015) research of an English, university-aged sample demonstrated this. Within Greenbank's (2015) research, only activities undertaken outside of the formal university curriculum were adopted within the methodological framework of ECAs. Greenbank (2015) also defined ECAs as being optional to students. This appears to reinforce the idea of ECAs being separate from a formal curriculum, as one could argue that students would be obliged to engage with all components of a formal curriculum. Given how pre-existing literature has considered ECAs to be outside of an institution's formal curriculum, one could arguably assume this impacts the timing when ECAs occur.

English-based research on secondary school ECAs has highlighted timing as a further definable characteristic. Bertram et al.'s (2017) research claimed school-based ECAs occur outside of the formal curriculum timetable. They were highlighted as taking place during break, lunch, after school and, for some schools, even during school holidays. Due to these findings, Bertram et al. (2017) referred to school based ECAs as 'out-of-normal timetable activities' as well as part of an extended school day.

The literature review has so far revealed previous research considering ECAs as being a diverse range of activities, as well as being separate to schools' and universities' formal curriculum. A further feature of ECAs, which has been highlighted by previous literature, relates to the potential learning environment which they provide.

2.2.3 A context for developing skills

The contexts of ECAs have been widely described as environments for learning. Fredricks and Eccles' (2006b) US-based longitudinal study of high-school students (aged 14 - 18) aimed to explore potential long-term benefits of students' ECA participation during students' high school years. Whilst Fredricks and Eccles (2006b) did not explicitly define ECAs within their research, they considered the environments of ECAs supportive in the development of varied skills. English-based research (Greenbank, 2015) has further highlighted ECAs as being a context for learning. Greenbank's (2015) perception of ECAs was based on the premise of what ECAs offered within the study's sample of university students participating in them.

Whilst previous research offers some tentative insight into the definition of ECAs, these studies are not free from criticism. These limitations need to be considered before adopting the aforementioned characteristics as defining features of English secondary-school based ECAs.

2.2.4 Limitations of pre-existing research

Whilst research exploring ECAs has been steadily growing, few have provided an outline or explanation as to how they have been defined by invested parties. Some research has indicated examples of ECAs via a typology. Such typologies have not, however, been explored in terms of how and/or why these activities can be classified as extra-curricular. This leads to a lack of clarity as to what constitutes as ECAs, potentially undermining the research. The lack of clarity within previous research is not the only significant issue. Much of the research carried out to date has not focused on ECAs within the context of English secondary schools.

The majority of existing research on ECAs, as previously stated, has primarily focused on exploring ECAs outside of the English context or has focused on a university-aged sample. This arguably leads to criticism and limitations of such research. There is a potential issue of generalising findings from one cultural context to another. A key component of ECAs, highlighted by previous research, distinguishes ECAs as something in addition to the curriculum. One could argue that there is variation between countries with regards to countries' educational curriculums. Differences will be present and what would be viewed as extra-curricular in one country may be considered part of the curriculum in another. As well as the difficulties in generalising findings across cultures, much English-based research has focused on university students. Greenbank's (2015) research on its own may not provide a clear picture for how ECAs are defined across the English secondary-school context. There is, it appears, a need to explore research specifically pertaining to this particular context, to understand whether findings from undergraduates are relevant to secondary school students.

Further research, exploring secondary school-based ECAs, could also support the exploration of other key issues pertaining to students' participation in them. This could include exploring schools' rationale behind offering different examples of school-based ECAs, as well as exploring the motivation of students to participate in them. These issues will be addressed in subsequent sub-sections of the current chapter. However given that the overall goal of the current research is to further explore ECAs

within the English context, it is important to understand a little more about how the significance and prominence of ECAs within England has evolved over recent decades.

2.3 Evolvement of ECAs within the English context

Following a period of unsettlement and change within the field of education, firstly as a result of the teachers' dispute and secondly, with the introduction of the National Curriculum, both during the 1980s, ECAs appeared to gain a revival of interest and credence within UK schools (Andrews, Vernon, & Walton, 1996). The National Commission on Education (1993) seized an opportunity to identify the importance of schools offering ECAs to YP, to the extent whereby a 'successful school' was one considered to provide ECAs (Andrews et al., 1996). ECAs were expected to broaden students' interests and experiences, expand their opportunities to succeed and help to build good relationships amongst peers and adults within the school community. It became apparent that education was not, and should not be, restricted to a culturally adopted timeframe, 9am to 3pm. The National Commission on Education (1993) highlighted how, if utilised effectively, the after-school hours could bring about further educational and social developmental benefits to YP.

The importance placed upon ECAs during the 1990s has persisted over the recent decades. The Every Child Matters agenda (ECMa), launched in 2003, aimed to ensure every child, regardless of background or circumstances, should have the support they need to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. The ECMa (2003) demonstrated previous UK governments' ambitions to improve outcomes for all YP. Within this agenda, the UK government promoted schools to offer services and activities beyond the 'normal' school hours. Since the ECMa (2003), further UK educational guidance has highlighted the importance of ECAs within UK schools.

More recently, in Ofsted's (2016) published guidance on school inspections, ECAs were actually cited as a context in which inspectors would conduct observations as part of evidence, regarding the teaching, learning, wellbeing and overall assessment of YP. Ofsted (2016) claimed inspectors would consider how well schools support the formal curriculum alongside EC opportunities made available to students. In their guidance published to schools, Ofsted (2016) considered ECAs to provide YP with the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding, as well as improve their

skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities. Consequently, ECAs were highlighted as important features of school life for YP.

UK governments have sought to provide schools with financial support, in order to accommodate the hopes previously set out within the ECMa (2003) and to enable schools to achieve the goals more recently set out by Ofsted (2016). The extended schools programme, first established in 2005, is an example of how UK governments have provided financial support to schools. The extended schools programme set out to provide stimulating activities, skills classes and additional learning support for YP. Since its development, a high level of funding (over £1 billion) has been invested in the programme. Whilst those schools serving areas of high socio-economic deprivation have been targeted for such funding, it is important to note that many schools which have not qualified for the funding have still offered extended services to their students (National Children's Bureau & VCS Engage, 2008).

The raised awareness of ECAs within UK government agenda over the last few decades appears to have filtered down, not only into school practice but also to the parents of YP. Parents of YP have been seeking ECAs for their children to participate in, including outside of the school context. In 2014, the Sutton Trust commissioned a poll to investigate the rate of participation in ECAs. 309 parents of YP (aged 5-16) were asked whether a particular child within the family (the child with the most recent birthday) had regularly participated in any number of ECAs outside of school within the previous 12 months. The poll highlighted that 76% of parents reported their child to have regularly participated in some form of ECA within the previous 12 months. UK families have therefore become highly invested in ECAs, despite little research having been carried out within the UK context.

With such a high level of interest and investment amongst the UK population in ECAs, (alongside the high level of financial resources being invested by the UK government to support increased access for all YP), exploring the purpose of ECAs amongst English secondary schools, as well as potential benefits, is vitally important.

2.4 Purpose of ECAs
It has been difficult to surmise, from previous research, a definitive rationale behind why educational institutions offer ECAs to their students. Apart from a generalised agreed perception that participation in ECAs can lead to a range of beneficial outcomes, little literature has explored their purpose. One commonality amongst ECA

literature, highlighted earlier (page 17), is an awareness and acceptance of a varied typology. Is the rationale for school-based ECAs consistent across this varied typology? What is the overall rationale for offering ECAs to YP in secondary schools?

Bertram et al. (2017) provided some potential insight into the rationale attributed to English secondary schools' offering of ECAs. From their findings, Bertram et al. (2017) acknowledged secondary schools' aims of ECAs as an opportunity of expanding students' horizons, as well as providing them with opportunities they may not necessarily have access to, outside of the school context. Furthermore, schools hoped to support students' holistic development, towards becoming well-rounded individuals, as well as provide students with opportunities that would give them a sense of achievement. Bertram et al.'s (2017) findings also indicated how specific ECAs may have come to fruition within schools, specifically highlighting the role of school staff. Their findings appeared to show that, in many schools, the interest of staff and the capacity for running ECAs were factors considered, prior to ECAs being made available to students. ECAs on offer to students in schools were therefore often related to the academic subjects within the school timetable or personal hobbies of staff. Bertram et al.'s (2017) findings provide further insight into why schools may choose to run particular ECAs. However, there are methodological weaknesses to their research, which could arguably undermine such findings.

In reviewing Bertram et al.'s (2017) methodology, in particular the form of data analysis used, one is able to see the researchers have adopted a hybrid approach in their thematic analysis. By adopting a hybrid approach, the researchers used pre-identified themes as part of the data analysis, instead of using a purely inductive approach. This is arguably problematic because if we are to understand the reasoning behind schools choosing to operate ECAs, one would argue that a social constructionist approach is needed. By using a mixture of deductive and inductive analysis it might be more difficult to uphold a social-constructionist approach, as there's arguably an increased chance of individual reasoning being overlooked. Not only does this methodological criticism potentially undermine research within the field of English secondary school-based ECAs, but, the lack of research exploring this context also poses a potential issue. The findings of Bertram et al. (2017) could be viewed as being more robust if there was further research, relevant to the context of English secondary schools, to support them.

Although Bertram et al. (2017) provided insight into the rationale of English secondary school-based ECAs, there is an overall absence of research undertaken in this field. The overall lack of substantive research is an issue because it arguably leads to over-reliance of a small evidence base. Further research is arguably needed to understand more about ECAs in the context of English secondary schools, particularly in relation to whether potential benefits to ECA participation are in line with the aims and goals of school-based ECAs. Some existing research has been able to provide insight into associated benefits of ECA participation.

2.5 Associated Benefits from ECA participation

Researchers investigating ECAs have long been interested in the potential benefits which emerge from ECA participation. Previous literature has highlighted potential positive implications from ECA participation on academic achievement, social and emotional development, feelings towards school and employability skills (Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Fischer & Theis, 2014; Greenbank, 2015; Roulin & Bangerter, 2013). Such literature has explored participation in ECAs amongst secondary school students and undergraduate students.

2.5.1 Academic Achievement

One of the widely considered potential benefits of ECA participation relates to raised academic achievement. Farb and Matjasko (2012) reviewed US and Canadian literature (published between 2004 and 2009) pertaining to adolescents' (aged 12-19) participation in ECAs. The review widely found participation in ECAs to positively impact short-term academic achievement, however the longitudinal impact was not considered significant. More recent research has explored how academic achievement may be impacted by ECA participation.

Fischer and Theis' (2014) study of German secondary school-aged students, explored the role of ECAs on school attachment and learning goal orientation. Learning goal orientation has been defined as an individual's desire to increase his or her competencies (Licht & Dweck, 1984). Fischer and Theis (2014) believed motivation and school connectedness mediate the effects of EC participation on academic achievement. They found participation in school-based ECAs can protect against declines in students' motivation (i.e. learning goal orientation), if activities are challenging and if they offer social support. Fischer and Theis' (2014) findings therefore highlight the potential positive implications which are transferrable from the

ECA context to school lesson contexts. That is to say, students' motivation can be bolstered by participating in ECAs, which in turn, arguably leads to students feeling motivated within class and a greater desire to achieve academic success. Apart from academic success, research exploring beneficial outcomes of ECA participation has also uncovered the potential positive impact on students' social and emotional development.

2.5.2 Social and Emotional Development

Students' participation in ECAs has been linked with supporting students' social and emotional development through positively impacting adolescent adjustment, i.e. students' self-esteem, sense of belonging, self-identity as well as other general social skills. Fredricks and Eccles' (2006a) US-based study of high school students (aged 12-18) aimed to explore students' involvement in ECAs and the potential impact on adolescent adjustment. The analysed data within this study originated from a longitudinal study in the USA, the Childhood and Beyond Study (CAB). The CAB explored development in childhood and adolescence, beginning in 1987, with three cohorts of children. Fredricks and Eccles (2006a) primarily used data from adolescents between grades 7 and 12 (Years 8-13 in UK context). From their analysis, the findings indicated greater involvement in ECAs to be associated with psychological competencies and a positive peer context. However whilst previous research has indicated ECAs to be beneficial to social and emotional development, research has also highlighted negative attributes which can arise from ECA participation.

Farb and Matjasko (2012) found participation in sports-based ECAs to have had an increasing impact on expressed homophobic attitude among male participants. This provides insight into the potential negative implications of ECA participation on emotional development and peer relations. It is important to note, however, that Farb and Matjasko's (2012) meta-analysis reviewed data (collected from 2004 to 2009), was when general attitudes towards homosexuality may have been less positive than in current times, both nationally (in the context of the USA) as well as globally. More up-to-date research, in particular research more relevant to English culture, is needed to explore whether such negative implications are prevalent amongst participants of sports-based ECAs as well as others.

Further US-based literature (Brooks, Floyd, Robins & Chan, 2015; Schaefer, Simpkins, Vest & Price, 2011) provides support, regarding the potential positive

impact of ECA participation on the social and emotional development of YP, specifically the development of social skills and peer relations.

Schaefer et al. (2011) highlighted the potential positive impact of ECA participation on the development and maintenance of peer relationships. In their study of US secondary-school aged students, Schaefer et al. (2011) found that co-participants of ECAs were twice more likely to be friends than those adolescents who were not co-participants. ECA participation would therefore seem to support the development of new friendships and the maintenance of existing ones.

Brooks, Floyd, Robins and Chan (2015) explored the impact of ECA participation on the development of social skills amongst US primary school-aged children, who had learning difficulties. Brooks et al. (2015) found that children with learning difficulties benefited from participating in unstructured social activities, in terms of the positive development of social competence.

Apart from potential benefits to academic achievement and social and emotional development, research has also linked ECA participation to enhanced skills related to employability.

2.5.4 Employability skills

Studies on the benefits of specific ECAs showed that they are conducive to the development of employability skills among undergraduate students (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013). Thompson et al. (2013), in exploring undergraduate engagement with ECAs and their perceived value within an English university, found many students to be actively engaged in a variety of ECAs. They were found to have perceived participation to be valuable with regards to future employability. In some cases, participation was influenced by students' desire to capitalise on opportunities for specific skill development, which they believed were made available to them in certain ECAs.

More recently, Greenbank (2015) highlighted the benefits of ECA participation on personal capital. The desire to develop one's personal capital was considered important in students' rationale for participating in ECAs, whilst at university (Greenbank, 2015). Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986) proposes that individuals possess and seek personal capital, which consists of 'hard currency' and 'soft currency'. 'Hard currency' involves the physical evidence of qualifications and

participation in ECAs. 'Soft currency' refers to personality traits and life-long skills, such as ambition, dedication, cooperation, teamwork and perseverance, which employers seek amongst potential employees. Whilst ECAs form the basis of hard currency, one could argue that the participation in ECAs leads to the development and maintaining of some vital soft currencies also.

Both Thompson et al. (2013) and Greenbank (2015) offer a unique contribution to the research field of ECAs. Their research moved beyond quantitative analysis of ECA participation and associated outcomes to explore qualitative data. In doing so, their research has been able to provide a greater insight into the perceived benefits of ECAs, amongst undergraduate students. Consequently, in using this information, we are arguably in a better position to develop ECAs, whilst continuously measuring their effectiveness and productivity than we would with quantitative data alone. However, as university students have been the sample focus, care is needed when attempting to generalise the findings to a younger population, i.e. secondary school students. The literature review has already highlighted the different stages individuals go through as part of adolescence (see pages 11-12). Further English-based research is needed to ascertain whether younger adolescents' perceived benefits of ECA participation are in line with, or different, from those of university students.

The literature review has indicated a high level of social and economic investment regarding ECAs in the UK. For this investment to be effective and worthwhile, a greater understanding of how particular benefits can arise from ECAs is needed. The potential benefits highlighted by previous literature has been outlined in the sections above. However, this arguably is only part of the story. In order for the high level of investment on ECAs to be of benefit to as many as students as possible, students' initial motivation needs to be more greatly understood.

2.6 Motivation behind students' participation

As interest in ECAs has developed, research in this area has more recently begun to explore the motivation of students participating in ECAs (Greenbank, 2015; Ng, 2017; Roulin & Bangerter, 2013). The research raised in sub-sections below has linked motivation with a desire to develop one's employability as well as one's desire for success.

2.6.1 Desire to enhance one's employability

Roulin and Bangerter (2013) hoped to explore how Swiss undergraduates' participation in ECAs was motivated by employability prospects. Roulin and Bangerter's (2013) findings' highlighted students' desire of increasing their employability as a key theme in explaining students' motivation to participate in ECAs. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) claimed how students participated in ECAs at university, in order to distinguish themselves from their peers as they entered into the competitive job market. Whilst Roulin and Bangerter (2013) explored motivation of Swiss undergraduates, research based within the UK (Greenbank, 2015) also explored the motivation of university students. Greenbank (2015)'s findings support those of Roulin and Bangerter (2013), as they found students' motivation to be also linked with a desire to increase their own employability.

As well as exploring the motivation of university students, regarding ECA participation, existing literature has also explored primary-school students' motivation.

2.6.2 Desire for achievement

Ng (2017) explored Australian students' motivations regarding participation in musical school-based ECAs, during their final year of primary school. Ng (2017) acknowledged a range of motivational variables including enjoyment, perceived parental support, conception of abilities and valuing of music. Students were also shown to be motivated, not only by a desire to learn, but also by the desire to achieve competence in a particular musical area. Ng (2017) linked students' desire for competence to the theoretical framework Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984). This theoretical framework will be discussed further in the following section.

2.7 Theoretical frameworks underpinning ECAs

Through reviewing existing literature, a number of theoretical frameworks which could underpin ECAs, i.e. conceptualising the associated benefits and motivational pull factors, have been put forward. Such theoretical framework has included Social Capital Theory (SCT; Bourdieu, 1986), Achievement Goal Theory (AGT; Nicholls, 1984) and Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974). These will now be outlined in the context of research exploring ECAs, which have been highlighted in sub-sections above. In outlining these theories, the researcher will explore how such frameworks may be relevant in conceptualising ECAs in the context of English secondary schools.

2.7.1 Social Capital Theory

In exploring undergraduates' motivation for participating in ECAs, Greenbank (2015) put forward Brown and Hesketh's (2004) view of social capital, as a potential underpinning theory to ECAs. Brown & Hesketh's (2004) reference to social capital (in terms of employability), stems from the earlier work of Bourdieu (1986). In this work, Bourdieu (1986) outlined three forms of capital: economic, social and cultural. All forms of capital, i.e. economic, social, and cultural, are considered important for individuals to live a happy and healthy life (Bourdieu, 1986). ECAs are considered to offer participants an opportunity to enhance their personal capital. This can be seen in the form of an individual's economic resources, qualifications, skills and personality traits. Greenbank (2015) believed undergraduates were motivated by the desire to increase their employability chances, which would be bolstered by heightened social capital.

Given the difference in adolescent stages between secondary school students and undergraduates, as previously highlighted (pages 11-12), it is questionable whether the perspectives of SCT can be applied to a younger population.

2.7.2 Achievement Goal Theory

Whilst Greenbank (2015) offered new insights into the motivation of undergraduates in their ECA participation, research has also explored the motivation of younger students. Ng (2017) explored the role of achievement goals as motivation for Australian primary school students' participation in ECAs. Ng (2017) adopted AGT (Nicholls, 1984), as an underpinning theoretical framework, to explain how students are motivated by achievement goals. AGT (Nicholls, 1984) proposes achievement goals to be students' perceived purposes for learning and achievement. Achievement goals can consist of two key sub-concepts- mastery goals and performance goals. Mastery goals relate to students' learning and competence development, whilst performance goals relate to relative achievement and competence demonstration. In this case, ECAs may therefore be conceptualised as a context for providing students the chance to develop competency in a skill and experience success. This would be in keeping with Fredricks and Eccles' (2006b) and Greenbank's (2015) interpretation of ECAs, perceived to be a learning context in which students are able to develop skills.

2.7.3 Social Control Theory

Some researchers (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Hoffmann, 2006), exploring the benefits of ECAs, also attempted to provide reasoning and explanation as to how ECAs impact YP's development. In adopting the Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974), these researchers claimed that YP form conventional bonds to their schools, as well as individuals within it. As ECAs were perceived to have a range of social benefits associated with them, e.g providing students with exposure to peers and positive adult role models, they were believed to play a role in the development of such conventional bonds. This increases the chances for positive friendships to develop, which then feeds back into supporting students' social and emotional development. Much of the literature highlighting Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974), as an explanatory framework to the benefits of ECAs, originates from outside of England. Further research is arguably needed to explore whether English-based ECAs may be conceptualised by this theoretical perspective.

2.7.4 Human Givens Theory

Although previous literature has indicated a variety of theoretical frameworks to be relevant in the conceptualisation of ECAs, questions arguably remain as to how relevant these might be for the ECAs taking place in English secondary schools. Previous literature has highlighted ECAs to be varied and to be associated with a diverse range of benefits. There may, arguably, be a gap in which an alternative theoretical framework could more appropriately conceptualise ECAs in their entirety, rather than addressing singular elements of ECAs.

The Human Givens Theory (HGT; Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) may offer such a new appropriate conceptualisation of ECAs. The HGT suggests that human beings have innate emotional needs which need to be met to ensure emotional wellbeing. The HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) outlines the emotional needs of YP as: security, volition, attention, emotional connection to other people, connection to wider community, privacy, status, a sense of achievement, to be stretched and purposeful. According to the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), individuals are also equipped with resources which include empathy, imagination and memory. ECAs appear to be able to offer an opportunity to support the development of these resources amongst YP, as well as meet their emotional needs. Based on this theory, secondary school-aged students may seek to participate in ECAs, as they offer potential opportunities to fulfil or

develop a particular emotional need, as opposed to SCT's (Bourdieu, 1986) argument of YP being motivated with a view to broadening future career prospects.

Further research exploring ECAs within the secondary school context is needed to narrow the gap. Such new research may be able to offer new insights regarding the relevance of existing theoretical frameworks conceptualising ECAs, as well as offering potential support to additional frameworks, i.e. the HGT.

2.8 The voice of YP participating in ECAs

The Children and Families Act (2014) and Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE & DoH, 2015) has promoted YP's right to be active participants in decision making, which goes on to impact their lives. There has also been an increasing level of interest shown towards the need to view YP as active participants in research (O'Kane, 2006). YP are increasingly viewed as competent participants within research (Fielding & Bragg, 2003). Eliciting the views and experiences of YP participating in ECAs has, however, largely been neglected.

Researchers have seemingly focused on making associations between participation in ECAs and measurable outcomes, rather than incorporating YP's views. As a result of this, assumptions of adult researchers appear to permeate the literature base within this field. The present study aims to move the field of research regarding ECAs forward. It aims to address the lack of qualitative research conducted with YP, through exploring the perspectives and subjective experiences of those, who are the participants of ECAs, and other invested parties (i.e. parents and ECA leaders).

2.9 Restatement of the current aims

This research aims to provide further insights into ECAs within the context of English secondary schools. The research aims to provide greater clarity as to how school-based ECAs may be defined and their rationale. The research also aims to provide further insight into their potential associated benefits and the motivation of students who choose to participate in them.

2.10 Research Questions

1. How are ECAs defined within the context of English secondary schools?
2. What is the rationale attributed to English secondary school-based ECAs from participants of different types: ECA leaders, students and parents?

3. What are the potential benefits of participating in school-based ECAs within English secondary schools for ECA leaders, students and parents?
4. What motivates students to participate in school-based ECAs within UK secondary schools?

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the research methodology emphasised in the current research. Firstly, the purpose of the work is presented. This is followed by a re-statement of the research questions, for the reader's reference. Then, in turn, a discussion of the broader philosophical positions underpinning the chosen methodologies; the rationale for the research design of the study; a consideration of the participants; data collection processes and data analysis strategies follow. Finally, a discussion of the ethical approach taken in the research project is outlined.

3.1 Purpose

According to (Robson, 2002), research can fulfil a variety of purposes: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and emancipatory. In a little understood area, exploratory studies enable researchers to deepen understanding, generate ideas and develop hypotheses for future research (Robson, 2002). This describes the current study which adopts an explorative perspective because it will be argued that little research has previously explored ECAs, in the context of English secondary schools.

The study had three phases. The literature review constituted Phase One (see Chapter Two). It identified a lack of substantive research exploring ECAs involving English secondary schools. As a result the current research aimed to explore this context - secondary school-based ECAs in an English county: what they were; their rationale; what the perceived associated benefits might be; and what might motivate YP to participate in them. In order to gain this understanding, the work was undertaken in two phases.

A small scale study was undertaken to explore and define the characteristics of school-based ECAs, forming the second phase. This small scale study aimed to uncover how ECAs were defined within the participating English secondary schools, through interviewing senior leaders of the four schools involved. These initial findings provided an insight which then informed the methodology of the larger scale study (Phase Three). From the Phase Two data, gathered within the small scale study, the researcher was able to identify appropriate examples of ECAs from the four schools. These ECAs were considered to meet the initial definition of school-based ECAs, from the four senior leaders interviewed. Phase Three then involved a deeper

exploration of the definition of ECAs, in the context of English secondary schools, by interviewing students, parents and ECA leaders (teachers who led specific ECAs) which were linked to pre-selected ECAs. This larger scale study (Phase Three) enabled the researcher to explore the rationale behind the school-based ECAs, the benefits they might bring and what might motivate YP to participate in them. It was hoped that the resulting findings would provide new insights that could inform further future practice regarding how secondary schools use ECAs and to support the development of adolescents, as well as identifying issues for EP practice.

The Phase Two research aimed to address the following Research Questions which had emerged from the limited existing literature (Chapter Two).

3.2 Research Questions

1. How are ECAs defined within the context of English secondary schools?
2. What is the rationale attributed to English secondary school-based ECAs from participants of different types: ECA leaders, students and parents?
3. What are the potential benefits of participating in school-based ECAs within English secondary schools for ECA leaders, students and parents?
4. What motivates students to participate in school-based ECAs within UK secondary schools?

3.3 Philosophical assumptions of the current study

Authors have argued the necessity for researchers to publicly establish the philosophical framework adopted within and informing research investigations. It is believed that underpinning philosophical assumptions inform all subsequent methodological procedural decisions in the research process (Way, 2005; Willig, 2001). In so doing, they may also provide a framework for interpreting any findings.

The current study adopted a Social Constructionism approach. Social Constructionism has been described as a theoretical orientation which acknowledges the role of historical, cultural and social contexts in shaping human knowledge (Burr, 2003). In acknowledging these potential biases, Social Constructionists also recognise the important role of language and communication, with regards to the joint construction of meaning, through interpersonal interactions in a range of contexts and activities.

Social Constructionists believe it is important to consider diverse interpretations and meanings that are given to explain phenomena (Burr, 2003). Adopting a Social Constructionist framework permits the researcher to explore, from different perspectives, how in the current context ECAs as social activities are defined within English secondary schools, as well as how YP experience such ECAs. This acknowledges that individuals' views are subject to a multiple of factors. Exploring such subjective realities and experiences resonates with the current study's aims.

In adopting a social constructionist standpoint, the researcher acknowledges that individuals can hold unique understandings of the world. People can be in a common context, yet their perception and experience of that context (from their point of view) is unique. In the case of the current study, exploring how ECAs may be of benefit to classroom learning or social relations within school will require the perceptions of those who are likely to notice such potential implications. Given that the staff and YP are in the context (the ECA), and given the parent is engaging with that context, exploring the views of these three participant groups is important.

Through the adoption of a social constructionist approach, one is able to capture individual perspectives, from different types of people (key stakeholders of ECAs: students, parents and ECA leaders). This triangulation of data permits the researcher to compare perceptions of what is going on in the social phenomena of ECAs, whilst also highlighting potential commonalities. Triangulation of data (in regards to the current research) is not employed to validate or discard data, but to ensure the inclusion of multiple perspectives. Views which are not shared by multiple participants are not discarded or deemed invalid, but rather, it allows the researcher to potentially highlight areas of commonality and/or differences between participant groups.

Just as it is important to consider the philosophical assumptions which underpin this research, it is also important to reflect on the impact my own personal perspective has, at different stages and levels of the study. I have aimed to outline my reflections within the sub-section below.

3.4 My role within the research

Creswell (2007) highlights the need for researchers to recognise how their own belief systems about the world can impact on the interpretation and presentation of their findings. With this in mind, I would like to state my role within the current piece of research.

Anecdotally, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) working within the sample area, I am aware of the difficulties some YP are experiencing within their respective secondary schools. I don't have substantive evidence, but from my experience I have come into this research, with the belief that secondary schools have the potential to support YP more than is currently happening, to ensure the holistic development of secondary aged students.

In terms of my motivation, I am conscious of cases I have been involved with professionally. These have been within the same geographical area as that of this research, where ECAs have been explored as potential mechanisms of support for vulnerable students; especially those who were struggling in their secondary school setting. This may have led me to develop a strong desire for ECAs to be considered as beneficial for participants of my research and thus support an argument for schools to place greater investment in them. By devising interview schedules in collaboration with my research supervisors, and following the semi-structured template, I was able to ensure impartiality and some consistency interviewing different participants. Questions were also coded as part of the thematic analysis process, to monitor potential impact of primers and leading questions.

Although my role as a TEP may lend itself to harvesting particular hopes regarding the findings, it has also brought positive traits to the gathering of rich data. I have been able to draw upon consultation skills within semi-structured interviews, to encourage and support participants to explore their own thoughts and beliefs.

Using my skills in these areas and being conscious that my role as a TEP may foreground my personal belief system, rigorous attempts were needed to ensure reflexivity in exploring my role in relation to the data which are evident in the research design and its rationale.

My dual role within the Local Authority, as a TEP and as a researcher meant I also had to address a range of ethical issues (see section 3.12).

3.5 Qualitative design

In Chapter Two, the literature review (pages 16–30) identified a lack of research regarding ECAs, within the context of English secondary schools, as well as a lack of instances where the views and experiences of invested parties (students participating in ECAs, their parents and ECA leaders) were explored. A key factor in this research

was the need to understand how ECAs were initially being defined within the context of English secondary schools (Phase Two). This was needed before the researcher could then go on to explore, in greater detail, the views and experiences of invested parties (Phase Three). In order to elicit a more comprehensive definition of ECAs, which could contextualise participant responses, their rationale, associated benefits and motivational pull for YP needs to be explored. In order to gain potentially rich descriptive accounts from participants in the research, the researcher needed to play an active role within the data collection phase. This encouraged a richer analysis of the data and deeper understanding of the views being expressed. Adopting a qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to adopt such an active role (Creswell, 2012).

3.6 Research Tools

The data obtained in the current research were gathered using qualitative research tools, specifically semi-structured interviews; the use of semi-structured interviews allowed for greater flexibility within the interview process. This was considered important in order to fully explore unforeseen discussion points, by providing participants with opportunities to elaborate further in their responses, within a clear pre-determined framework (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Separate interview schedules were designed for each participant group (see Appendices VI-X). However, the overall framework in terms of the specific pre-determined questions remained fairly consistent across participant groups, to support triangulation of the data.

The interview schedules were developed with the view of collecting data relevant to the four research questions (pages 30-31). The interview schedules were piloted on students, parents and an ECA leader. The piloting led the researcher to add an additional question within the interview schedule for students. The question aimed to provide students with tentative ideas of what ECA participation may impact on, acting as a prompt to gain richer responses (see pages 44-45 for further details).

3.7 Thematic Analysis

The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an approach used in many branches of academic work. For psychological studies it has been specifically developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Adopting Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach enabled the researcher to generate themes and sub-

themes – effectively patterns at different levels within the participants' responses, using several cycles of coding. Saldaña (2009) argues that such coding enables the researcher to organise and group data into categories and this allows the researcher to interpret the ideas and consider possible explanations for its inclusion in the first place. A more detailed step-by-step account of the data analysis is provided at the end of the current chapter.

3.7.1 Consideration of other qualitative approaches

Whilst the researcher selected thematic analysis as the most appropriate qualitative approach to the current research, consideration was also given to other qualitative methodologies. These possible methodologies were considered as part of a defence of the researcher's rationale for adopting thematic analysis as the chosen qualitative methodology. Other qualitative methodologies that were considered included narrative analysis and interactive phenomenological analysis.

Narrative analysis (NA) draws on Narrative Theory, which claims that an individual constructs past events and actions in terms of personal stories. Exploring the sequences and connections of an individual's narrative permits researchers to understand more about the world and/or people's experiences of it, from their perspective (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). Like thematic analysis, NA permits the generation of themes from the data. This method does differ from thematic analysis, however, in that the level of extensive information required by the researcher to carry out an informed analysis is greater. The objective of the current study was to explore the views and experiences of a larger sample of individuals: narrative analysis is more appropriate when focusing on a very small sample size of individuals' life stories - it is in a sense a much more detailed micro-analytic approach.

Interactive phenomenological analysis (IPA), is an approach which aims, in contrast, to explore the social cognitions of a specific individual in detail. In others words, how a given individual, within a given context, makes sense of a given experience (Smith & Osborn, 2003). A critical approach needs to be taken by the researcher, as there may be deeper underlying thoughts in an individual which participants are not aware of. Data analysis is therefore considered time-consuming when adopting IPA. As such, studies typically involve small sample sizes (Meek, 2008). The aim of the current research was to capture themes regarding ECAs which were shared by a wider audience of participants. Therefore, IPA did not seem an appropriate methodology to adopt.

3.8 Phases of study

As noted earlier, the research reported has had three phases. It constituted a qualitative research design:

- Phase One: involved reviewing literature relevant to the field of ECAs.
- Phase Two: involved interviewing senior managers within four English secondary schools. Data collected was used to support the methodological framework of Phase Three. Phase Two allowed the researcher to identify potential school-based ECAs which could be explored further in Phase Three.
- Phase Three: involved adopting a multi-informant approach by interviewing students, parents and ECAs leaders, across four schools, to explore secondary-school based ECAs in greater detail.

Phases Two and Three involved the direct collection and analysis of data. The qualitative design of Phases Two and Three enabled the researcher to address the exploratory purpose of how English secondary school-based ECAs were being defined. Phase Three then enabled the researcher to explore the perceived rationale of ECAs, the associated benefits and, finally, the motivational factors behind students' participation – such a process focused on individual experiences and aimed to understand the world in which people live (Willig, 2001).

Phase Three adopted a multi-informant approach, by drawing on the views of different participant types: students, parents, and ECA leaders, contextualised by the respective schools' understanding of what ECAs meant to them around the common context of identified ECAs. In doing so, the researcher was able to triangulate data gained from a wider selection of sources. This is important as triangulating data enhances potential clarity and credibility of research (Creswell, 2012).

The following sections discuss the key features of Phase Two and Phase Three in turn.

3.9 Phase Two

Phase Two identified appropriate school-based ECAs by exploring further how four secondary school senior leaders defined ECAs. This would, it was anticipated, help to frame the context that the various trios of participants would be interacting in.

3.9.1 Participating Schools

Phase Two focused on the collection of data from a senior leader in four secondary schools. The four secondary schools were all located within the same county in South-East England. They were mixed-gender, mainstream (non-selective and non-religious) secondary schools. Table 1 gives the contextual characteristics for the participating schools, illustrating the range of schools involved.

Table 1: Characteristics of school sample

School code	Number on roll (approximate)	Proportion of students on pupil premium	Proportion of students with SEN	Range of Index of multiple deprivation score (2015)	Ofsted Rating (most recent)
'i'	1150	Above average	Above average	20% least deprived – 10% most deprived	Requires improvement
'ii'	900	Above average	Above average	40% least deprived – 20% most deprived	Good
'iii'	1300	Average	Above average	10% least deprived – 10% most deprived	Good
'iv'	1500	Below average	Below average	20% least deprived – 50% most deprived	Outstanding

In Chapter Two, the literature review (pages 16-30) indicated that ECAs had not been extensively explored within the context of English secondary schools. Mixed-gender mainstream secondary schools were targeted as the contextual environment for Phase Three of the research, to limit the potential impact of extraneous variables (such as gender, religion and intelligence). These extraneous variables could potentially influence the overall ethos of a school and potentially limit the selection of ECAs available to students.

3.9.2 Adult participants: Phase Two

3.9.2.1 Inclusion criteria

The adult participants involved were senior members of staff working in mainstream secondary schools (of mixed gender) within a county in South-East England. These consisted of deputy head-teachers, assistant head-teachers and internal college leaders (all members of the senior leadership team in each setting with a responsibility for overseeing extra-curricular activity within the school).

Those in the senior management team have an influential role within a school as to how ECAs are put into operation because, anecdotally, they have a more active role

within decision making processes impacting their respective schools. In order to gain an understanding as to how ECAs are being defined by schools we must seek to explore the views and rationale of the senior management team because their senior position in schools will potentially impact how the rest of the school perceives ECAs.

3.9.2.2 Recruitment

A number of mixed-gender mainstream secondary schools were contacted and invited to participate in the research. Schools within the same Local Authority were contacted first, a total of five, because there were only five mixed-gender comprehensive schools which were known to have existing ECAs in operation within the school in the study area. Head teachers from these highlighted schools were contacted and invited to participate in Phase One of the research. Two schools responded to the invitation. I then widened the sample area, and invited schools in the next Local Authority (yet within the same County). Two further schools responded with an agreement to participate. This meant four schools in total had positively responded. Head teachers were asked to nominate an appropriate member of staff to be the participants in the interview. It was possible that they could nominate themselves (as head teacher) or another senior member of the leadership team (but one with responsibility for ECAs within the school).

3.9.3 Data Collection

To gather qualitative data from four senior leaders, semi-structured interviews were used. The interviews were conducted on sites of the respective four schools. In each case, a private office was used. The four senior leaders were asked to provide the researcher with an interview time slot that was most convenient to them.

3.9.4 Transcribing interviews

Following the interviewing process, recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim. The duration of interviews ranged from 23 minutes to 31 minutes (M = 27).

3.9.5 Data analysis

The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis (see pages 49-50 for further details of this process).

3.9.6 Implications of Phase Two

Data analysis of the Phase Two interviews led to the formulation of key criteria for the selection of ECAs for the Phase Three work. Thematic analysis of the interviews with the four senior leaders illustrated that school-based ECAs were:

- Separate to the main curriculum
- Optional for students to attend
- Outside of core timetabled teaching times

Senior leaders were asked to highlight examples of ECAs which met these key criteria in their settings. The researcher also asked schools to select ECAs that were free at the point of entry and were managed by school staff. By adding these additional criterion, the researcher was able to further limit the potential impact of additional extraneous variables. Previous research (Bertram et al., 2017) exploring ECAs, in the context of English secondary schools, had explored a range of ECAs including ECAs operated by external agencies. The current research wanted to focus explicitly on ECAs which were purely governed by school staff for several reasons. Firstly, this enabled the collection of triangulated data as school staff leading ECAs would be more likely to understand their respective school's overall rationale for ECAs more than third party companies. School-governed ECAs were also more likely to be free at the point of use than other privately organised ECAs.

3.10 Phase Three

Phase Three involved exploring selected ECAs in greater detail. These ECAs were selected on the grounds that they met the criteria which emerged from the thematic analysis of interviews with the four senior leaders. Phase Three aimed to further explore ECAs, from the perspective of key stakeholders, including: the definition of secondary school-based ECAs; the rationale of school-based ECAs; associated benefits; and motivational factors behind YP's participation.

3.10.1 Piloting of Interview Schedules

Phase Three involved the creation of several interview schedules, each being specific type of participant: ECA leader, student, and parent. These captured participants' views about secondary school-based ECAs. The interview schedules had to be piloted before use, to ensure their accessibility, utility and reliability in capturing data which was relevant to the four research questions. Gudmundsdottir and Brock-Utne (2010) consider pilot studies to be an influential tool which encourages the researcher

to reflect on the focus, design, validity and reliability of their research. The piloting of the three interview schedules: student; parent; and ECA leader, helped to assess the accessibility of questions, i.e. ease of understanding, which allowed the researcher to appraise views and make sense of them.

The school involved in the piloting phase of the research was a secondary school, which was an original participating school from Phase Two. This school was chosen as the context to pilot the interviews due to the high level of socio-economic deprivation amongst students. Students' and parents' academic levels were perceived to be potentially lower than that of participants in other schools. To garner a range of YP's views, irrespective of academic ability, the researcher therefore wanted to have interview schedules which were accessible to all participants. Carrying out the piloting of interview in this school contributed to assessing interview schedules' reliability with regards to accessibility.

3.10.1.1 Student participants: Inclusion criteria

The piloting sample consisted of four secondary school-aged students (2 male, 2 female) from one of the Phase Two's four participating schools. The four students were between 12 and 14 years of age. This age range fell within the early and middle stage of adolescence. This was the target age range for students of Phase Three because prior English research focused on college and university students: age range fall within the latter stages of adolescence. As there are important differences in individuals' development across these distinct stages of adolescence (see pages 11-12), caution is needed before researchers generalise findings. Consequently, the researcher believed it was important to draw on a population of a younger age, to explore whether there were commonalities or differences in their perception of ECAs. A further inclusion criterion for the piloting included students being existing current participants in school-based ECAs in their schools.

Including four student participants, as part of the piloting process ensured accessibility for the interview schedules. Students can vary in their understanding of language, as well as confidence in speaking, and it was important therefore to ensure that the form of questioning and language used, was accessible to a wide range of students consistent with the make up the participant cohort of Phase Three.

3.10.1.2 Adult participants: Inclusion criteria

The piloting participants included one ECA leader, from the same secondary school as the four students mentioned above, and parents for two of the students involved in the student piloting process.

It was felt that a minimum level of comprehension might be needed to work within secondary schools. It would be reasonable therefore to expect adults involved with leading ECAs to have a basic minimum level of understanding language. For this reason, piloting the interview schedule with one ECA leader was considered to be sufficient.

Like students, parents might differ in their cognitive skills and understanding of language. It was therefore considered important to pilot the interview schedule on more than one parent. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to interview all parents of the four students. This was due to the availability of parents to participate in the interviews.

3.10.1.3 Recruitment

The senior leader of one of the four participating schools, interviewed during Phase Two of the research, remained a key contact moving forward to Phase Three.

The senior leader was able to identify four students (2 male, 2 female) who were known to participate in school-based ECAs. Students were given information and consent (and respective parents), to comply with ethical guidelines. These were the same forms used for Phase Three of the research. One parent, for each of the four students, was also invited to participate in the pilot, and was asked to provide their availability for telephone interviews.

The senior leader within the Pilot School also identified a member of staff responsible for leading a school-based ECA. Informational consent forms were passed on to the ECA leader, via the senior leader.

3.10.1.4 Data collection

The pilot study used semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data (see page 36) for information regarding the background to the interview schedules). The length of semi-structured interviews ranged from 13 to 25 minutes (Mean=16 minutes).

Students and the ECA leader were interviewed face-to-face within a private space in the pilot secondary school. Two of the four students expressed a desire to be interviewed together. In order to ensure students' comfort the researcher accommodated this request.

Telephone interviews were carried out with the parents. Parents had been asked, via the information and consent forms, to provide preferred timings of when to be contacted by the researcher.

Audio recordings were made of the interviews using an audio recorder on a mobile phone. Two phones were used during the completion of telephone interviews. One device was used to contact parents, once contact had been made parents were then put on speaker phone (following verbal consent), and another phone was used to audio record the interview. The interviewer carried out telephone interviews in a private space to ensure the confidentiality of the parent. Recordings were saved directly into an encrypted folder onto the hard drive of a password protected laptop. Interviewees were advised of their right to withdraw at any point without giving a reason. None chose to do so.

3.10.1.5 Implications of Piloting

The piloting process highlighted overall the accessibility of questions; suggesting an ease of understanding which allowed the researcher to appraise the views of participants and make sense of them. Whilst carrying out interviews with students, it became apparent that some students focused on the benefits related to academic achievement. The researcher considered how students may have thought this was something the researcher (and potentially the school) wanted to hear. It was also interesting to note how, within the paired-interview, students appeared to feed off each other, i.e. the thoughts and views of one student encouraged the other student to talk about a related theme. It was thought that interviewing students individually would potentially remove such an unforeseen benefit. Students may find it hard to express all their thoughts within the designated space and time.

As a result of these considerations, and following a discussion during supervision, the researcher added an additional question to the student interview schedule:

> *"As you know, I am asking various students in this school these questions. I have also been asking the same questions in other schools. Some of the topics which some students have talked about include friendships,*

relationships with staff, learning and transition. What do you think about those topics?"

This question aimed to give students a range of examples which had been raised by participants in the piloting stage and senior leaders from Phase Two. It supported students' engagement in the interview by acting as a prompt to garner further views. Themes which had emerged from the literature review were also considered when listing examples within the additional question. These examples included: transition; relationships with staff; learning; and friendships (see Appendices VII and VIII, for a comparison of the student interview schedule: pre- and post- piloting). The tentative wording of this question was carefully considered i.e. "some of the topics which some students have talked about". This was to ensure the additional question did not lead students to believe all students thought all of the suggested topics had been discussed. It was hoped that the tentative question would not lead students to provide answers which were not reflective of their own personal views and experiences. Firstly, the anonymity and confidentiality of students was paramount and therefore students were informed that peers in other ECAs from the same school and students from other schools were involved in the research. Secondly, the researcher provided each student with an opportunity to say whether themes were relevant or irrelevant to their experience or understanding of ECAs. Students were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the examples provided from other interviews.

3.11 Phase Three: Main Study

Following the piloting stage of Phase Three, the researcher proceeded to undertake the larger scale study.

3.11.1 Participants

This phase of the research consisted of interviewing students participating in school-based ECAs (n=20), key staff members managing school-based ECAs (n=10) and the participating students' respective parents (n= 14). To ensure the ECAs explored were relevant examples of ECAs, within the context of English secondary schools, the definition of ECAs developed from Phase Two was adopted as a means to establish specific criterion. To ensure the definition of ECAs was relevant and applicable to the schools participating in Phase Three of the research, the four schools from Phase Two were asked to continue participating in the research. All four schools agreed.

3.11.2 Recruitment of participants

The same four secondary schools which participated in Phase Two were invited to participate in Phase Three. All four schools responded to this invitation, agreeing to participate. The initial aim was to explore three ECAs in each school, with the view to interviewing two students per ECA. Whilst the researcher attempted to follow through with the original aim, it was not possible to gain access to two ECAs despite numerous attempts to make contact with the ECA leader. Consequently, a total of ten ECAs were explored between the four schools. These are summarised for student participants (Table 2); parents (Table 3) and ECA leaders (Table 4).

Table 2: Characteristics of student sample

Student				ECA		School
Code	*Gender*	*Age (Years)*	*Year Group*	*Code*	*Activity Type*	Code
S-i-A-1	Male	13	9	A	Sports	'i'
S-i-A-2	Female	13	9			
S-i-B-3	Male	13	9	B	Music	'i'
S-i-B-4	Male	15	10			
S-i-C-5	Female	12	8	C	Drama	'i'
S-i-C-6	Female	12	8			
S-ii-D-7	Male	14	10	D	Creative Writing	'ii'
S-ii-D-8	Female	13	8			
S-ii-E-9	Male	11	7	E	Art	'ii'
S-ii-E-10	Female	12	8			
S-ii-F-11	N/A	N/A	N/A	F	Film Club	'ii'
S-ii-F-12	N/A	N/A	N/A			
S-iii-G-13	N/A	N/A	N/A	G	Sports	'iii'
S-iii-G-14	N/A	N/A	N/A			
S-iii-H-15	Male	13	8	H	Social Club	'iii'
S-iii-H-16	Female	11	7			
S-iii-J-17	Male	14	9	J	Lego	'iii'
S-iii-J-18	Male	12	8			
S-iv-K-19	Male	14	10	K	Choir	'iv'
S-iv-K-20	Female	13	9			
S-iv-L-21	Male	11	7	L	Textiles	'iv'
S-iv-L-22	Female	13	8			
S-iv-M-23	Male	11	7	M	Sports	'iv'
S-iv-M-24	Male	12	7			

Table 3: Characteristics of parent sample

Parent		Student
Code	Relationship	Code
N/A	N/A	1
P-i-A-2-M	Mother	2
N/A	N/A	3
N/A	N/A	4
P-i-C-5-M	Mother	5
P-i-C-6-M	Mother	6
N/A	N/A	7
P-ii-D-8-M	Mother	8
P-ii-E-9-M	Mother	9
P-ii-E-10-M	Mother	10
P-ii-F-11-?	N/A	11
P-ii-F-12-?	N/A	12
P-iii-G-13-?	N/A	13
P-iii-G-14-?	N/A	14
P-iii-H-15-M	Mother	15
P-iii-H-16-M	Mother	16
N/A	N/A	17
P-iii-J-18-F	Father	18
P-iv-K-19-M	Mother	19
P-iv-K-20-M	Mother	20
P-iv-L-21-M	Mother	21
P-iv-L-22-M	Mother	22
P-iv-M-23-M	Mother	23
N/A	N/A	24

Table 4: Characteristics of ECA leader sample

ECA leader		ECA	School
Code	Gender	code	code
L-i-A-m	Male	A	'i'
L-i-B-m	Male	B	'i'
L-i-C-f	Female	C	'i'
L-ii-D-f	Female	D	'ii'
L-ii-E-m	Male	E	'ii'
L-ii-F-f	N/A	F	'ii'
L-iii-G-m	N/A	G	'iii'
L-iii-H-f	Female	H	'iii'
L-iii-J-f	Female	J	'iii'
L-iv-K-m	Male	K	'iv'
L-iv-L-f	Female	L	'iv'
L-iv-M-m	Male	M	'iv'

3.11.2.1 Inclusion criteria: Students

The main study involved twenty student participants (12 male, 8 female). Students were aged between 11 years and 15 years (see Table 1 for breakdown of students' ages). For each ECA being explored, 2 students were invited to participate. It was hoped that one male and one female from each ECA would participate, yet due to the nature of some of the ECAs this was not possible – itself raising interesting issues

about the gendered nature of ECA participation (see discussion). An example of this being the sports-based ECA 'M' in school 'iv' which catered for one gender. Some ECAs were also more popular with one gender, and it proved difficult to gain consent from the limited number of students of the opposite gender participating. An example of this being ECA 'C' in school 'i' which had very low male participation. Attempts were made to include a male from this club however, due to time restrictions, the researcher had to then invite a second female to participate. This was also true of ECA 'B' in school 'i'.

3.11.2.2 Inclusion criteria: ECA leaders

This study included ECA leaders (5 male, 5 female) involved with the running of ten ECAs, across four schools. It was hoped that by involving key professionals within the research, they would be able to offer the researcher further context of the ECA. This context will be important to help understand and analyse the views and experiences of the students participating in the ECAs.

3.11.2.3 Inclusion criteria: Parents of students

This study includes fourteen parents of students (13 female, 1 male). By inviting the parents of students participating in ECAs, it was hoped that an additional perspective may be offered into how the students are experiencing ECAs they are involved in. By including parents, alongside key professionals within the research, the researcher was able to triangulate the data which increased validity (Robson, 2002). Twenty parents were invited to participate in this Phase of the research. Three parents declined the invitation to participate and two parents were not reachable during the interviewing time-frame, despite numerous contact attempts. The three parents who declined to participate were all from school 'i', which was referred to as having low parental involvement by a senior leader within the school.

3.11.3 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data for the Main Study of Phase Three. (See pages 36 and 44-45 regarding the development of the interview schedules).

The same data collection procedures employed during the Piloting of Phase Three were adopted during the Main Study of Phase Three. One student out of twenty

requested to have a friend with them during the interview. This request was granted. The 'friend' was not a participant of the study and did not talk during the interview.

3.11.4 Transcribing interviews

Following the interviewing process, recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim. The length of interviews varied between participants and across participant groups (Table 5). The participant group with the shortest average interview length was the parents. This might be explained by the interviews being conducted by telephone, which created distance between the researcher and interviewee. Some parents were also limited to how much time they were able to dedicate to the researcher.

Table 5: Participant interview lengths

Participant Group	Minimum length (minutes)	Maximum length (minutes)	Average length (minutes)
Students	11	26	17
Parents	12	22	15.4
ECA leaders	14	26	20.2

3.11.5 Data analysis

Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Adopting Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of data analysis involved following their six phases of thematic analysis:

1. Familiarisation with the data – the interview was played and transcribed to produce verbatim transcripts. The transcription process allowed the researcher to familiarise himself with the data and notice additional information missed during the interview.

2. Generation of initial codes – the transcripts were read again, with a focus on identifying further examples of the codes already established. Initial codes were given to sections of the text and the researcher reviewed the codes in their entirety; some codes were amalgamated or discarded.

3. Search for themes – the researcher combined different codes to form sub-themes and these sub-themes were categorised under over-arching themes. The consistency of these themes and sub-themes were considered with regards to the research questions and research aims.

4. Review themes – the original transcripts were revisited to ensure the emerging themes were representative of the data provided. This process

enabled internal consistency, which was measured by how codes represented the same construct.

5. Define and name themes – appropriate names of themes were developed to accurately reflect the data collected. These main themes were appropriate to the research questions. These theme names were developed to be easily understood by readers with varying knowledge of the research area.

6. Produce the report – the findings section of the Thesis illustrates the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data set. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to organise the data in a meaningful way on the basis of perceived patterns in responses.

3.11.6 Inter-rater reliability

Yardley (2008) recommends that coding should be corroborated across two or more individuals, to ensure the analysis makes sense to others and has been developed in a way that reflects the data. To ensure inter-rater reliability for the current study, the researcher shared one coded transcript with both supervisors. The same coded transcript was also shared with a colleague completing the Professional Doctorate who was familiar with the process of thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013). Codes devised by the researcher were considered, by supervisors and Doctorate colleague, to be suitable for the associated data.

3.12 Ethical considerations

The current study was conducted according to the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2010). Full ethical approval was gained from the Departmental Ethics Committee at the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the Institute of Education (UCL), for phases two and three of the research. The ethical considerations detailed below include: informed consent, confidentiality, disclosures, data storage and security, and dissemination of findings (see Ethics form in Appendix I).

3.12.1 Informed consent and sampling

Participant informed consent was obtained through consent forms (see Appendix II-V). All parties (students, parents, ECA leaders and school senior leaders) signed their own relevant consent forms. Written parental consent was also gained from parents of student participants in keeping with ethical guidelines. Student participants and school staff who gave consent to participate were interviewed on their respective

school's premises, thereby alleviating the degree of imposition. Parent participants were interviewed via telephone at a time which was convenient to them.

Participant consent was provided to:

- take part in a semi-structured interview about extra-curricular activities,
- allow any discussions to be audio recorded,
- allow the data collected being used within the findings of the current research.

3.12.2 Confidentiality, Data Storage and Security

Confidentiality was ensured at all times. Completed consent forms were given a code reference. From this point, each participant was referred to by their code reference only and so were anonymised. All consent forms were kept in a locked drawer in a desk, in a separate building to the laptop, which stored transcribed and analysed data. Data was stored in an encrypted folder on a laptop, which was password protected.

Audio recordings of the interviews were taken using a password protected iPhone and transferred directly into the encrypted folder before the researcher left the interview room.

The researcher ensured that only anonymised data was included within the findings section of this research, therefore no identifiable information was included within the presented interview quotes.

Participant codes applied in the reporting of data

Identification codes were assigned to all participants, to ensure anonymity, and these have been adopted in the presentation of data; see Table 6 for a reference of codes adopted.

Table 6: Participant Coding Key

Participant	Student	Parent	ECA Leader	Senior Manager
Code	S	P	L	SM

Notes: Codes incorporated: roman numerals for the school; letters for the ECA; and numbers for the students. Codes for parents included M (mother) / F (father), whilst the genders of leaders were represented by m (male) / f (female).

Several examples will now be listed to illustrate this coding for the reader:

S-i-A-1, represents a student (S) participating in ECA 'A' (A), from school 'i' (i). The number 1 indicates which of the students it was.

P-ii-E-9-M, represents the parent (P) mother (M) of student '9' (9), from school 'ii' (ii), participating in ECA 'E' (E).

L-iv-K-m, represents a male (m) ECA leader (L) of ECA 'K' (K), from school 'iv' (iv).

SM-ii represents the senior manager (SM) from school 'ii' (ii).

3.12.3 Disclosures

The research involved interviewing school staff, students, and parents. As the interviews centred on ECAs, disclosures were not considered likely. However, if a disclosure were to be made, the researcher's intended plan was to alert the designated safeguarding officer at the school. No disclosures were made during the interviews.

3.12.4 Sensitivity to Power Imbalance

Due the nature of the researcher's linked job role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, there was a need to be conscious of potential power imbalances. Sensitivity to such power imbalances was maintained by establishing supportive, respectful relationships with participants from the outset. This was achieved by explaining to participants during the time of completing the research related tasks, that I, as a TEP, was adopting the role of a researcher, which was different to the day-to-day role of being a TEP. The research relationship became more evenly balanced for participants by the researcher sharing with them, the TEP's various roles

3.12.5 Dissemination of findings

The participating schools of the study were provided with a summary of overall key themes which had emerged from the entire data set.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of qualitative data gathered from students (n=20), parents (n=14), ECA leaders (n=10) and school senior managers (n=4). The findings are presented in order to address the four research questions.

4.0.1 Identified themes and sub-themes

Thematic analysis contributed to the development of 15 themes and 48 sub-themes. A summary of these themes and sub-themes for each research questions are displayed in Figures 2-16.

4.1 Findings for RQ1: How are ECAs defined within the context of English secondary schools?

Three themes and 10 sub-themes emerged from the data from students, parents, ECA leaders and senior managers to answer RQ1 (Table 7).

Table 7: Themes and sub-themes of RQ1

Theme	Sub-theme
Variation-within-ECAs	Variation-of-activities
	Varied-frequency-and-occurrence
	Varied-range-of-participants
A-change-from-formal-learning	Optional-participation
	Increased-social-interactions
	Less-academic-focus
	Less-staff-directed-and-more-student-led
Perceived-value-to-ECAs	ECAs-focus-on-interests
	ECAs-are-educational
	ECAs-are-enjoyable

Notes: The themes and sub-themes have been hyphenated because they are titles of the themes and sub-themes.

4.1.1 Theme: Variation-within-ECAs

This theme refers to the variation across activity types, the frequency and occurrence of ECAs, and in the range of students participating in them (as illustrated in Figure 2). One particular parent's views of ECAs encapsulated the key essence of this theme:

"I think they're quite broad ranged…offering lots of different things to suit lots of different children really."   [P-iv-K-19-M]

Figure 2: Variation-within–ECAs and interrelated sub-themes
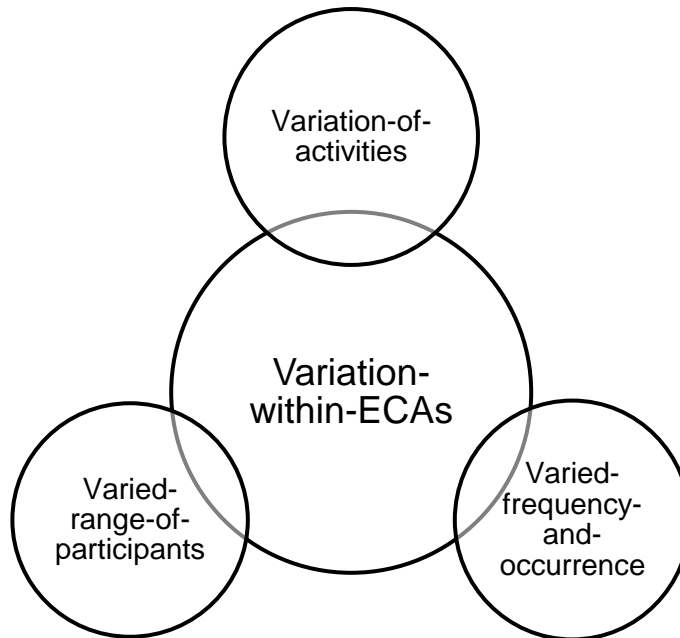
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the variation within ECAs, a key sub-theme related to the variety of activities available to students, both as ECAs as an entity and within ECAs.

4.1.1.1 Sub-theme: Variation-of-activities

Many participants, across participant groups and across schools, highlighted a wide variety of ECAs on offer within their respective secondary schools. ECAs were mainly linked to the creative arts, sports, and specific subjects:

"There's Art club…history club…maths club…sports clubs- football, rugby, basketball, gymnastics...ICT"   [S-ii-E-10]

Some ECAs were also reported to consist of a variety of *activities*, including competitions and fundraising events. An ECA leader gave an example of this, as she discussed the competitions accessible to participants of her creative writing club:

"…we do external competitions and things that they can enter their writing in, to kind of school-wide, nation-wide competitions."   [L-ii-D-f]

Not only were ECAs seen to be varied in terms of the activities made available to students, but ECAs were also considered to be variable with regards to frequency and occurrence.

4.1.1.2 Sub-theme: Varied-frequency-and-occurrence

Responses across participant groups indicated the variation regarding when and how often, ECAs operated. ECAs were considered activities which took place at various stages of the day, including before school, after school and during recreational times.

One parent considered ECAs to be an activity which took place at lunch time or after school:

> *"An afterschool or a lunch time activity that the children can take part in away from their normal everyday subjects."*   [P-iv-L-21-M]

Some ECAs occurred at particular stages of the school year, as illustrated by a senior manager when he highlighted the summer school which runs for upcoming Year 7s:

> *"I do the summer school for a week in the summer holidays…[for] students that will need extra support in terms of transition."*   [SM-iii-M]

Other ECAs offered within schools took place throughout the school year. An ECA leader illustrated examples of ECAs available to students in her school over the course of an entire year:

> *"…drama runs…throughout the year…music runs…throughout the year."*
> [L-i-c-f]

Variation within ECAs also covered the variety of participants whom participated in ECAs, as well as the variation in timings.

4.1.1.3 Sub-theme: Varied-range-of-participants

Participants considered ECAs to cater for a range of students, regardless of age or ability. In some cases schools opened ECAs up to everyone, and then adapted activities within the ECA according to participants' needs, as highlighted by a senior leader:

> *"[ECAs are] open to everybody…everybody is invited, they will then…cater for …more abled…and the less abled, so they differentiate in that way."*
> [SM-iv-M]

When a student was asked to define ECAs, his response supported the notion that ECAs are activities which are open to all. He described an ECA as:

> *"an activity which like all people can do…it doesn't matter what the age group you are."*   [S-i-A-1]

Whilst ECAs were considered to be open to the majority of students, some appeared to be targeted towards particular individuals more than others. A parent commented:

> *"the club she goes to, obviously that's just set up for children that have a few struggles for school, friendship wise or whatever."*   [P-iii-H-16-M]

Some students in schools were highlighted by school staff as needing extra support in a particular area, e.g. social skills. There were also varying needs and differences amongst participants of these ECAs, as indicated by an ECA leader when talking about who participates in the club:

> *"…it's for students we like to improve their social skills. Some of the children are SEN, some are quite hyperactive I have to say, some of the boys."*
>   [L-iii-H-f]

ECAs were not only defined, by students, parents and ECA leaders, in terms of the theme of variety, but also in terms of being different to formal learning.

4.1.2 Theme: A-change-from-formal-learning

This theme emerged from participants' voicing their definition of ECAs in relation to the context of formal learning, e.g. lessons. Students, parents, ECA leaders and senior managers all underlined a change from formal learning with regards to ECAs. Figure 3 illustrates the sub-themes subsumed within 'a-change-from-formal-learning'.

Figure 3: A-change-from-formal-learning and interrelated sub-themes
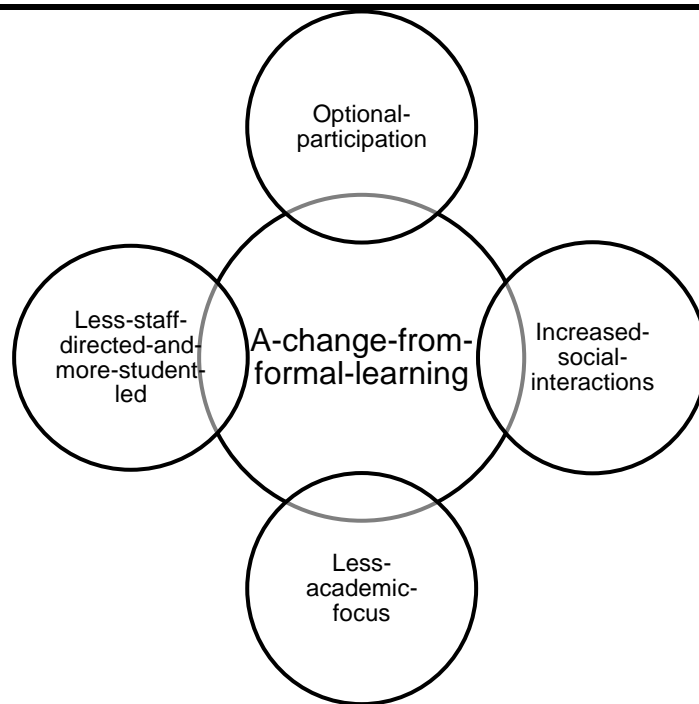
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

One of the underlying sub-themes, which characterised ECAs being different to formal learning, emerged from the perceived view that participation in ECAs was optional to students.

4.1.2.1 Sub-theme: Optional-participation

Many students, ECA leaders, senior managers and some parents considered ECAs to be definable by their voluntary participation, as opposed to lessons where participation of students was compulsory. This was illustrated by an ECA leader:

> *"It's not compulsory, they don't have to come…it's so different from lessons…in lessons if they miss it they have to catch up."* [L-iv-L-f]

Parents supported this notion, of students not being obliged to attend or participate in ECAs:

> *"you are not obliged to do them [ECAs]…they are quite different in that sense. You don't have any choice…going to maths for example."* [P-iii-J-18-F]

It was also noted that, not only was ECA participation optional to students but there was also flexibility for those who do decided to participate. One student illustrated how students were not obliged to participate in every session:

> *"some people don't want to do the lesson…you are being forced to do something you don't want to do, but in the club you can choose…one week if you decide you don't want to do it anymore, you don't have to..."* [S-ii-E-9]

Aside from ECAs being viewed as different to formal learning as a result of the perceived optional participation, the increased level of social interaction was also highlighted.

4.1.2.2 Sub-theme: Increased-social-interactions

All participant groups, including many parent participants, commented on an increased level of social interaction between students which took place in ECAs. This is in comparison to school lessons where, one might presume, more teacher-to-student interaction takes place and less student-to-student interaction. These increased social interactions was apparent from responses which illustrated students working as part of a team within ECAs:

> *"it also brings them together to work as a team…which sometimes perhaps not so much happens in a class lesson."* [P-i-A-2-M]

Increased social interactions were also visible by the increased levels of group work within ECAs, as illustrated by an ECA leader:

> *"It might also include more group projects…working with a different brief and working as groups I would say."* [L-ii-E-m]

The increased level of social interaction within ECAs was not the only characteristic which indicated ECAs as being different to formal learning. ECAs were also considered to be different to formal learning as there was considered to be less academic focus within ECAs.

4.1.2.3 Sub-theme: Less-academic-focus

Across participant groups, ECAs were considered to be less academically focused than other school-based activities, i.e. lessons. This sub-theme emerged from the view that ECAs were considered to be more informal, with less prescribed rules, as

well as offering a more relaxed overall environment for their participants. ECAs were also considered to be something separate to the school curriculum.

Some participants described ECAs as being additional to timetabled lessons, as illustrated by one ECA leader:

> *"…it's extra-curricular, curricular being lesson delivery, timetabled lesson delivery, anything else outside of that would be extra-curricular."*   [L-iv-K-m]

Whereas, others spoke of ECAs being outside of the curriculum:

> *"it's [ECA is] anything that goes on outside of…the classroom…not just outside of the classroom…outside the curriculum… it's when people…do break and lunch time…after school clubs."*   [L-i-B-m]

The different focus within ECAs, compared to lessons, was raised by students and ECA leaders. ECAs were considered to allow greater flexibility to its participants, with regards to what they get out of it:

> *"It allows me to express my ideas more than I would be able to, in a…constructed lesson…like… a normal English lesson…isn't to allow the child's creativity to grow it's to teach them the necessary parts of the language…"*   [S-ii-D-7]

Students across schools appeared to indicate a link between the relaxed environment of an ECA and their reduced academic focus:

> *"They're [ECAs] a bit different because you can…talk…it's…more fun and you can have music in the background…you can sit where you want…laugh…you don't have to learn a certain thing. You can go onto other things."* [S-iii-H-16]

With ECAs being considered less academically focused, a defining characteristic of how ECAs differ from formal learning, the role of staff appeared important within participant responses. Staff were considered to have less of a direct role within ECAs, as these activities were thought to be more student led.

4.1.2.4 Sub-theme: Less-staff-directed-and-more-student-led

Participants' interview responses indicated ECAs to be less directed by staff and more student led, than other school-based activities. Students were considered to have greater ownership of ECA content, with less prescribed tasks, goals and targets more

commonly found within lessons. Whilst this view was most widely shared amongst ECA leaders and students, parents also contributed towards this sub-theme.

Some ECA leaders highlighted the lack of prescribed tasks in ECAs, resulting in reduced adult expectations of the students:

> *"I'm not setting them tasks…not having massive expectations of them. They're not having to produce any work in the class, for my intervention."*   [L-iii-J-f]

Student also perceived a lack of a prescribed plan and tasks as being key features of ECAs:

> *"…you get to do what you really want to do, there's no guideline, you have your freedom and have more freedom what you want."*   [S-iii-H-15]

Parents appeared less confident in outlining the content of ECAs, they did, however, indicate a perceived lack of prescribed targets placed on students in ECAs:

> *"I'm not entirely sure…the clubs how much…they [students] have to meet, criteria wise or whether it is just something that is open and available for children to go along to. They're not necessarily meeting any particular curriculum…"*   [P-iii-H-16-M]

ECAs were considered to represent change from formal learning, due to a number of key differences e.g. less academic focus and optional participation, as raised by participants of the research. Such differences were not the only potential definable traits of ECAs however. ECAs were also seen as a context with perceived value.

4.1.3 Theme: Perceived-value-to-ECAs

In defining ECAs, participants considered ECAs to have attached value, be it educational, enjoyable and an opportunity for students to focus on their interests. Figure 4 illustrates the sub-themes subsumed within 'perceived-value-to-ECAs'.

Figure 4: Perceived-value-to-ECAs and interrelated sub-themes
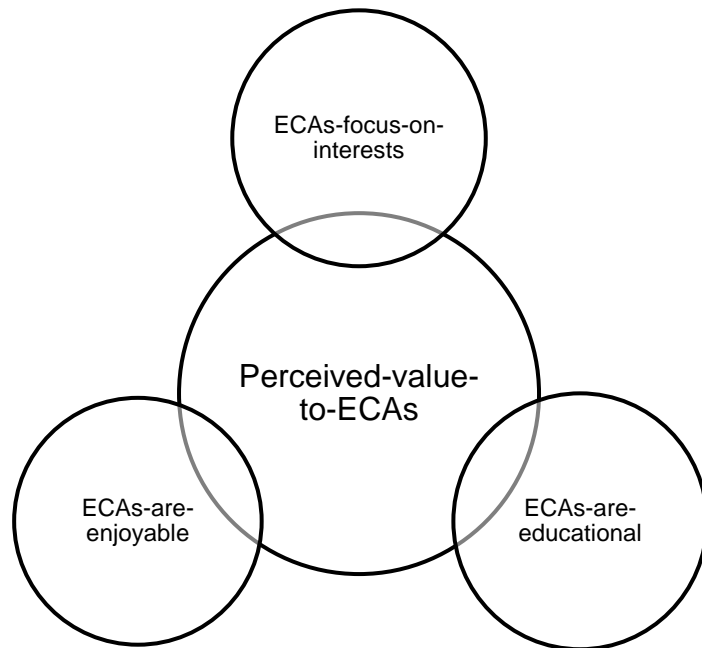
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the perceived value to ECAs, a key sub-theme related to the opportunity ECAs provide in allowing students to focus on interests.

4.1.3.1 Sub-theme: ECAs-focus-on-interests

Parents and ECA leaders both defined ECAs as being activities connected to students' hobbies or interests. An ECA leader highlighted students' individuality, by illustrating how students chose to participate in ECAs which might be linked to their hobby:

> *"…something of choice…connected to a hobby…something they enjoy"*

[L-iii-J-f]

Parents also likened ECAs to that of a hobby, in connection with their child's interest:

> *"It's like a hobby of an interest"* [P-ii-D-8-M]

As well as ECAs being a context in which students could focus on their interests, ECAs were also seen to have educational value.

4.1.3.2 Sub-theme: ECAs-are-educational

ECAs were considered to be an activity which holds educational value, be it to provide an opportunity for learning or to improve academic attainment. Many students supported this notion:

> *"something fun to do…with your friends that you can also learn something with"*   [S-ii-E-10]

> *"I would define it [an ECA] as an activity…which can help improve your grade within school."*   [S-ii-D-7]

Parents also considered ECAs to be educational:

> *"They [ECAs] are educational no matter what the lesson might be."*
>   [P-ii-E-9-M]

Not only were ECAs considered definable in terms of an educational context, ECAs were also characterised as enjoyable activities for those participating in them.

4.1.3.3 Sub-theme: ECAs-are-enjoyable

Participant groups, particularly students, viewed ECAs as enjoyable activities. This was illustrated by the following student and ECA leader, in their comparison of ECAs to lessons:

> *"more enjoyable I guess…its [ECA] something else to look forward to at the end of the school day"*   [S-i-B-4]

> *"generally a club to me is slightly less stressful, more enjoyable"*
>   [L-iv-L-f]

Participants of the current study indicated ECAs to encompass wide-ranging contexts, such as sports, creative arts, and activities pertaining to academic enrichment. These activities took place at varying times. ECAs were also perceived to be a context in which students took on more of a directive role than in other elements of secondary school life. ECAs were considered to be different to the core curriculum and formal learning. Whilst some participants considered ECAs to be less academically focused, they were seen also seen to be a context which offered educational value. Students were also regarded as having greater personal freedom

with ECAs, as they personally chose to participate, and were able to focus on areas of personal interest.

4.2 Findings for RQ2: What is the rationale attributed to English secondary school-based ECAs from participants of different types: ECA leaders, students and parents?

Three themes and 10 sub-themes emerged from the data from students, parents and ECA leaders to answer RQ2 (Table 8)

Table 8: Themes and sub-themes of RQ2

Theme	Sub-theme
Develop-students'-skills-and-interests	Attempt-to-include-targeted-children-for academic-enrichment
	Opportunities-to-pursue-aspirations-and-interests
	Support-social-and-emotional-skills
Systemic-factors	Continuation-of-established-practice
	School-image
	Culture-and-ethos-of-promoting-holistic-development
	Logistical-capacity
	Teacher-interests
Provide-a-safe-environment	Support-working-parents
	Keep-students-safe

Notes: The themes and sub-themes have been hyphenated because they are titles of the themes and sub-themes.

4.2.1 Theme: Develop-students'-skills-and-interests

This theme refers to schools' key rationale of ECAs being run to develop the skills and interests of their participants (as illustrated in Figure 5). Students, parents and ECA leaders believed ECAs were offered, by schools, to students to support social and emotional skills. It was also thought that ECAs were run to provide opportunities for students to pursue aspirations and interests. Some ECAs were also geared towards targeted students, to support academic enrichment.

Figure 5: Develop-students'-skills-and-interests and interrelated sub-themes
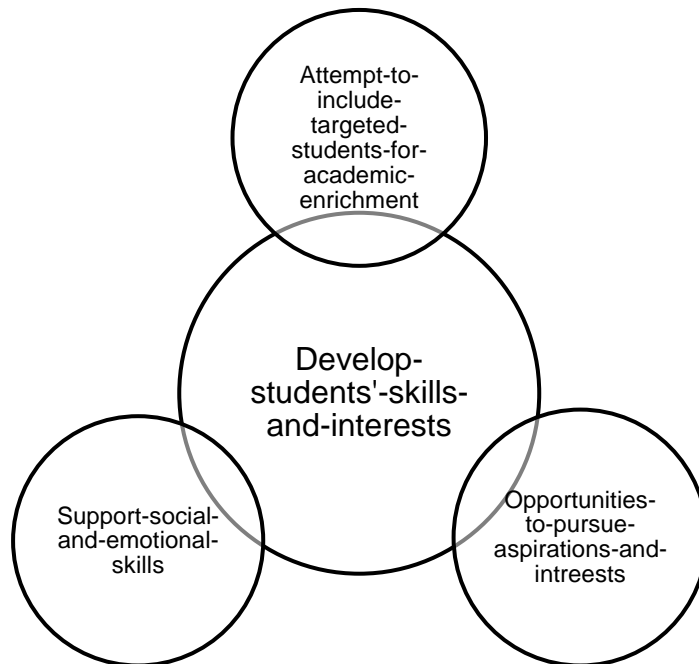
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the development of students' skills and interests, a key sub-theme related to the attempt by school staff to involve targeted students with a view to support academic enrichment.

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme: Attempt-to-include-targeted-students-for-academic-enrichment

ECA leaders, parents and students suggested, by their interview responses, school staff targeting students for academic enrichment was a key issue. All participants groups discussed ECAs being used to promote the associated subject for GCSE level, supporting students' learning and academic success.

An ECA leader illustrated how ECAs could be construed as being used to spot potential GCSE candidates:

> *"we try…pinpoint…ones…more artistic…more likely to pick art at GCSE…they have this book that they do outside of class and they come and find us...to show us their work…it's…introducing them to projects and how everything links together."* [L-ii-E-M]

The response of a student also supported the notion of ECAs being run to support learning:

> *"the teachers would like to help other children progress in their lessons, so it will speed up learning time for everyone so it doesn't hold back a whole class."*
>
> [S-i-C-6]

Parents also attributed a rationale for ECAs, from a school's perspective, with a desire to support students' learning:

> *"To help, to help with their education…to give them support."*   [P-i-C-5-M]

ECAs were shown to operate in secondary-schools, not only for the purpose of supporting academic enrichment, but to also offer opportunities to students to pursue personal interests and aspirations.

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme: Opportunities-to-pursue-aspirations-and-interests

Within this sub-theme, ECA leaders, students and parents considered the desire to inspire students and develop their passions, as well as supporting them in achieving their life goals as factors behind the rationale of ECAs.

It appears that school staff acknowledged the passions of students by providing them with opportunities to explore these in greater detail:

> *"…any child who has a passion, we'd like to keep them after school and say 'look, we'll do that with you."*
>
> [L-i-C-f]

In considering their schools' rationale for operating ECAs, students highlighted their interpretation of their schools' desire of inspiring students as well as their hope for students to achieve life goals:

> *"…possibly, yeah, to just like motivate people, to inspire them to do something, to be inspiring as well."*
>
> [S-iii-J-18]

> *"I found that with loads of clubs, this school is a bit open minded to everything like trying to help everyone reach their goals in life."*
>
> [S-ii-E-9]

Providing students with opportunities to explore potential interests was also perceived to be an element of schools' rationale behind ECAs:

> *"To offer extra things for different children…they're giving children opportunities to try different things, see kind of where they fit."*   [P-iv-K-19-M]

A further sub-theme which related to supporting students develop skills and interests, included the desire for schools to support students' social and emotional skills.

4.2.1.3 Sub-theme: Support-social-and-emotional-skills

Another factor which appeared to be linked to the rationale behind ECAs, by students, ECA leaders and parents, included supporting the social and emotional skills of students. This included building students' confidence, sense of belonging, social skills and supporting friendship development.

ECA leaders often said that building social skills was a core aspect of the rationale behind running particular ECAs. One ECA leader expressed how the desire to support YP with social skills difficulties and build friendships was a preliminary motivator for the ECA:

> *"…we wanted to start a group that was a social group…we had…people coming in who didn't have particularly good social skills…they were struggling in making new friends in classes."*   [L-iii-H-f]

Parents also believed a school's goal to support social skills development was a key motivator in the rationale for providing ECAs, as illustrated by one parent:

> *"I think…to bring K [child] out of himself…I think it [participating in ECAs]…is a way of encouraging him to socialise with people, verbally socialise with him…his social interactions are sometimes…inappropriate…that's probably why they thought this would be good for K."*   [P-iii-J-18-F]

All participant groups suggested that developing a student's sense of belonging was a further motivational factor behind ECAs. A student acknowledged that ECAs were used to support students in belonging to a group or wider sub-culture within a school:

> *"Because they want everyone to fit in somewhere, whether that's like art or sport, everyone has a group of people that do the same kind of thing as them"*
> [S-i-A-2]

Participants of the research indicated schools to be influenced by more than the desire to support students' skills and interests. The rationale behind offering ECAs was also linked with systemic factors.

4.2.2 Theme: Systemic-factors

Students, parents and ECA leaders considered systemic factors to play a role in the rationale behind secondary school based ECAs (As illustrated in Figure 6). The school's image, culture and ethos of promoting holistic development, logistical capacity were sub-themes which emerged from participants. Teachers' interests as well as the continuation of established practice were further sub-themes which underpinned how the rationale was influenced by systemic factors.

Figure 6: Systemic-factors and interrelated sub-themes
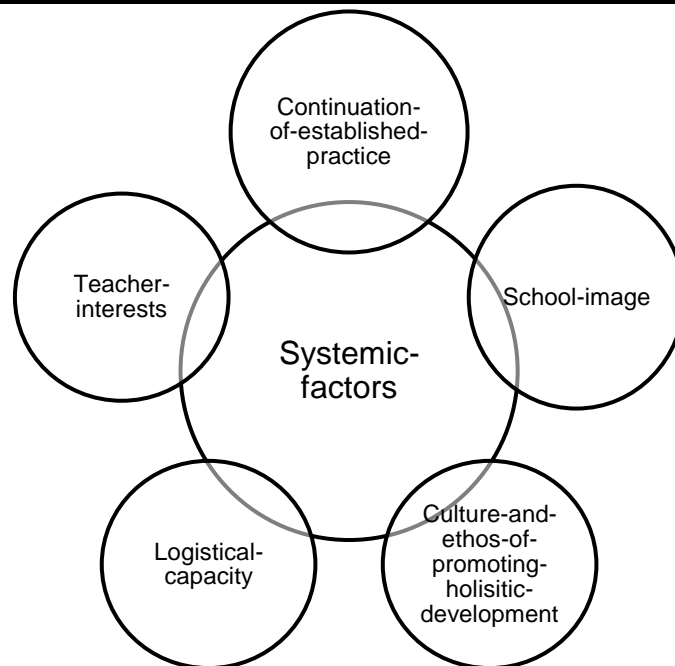
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the systemic factors which influenced schools' running of ECAs, a key sub-theme related to schools (and school staff) continuing with established practice.

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme: Continuation-of-established-practice

ECA leaders appeared to suggest a link between the rationale behind ECAs and continuation of established practice within their respective schools. Some of their

comments illustrated their respective schools' history of running ECAs and acknowledging the place of ECAs within school life:

> *"Since I've been here, they've always run it…so many different clubs…run in the school, over each year it might change slightly, but generally the same ones go ahead, the school is very much for them."* [L-iv-L-f]

Whilst further comments by ECA leaders, demonstrated the longevity of their respective ECAs:

> *"I actually set it up, and it was, oh my goodness, five years ago."* [L-iii-H-f]

As schools maintained running ECAs, as part of the status quo, the rationale behind ECAs was also believed to be influenced by the desire to portray a positive school image.

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme: School-image

The comments of students, parents and ECA leaders suggested the potential positive school image which can emerge from the running of ECAs and viewed this as contributing to the school's rationale for ECAs.

A student illustrated the perception among students of the school being seen in a favourable light by prospective students and ECAs enticing them to join the school:

> *"The school obviously gets a very good look…other primary schools which can come and enjoy music activities…the primary school children might want to come and join our school when they're older and take part in more of these activities."* [S-iv-K-20]

Parents also implied that ECAs can be good advertisement for other prospective students, as illustrated by one parent when she mentioned this being a motivational factor for her own child's choice of secondary school:

> *"…it would just promote the school more…If they see children are happy that are already there. It would make the other children want to go there…that's why S wanted to go there. He's always wanted to go to the school because he knew how sporty…it was."* [P-iv-M-23-M]

There was a belief amongst participants that school culture and ethos played a role in the rationale behind school-based ECAs. Schools which operated ECAs, were considered to want to promote the holistic development of students.

4.2.2.3 Sub-theme: Culture-and-ethos-of-promoting-holistic development

Interviews with ECA leaders and parents suggested an acknowledgement of a school's culture and ethos for supporting the holistic development of its students.

School ethos is considered to be part of a reciprocal relationship with ECAs, as the culture and ethos of a school feeds into the rationale behind secondary school-based ECAs. However, ECAs were also seen to contribute to the culture and ethos of a school. This was illustrated by the views of an ECA leader:

> *"…it's not prescribed but I think it's so important to the other side of things and the general culture of the school and students."*   [L-i-B-m]

Parents' comments suggested they considered how ECAs help support the holistic development of their child, and perceived this positive attribute of ECAs as something important to the school's rationale for ECAs:

> *"ECAs are very important for children, it helps to develop a lot of self-confidence, belief in themselves…independence…in the long run it does benefit the school…children gain…confidence…they have more confidence when they do their work. It gives them avenues to explore."*   [P-ii-10-M]

A further sub-theme which related to systemic factors, influencing schools' rationale for ECAs, included logistical capacity. Logistical capacity related to the limits within schools which impacted on how, when and why certain ECAs operated.

4.2.2.4 Sub-theme: Logistical-capacity

ECA leaders, in their interview responses, highlighted the impact of logistical capacity: time, space, resources, facilities and availability of staff on what ECAs were run, as well as their occurrence and frequency.

An ECA leader commented on the restrictions which might limit how the ECA she runs could evolve over time:

> *"I would have to be careful if the numbers started going up… we haven't got a lot of time…we haven't got a lot of space…we haven't got a lot of lego…I can't have too many kids but maybe we could have a changeover, I might do another day."*   [L-iii-J-f]

A further ECA leader reported on the time available to students and how their interest in multiple club may lead to staff having to negotiate the timetabling of ECAs:

> *"Definitely they [school]…want to run as many clubs as possible. It's the time frame though…whenever I plan my club I check to make sure that art club isn't on at the same time…my pupils will want to go to art as well as come to mine."*   [L-iv-L-f]

An ECA leader highlighted facility availability as influencing the options open to students. Whilst the PE department would like to provide opportunities to as many students as possible in his respective school, space restricts the ECA's offerings:

> *"We try to have in Year 7, A, B, and C teams for most of things…We try and go as big as we can, the problems we have are facility wise we can't do any more than a C team."*   [L-iv-M-m]

A final sub-theme linked to the systemic factors influencing schools' rationale for ECAs, related to the role of teachers: teachers' passions and interests.

4.2.2.5 Sub-theme: Teacher-passions-and-interests

ECA leaders' and parents' comments suggested that they recognised the role of personal interests and passions of staff in the rationale for running ECAs.

One ECA leader, in his interview, spoke of his passion for the subject as being a driver as to why he runs ECAs linked to his department:

> *"…you are a musician because you love music…We are not contractually obliged to be running those ECAs. We're not forced to do so…we do so out of the love for our subject and the love for music making and the opportunities…that provides."*   [L-iv-K-m]

A parent of a student who took part in one of the above leader's ECAs made comments which supported the idea of passion being important to the running of ECAs, and how visible this was to the participating students

> *"…they've [students] got Mr D who is passionate about music…you can see that in every musical performance they put on, how passionate he is…the students look up to him and rave about how good he is."*   [P-iv-K-M]

Another ECA leader added further cross-school support for teacher's interests' influence in the rationale of ECAs as she highlighted a personal interest to extend the offering of ECAs within the English Department:

> *"With English in particular, we've done a lot of…clubs that are to do with…poetry and things like that but I wanted a creative writing club that would encompass all sorts of different things…I really enjoyed doing that, I really enjoyed teaching it."*   [L-ii-D-f]

Systemic factors and the desire to develop students' skills and interests were not the only themes linked to schools' rationale behind ECAs. A further theme emerged from participants' responses, which indicated the desire to provide a safe environment for students as a further rationale.

4.2.3 Theme: Provide-safe-environment

Both parents and ECA leaders, in their comments, reported a contributing factor behind their perception of the rationale of ECAs being offered was to provide a safe space for students, be it during the school day or outside of the ordinary school day. Figure 7 illustrates the sub-themes subsumed within 'provide-safe-environment'.

Figure 7: Provide-safe-environment and interrelated sub-themes
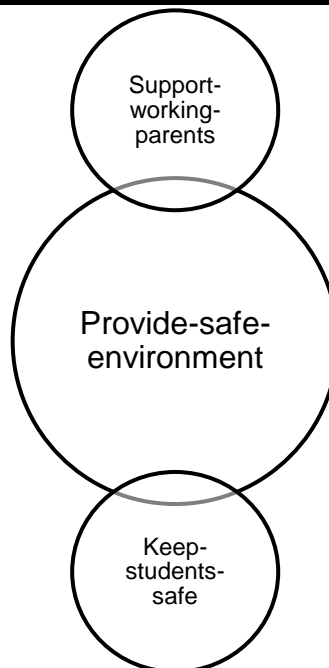
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the desire to provide a safe environment for students, a key sub-theme related to the belief in schools' wanting to support working parents.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme: Support-working-parents

Parents' comments highlighted their concerns, as working parents, about their child's safety and wellbeing after the core school day had finished. By offering students something after school, schools were supporting working parents:

> "…to help working parents and to stop…children just hanging around on the street. I certainly like that…I am self-employed, I sometimes have to work a bit longer. It's nice knowing he's in an educational and…safe environment."
> [P-ii-E-9-M]

An ECA leader considered working parents when, in his comments, he discussed the school's rationale for offering ECAs to students:

> "…a lot of children don't have somebody at home between the hours of 7 [am] and 6 [pm]…we are providing them an option to be in school early and be active, doing stuff after school…they're off the streets, they're busy, they're involved. For parents, it means there is that option of additional child care in later hours."
> [L-iv-M-m]

Responses from participants acknowledged that some parents of students worked for durations in excess of the core school day. A closely linked sub-theme to this view related to schools' desire to keep students safe.

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme: Keep-students-safe

Parents believed schools considered students' safety, after school hours, by offering options to keep them occupied. This was apparent from comments such as the one below:

> "…one to keep the children occupied afterschool…if…their parents aren't due to be in until later on in the evenings, if it's like a specialised club…children become involved...It's a good way of keeping the children out of trouble…keep them off the streets.."
> [P-i-C-6-M]

Another parent echoed this sentiment: schools wanting to provide a safe environment for students outside of the core school day. ECAs were seen as a means to accomplish this:

"It offers them something to do after school, instead of hanging around on the street corner, which for me is quite important I feel…A completely safe space and safe environment" [P-i-A-2-M]

Participants of the current study indicated a number of factors linked to the rationale behind secondary school based ECAs. The three key themes included: developing students' skills and interests; systemic factors; and providing a safe environment. Schools were perceived to want to provide students with opportunities to support the development of a variety of skills. Responses from participants also indicated a belief that schools desired to provide a safe-base for students, especially given how some parents work hours in excess of the normal school day. Systemic factors: school image; logistical capacity; teachers' interests; school culture and ethos were also linked to schools' rationale for secondary school based ECAs.

4.3 Findings for RQ 3: What are the potential benefits of participating in school-based ECAs within English secondary schools for ECA leaders, students and parents?

Four themes and 13 sub-themes emerged from data of students, parents and ECA leaders to answer RQ3 (Table 9).

Table 9: Themes and sub-themes of RQ3

Theme	Sub-theme
Positive-relationships	Chance-for-positive-peer-interactions
	Building-friendships
	Positive-teacher-student-relationships
Building-skills-and-pursuing-interests	Increased-academic-abilities
	Opportunities-for-learning
	Personal-developmental-skills
	Opportunities-for-following-interests-and-aspirations
	Building-social-and-communication-skills
Increased-wellbeing	Benefits-to-students'-social-emotional-and-mental-health
	Physical-health
	Parental-wellbeing
Viewing-school-positively	Parental-engagement
	Students-positively-engaged-with-school-system

Notes: The themes and sub-themes have been hyphenated because they are titles of the themes and sub-themes.

4.3.1 Theme: Positive-relationships

Responses from students, parents and ECA leaders all indicated positive relationships as a benefit of participating in school-based ECAs: offering chances for positive peer interactions, building friendships and positive teacher-student relationships underpinned the overall benefit of positive relationships (as illustrated in Figure 8).

Figure 8: Positive-relationships and interrelated sub-themes
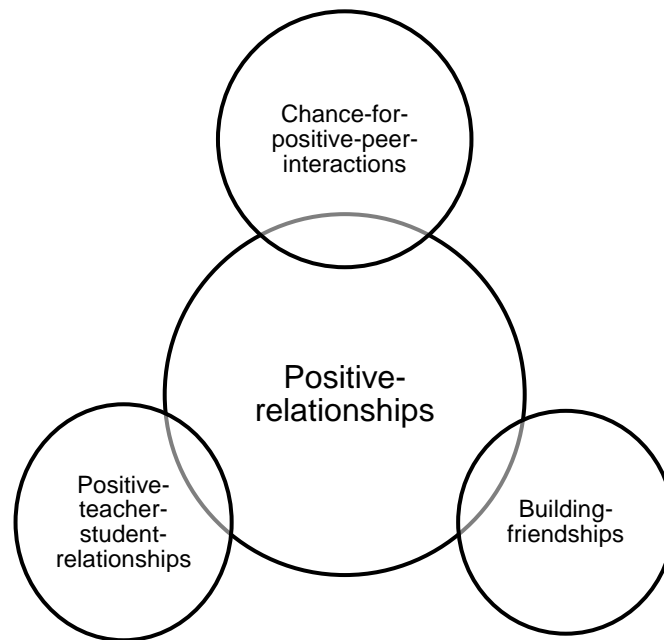
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the positive relationships which emerge from ECA participation, a key sub-theme related to the opportunities ECAs offer students for positive peer interactions.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme: Chance-for-positive-peer-interactions

Many participants, across participant groups, highlighted a beneficial opportunity for peers to interact positively as one of the advantages of ECA activity. ECAs were seen to provide students with the chance to meet with different people, as illustrated by the comments of a parent:

> *"…it gives him the opportunity to meet people that he wouldn't necessarily talk to otherwise outside of that club…"*　　　　　　　　　　[P-iv-L-21-M]

The opportunity to meet and collaborate with others from different year groups, (and interact outside of the ECA context as well) was also considered beneficial, as indicated by the comments of an ECA leader:

> *"…I've got all different age groups in here…in lessons they only work with their peers in that age group, whereas, in drama club they work with years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, which is wonderful… I'm on duty of a lunch time as well, they'll come over and the year 7s will talk to the year 9s…in their time…it breaks that barrier down."*　　　　　　　　　　[L-i-C-f]

Students, in their responses, commented on the benefit of having more people to interact with outside of the ECA context as a result of participating in ECAs:

> *"you have more people to talk to during lesson time, well not lesson time but break time so you can talk about that certain subject with others that share the same interest."*   [S-i-C-6]

Some participants considered ECAs to provide more than the chance for students to have positive peer interactions. A further sub-theme, linked to positive relationships, theme related to the chance to build friendships.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme: Building-friendships

Consistent with respondents' belief that participation in ECAs offered students the chance for positive peer interactions, all participant groups in the current research highlighted the development of friendships as another potential benefit. Students, it was suggested, had been able to develop new friendships by participating in school-based ECAs, as well as build pre-existing friendships.

Parents, in their comments, valued ECAs for the opportunities they offered students with regards to building friendships, as illustrated by a parent where she talked about the benefit felt by her daughter:

> *"ECAs are fantastic…M [child] absolutely loves every moment of…school clubs. She's also made the nicest group of friends who partake in the…clubs."*   [P-i-A-2-M]

Many students referenced the benefit of the ECA environment for gaining new friends, as well as the benefit that ECA participation had on existing friendships. A student indicated the development of friendships was linked with the context of shared interests attached to the ECA:

> *"…because it's such like a tight-knit group, you gain friends…it would strengthen it because you both share the same interests."*   [S-i-C-5]

ECA leaders, in their comments, also considered shared interests as a basis for friendships between students. An ECA leader illustrated how the subject of the ECA provided students with a shared interest:

> *"… the important element of it is they've got this shared interest…they've got the shared musical thing and it's what their friendships are kind of based on."*
>   [L-i-B-m]

A further sub-theme, beyond those related to students' relations with peers and friends, was linked to positive relationships which developed between teachers and students.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme: Positive-teacher-student-relationships

Students, parents and ECA leaders all considered participating in school-based ECAs as contributing to positive teacher-student relationships.

These comments suggested that the increased interaction between students and teachers was seen to allow both parties to get to know one another in a more relaxed, less formal context:

> *"It's been really nice for me to see different students…I definitely feel there's a good relationship…it promotes those kind of conversations that make that the teacher student a bit more relaxed out of the normal classroom environment."* [L-ii-D-f]

Whilst ECA leaders' comments acknowledged getting to know more about students through running ECAs, it was suggested by students that they themselves also believed seeing teachers in a different light helped them develop a positive working relationship with them:

> *"I feel like I can talk to them more…like what I'm doing…I think you do sort of trust staff more, once you go to other clubs and obviously learn more with them individually."* [S-i-B-4]

Positive relations was not the only benefit attributed to ECA participation. A further beneficial theme, which emerged from participants' responses, related to students to building their skills and pursuing interests.

4.3.2 Theme: Building-skills-and-pursuing-interests

Comments from all of the participant groups discussed the benefit of students accessing learning opportunities: chances to follow interests and aspirations; build social and communication skills and increase their academic abilities (as illustrated in Figure 9).

Figure 9: Building-skills-and-pursuing-interests and interrelated sub-themes

Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of ECAs supporting students to build skills and pursue interests, a key sub-theme related to the impact ECA participation had on academic abilities.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme: Increased-academic-abilities

Participation in ECAs was considered, by all participant groups, to help improve students' attainments and support students make faster academic progress. One ECA leader explicitly linked the increased running of ECAs, within his department, and stronger GCSE performance from students:

> *"I became head of department…the results here was 0% A* to C, at GCSE for music…that was 2014…then when we put on a show that first Christmas…from that the shows become the vocal point of the school year for these students and the results have gone up and up. So two years on from that we got 83%, through doing shows and stuff."* [L-i-B-m]

From their comments, parents also appeared to notice improvement in their child's academic performance, especially when it was linked to the ECA subject. This was illustrated by a parent, when she talked about the benefit of her daughter participating in a creative writing club:

> *"she's getting good grades for English you know, her spelling, her handwriting is so much better."* [P-ii-D-8-M]

Students' comments suggested a further benefit in being able to apply content being explored within ECAs to their lessons- this supported them in achieving higher grades in subsequent assessments:

> *"…if you are doing stimulus and freeze frames and expressions then in the actual drama class you could apply that to say your assessment you were doing because in October it's assessments and you could get a higher grade for that."* [S-i-C-5]

As part of ECAs supporting students to build skills and pursue interests, a further sub-theme related to ECAs offering students opportunities for learning.

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme: Opportunities-for-learning

Parents', students', and ECA leaders' comments all indicated the opportunities for learning from ECA participation. This was linked to the environment and set-up of ECAs being conducive to learning: the support available for students within ECAs, as well as the added benefit of students being pre-exposed to themes which might be applicable to classroom learning.

Comments from all the participant groups, considered the environment and set-up of ECAs to be a key factor in their benefit of providing opportunities for learning to participating students. One parent believed ECAs would have less disruptive students participating than in lessons, allowing her child to gain greater support from the teacher if it was needed:

> *"…if the class is a disruptive class then she might not get support or help, she might not be able to do the work…after school…she could get help with the work, it wouldn't be as disruptive for her…the disruptive children that are in the class won't be in the club…they'd be less likely to go."* [P-i-C-5-M]

However, students were also able, in their comments, to give examples of disruptive behaviour within lessons, which were not common in ECAs. This was illustrated by a student when he considered ECAs to be less noisy:

> *"[ECAs are] not as loud, some of the lessons I'm in people talk…like someone will shout..."* [S-iii-J-17]

Students' reports also acknowledged that ECAs offered the opportunity for students to work with greater flexibility, such as at their own pace:

> *"They'd [teachers] usually allow you to go off on your own path instead of following everyone else's…in lesson if you are teaching badminton, you will teach everyone at the same rate but if you go to an after school club you can go at your own speed."*   [S-iv-K-19]

Aside from ECA participation supporting students' academic abilities and providing an opportunity for learning, personal developmental skills were also considered to be positively impacted by students' participation in ECAs.

4.3.2.4 Sub-theme: Personal-development-skills

All participant groups pointed to the benefits ECA participation have on personal developmental skills. ECA leaders and parents suggested that students were able to develop greater skills related to independence and responsibility.

Some ECA leaders suggested that the experience ECAs offered had been considered supportive in developing students to become more independent. This was illustrated by an ECA leader when discussing how students are trusted to work individually without intrusive teacher input:

> *"…they're all individually working on different things…we need to trust that they will work on those and come back to us and we will have feedback in sessions together…they will go away…they become incredibly independent."*
> [L-ii-E-M]

Parents suggested the act of going to an ECA, and thereby the commitment a student, to be a learning experience for students: one which highlighted the importance of responsibility:

> *"…it teaches them a bit of grown up responsibility because it's extra-curricular …it is more their responsibility to go and to learn…I think it helps them in every aspect of life..."*   [P-ii-E-10-M]

As part of ECAs supporting students to build skills and pursue interests, a further key sub-theme related to the opportunities ECAs offer students to follow interests and aspirations.

4.3.2.4   Sub-theme: Opportunities-for-following-interests-and-aspirations

This sub-theme relates to ECAs offering students the chance to explore personal interests, more than is possible within the school timetable, as well as helping students move closer to their career goals.

One student illustrated how students have opportunity of spending more time on an area of interest for them. In her case, the student was able to better follow her own interests by participating in the Art ECA, as she had limited art lessons within her current academic year:

> *"…we don't actually get a lot of art lessons in this school…only…2-3 lessons a week…when I actually choose it for GCSEs I will get more lessons, but for now…art club is something extra I can do. It's more fun and everything."*
>
> [S-ii-E-10]

Parents, in their comments, saw the benefit of ECA participation, with regards to their child having opportunities linked to future career goals. A parent commented on how the drama ECA, which her daughter participated in, had provided her with the opportunity to learn skills needed in teaching performing arts, her daughter's ideal career choice:

> *"…she has her heart set on being…lecturer or teacher…she's able to work alongside the teachers quite a bit…like when they do warm-up for dance and drama she is able to take like small groups to do the warm-ups to give her experience of what she'd be doing, which is helpful to her."*   [P-i-C-6-M]

As part of ECAs supporting students to build skills and pursue interests, a key sub-theme related to building social and communication skills.

4.3.2.5 Sub-theme: Building-social-and-communication-skills

This sub-theme relates to the contribution of ECAs on developing students' social and communication skills.

ECA leaders, in their responses, suggested ECAs provided students with needed experiences related to social communication, something lessons were not thought to prioritise. This point was clearly illustrated by an ECA leader when he was asked about the impact ECAs have on students:

> *"I think socially…the whole-rounded character of a person, it has a massive impact on them…we've standardised education to people who can put pen to paper and not create people with skills…socially…they can't communicate and do all them types of things which is a shame."* [L-i-A-m]

Some parents, in their responses, also noticed a difference in their children's' social and communication skills, which they believed was linked to ECA participation. A parent commented on her son being more polite at home, something which she believed came from the interaction he had with peers in the ECA:

> *"As a result of him going, the home is better…he's just more polite…the social interaction he has with other people is helping him learn how to interact with everyone else around him…that has definitely changed over the time he's been there."* [P-iii-H-15-M]

Students' comments pinpointed examples of how sub-activities of an ECA were supportive in their developing social skills. One student outlined the opportunities to learn social skills, from the guidance of others, which helped her in contexts outside of the ECA e.g. playing games:

> *"…social skills and art skills and like play a bit fairer in games because you kind of have everyone to guide you in the right way and you know, learn more because if you are stuck on something the other people could help which makes you learn…"* [S-iii-H-16]

Aside from the impact ECA participation has on the ability for students to build their skills and pursue interests, a further beneficial theme to ECA participation includes increased wellbeing.

4.3.3 Theme: Increased-wellbeing

This theme emerged from interview data from across participant types: ECA leaders, parents and students. Their comments highlighted the impact of ECAs on strands of students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), physical health and consequent influence over parental wellbeing (as illustrated in Figure 10).

Figure 10: Increased-wellbeing and interrelated sub-themes
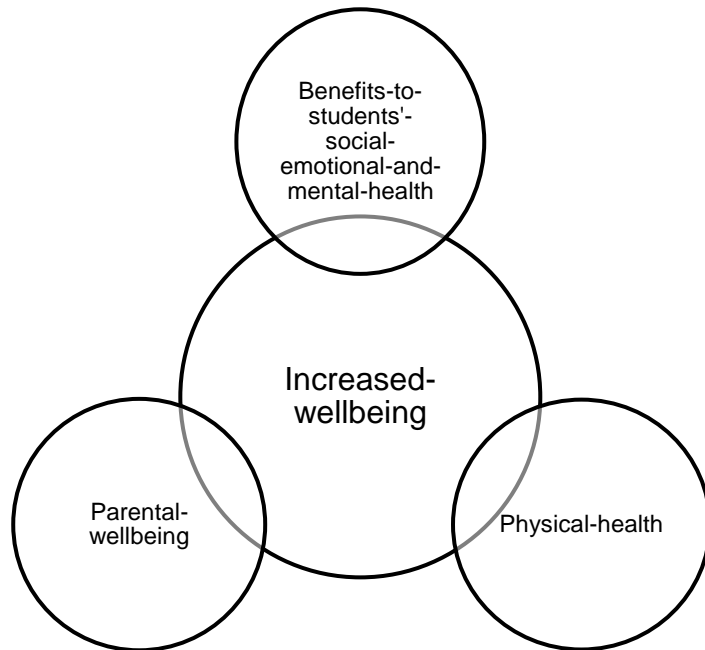
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of the impact ECA participation has on increased wellbeing, a key sub-theme related to the benefits to students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH).

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme: Benefits-to-students'-social-emotional-and-mental-health

All participant groups highlighted developed confidence, a stronger sense of belonging, and greater self-esteem as strands of students' SEMH, impacted by participation in ECAs.

An ECA leader illustrated the developed confidence and self-esteem of students by giving an example of one student who became more extrovert as a result of increased confidence and self-esteem:

> *"It's really good for them…it is improving their confidence. There's one young lady…she was very quiet and wasn't very happy when she first started here but she's really vocal now and it's brilliant to see how it builds confidence and self-esteem."* [L-iii-H-f]

The support and encouragement students receive from staff within ECAs was also linked to increased self-confidence. Parents considered their child's developed confidence to be a key factor in their willingness to take on greater challenges:

> *"…she [child] used to be quite a recluse, she used to be quite introverted, it's given her the confidence to believe in herself more…she's more confident in herself…because someone's seen something in her to say 'yes you can.'"*
>
> [P-i-C-6-M]

In addition, having a sense of belonging within school was considered important by ECA leaders, as it supported learning. ECAs were highlighted, by ECA leaders, as a means to provide students with a sense of belonging as they feel they have a place within a group in school:

> *"…you belong to a club…you belong to a group…you're in a place of belonging and that's one of the important first steps of learning, feeling a place of belonging….when students get into…ECAs…they get that sense of belonging and that is their place within the school…"* [L-i-B-m]

Students' responses suggested how being part of ECAs could be particularly beneficial for their emotional wellbeing following the transition from primary school, as illustrated by one student when he reflected on how developing positive relationships with teachers helped him feel less worried:

> *"When you move to Year 7 from primary school, you feel so scared like it's a big school and you feel like all the teachers are absolute monsters and they're going to shout at you all the time. But you go to clubs and you get to know them…you feel so much better…not as worried."* [S-iv-L-21]

Aside from the impact of ECA participation on students' SEMH, a further sub-theme related to the benefits to students' physical health.

4.3.3.2 Sub-theme: Physical-health

This sub-theme related to the positive impact participation in ECAs had on students' physical health, through promoting a healthy lifestyle and supporting better fitness amongst students: a participant group raised physical health as a benefit of EC participation.

A parent highlighted her daughter's weight loss as a physical benefit, which she attributed to her daughter participating in the school dance ECA:

"I mean, B [parent's daughter], whilst she's been doing all the dancing, she's lost like a stone and a half in the last year and it really has made her feel a lot more confident." [P-i-C-6-M]

Students suggested overall fitness levels were also attributed to participation in sports-based ECAs. Students, for their part, considered the wider benefits from being healthier, such as being more adept at taking on a job which requires being active:

"…you get more sporty and your fitness level goes up…you'll be healthier…if you want to do something active as your job then you can do it with more ease than if you're inactive." [S-i-A-2]

This notion of sports-based ECAs encouraging an active, healthy lifestyle was seen across schools, as the views of an ECA leader in one school illustrates:

"…so we are providing them an option to be in school early and be active, doing stuff after school…it keeps them active, it keeps them healthy" [L-iv-M-m]

Aside from the impact of ECA participation on students, responses from participants of the research also indicated ECA participation impacts parents, including parental wellbeing.

4.3.3.3 Sub-theme: Parental-wellbeing

This sub-theme reflects a common view of ECA leaders, parents and students. The benefits which emerge from students participating in school-based ECAs were considered to support parents to foster a positive view of their child's school as an institution and lead to reduced parental anxiety about their child feeling potentially negative about school.

Students perceived one benefit of participating in ECAs as a reduction in the amount their parents worried about them: students suggested parents might worry less when they knew their child was engaged in enjoyable experiences at school:

"I suppose your parents wouldn't worry as much about you if you've got something that you enjoy doing whereas if you don't like enjoy anything they're going to start worrying about you." [S-i-A-2]

Parents' comments also confirmed children's perceptions of ECAs as contributing towards reduced parental concern. For example, a parent believed ECAs allowed

her child to find his own way in secondary school, which helped alleviate earlier worries:

> *"He was a bit of a loner…he's not a playground person, he's not particularly a sport person. He did need to find his own way and he has done, through trying different clubs and music has been where he's felt at home."* [P-iv-K-19-M]

Parents, in their responses, also praised the school, and staff leading ECAs in particular, for the opportunities made available to their children. For some parents, this was even more beneficial when they did not have to worry about the financial implications of providing additional opportunities to students:

> *"…the fact that you don't have to pay for school clubs, which for me…I'm on quite a tight budget, is a huge bonus for us…the fact that there are no termly fees involved and the fact that these teachers dedicate so much of their time…I take my hat off to them…I really think that they do the kids a huge justice."* [P-i-A-2-M]

Aside from the beneficial impact ECA participation has on individuals' wellbeing, a further beneficial theme to ECA participation includes viewing school in a positive light.

4.3.4 Theme: Viewing-school-positively

This theme relates to parents' positive views towards their child's school and being more engaged with their child's school experience. Students were also found to hold positive views towards school as a result of their participation in ECAs. Positive feelings towards school, it can be suggested, also contributed to students being more engaged with the school system, such as contributing to the life of the school and their own overall school attendance. Figure 11 illustrates the sub-themes subsumed within 'viewing-school-positively'.

Figure 11: Viewing-school-positively and interrelated sub-themes
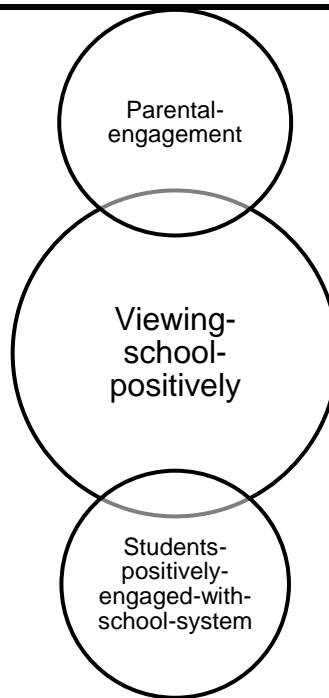
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

As part of viewing school positively, a key sub-theme related to impact ECA participation has on parental engagement.

4.3.4.1 Sub-theme: Parental-engagement

Students' participation in ECAs contributed towards parents seeing the school in a more favourable light. Data from parent interviews also indicated that parents were more engaged in their child's school experience, when their children engaged in ECAs: forming the basis of school related conversations between child and parent at home.

One student's comments illustrated the notion of how students and parents could be more involved in school as a result of a student's ECA experience:

> *"If you go along to drama, you'll come home and you tell your mum that you'll be in that club. 'Mum and dad, I went to drama club, it was really good' and then you'll keep going and you'll be a lot happier."* [S-i-C-5]

One parent explicitly acknowledged the benefit of feeling more involved in their child's school experience as a result of their hearing about experiences within ECAs, especially around the transition from primary school where parents might be imagined

to be more naturally heavily involved. She also highlighted feeling positive about having more knowledge over her child's school-life:

> *"…it's a huge jump from junior school to…senior school…[parents] have so much more input at junior school… they start senior school…you're not up the school with the mums, like you were at junior school…[ECAs are] an insight into the school, into the school day…the little stories that she shares when she comes home…it's just lovely for us to talk about it…I just feel a little bit involved…regarding school life, I…have that…knowledge about what goes on."* [P-i-A-2-M]

As well as ECA participation impacting on parental engagement, a further sub-theme related to the impact of ECA participation on student engagement within school.

4.3.4.2 Sub-theme: Students-positively-engaged-with-school-system

Students considered ECAs to be beneficial in supporting students feel more positive about school. Students also reported feeling ECAs helped to lift their mood and feel more positive within school:

> *"one of the things that I look forward to in the week…if I'm having a really bad week I can just look forward to that one lunch…Before the club I just look forward to it…after it's just like I walk out and I'm just *long sigh*, it's ok now, I'm fine…"* [S-iii-J-18]

ECAs leaders also believed ECAs supported school engagement, including through improved school attendance. This was something considered by an ECA leader who highlighted students' increased enjoyment of school contributing to their desire to attend the setting:

> *"…it [ECAs] can be a real strength for them and a real pull as it were to bring students into school. A lot of music students who partake in ECAs have… better attendance than other students. We've had specific examples of students whose attendance was quite poor before they go to musical ECAs and then it's gone up. I think it makes it an enjoyable and purposeful place to be for them outside of just getting you're A,B,Cs and your 1,2,3s."* [L-i-B-m]

A range of potential benefits to ECA participation were indicated from the responses of students, parents and ECA leaders. Benefits were linked to students, parents, and school staff. Benefits from ECA participation included a positive impact on relationships students have with others. There was also a belief ECA participation

has a positive impact on the wellbeing of students and parents. Students were also considered to have the opportunity to build a range of skills: academic skills; personal development skills; and social and communication skills. ECAs were also believed to offer students the chance to follow personal interests and aspirations. ECA participation also appeared to indicate a have a positive impact on parent and student engagement with school life.

4.4 Findings for RQ 4: What motivates students to participate in school based ECAs within English secondary schools?

Five themes and 15 sub-themes emerged from data of students, parents and ECA leaders in relation to RQ4 (Table 10).

Table 10: Themes and sub-themes of RQ4

Theme	Sub-theme
Motivated-by-others	Parental-role-in-students'-ECA-participation
	School-and-staff-role-on-students'-ECA-participation
	Role-of-peers-in-students'-ECA-participation
	Importance-of-friendships-in-students'-ECA-participation
Individual-differences-impact-motivation	Role-of-gender-impacts-ECA-participation
	Students'-special-educational-needs-impact-ECA-participation
	Students'-previous-experience
Perceived-benefits-influence-ECA-participation	Personal-ambitions-and-interests
	Impact-on-learning
	Social-and-emotional-benefits
	Associated-perks
Features-of-ECA	Characteristics-of-ECA-significant-for-motivation
	Access-to-resources-and-facilities
External-limits-on-ECA-participation	Weather
	Time

Notes: The themes and sub-themes have been hyphenated because they are titles of the themes and sub-themes.

4.4.1 Theme: Motivated-by-'others'

This theme reflects the role of 'others', defined as people linked to students, in influencing students' motivation to participate in school-based in ECAs. Data from all participant groups revealed the impact of parents, school staff, peers and friends on a students' choice to participate (as illustrated in Figure 12).

Figure 12: Motivated-by-'others' and interrelated sub-themes
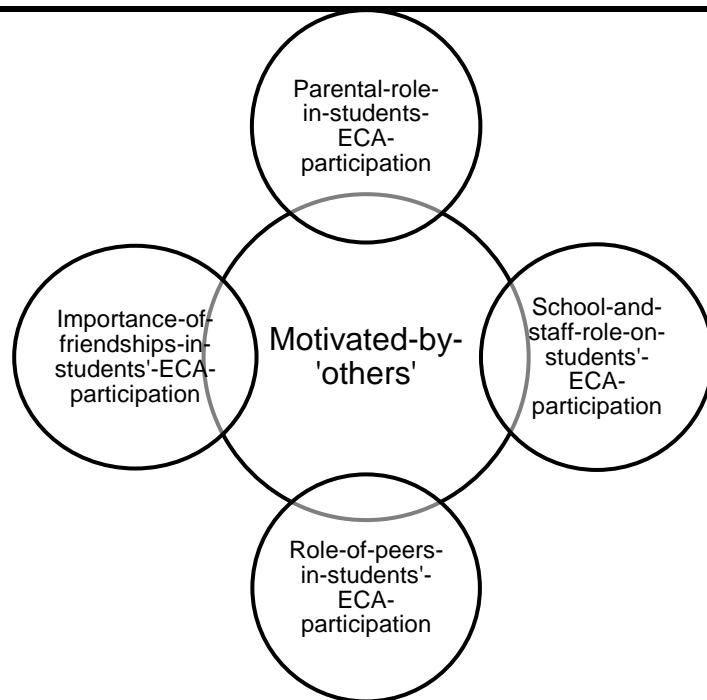
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

In relation to students' ECA participation being influenced by others, a key sub-theme related to the parental role in students' ECA participation.

4.4.1.1 Sub-theme: Parental-role-in-students'-ECA-participation

In their comments, parents indicated their own interest in ECA content influenced their child's motivation for participating in school-based ECAs. Parental influence, encouragement and overall support for their child's participation was also highlighted, by parents and ECA leaders, to impact the motivation of students.

One parent indicated how her own interests had instilled curiosity within her child and developed his interests, which in turn had motivated him to take part in subject-related ECAs:

> *"I love science. It's one of my favourite subjects…when we [parent and child] talk at home about this sort of stuff…he's like 'oh that sounds really interesting mum' and I'm like 'well go to the science club, have a look, see what it's like'…I suppose it's the home activities that increase his interest in school, after-school clubs."* [P-iii-H-15-M]

From a school's perspective, an ECA leader highlighted the significance of parental support in students' engagement with school-based ECAs. He reflected that students can be encouraged, or in some cases, discouraged, by parental influence as a result of parental fears for their child, i.e. it can be positive or negative:

> *"More often than not parents are really, really, supportive…they're happy that their child is playing rugby or football…that's really positive and…they [students] take on their support but, sometimes, it can have a negative impact because they're [parents] fearful their child might be injured. It has a negative impact on them and how they act so sometimes they can have drawbacks as well…parents won't allow them to go…it might be their own insecurities that impact on their own kids..."* [L-i-A-m]

Aside from the influence of parents on students' motivation to participate in ECAs, a motivational factor related to the role of school and school staff.

4.4.1.2 Sub-theme: School-and-Staff-role-on-students'-ECA-participation

Students' school-based ECA participation was considered, by all participant groups, to be motivated by school, be it through the role of staff or the school as a whole. Students, for their part, reported being motivated towards ECAs from feelings of obligation towards the school, as well as because of the school's promotion of the ECA. School staff were identified as being important to the motivation of students, in the form of encouragement from staff and as a result of the pre-existing relationships students had with them.

One student illustrated how students can feel obligated to participate in ECAs, from a sense of their school having invested in them:

> *"…it feels like I'm obliged to do it because the school are giving me free lessons and one of the music teachers…wants to do a project with children who are getting free music lessons at school. I don't think they would be offended…but I feel it's kind of my duty to say yes…because I'm getting free lessons."* [S-i-B-3]

ECA leaders also raised the notion of students feeling obligated to participate in ECAs, as they, in their terms, discussed the investment made towards students and wanting to see commitment from them as a result:

> *"…if a student is in a football team or basketball team for the first three years of school, them being in the team would mean someone isn't in the team…we would expect them to continue to commit…"*   [L-iv-M-m]

The relationship students have with school staff was also shown to greatly influence a student's choice of whether or not to participate in school-based ECAs, regardless of their interest in the subject content of the ECA. This was illustrated by a parent, after being asked about what motivated his child to participate in ECAs:

> *"There are some teachers he really likes and there are some that he greatly dislikes, and it could be down to that, it could be the teacher he likes …The one teacher he really has a bug-bear with is this O [name of teacher], which is rather a shame because it's one of the topics he's been traditionally interested in. So if there was…club set up, run by this teacher, K [student] would not go…under any circumstances, regardless of what the club was doing."*   [P-iii-J-18-F]

As part of the role of others in students' ECA participation, a further key sub-theme related to the influence of students' peers.

4.4.1.3 Sub-theme: Role-of-peers-in-students'-ECA-participation

Data from all of the participant groups highlighted the influence of students' *peers* in contributing to students' motivation in participating in school-based ECAs. Students, their comments suggested, were motivated by the experience of their peers: the opportunity to interact with peers in ECAs, as well as the influence and encouragement of their peers.

An ECA leader highlighted social opportunities which participating in ECAs could provide for students, such as interacting with other peers:

> *"I've certainly got some people for the social aspect of it, they like mixing with other groups."*   [L-ii-D-f]

A student shared a similar view, also indicating their enjoyment of interacting with others in ECAs:

> *"it's rather fun, you get to spend time with people and play with things and other stuff like that."*   [S-iii-J-18]

Responses from participants of the research also indicated the importance of friends in the motivation of students to participate in ECAs.

4.4.1.4 Sub-theme: Importance-of-friendships-in-students'-ECA-participation

The role of friends as motivators of students' participation in ECAs was suggested by all participant groups.

Taking part in activities where students had the opportunity to be with friends was identified as a common factor behind students' motivation in participating in school-based ECAs, as shown by a student:

"…because all my friends go and I just like being with my friends and going with them." [S-iv-M-23]

However, despite the role of friends being highlighted as a motivating factor for students participating in school-based ECAs, some parents commented on friendships not being a motivating factor for participating in ECAs:

"…he's not sort of lead by – say a friend of his starts going and doesn't want to carry on anymore – if J [parent's son] wants to carry on, he will still do it. He is not lead by what his peers do." [P-iv-L-21-M]

Aside from students being motivated by others to participate in ECAs, a further theme related to students' motivation related to students' individual differences.

4.4.2 Theme: Individual-differences-impact-motivation

This theme relates to the individual differences of students themselves, which could impact on their participation in school-based ECAs. Gender, special educational needs and previous experience were all raised during interviews, with ECA leaders, students and parents, as relevant dimensions of individual differences (as illustrated in Figure 13).

Figure 13: Individual-differences-impact-motivation and interrelated sub-themes
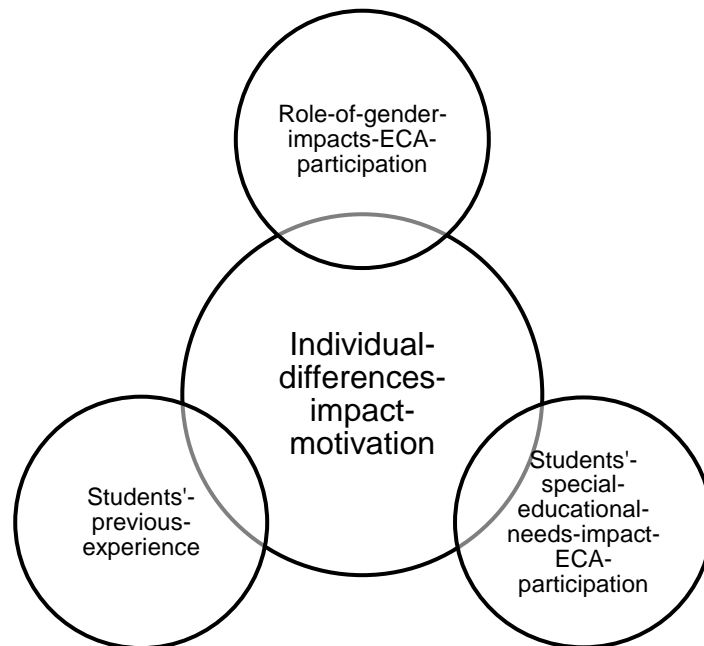
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

In relation to the impact of individual differences on students' motivation to participate in ECAs, a key sub-theme related to students' gender.

4.4.2.1 Sub-theme: Role-of-gender-impacts-ECA-participation

Students, parents, and ECA leaders all suggested gender as a factor relating to ECA participation within schools. Whilst some ECAs were specifically open to one gender, i.e. team sports, other ECAs were considered to be typically more common with one gender. An ECA leader acknowledged the impact of gender on participation in the textiles ECA she runs. She also acknowledged trying to promote the subject more amongst boys:

> *"Definitely, it's considered as a girl subject rather than a boy, but even from my lessons, boys enjoy it more so than girls sometimes, especially in the younger years, Years 7 and 8. So it is obviously it's to raise the profile of it to get them interested early into it."* [L-iv-L-f]

Students also highlighted a difference in the ECAs which were available students, based on their gender:

> *"We've got a lot of different things, we've got sporty clubs, like rugby or football, or if you are a girl then netball."* [S-iv-K-19]

A further key sub-theme, in relation to the impact of individual differences on students' motivation to participate in ECAs, related to some students' special educational needs (SEN).

4.4.2.2 Sub-theme: Students'-special-educational-needs-impact-ECA-participation

From ECA leaders' responses, it might be construed that ECAs provide some students with a sense of routine and structure, during otherwise unstructured times. Outside the formal learning of the school day, recreational times can be challenging for some students with special educational needs, if there only choice was to be on the school playground. This was illustrated by one ECA leader as she highlighted the benefit her ECA brings to students with SEN:

> *"…they like kind of the structure of coming to something kind of every week as well. So I've got one boy in there with SEN and he really enjoys it and for him it's that time he knows he can come every week and it's a safe place for him to be..."* [L-ii-D-f]

Other than students' gender and SEN, further individual differences which were considered to impact students' motivation to participate in ECAs related to students' previous personal experience.

4.4.2.3 Sub-theme: Students'-previous-experience

Students' motivation for their current participation in school-based ECAs had been linked, by students and parents, with their previous experience. Students appeared to have engaged with similar ECA content in the past, e.g. in their respective primary schools. This indicated the origins of students' interest, such as one student previously being involved with stitching as illustrated by his parent:

> *"in his primary school…I know he has done sewing before and he enjoyed it – so he probably thought that he'd done that before so he'd carry on with that or give that a go."* [P-iv-L-21-M]

Students' comments also highlighted that their previous experience of ECA content was linked with current motivations for current participation in ECAs:

"…we have like a little opening day, so you know what is available and I saw it and I was like well in primary school I used to write a lot and I wanted to get it running again so I decided to join in..." [S-ii-D-8]

A further theme which related to students' motivation in participating in ECAs was linked to the perceived benefits associated with ECA participation.

4.4.3 Theme: Perceived-benefits-influence-ECA-participation

This theme relates to students being motivated by the perceived benefits that participating in school-based ECAs can bring. Figure 14 illustrates the sub-themes subsumed within 'perceived-benefits-influence-ECA-participation'.

Figure 14: Perceived-benefits-influence-ECA-participation and interrelated sub-themes
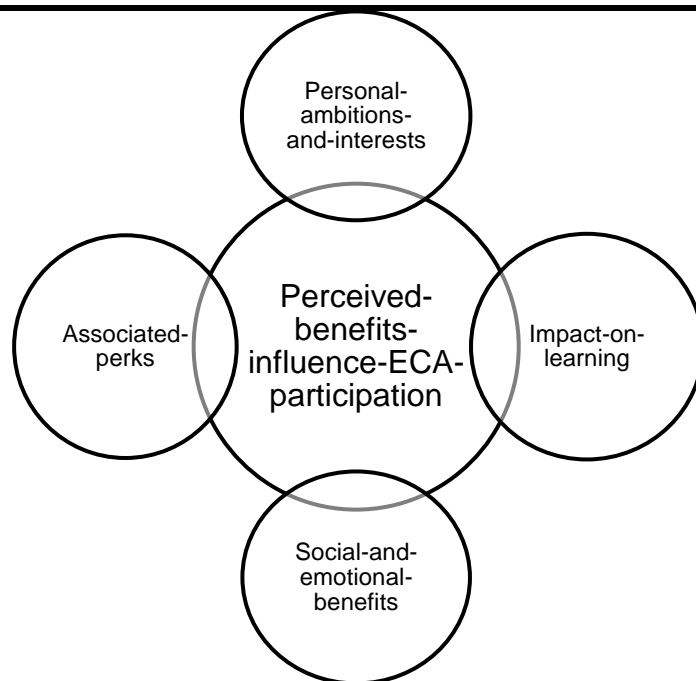
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

In relation to influence of perceived benefits, linked with ECA participation, a key sub-theme related to the personal ambitions and interests of students.

4.4.3.1 Sub-theme: Personal-ambitions-and-interests

Comments from students, parents and ECA leaders a like showed how the personal ambitions and interests of individual students played a role in their motivation to participate in particular school-based ECAs.

One parent highlighted her son's longer-term career interests as influencing his choice of participating in an art based ECA:

> *"…it's something he loves doing, it's something in his mind already…he wants to do animation for like a job…so he's looking already at the types of things he can do to improve his goal as it were."*   [P-ii-E-9-M]

A student also illustrated career goals being linked to their motivation for ECA participation:

> *"I go to drama not only because I want to hopefully become, and achieve being an actor."*   [S-i-C-5]

Whilst other students didn't explicitly link participation in a particular ECA to a distinct career goal, students' passion and interest within a field arguably motivated them to participate in subject-related activities:

> *"It's something that I'm passionate about and I would want to do that and if it's a club that was about learning more about music, I'd go because I want to learn more about music."*   [S-i-B-3]

A further key sub-theme linked to the impact of perceived benefits on motivation of student to participate in ECAs, related to the perceived impact on learning.

4.4.3.2 Sub-theme: Impact-on-learning

Participation in ECAs was illustrated, by students, and parents, to be motivated by the impact it has on students' learning, more so by students than other participant groups.

Students indicated their desire to learn more about a specific subject-related area, and improve in that area, as the motivational reason for their participation in an ECA:

> *"I went to the creative writing club because I have an interest in writing and English so I guess I thought that this could help me learn."*   [S-ii-D-7]

Parents' comments also highlighted their child's desire to succeed and do well in an area of interest as motivator behind ECA participation:

> *"…my son does like to do well in things…If it's a club that he can do and build up and gets awards with, or…an achievement type of thing, he would be very happy with that."* [P-ii-E-9-M]

In relation to influence of perceived benefits, linked with ECA participation, a key sub-theme related to the perceived social and emotional benefits.

4.4.3.3 Sub-theme: Social-and-emotional-benefits

Students, parents and ECA leaders all contributed thoughts regarding students' motivation for participating in ECAs which indicated the role of gaining social and emotional benefits.

Whilst it could be argued that a sense of belonging can arise through various forms, i.e. through friendships, ECA leaders were specific, in their responses, in linking students' motivation to participate in ECAs with their desire to achieve this:

> *"I think they come for a sense of belonging and that friendship is going to grow".* [L-i-C-f]

All participant groups highlighted the enjoyment of a subject, or an activity related to an area of interest, as being a key motivator behind students' participation in ECAs. Students that experienced something fun and enjoyable was seen in a positive light, illustrated by one student:

> *"Well I mainly do it because I enjoy it and it's fun".* [S-i-C-6]

Even when students were motivated by personal goals, such as achieving targets, they identified enjoyment of the activity as another aspect for choosing to participate:

> *"I would still go because I enjoy it, even if you don't beat it [personal target]."* [S-i-A-1]

Aside from the perceived impact on learning and social and emotional skills, additional associated perks to ECA participation was also shown to be a related sub-theme to perceived benefits and influence on students' motivation in ECA participation.

4.4.3.4 Sub-theme: Associated-perks

From speaking with students and parents, associated 'perks' for ECA participation were identified as contributing to students' motivation for particular activities. Perks included being able to eat lunch in the ECA, as well as having the opportunity to miss part of, or all of, a lesson. One parent highlighted her son's enjoyment of leaving school early to attend matches as part of his motivation to become involved in ECAs:

> *"…probably if he could get out of other lessons…they leave early for basketball matches and things, and he just thinks it's brilliant."* [P-iv-M-23-M]

A further motivational theme behind students' choice in participating in ECAs related to features of ECA.

4.4.4 Theme: Features-of-ECA

This theme relates to responses from students, parents and ECA leaders with regards to characteristics of ECAs which appealed to students, as well as the access ECAs provided to appealing resources and facilities (as illustrated in Figure 15).

Figure 15: Features-of-ECA and interrelated sub-themes
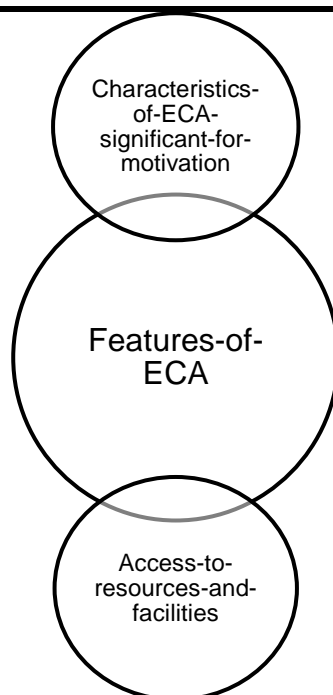
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

In relation to the features of ECAs which impact the motivation of students' ECA participation, a key sub-theme referred to the characteristics of ECAs.

4.4.4.1 Sub-theme: Characteristics-of-ECA-significant-for-motivation

Students, parents and ECA leaders highlighted various aspects of ECAs which appeal to students, and motivate them to participate.

An ECA leader highlighted the social aspect of an ECA, and the overall environment, which appealed to students, as illustrated by his example of a student who appreciated the social element of speaking with others helpful:

> *"…I have a student in there [ECA] at the moment, who has a very bad home life, she finds that coming along and drawing and sitting and talking to the teachers and other students actually resolves a lot of her issues inside."*
>
> [L-ii-E-m]

Parents provided support to the view that students enjoy the social aspect of ECAs. One parent gave the example of her daughter being drawn to an ECA as it allows her to socialise with others:

> *"…she's quite sociable, my daughter and I think she quite enjoys the social side of it".* [P-iv-L-22-M]

In relation to the features of ECAs which impact the motivation of students' ECA participation, a key sub-theme referred to the access to resources and facilities which comes from participating in ECAs.

4.4.4.2 Sub-theme: Access-to-resources-and-facilities

All participant groups acknowledged the access to resources and facilities through ECAs as being a motivating factor for students' participation in school-based ECAs. Through participants' responses, it is apparent, resources and facilities did not only take the shape of physical equipment and physical environment, but also resources in the sense of support from staff.

ECA leaders considered how, for some students, the equipment made available during ECA sessions had been considered a motivational factor to students' participation:

"And obviously, you know, equipment facilities can have a draw on whether they come."   [L-i-A-m]

A student from the same school, but different ECA, reinforced the significance of accessing equipment in his decision to participate in a school-based ECA:

"So the school has a lot of iMacs with a lot of expensive audio software…my software wasn't as good as the stuff at school and neither was my equipment. So I'd go there every week to you know write songs on the computer."
                                                                    [S-i-B-3]

Access to staff resources was also highlighted, by parents, as a motivational factor in students' choice to participate in ECAs. Parents' comments illustrated how students were able to use ECAs as a means to gain additional support from teachers, if it were needed:

"…if they've got problems in the lesson, if they can't speak to the teacher, they can go to the after school clubs and they've got the help there that they need as well."   [P-iii-H-15-M]

A further motivational theme behind students' choice in participating in ECAs related to external limits.

4.4.5 Theme: External-limits-on-ECA-participation

This theme relates to external factors which impacted on a student's decision to participate in school-based ECAs, key themes which emerged from the responses of ECA leaders, parents and students included weather and time (as illustrated in Figure 16).

Figure 16: External-limits-on-ECA-participation and interrelated sub-themes
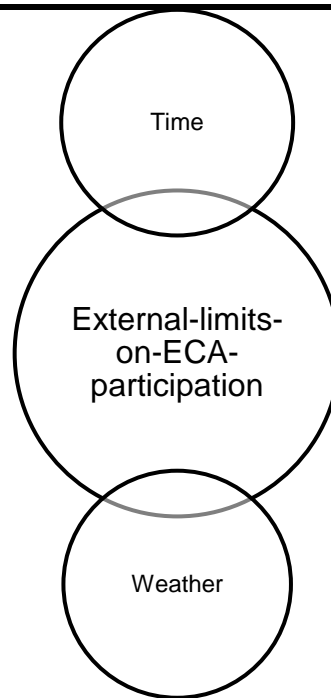
Notes: Theme = larger circle, Sub-theme = smaller circles. No meaning is meant to be inferred from size of smaller circles.

In relation to the external limits which impact the motivation of students' ECA participation, a key sub-theme raised was the weather.

4.4.5.1 Sub-theme: Weather

Whilst this sub-theme was not commonly raised by participants, it was raised by a student interviewee who was not very vocal during the interview and so it seemed important to highlight what was significant to him. Weather was also indicated to play an important role in ECA participation by an ECA leader.

When one student was asked about his reasons for taking part in a particular ECA, he struggled to initially give a response. After being asked to consider what else he might have done, he spoke of being somewhere inside:

"Most likely in the library because of the actual cold out."   [S-iii-J-17]

For this student, the weather contributed to a desire to be inside and therefore ECAs which took place inside during recreational times seemed to be appealing to him.

Further to the sub-theme of weather, a further sub-theme linked with the external limits impacting on the motivation of students' ECA participation related to time.

4.4.5.2 Sub-theme: Time

All participant groups emphasised the influential role of time, with regards to participating in school-based ECAs. Parents' responses indicated that, for many students, there was a desire to have done more than was possible, due to physically not having enough time, but, also due the timetabling of ECAs. This led students having to prioritise commitments:

> *"He was so looking forward to doing some of the other things…I think the cooking came up but because he's committed to the drama…he couldn't do that cooking club because you know it was on at the same time as the drama."*
>
> [P-ii-E-9-M]

Students, in their responses, reinforced how other commitments could restrict participation in school-based ECAs. One student illustrated the importance of time and prior commitments, when asked about what could influence her decision to attend an ECA:

> *"the other half is if I've got time to. I do scouts every Friday night, which is at 7 but sometimes we stay at school until about 5ish, sometimes."*   [S-ii-10-E]

Participants' responses illustrated the role of others as contributing to students' motivation. These included school staff, school peers, friends and parents. Aside from the significance of others, individual differences were also considered important in explaining students' motivation. ECAs were associated as having a range of potential benefits. The participants of the current research perceived these benefits to appeal to students, which motivated them to participate. Other factors linked to the motivation of students related to individual ECA features, as well as external limits i.e. time and weather.

4.5 Overall summary of findings

- ECAs were considered to: encompass wide-ranging contexts; take place at varying times; be separate to the core curriculum and formal learning; allow students to have greater personal freedom; and allow students to take on a more directive role than in other school-based activities, i.e. lessons.

- The rationale for school-based ECAs included: developing students' skills and interests; systemic factors (e.g. logistical capacity and teachers' interests); and providing a safe environment.

- Potential benefits from ECA participation included: a positive impact on students' relationships with others; a positive impact on the wellbeing of students and parents; an opportunity for students to build academic skills, personal development skills and social and communication skills; providing students with an opportunity to develop social capital; offering students the chance to follow personal interests and aspirations; and a positive impact on both parental and student engagement with school life.
- Students' motivation for participating in ECAs included: the role of school staff, school peers, friends and parents; students' individual differences (e.g. gender and special educational need); the belief ECA participation came with associated benefits; and individual ECA features (e.g. time and weather).

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a discussion of the main findings (see Chapter Four), according to the four research questions, previously set-out in Chapter One. I will first re-state the aims of the research and provide a brief summary of the main findings. This will then lead to the detailed discussion of findings. The implications of the findings for professionals will then be outlined and will conclude with a statement of the strengths and limitations of the current research, culminating in final conclusions to close the chapter.

5.1 Aims of the research

The current research aimed to explore ECAs, within the context of secondary schools located in South-East England, from the different perspectives of key stakeholders: students; parents; and school staff who lead the ECAs. The research aimed to explore: what they are; the rationale attached to them; the potential associated benefits; and possible motivations of students participating in them.

5.2 Summary of main findings

The overall findings of the current research (pages 104-105) indicated a wide variation in the availability, type and context for ECAs taking place in English secondary schools, within the county sampled. Variation in terms of activity type, occurrence, and participants. The findings also highlighted ECAs as potential environmental contexts to further support students' academic, personal, social and physical development. This in turn related to and arguably influenced parental views. Students' participation in ECAs was found to be influenced by a range of factors: who was involved; individual differences; perceived associated benefits; individual features of the ECAs.

5.3 Summary of findings in relation to research questions

5.3.1 RQ1: How are ECAs defined within the context of English secondary schools?

Unlike previous studies (see Literature Review, Chapter Two), this research has aimed to establish a clearer understanding as to what constitutes an ECA, specifically within the context of English secondary schools in the area studied.

The current findings suggested variation across and within ECAs. ECAs were believed to cover a wide variety of activities within participating secondary schools, echoing the findings of previous US-based literature (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Hoffmann, 2006) as well as other English-based research (Bertram et al., 2017). The varied typology of ECAs available to students covered subject-related activities, i.e. history, PE or music, as well as activities unrelated to typical school subjects, i.e. lego club or a social club. The findings presented, in relation to secondary school students, have appeared to fall in line with previous research carried out with undergraduate students (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013). Varied typology would therefore appear to be a potential fundamental characteristic of ECAs, across institutional settings and potentially across cultures. The current findings also indicated ECAs to be varied, not only in terms of activity type, but also when these activities took place.

ECAs were found to occur at different times of the day. All participant groups pointed towards ECAs taking place at various points in, and out of, the core school day, i.e. during recreational times, after-school and even during school holidays. Such timings highlighted by the participants of the current study echo the findings of previous literature (Bertram et al., 2017). The previously held notion of ECAs *not* being explicitly linked to specific time, but rather outside of the timetabled curriculum, is supported by the findings of the present research. As well as ECAs being defined in terms of variability, the present findings indicated ECAs as being open to all whilst in some cases also targeting particular individuals.

The findings indicated specific ECAs being geared towards particular groups of individuals. At the same time, however, these ECAs did not discourage students who did not fit the potential target group, i.e. strong performing footballers/actors/writers, from participating. Students of all ages, gender and ability were permitted to access ECAs. The exceptions to this were sports-based ECAs. These types of ECAs were considered to be limited in allowing all students to participate, especially for older year groups, due to capacity. Apart from the degree of variability attributed to ECAs, in terms of focus, timing and participants, ECAs were also considered to be separate to the formal curriculum.

There appeared to be a consistent view across participant groups that ECAs were separate from the mainstream school curriculum, and therefore were perceived as separate from formalised learning. Such findings support previous research (Bertram et al., 2017), which considered ECAs to be unconnected to the curriculum. As ECAs

were being viewed as separate to the formal curriculum, participation was not mandatory. Greenbank (2015) defined ECAs as being optional to students, as too did participants of the current research.

Whilst there has been a great deal of overlap, in terms of the findings of previous research and the current study, the present research offers further insight into how ECAs are seen by key stakeholders.

ECAs were viewed to be separate from formal learning, with regards to content covered by students within school lessons. The form in which ECAs were led was also considered to be different to school lessons, even though teachers were leading the activities. There appeared to be a common understanding amongst participant groups, that ECAs, being less academically focused, had superficially less determined goals, rules and expectations. For this reason, possibly, staff were able to adopt a more passive role and allow students greater ownership in leading the direction of ECAs.

Arguably the reduced rules and pre-determined tasks and goals contributed to students' perception of the environment of ECAs as being different, e.g. more relaxed. The relaxed environment seemed to be a further defining feature of ECAs. Students particularly commented on the increased social interactions which took place in ECAs in comparison to core school lessons. ECAs were also seen to be more flexible than lessons, therefore allowing students the opportunity to talk more freely and be more open with one another whilst completing activities.

As well as content, structure and environment constituting definable themes for ECAs, the work presented here also highlighted the importance of perceived value connected with ECAs, something which has been referred to in previous literature. Earlier research (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Hoffmann 2006; Greenbank, 2015) indicated ECAs as a context for learning, an environment which provided participants with the opportunity to develop skills. This is interesting, given how participants also commented on ECAs being separate to the curriculum and having less prescribed goals and tasks. The present findings would indicate that learning can take place in a range of contexts, not just within formalised settings. The implications of this will be discussed in section 5.5.3 (pages 119-120).

5.3.2 RQ2: What is the rationale attributed to English secondary school-based ECAs from participants of different types: ECA leaders, students and parents?

The present findings highlighted schools' desire to develop students' skills and interests as a part of the rationale for running ECAs. There also appeared to be a shared understanding amongst students, parents, and ECA leaders that ECAs were being used to support students in achieving higher grades and an enriched understanding of subject matter, albeit indirectly. Aside from ECAs being run to support students' academic achievements, schools also showed interest in supporting students holistically.

Existing literature (Bertram et al., 2017) suggested that schools' reasons for offering ECAs included a desire to support their students' holistic development. Current participants reported that ECAs were offered by schools as a means to support their development of social and emotional skills, as well as academic enrichment. Furthermore, as ECAs were perceived to be used as a way to support academic enrichment, there was a belief that they were run to provide students with opportunities to pursue personal interests and instil new passions. Besides the potential rationale of schools seeking to support students' development, systemic factors were also indicated as having an impact.

These systemic factors, such as logistical capacity and teachers' interests, played a role in explaining the rationale behind the operation of school-based ECAs. Participants indicated the influential role of their teachers with regard to the choice of ECAs made available to students. Such findings were again in line with existing literature (Bertram et al., 2017), which suggested the interest of staff and their personal motivation were influential factors in explaining the types of ECAs operating within schools. Further factors which impacted on the provision made available via ECAs centred on logistical capacity: timings, availability of facilities, and availability of resources.

The role of staff was considered important by the current participants (supporting the findings from previous literature). The present findings also suggested that the role of the school, as a whole, was important. The ethos and culture of the school appeared to influence the rationale attributed by schools to running ECAs. ECA leaders particularly highlighted this when stating the importance of ECAs held within the

school and their perceived value by school leadership. It seemed closely linked with the desire to provide more than mainstream education, something Bertram et al. (2017) found with regards to a desire to support students' holistic development.

School culture and ethos may also be linked to staff motivation in leading ECAs. Staff enthusiasm and commitment, reported by students and parents of the current study, arguably helps to contribute to an overall positive ethos and culture within a school. By having dedicated and enthusiastic staff members running ECAs, this also helps to raise the profile and significance of ECAs.

As a school's culture and ethos appeared to be closely linked to its rationale for ECAs, so too, arguably, was the school's presentation of its identity to others. Participants perceived that a school was motivated towards providing ECAs for present students as a positive advertisement for prospective students. Some participants' responses demonstrated the close association between ECAs and external recognition: e.g. sports-based ECAs, where participating students often competed for trophies and medals in external competitions. Beyond the goal of impacting students themselves, current findings appeared to indicate the potential rationale of supporting parents.

A further rationale for schools providing ECAs was apparent through a belief amongst participant groups (especially parents) that schools sought to support *working parents*. This has not been mentioned in previous literature, thus is a new finding. For parents who work, typical school finishing times often meant students being on their own at home until parents finished work. ECAs were therefore seen in this capacity, as a means of offering a safe environment for students after school, and providing students with different opportunities, rather than simply going home and as some participants reported, 'hanging around town'.

5.3.3 RQ3: What are the potential benefits of participating in school-based ECAs within English secondary schools for ECA leaders, students and parents?

The results presented in Chapter Four suggested a variety of perceived benefits arising from ECA participation: positive relationships; building skills and pursuing interests; increased wellbeing; and holding positive views towards school.

Previous literature has primarily focused on the impact of ECAs on academic development as well as social and emotional wellbeing. Consequently, ECA participation and its impact on students' relations within the school setting has largely been neglected. The current findings offer new tentative insights into how ECA participation affects students' relations. Whilst Farb and Matjasko (2012) did find some negative impacts of participating in sports-based ECAs; an example being the expression of homophobic attitudes, such findings were not uncovered in the present study. To the contrary, ECA leaders even highlighted students' participation in ECAs as helpful in supporting greater empathy amongst students. This could be looked at from the perspective of the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), previously outlined in Chapter Two (see pages 29-30), whereby empathy is considered to be one of the key emotional resources which enable individuals to meet their emotional needs. Adopting the perspective of the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), ECAs could be considered supportive for students as they provide them with opportunities to learn more about others, developing empathy and leading students to build positive relations with peers.

The findings suggested ECAs supported the development of positive relations between students and their respective peers, friends and school teachers. ECAs were considered to provide students with enhanced opportunities to interact more with others (peers, friends and school staff) than they would ordinarily be able to do within the day to day school timetable. In HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) terms, this could be explained by the opportunities ECAs offer students with regards to enhanced interactions with peers and ECA staff. These potential enhanced interactions could arguably support the development of empathy between participating students and peers and ECA staff. According to the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), empathy is a fundamental resource. As ECAs potentially support the development of greater empathy amongst participating students, this may support ECA participants in gaining emotional connection to others.

The findings suggest ECA participation had a positive impact on students developing an array of skills. These included social and communication skills, personal development skills and academic skills. In line with previous research (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013), the current findings offer tentative support to the idea that participation in ECAs raises a student's social capital. This increased social capital not only refers to the potential benefits in 'hard currency' terms, e.g. stronger academic performance or a developed skill set in specific areas (i.e. singing, acting

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or art), but also supported some 'soft currencies', e.g. developing a range of social and communication skills and personal development skills, i.e. teamwork, responsibility and dedication (Bourdieu, 1986). Previous literature (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013) has highlighted the benefits university-aged students gain by participating in ECAs, in terms of physical attributes ('hard currency'), i.e. qualifications and developed skillset. The current research has also highlighted the role of ECA participation on 'soft currency'. In thinking about why 'soft currency' was highlighted more prominently as a benefit for student participants of this research (secondary school students) and not so prominently for participants of existing research (namely English undergraduates), one might look to the different stages participants find themselves in with regards to adolescent development.

From another perspective, adolescence can be viewed as a spectrum in which there are multiple stages that YP pass through. Much of the existing English literature has focused on the university-aged population. In following UNICEF's (2011) definition of adolescence, participants of Greenbank's (2015) and Thompson et al.'s (2013) studies would fall under the category of late adolescence (15-19 years). Secondary school-aged students of the present research would fall under the category of early adolescence (10-14 years). This age-based categorisation has recently been challenged, e.g. the upper age being extended from 19 to 24 (Sawyer et al., 2018). On this basis, students of typical university age (18-21) would still be experiencing the latter stage of adolescence.

Individuals within the latter stage of adolescence are considered to have a higher level of concern for the future and more in-depth thinking about their role in life (UNICEF, 2011). For this reason, university-aged samples from previous research may have been more attuned to focusing on the hard currencies which ECA participation can be associated with. Individuals within the latter stages of adolescence are thought to express ideas more clearly, make independent decisions and have greater emotional stability reflecting their developed cognitive maturity. Secondary school-age students, being in the early stages of adolescence, may in contrast need to develop their cognitive maturity. As younger adolescents have not yet arguably mastered such skills, it is more likely that students, parents and ECA leaders, will potentially see progress more readily within the areas representing cognitive maturity, as a result of ECA participation.

Students' ECA participation was also considered to have a positive impact on parents' wellbeing. Parents believed that their children were content in school, partially due to their participation in ECAs. The findings suggested that parents worried less about their children and arguably held positive views about their child's schooling. From a HGT perspective (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), parents appeared to be aware of their children's ECA experience having an impact on their emotional needs. One could argue that parents recognised the school's role in supporting students in meeting their basic emotional needs, by offering school-based ECAs.

5.3.4 RQ4: What motivates students to participate in school-based ECAs within English secondary schools?

Previous research has primarily focused on exploring benefits associated with ECA participation. English-based research (Bertram et al., 2017) re the secondary school-aged population suggests a range of benefits on offer, by participating in ECAs. The motivation of students to take part in ECAs, however, remains relatively unexplored. Potential long-term benefits of ECA participation have been suggested in previous research, such as Greenbank (2015) who explored the motivation of university-aged students. Due to the population sample being in a different stage of adolescence (late adolescence versus early adolescence) one can not reliably transfer findings of university students to secondary school students. In this study, the school-based sample used does not therefore link with existing literature.

A new perspective explaining secondary school students' motivation, regarding their choice and participation within school-based ECAs, may be needed. The current findings appear to echo previous research (Greenbank, 2015; Roulin & Bangerter, 2013), whereby students choose to participate in ECAs in order to enhance their knowledge and skillset in areas of particular interest. For some students, this includes developing skills which they perceive to be important for future career goals. Whilst these findings, like Greenbank's (2015) and Roulin and Bangerter's (2013), may be looked at and explained from a SCT perspective (Bourdieu, 1986) it is arguably not the only potential explanatory framework.

SCT (Bourdieu, 1986) may not be the only theory which could explain current emerging themes. The current findings indicated students possessed a desire to be successful within their ECAs and also, in some cases, a desire to be challenged. This is particularly important as some students may not experience success within core

curriculum lessons- a view shared by some ECA leaders and students themselves. These findings could be looked at from a HGT perspective (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), as individuals need to experience a sense of competence and achievement, as well as being stretched mentally (i.e. thinking skills and problem solving). ECAs may therefore appeal to students, who wish to fulfil needs which are not being met within core school lessons. The opportunity to have their unfulfilled emotional needs met, may arguably motivate students to participate in activities outside of the formal curriculum.

The present findings, relating to students seeking opportunities to experience success and accomplish competence, seem to be in line with the previous findings of Ng (2017). Ng (2017) found Australian secondary school-aged students to be motivated by the wish of achieving competence in desired areas. Ng (2017) tried to explain his particular findings by adopting the AGT (Nicholls, 1984), previously outlined in Chapter Two (see page 28). As Ng's (2017) findings are in line with the present findings, the AGT could also be adopted as a framework to explain the present findings.

Whilst students from this research appeared motivated in wanting to enhance their academic performance and skillsets, developing positive relations with others was also considered as a motivating factor. Students sought to spend more time with peers and friends and possibly linked the desire to form friendships. This can not easily be accommodated in a SCT approach (Bourdieu, 1986), as this perspective focuses on the development of economic resources, qualifications, skills and personality traits. In contrast, the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) offers a perspective which explores relations between individuals. From a HGT perspective (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), some of the innate emotional needs individuals have relate to the desire of seeking connections and relations with others, as well as the need to belong to a relevant social group.

Aside from students being motivated by personal gains, i.e. gains linked with social capital, secondary-school students were also shown to be motivated by another factor: the influence of others. Findings from this research highlighted the role of parents, school staff, and students' friends in the motivation of students' choice to participate in ECAs. These findings provide a new insight into the field of students' participation in school-based ECAs. Previous English-based research (Greenbank, 2015) has uncovered motivational factors to be linked with explicit benefits, perceived

by the participating individual, as opposed to the influence others have on students' participation. The theoretical perspective, SCT (Bourdieu, 1986), provides insights into why explicit benefits, i.e. the development of qualifications and skills, may be of benefit to students. It does not, however, offer a perspective in regards to individuals being influenced by others.

Whilst SCT (Bourdieu, 1986) does not appear to explain the significance of others in the motivation of students participating in ECAs, Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974) and HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) may be able to offer insight. From the perspectives of these two theories, the social bonds and relationships between people are considered important factors in human development. As individuals seek to have positive relations with others and be accepted by social peers, they are arguably more inclined to be led by others. This is particularly arguable in the case for individuals at the early stages of adolescence, where they are more prone to being influenced by those around them because they are still experimenting with establishing their individual identities (UNICEF, 2011).

The current research suggests school staff and parents' perception of benefits arising from ECA participation, related to their encouraging support of students participating in particular ECAs. The role of friends was also highlighted by all participant groups, particularly students. Students often spoke of initial motivation being tied to their friends participating in the same ECA, as well as being motivated by their friends' encouragement to also attend. The significance of external influence, that is to say the role of others, on secondary school-aged students' motivation behind ECA participation may be linked to their particular stage of adolescence (UNICEF, 2011).

Previous research on motivational factors to ECA participation has explored students' engagement during latter stages of adolescence (Greenbank, 2015; Thompson et al., 2013). This is seen to be a time when students have a firmer sense of identity and more independence when making decisions. Students at this age are considered to be less vulnerable to the influence of peers as they are more self-assured. In terms of ECAs, this means students are arguably motivated more by personal desire and goals. In contrast, those in the early stage of adolescence, as in the current sample, are more vulnerable to the influence of others, especially peers, as they shape their own identity and develop their interest (UNICEF, 2011). The motivation for students choosing to attend ECAs could be influenced by others, as much as students' individual goals.

5.4 Interpretation of findings summary

Initially, in the literature review (see Chapter Two), a number of theoretical perspectives (Social Capital Theory, Social Control Theory, Achievement Goal Theory and Human Givens Theory) were looked at as possible frameworks for ECAs. It is only when analysing the data that the potential for using those different frameworks for explanatory purposes became apparent. Many of the aforementioned theories could be used to provide explanation for a range of key findings. Examples of this will be outlined in the subsequent paragraphs.

The importance of ECAs offering students the chance to develop skills and knowledge could be looked at from the perspective of the different theories: SCT (Bourdieu, 1986), AGT (Nicholls, 1984) and the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), whereby participants' responses indicated students' desire to do well and develop competency in an area of interest. For some, this related to future career goals. The HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) also offers the perspective of students needing to experience a sense of competence and achievement, as well as being stretched mentally. ECAs may therefore appeal to students, who do not gain these experiences from school lessons. Whilst these theories offer an explanatory framework for the perceived benefit and motivational factor, the Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974) however, does not, as it focuses more explicitly on the bonds and relationships between individuals.

The findings demonstrated the importance of positive relations to the invested parties (students, parents and ECA leaders), and the significance of others in influencing students' motivation to participate in ECAs. This could also be looked at from the perspectives of Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1974) and the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013). ECAs appeared to offer students the opportunities to have enhanced interactions with peers and key adults, arguably supporting the development of empathy between parties. This in turn helped students build social bonds and relationships with people around them. From the perspective of the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013), students would seek positive relations with peers in order to have not only positive connections to others, but also to gain a feeling of acceptance within an identified social group. The AGT (Nicholls, 1984), however, does not appear to address the importance of positive interactions and relations.

Whilst recognising the benefits and motivation of individual students, the current findings indicated ECAs to also impact parents' wellbeing. From a HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) perspective, parents appeared to recognise a school's role in

supporting students being able to meet their basic emotional needs, through the offering of school-based ECAs. This seemed to alleviate parental concerns and anxieties, with regards to their child's school experiences.

In this sub-section, various theories have been highlighted and used as explanatory frameworks. However, relating to the various findings of the present research it would appear the HGT (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2013) offers the broadest framework for explaining the benefits of ECAs and the motivation of students who participate in them.

5.5 Implications for professional practice

There were a number of implications which emerged from the present research. These related to:

i. The potential benefit of EPs exploring students learning and social, emotional and mental health within the context of ECAs at individual, group and systemic levels.

ii. Developing schools' awareness and understanding of ECAs within the school context.

iii. Highlighting features of ECAs which are conducive in supporting a positive learning environment.

5.5.1 Exploring students' strengths within the ECA context

The positive views of students, parents, and ECA leaders, regarding students' ECA participation, alongside the associated benefits from participation, would suggest that it is a good context for others to observe students. Students may present differently in formal learning environments, such as the classroom. In a formal school lesson, students may not have the opportunity to fully display their potential strengths, which are arguably just as important for EPs to recognise, as well as identifying students' particular needs.

Whilst there may, arguably, be a beneficial need for EPs to observe students in a wider range of school contexts, i.e. ECAs, for some Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) this may potentially place added pressure. EPSs around the country are operating via various models of service delivery. Some EPSs, including the EPSs linked to the area of the current research, operate via a traded model of service delivery. This means school settings purchase a set amount of time from an EPS. In some cases, this may not amount to a substantial amount of time. Schools may try to

use their designated EP time to focus on areas they perceive to be important, i.e. school lessons. Part of the EP role is to negotiate with invested clients, holding in mind that the key clients are the YP whom EPs endeavour to support. EPs will need to work with schools and parents to help them understand the benefits of exploring students in multiple contexts, especially secondary school students, as they experience multiple contexts in one day as well as across the week.

If ECAs were considered as an additional school-based context in which to observe students, this could lead to added pressures on the capacity of EPs. EPs may find it challenging to explore a wider range of contexts within specific time allocations, depending on the model of service delivery of an EPS. The current findings have indicated the potential significance to YP's development within schools, therefore EPs should aim to work in collaboration with schools and parents to explore this context to the best of their ability. EPs may need to be creative in the way they do this. They may seek to use other means at their disposal, to gather useful information, on how YP operate within the context of school-based ECAs.

Some of the ways EPs may like to explore the context of ECAs could include raising students' involvement in school-based ECAs, during consultations with school staff and parents. EPs may suggest to school professionals (e.g. special educational needs co-ordinators), that it is of benefit to ask staff to provide their thoughts on how a student is presenting within lessons and relevant ECAs. This can then be shared with the EP in order to gain a broader understanding of a student's strengths and areas of difficulty. By reflecting on this information, EPs may find it appropriate to explore particular contexts in more detail i.e. through observations.

5.5.2 Supporting schools' understanding of benefits to ECAs

The current findings support the claims of previous literature in highlighting a range of potential benefits associated with students' ECA participation. With this in mind, it will be important to support schools in developing further their understanding of ECAs. Schools should be fully aware of what ECAs can offer students, particularly in relation to the students' current stage of adolescent development.

EPs are in an arguably unique position because, as external professionals, they come into contact with teachers, learning support assistants, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCos), as well as senior school leaders. EPs are also skilled in delivering training to school staff. Systemic training may be useful in working with

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schools, to help develop school staff's understanding of the wide range of benefits which emerge from ECA participation. The research and evaluation skills of EPs means they might also help schools in developing ECAs and evaluating the impact they hold on students' development.

From the current findings, it appeared some students had been targeted by school staff to participate in particular ECAs. Students had been targeted by staff with the hope of supporting students' development in a number of areas, i.e. social skills, friendships and confidence. If schools are employing ECAs as a means to develop students' specific skills, traits or emotional needs, then arguably schools should measure and evaluate the impact of ECAs on these areas. EPs, within their capacity of having developed research skills, can be useful in reviewing and evaluating the impact of school-based interventions. Consequently, they may potentially have a role to play in helping school staff develop and evaluate ECAs operating in their schools.

Previous research (Bertram et al., 2017) has highlighted the support of school leaders' for ECAs, and their awareness for the need to continue investing resources within this area. However, school leaders also expressed varying levels of knowledge and awareness regarding the overall effectiveness of ECAs in meeting desired outcomes. This arguably reinforces the potential role of EPs to support schools in developing their knowledge and understanding of the potential success and effectiveness of well-run ECAs.

5.5.3 Adopting ECA characteristics within the formal classroom

Current findings have suggested how ECAs were perceived by participants, particularly students, to be separate from the formal school curriculum. At the same time, however, participants' responses also demonstrated ECAs were seen as having an educational value. Students, it was suggested, were able to learn in any context, not just in a formalised structured environment. Consequently, students who struggle with learning in a typical formal school lesson may approach learning differently within less structured, more flexible contexts of school-based ECAs.

Given how some students may find certain features of ECAs conducive to supporting their learning, it might help if EPs were to work with schools systemically. In their role, they could raise awareness of the positive characteristics and features of ECAs, which are appealing to students. Some of these include greater peer interaction, the ability to develop positive relations with peers and staff, tolerance and acceptance of

one another and students having greater ownership of their learning (e.g. working at their own pace). In supporting schools in this manner, EPs can help school staff reflect on features of ECAs, which help contribute to an encouraging learning environment. Furthermore, staff may be encouraged to reflect on how one might transfer those supportive characteristics to the classroom environment.

5.6 Strengths and shortcomings of the current research

Whilst there appears to be an overall consensus amongst researchers over the potential benefits of ECA participation, a criticism could be made that literature has dwelt too much on quantitative data to support such claims. Little is known about how ECAs might be linked with stronger academic performance, or even if this potential impact was noticed by key stakeholders at the time of participation. Excluding Bertram et al. (2017), previous research cited in the literature review (see Chapter Two) has neglected to explore the perspectives of multiple invested parties. By including the voices of parents, alongside that of students and school professionals, hereby adopting a multi-informant approach, it offers new insights into the potential benefits of ECA participation.

This research included views of students, parents, ECA leaders, and senior school leaders. By incorporating the views of these invested parties, the current research was able to triangulate their self-reported perspectives. This provided a richer picture including a little more context to particular cases. In turn, this helped the researcher to make sense of the responses made by related parties. An example of this was how parents provided information of their children's previous experience, thus helping the researcher to accurately interpret some of the children's responses. This added further clarity and overall validity to the developed themes and sub-themes of the present research.

Given the relatively small sample size it is important to reflect on the generalisability of the findings. A range of schools were involved in the research. These schools had a range of Ofsted grades, levels of SEN and levels of deprivation (as illustrated in Table 1, page 39). However, the nature of the study does not permit generalisability to any extent: rather as an exploratory study it offers suggestions for focus in future work and in the researchers own continuing exploration of the issues.

Unfortunately it was not possible to explore three ECAs in each of the four schools, despite the researcher's consistent attempts. By missing these two ECAs, ten

participants were not able to provide their views and experiences. These views could have provided further support to the data collected from other participants, or could have offered differing perspectives.

It is also important to highlight some of the drawbacks from using telephone interviews, as a means to collect data. Not all parents could be reached, despite the repeatedly phoning to speak at agreed given times. This impacted the overall number of parent participants which needs to be held in mind, given the current researcher's aim of using triangulated data. A further drawback to using telephone interviews was the resulting distance between researcher and participant. Some parents appeared disconnected and uninterested in the research, as they were completing other tasks, whilst answering questions. This seemed to impact the amount of time in which parents were willing to talk and share their views. By conducting interviews with parents face-to-face, the researcher may have been able to gain richer accounts from parents' perspectives.

Whilst telephone interviews had their drawbacks, one could argue their use helped to promote accessibility in helping parents to contribute to the current research. An example of this relates to working parents, who would have been limited in their availability to participate, had it depended totally on face-to-face interviews. This in turn could have impacted on the overall response rate.

The results of the current research appear to be very positive, with regards to the potential benefits ECAs can offer participating students. However, the methodology employed within this study may have played a role in this. Given that the sample involved students who were active participants of ECAs, the parents of those students, as well as leaders of ECAs, this may have impacted upon the range of views which could otherwise exist in the wider field. Students who participate in ECAs are more likely, in some capacity, to hold positive views of the club they are engaged with and hence why they participate in this club. Future research could explore reasons for non-participation among those students who choose not to engage in ECAs. This would then help schools to think about potential barriers to ECA participation and consider ways in which such barriers may be removed.

Whilst the current research aimed to focus on school-based ECAs, i.e. ECAs which occurred on school grounds and managed by school staff, participating students did also talk about other ECAs (externally governed) in which they were involved. Given

the nature of the semi-structured interviews, participants had the freedom and flexibility to draw on their thoughts and views of ECAs in general, as well as specific school-based ECAs. This could have implications for RQ 1, whereby the overall definition of ECAs is restricted to how school-based (and school-led) ECAs are viewed. There may have been times, however, where there was a crossover between students' views and feelings towards school-based ECAs and externally-governed ECAs. The researcher aimed to mitigate the potential impact on the findings by checking the veracity of his interpretation of students' responses. This was achieved by repeating back what he had understood from the students' responses and asking if this summary was accurate.

5.7 Suggestions for future research

Given the lack of substantive current research exploring ECAs within English secondary schools, it was important to do an explorative study which did not focus on particular individuals, i.e. those with SEN. By adopting an explorative framework, the present research provided initial key insights into how ECAs are currently operating in English secondary schools for a range of students, irrespective of gender or SEN. Moving forward, it would be useful to explore how particular students, i.e. those with SEN, experience participating in ECAs.

Previous findings and the current findings support the view of ECAs being beneficial for a variety of reasons. These have been outlined in the literature review and in the discussion of findings (presented earlier in this chapter). With this shared understanding of benefits to ECA participation, it is important to ensure there is equal access to school-based ECAs for all students. As EPs we have, arguably, a developed understanding of the needs of students with SEN. Therefore we are in a good position to explore how students with SEN experience ECAs. We might be able to offer insight and advice to schools, as to how best support *all students* in accessing beneficial experiences and resources, such as school-based ECAs.

5.8 Final Reflections

This exploratory research has provided potential insight into ECAs within the context of English secondary schools in a South-East county. By incorporating the views of students, parents, ECA leaders and senior leaders, it has sought to maximise the accuracy and credibility of the finding. Given the lack of substantive research within the field of English secondary school-based ECAs, the current research aimed to be

explorative. It is the researcher's hope that in so doing it has helped to identify issues for further investigation linked to the role of EPs.

Research necessarily plays a potentially important role in supporting EPs to understand better how to promote a sense of inclusion; supporting positive social, emotional and mental health; promoting an opportunity for achievement and success; supporting the safety of students; and promoting the opportunity for YP to meaningfully participate in society. The current findings have highlighted the potential role of ECAs in addressing aspects of these key drivers, which themselves underpin EP practice.

Given how ECAs could potentially be a useful context and resource in addressing the key areas mentioned above, this research hopefully illustrates to the EP profession how important and valuable ECAs can be to YP. In doing so, it is hoped the EP profession will take more of an active interest in exploring this area with YP, families and schools.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Ethical Approval Form

Ethics Application Form: Student Research

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentethics/ or contact your supervisor or researchethics@ioe.ac.uk.

Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).

Please attach all supporting documents and letters.

For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Section 1 Project details				
a.	Project title		Extra-curricular activities in UK secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer? Why are students choosing to participate?	
b.	Student name		Patrick Sullivan	
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor		Dr Karl Wall / Helen Upton	
d.	Department		Psychology and Human Development	
e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD/MPhil ☐	EdD ☐	
		MRes ☐	DEdPsy ☒	
		MTeach ☐	MA/MSc ☐	
		ITE ☐		

		Diploma (state which) ☐	
		Other (state which) ☐	
f.	Course/module title		Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology- Research Methods
g.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.		Not applicable
M	Intended research start date		September 2017
i.	Intended research end date		July 2018
j.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel insurance form to Serena Ezra (s.ezra@ucl.ac.uk) in UCL Finance (see guidelines). This form can be found here (you will need your UCL login details available):* https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm		England

k.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:
	No ☒ ⇨ *go to Section 2*	Date of Approval:

If yes:
  − Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
  − Proceed to Section 10 Attachments**.**

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 Project summary

Research methods (tick all that apply)

Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).

	☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study

☒ Interviews ☒ Focus groups ☒ Questionnaires ☐ Action research ☐ Observation ☐ Literature review	☐ Use of personal records ☐ Systematic review ⇨ *if only method used go to Section 5.* ☐ Secondary data analysis ⇨ *if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.* ☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups ☐ Other, give details:

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

Working title:

Extra-curricular activities in UK secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer? Why are students choosing to participate?

Aims

Research exploring the field of ECAs is a relatively under-researched area with regards to the UK context. Most of the literature pertaining to ECAs originates from the USA. Due to cultural and contextual differences between these two counties, the findings from US studies are not reliably transferable to the UK. As well as this argument sits the criticism that ECAs have not been explored within the specific climate of secondary schools within the UK. There is a marked difference, with regards to human development, between secondary school aged individuals and university aged individuals. It is therefore hoped, this research will offer a unique insight into ECAs within UK secondary schools.

This research aims to explore what ECAs are, within the context of UK secondary schools as well as their rationale. The research also aims to explore the potential benefits of participation in ECAs from different perspectives of key stakeholders, i.e. participating students, their parents and the school institutions which run the ECAs.

Main research questions

1. How are ECAs defined within the context of UK secondary schools?
2. What is the rationale behind secondary school based ECAs?
3. What are the potential benefits /issues of participating in school based ECAs within UK secondary schools for ECA leads, pupils, parents and head teachers?
4. What motivates students to participate in school based ECAs within UK secondary schools?

Relevance to Educational Psychologist (EP) practice:

There are many ways in which this research will be relevant to EP practice. Some of the areas below will be expanded upon in writing for the thesis.

- EPs are able to support schools to develop systematic ways of supporting the holistic development of their students. One such way is to support the holistic development of CYP. If extra-curricular activities could be better harnessed, to support CYP's development, this would be a good example of preventative working. It is important therefore for EPs to gain a greater understanding of ECAs, how they are defined by senior management within schools, the current perceived benefits and reasons for why CYP actively participate in them. EPs may be able to gain a better understanding of why certain ECAs appeal more to different CYP for example. More broadly they could understand what the utility of participating in particular ECAs is for those involved and what contributions' it might make to the participants academic development and emotional wellbeing. They could then apply this knowledge when considering participation in ECAs as a recommendation/strategy to support a CYP in their development.
- EPs are trained to explore the different environmental contexts in which a CYP interacts. As EPs play an important role in contributing to evidence based research, understanding more about the different contexts in which a CYP interacts is crucial. By gaining a greater awareness and understanding of ECAs; what they offer to participants and how participants engage and benefit from them (if they do), EPs will be in a unique position in which to support schools in their management and delivery of such activities. Schools are becoming increasingly aware that EPs are effective professionals when working at a systemic level, as well as at an individual level. ECAs are a common occurrence throughout UK schools, as a profession we need to contribute to the gap in this field of research.

Research Design

This research will use a mixed method multi-informant approach. Using the multi-informant approach will enable the research to see, if across participant types, there is any triangulation of rationale for ECAs, their potential benefits and the motivation behind student participation. Mixed methods has been adopted as it allows for a deeper understanding of the ECAs offered within secondary schools in a South-East England County.

Participants

The research will focus on mainstream mixed-gender secondary schools within a county in the South-East of England. A member of senior-management from these schools have already been invited to participate in semi-structured interviews (previous ethics form submitted). The findings from these interviews will be used to answer the first research question.

Staff members leading ECAs will also be invited to participate. 3 ECAs taking place in each school will be explored. Semi-structured interviews will be used to gain their views on the purpose of their particular ECA and what they perceive are the benefits for participating.

Students from Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3) will also be involved in the research to ascertain their perceptions of what ECAs can offer (i.e. the perceived benefits) and what motivates them to want to take part. 2 students (one male and one female) from 3 ECAs within each school will be invited to participate. Key Stage 3 has been highlighted as it is an important stage of adolescent development. Preliminary findings from the initial also indicate that the participant schools (for this research) target many of their ECAs towards this particular key stage. This is because students have recently transitioned from primary school and therefore it helps the school to ensure students develop a sense of belonging and also because more pressures are placed on students in Key Stage 4, i.e. exam pressures and revision sessions.

Parents of the student participants will also be invited to participate. Their views, alongside the views of senior leaders and ECA leaders will contribute to the triangulation of the gathered data.

Method of data collection

Semi-structured interviews will be used with the senior management staff members, as well as students, their respective parents and leaders of ECAs. Semi-structured interviews should last no more than 30 minutes. In order to develop a reliable instrument to gain the views of parents and students, a pilot study will be conducted. This pilot study will consist of running a focus group with students as well as telephone interviews with their respective parents.

Audio recordings will be made of the interviews using an audio recorder on a mobile phone. These recordings will be saved directly into an encrypted folder onto the hard drive of a password protected laptop as soon as possible following the interview.

For sample questions of the semi-structured interviews and focus group, please see the provisional schedule attached.

Dissemination

The findings of the research will be reported in a thesis. A generic report can be distributed to participating schools. This will offer an insight into the key themes which have emerged from the research. No identifiable data will be included in these generic reports, to ensure confidentiality and anonymity is protected. Senior leaders may find the generic report helpful in supporting the development of ECAs within their school.

Section 3 Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

a.	Will your research involve human participants?	Yes ☒	No ☐ ⇨ *go to Section 4*

b.	Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.

☐ Early years/pre-school ☐ Ages 5-11 ☒ Ages 12-16 ☐ Young people aged 17-18	☐ Unknown – specify below ☒ Adults *please specify below* ☐ Other – specify below

NB: Ensure that you check the **guidelines** (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).

The participants will include members of the senior management team of mixed-gender mainstream secondary schools (within a South-East England county). Students from Years 8 and 9 (Key Stage 3) will also be invited to participate as well as their respective parents. Leaders of particular ECAs will also be invited to participate.

The rationale behind the selection of participants is given below:

- Head teachers/Senior leaders have an influential force within schools for how ECAs are operationalised and implemented. If we are to gain an understanding into how schools are defining them, we must seek to explore the views and rationale of the senior leaders.

- ECAs have been explored in more detail within the context of universities and further education but not yet extensively within the context of secondary schools.

- 6 mixed-gender mainstream secondary schools were selected as the contextual environment for the initial phase of the research. Using these schools reduces the potential impact of extraneous variables such as gender, religion, intelligence than if we were to include single-sex schools, religious schools or grammar schools for example.

- In order to determine the purpose of ECAs within the context of UK secondary schools, as well as the perceived benefits of them, and to explore the motivation behind why students elect to participate in them, the views of the students will need to be included within the study. This will involve interviewing young people within secondary schools. Students in Years 7-9 are of particular interest, as these do students do not have the added pressures of exams which may interfere with actively participating in ECAs. The lower end of secondary school is also of interest as students have recently transitioned from primary schools and is an important time for children and young people, i.e. in terms of developing a sense of belonging to schools and developing links and relationships with others within the school. Although I am interested in the experiences of students from Year 7, I have chosen to exclude current Year 7 students (at the time of data collection) as they would have only recently joined the school and may therefore not have had much opportunity to

experience ECAs on offer at the school. I will, however, be calling upon students in Year 8 and 9 to reflect on their experience of school from when they joined in Year 7.

- In order to provide a richer picture, triangulation of data would be beneficial for this piece of research. For this reason gaining the views of the ECAs' leaders and parents of participating students is important.

| c. | If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study?

Informed consent will needed to be obtained from the school's head teacher, the students' parents and the students themselves prior to any involvement. Once consent has been granted from the school's head teacher, via an information consent form, consent forms will be distributed to the parents of students and students themselves. The researcher's email address will be included in this information consent form should parents have any further questions they wish to be answered prior to giving their consent.

(Please attach approach letters or details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.) |

| d. | How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)?

Head teachers have already been approached for their school to participate following the approval of an original ethics application. As the research has entered a new phase an updated information sheet and consent form outlining all details of the research will be distributed to the same head teachers. The consent form will also outline the ethical prerequisites around confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw (see Section 8). |

| e. | Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing. |

| f. | How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time?

See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures.   Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.

An information sheet and consent form will be provided to participants prior to data collection (via semi-structured interviews). This will be distributed to participants, via email (to school head teachers and ECA leaders) and via school (to students and their parents), in advance of the data collection. An additional copy of the information sheet and consent form will be provided at the start of the interview to ensure participants have read this. The participants' right to withdraw without explanation will be written on the consent form and information sheet and I will also repeat this verbally to the participants. The information sheet will include a UCL IOE email address for any questions. |

g.	**Studies involving questionnaires:** Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes
	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
h.	**Studies involving observation:** Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
	If **NO** read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
i.	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If **yes** what steps will you take to explain and minimise this? There is always a small chance that a participant may experience anxiety, embarrassment or discomfort during an interview. However, the researcher considers this unlikely in the current piece of research, given the nature of the topic being discussed. The interviews will be conducted on school premises (except for parent interviews), so participants will be in familiar surroundings. I will be conducting the interviews personally. As a TEP I will be working within the university and BPS codes of conduct, which expect that I put the individual's feelings first. So, I will consider the comfort and emotional state of participants before probing questions or elaborating on topics. If **not**, explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise?
j.	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes ☐ No ☒
	If **YES** please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
k.	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? An anonymised summary of main points from the pilot will be made available to participants at their request. Yes ☒ No ☐

	If **NO** please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
l.	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same as an individual debriefing.) Yes ⊠ No ☐
	If **no**, why not? Schools will be presented with a brief summary of the research's findings. This will be generic and will only consist of key themes which have emerged from the research. No identifiable data will be included within this summary to ensure confidentiality and anonymity is not compromised.

Section 4 Security-sensitive material

Only complete if applicable

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call;   involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes ☐ *	No X
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes ☐ *	NoX
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes ☐ *	No X

* *Give further details in Section 8 Ethical Issues*

Section 5 Systematic review of research

Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* *Give further details in Section 8 Ethical Issues*

*If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 10 Attachments.***

Section 6 Secondary data analysis Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s	
b.	Owner of dataset/s	
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes ☐ No ☐ *If no, do you have the owner's permission/license?* Yes ☐ No* ☐
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes ☐ No ☐
		Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes ☐ No* ☐
		Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☐ No ☐
		Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* ☐ No ☐

e.	Are the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)?	Yes* ☐	No ☐
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
g.	**If no,** was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
h.	**If no,** was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

** Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues***

*If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to **Section 9***

Attachments.

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). *(See the Guidelines and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.)*	Yes ☒
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?	Yes ☐ * No ☒

** **If yes,** please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and*

state what these arrangements are below.

c.	Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and during transcription? Only myself, the researcher. I may share physical copies of some data with my research supervisors (Dr Karl Wall and Helen Upton) in order to ensure the quality of my data analysis. However, it will be in an anonymised form and will be shredded afterwards.

During the research

d.	Where will the data be stored? Physical consent forms will be kept in a locked cupboard. Interview data will be anonymised so no answers will be stored with the name of the participant who provided them. This data will be kept in an encrypted folder, on a password laptop.
e.	Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes ☒ * No ☐ ***If yes,** state what mobile devices: Mobile phone to initially record the interview. These will be transferred onto a password protected laptop, within an encrypted file. Original recordings on the mobile phone will then be erased. An encrypted USB stick will also be used to transfer anonymised transcripts i.e. to show supervisors. ***If yes,** will they be encrypted?: Yes password protected and encrypted.

After the research

f.	Where will the data be stored? The anonymized data will be stored on my personal computer- password protected, within an encrypted file. After transcription of the interviews the audio-recordings will be deleted.
g.	How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format? The recordings of the interviews will be disposed of once they have been fully transcribed. The records of transcription will be kept for 2 years, as it is possible it may provide context for a future piece of research. In this case it will be stored on the same password protected laptop.

	Will data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes ☐ * No ☒
h.	*** If yes,** please provide details.

Section 8   Ethical issues

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

− Methods − Sampling − Recruitment − Gatekeepers − Informed consent − Potentially vulnerable participants − Safeguarding/child protection − Sensitive topics	− International research − Risks to participants and/or researchers − Confidentiality/Anonymity − Disclosures/limits to confidentiality − Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) − Reporting − Dissemination and use of findings

Informed consent and sampling

Participant informed consent will be obtained through consent forms (please see attached). Participants (except parents) who give consent to participate will be interviewed on their respective school's premises, thereby alleviating the degree of imposition. Parents of the student participants will also be required to provide their consent for their children being interviewed.

 Participant consent will be provided to:

- take part in a focus group (as part of a pilot study to determine the reliability of data collection tools) and subsequent individual semi-structured interviews about extra-curricular activities

- allow any discussions to be audio recorded
- consenting to the data collected being used within research and published/presented anonymously

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be ensured in the following ways. Participants will complete a consent form which includes their name, this consent form will then have a code reference added to it. From this point, each participant will be referred to only by their code reference. All consent forms will be kept in a locked drawer in a desk, in a separate building to the laptop which will store transcribed and analysed data. Data will be stored in an encrypted folder, on a laptop which is password protected.

Audio recordings of the focus groups and interviews will be taken using an iPhone and saved directly into an encrypted folder on a secure private laptop.

Disclosures

The research will involve conducting interviews with key professionals in their respective schools, young people participating in ECAs as well as their parents. As the interviews will centre around the theme of extra-curricular activities in general, it is unlikely that disclosures will occur. However, if a disclosure is made, the designated safeguarding officer at the school will be informed by the researcher carrying out the interview. The researcher will follow up that any actions agreed have been carried through by the safeguarding lead.

Risk to participants/researchers

In order to ensure a professional distance, all communication with participants will be channelled through a university email address.

Data Storage and Security

Participants will complete a consent form which includes their name, this consent form will then have a code reference added to it. From this point, each participant will be referred to only by their code reference. All consent forms will be kept in a locked drawer in a desk, in a separate building to the laptop which will store transcribed and analysed data. Data will be stored in an encrypted folder, on a private laptop which is password protected.

Audio recordings of the interviews will be taken using an iPhone and saved directly into the encrypted folder and stored on a password protected private laptop.

Dissemination of findings

The schools will have the anonymised generic findings of the thematic analysis presented to them. These generic themes may help to give senior leaders in schools an insight into the importance of ECAs and possible thought for how to support their development in the future.
Once the research has been concluded and data analysed it will be written up into a part of the TEP's thesis. The report will anonymise any references to participants and if interview quotes are used, the TEP will ensure that no identifying information is included.

Section 9 Further information

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

Section 10 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

a.	Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes ☒	No ☐
b.	Consent form	Yes ☒	No ☐
	If applicable:		
c.	The proposal for the project	Yes ☐	No ☒
d.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes ☐	No ☒
e.	Full risk assessment	Yes ☐	No ☒

Section 11 Declaration

I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines.

☒   ☐

Yes   **No**

BPS X	BERA X	BSA ☐ Other (please state) ☐

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.

☒   ☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.

☒   ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name	Patrick Sullivan

Date	31.08.2017

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*

or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*

or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE. Further information can be found at

http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/DBS_Guidance_1415.pdf

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook.* London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator (via researchethics@ioe.ac.uk) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee.

Also see' when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':

http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/42253.html

Reviewer 1	
Supervisor name	Dr Karl Wall 20-09-17
Supervisor comments	This has been reviewed and is consent with both BERA and BPS guidelines as they apply to the work being covered
Supervisor signature	
Reviewer 2	
Advisory committee/course team member name	Helen Upton
Advisory committee/course team member comments	Agreed
Advisory committee/course team member signature	
Decision	
Date decision was made	
Decision	Approved ☐
	Referred back to applicant and supervisor ☐
	Referred to REC for review ☐
Recording	Recorded in the student information system ☐

Once completed and approved, please send this form and associated documents to the relevant programme administrator to record on the student information system and to securely store.

Further guidance on ethical issues can be found on the IOE website at http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/ and www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk

Appendix II: Information sheet and consent form for senior managers

Research Information Sheet for the head teachers

Research Title: Research Title: Extra-curricular activities in English secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer? Why are students choosing to participate?

Dear Head teacher,

My name is Patrick Sullivan and I am currently a Year 3 Trainee on the 3 year Doctoral Course in Professional Child, Adolescent and Educational Psychology at UCL Institute of Education. I would like to invite your school to participate in a piece of research which forms part of my professional qualification. Before you give consent to your school taking part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what the school's participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this piece of research?

Research exploring the field of extra-curricular activities (ECAs) is a relatively under-researched area with regards to the UK context. Most of the literature pertaining to ECAs originates from the USA. Due to cultural and contextual differences between these two counties, the findings from US studies are not reliably transferable to the UK. As well as this argument sits the criticism that ECAs have not been explored within the specific climate of secondary schools within the UK. There is a marked difference, with regards to human development, between secondary school aged individuals and university aged individuals. It is hoped, therefore, that this research will offer a unique insight into ECAs within UK secondary schools. This research aims to explore what ECAs are, within the context of UK secondary schools as well as their purpose, i.e. their rationale and intended outcomes. The research also aims to explore the perceived benefits of participation in ECAs from different perspectives of key stakeholders, e.g. participating students, their parents and the school institutions which run the ECAs.

What are the benefits to your school by taking part?

By agreeing to participate in this research I hope to offer you and your staff an insight into how ECAs are viewed in your school. These findings could help your school promote ECAs to more of your pupils, or to know which types of ECAs may benefit particular pupils. As your school is investing scarce resources into the running of ECAs, I would like to be able to support schools gain a greater understanding of what the benefits are to pupils participating in them. Consequently, I hope the findings will guide schools like yours and their investment in ECAs, to ensure that the limited resources schools have for ECAs is being used in the best possible way.

What will happen if you give consent for your school to participate?

If you give permission for your school to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form.

I will be carrying out data collection during the Autumn Term (2017). I would visit at a time that is convenient for yourself, your staff and students, so as to minimise any disruption to school life.

As part of the research, I will ask three staff members (staff members who lead an ECA) to participate in semi-structured interviews, which will last no more than 30 minutes A similar approach will be used with a selection of 6 students (one male and one female from 3 difference ECAs) from Key Stage 3 and their respective parents. The questions will be based around the research title above, but it is designed to be flexible so it can be guided by the participant's views. The interview will be recorded, subject to the individual's permission. All audio-recordings of interviews will be deleted after transcription. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Parents, should they give their permission, will be interviewed via the telephone. Prior to interviewing students, parents will be contacted to give their consent alongside yours.

Will the information collected be kept confidential?

What is said or recorded in interviews is regarded as strictly confidential and will be held securely until the research is finished. All data for analysis will be anonymised. In reporting on the research findings, I will not reveal the names of any participants or the organisation where you work. At all times there will be no possibility of individuals being linked with the data.

The UK Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to all information gathered within the interviews and held on password-locked, encrypted computer files. No data will be accessed by anyone other than the researcher and supervisors. No data will be able to be linked back to any individual taking part in the interview. Upon completion of the data analysis, all recordings will be deleted.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Participants will be sent a copy of the transcript to allow them to check their thoughts and views have been correctly understood. A summary of the main findings will be developed and shared with yourself, colleagues within the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the UCL IOE and the Southend EPS. I will be inviting other schools in the area to participate and there will be a generic summary sheet distributed to all schools after the research culminates.
Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Patrick Sullivan

██████████████████

Thank you for reading this research information sheet and for your consideration in giving permission for your school to participate in this pilot.

Please complete the consent form on the following page by ticking the relevant box and entering your details.

I give my permission for the school to be involved in the research outlined above.

☐ YES

☐ NO

Name of School ....

Name ....

Role ....

Signature ....   Date
....

Contact Details:

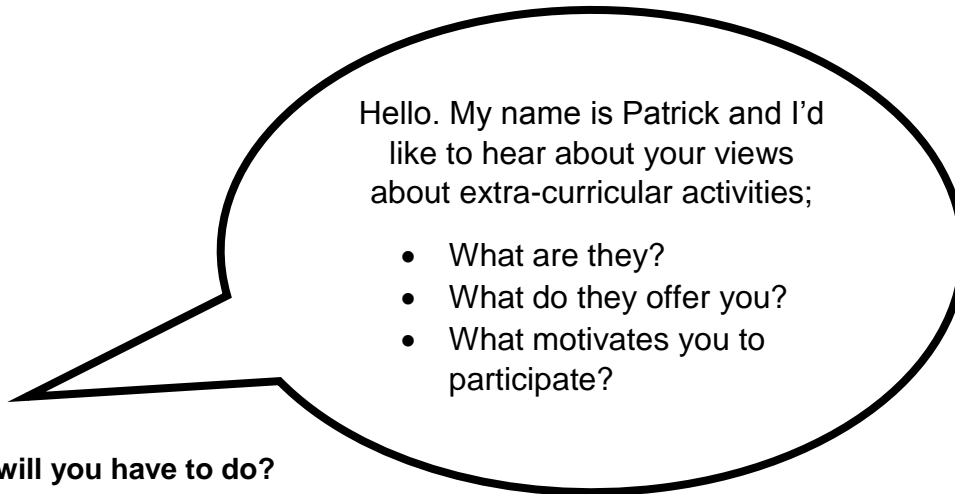Phone ....

Email ....

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

Appendix III: Information sheet and consent form for students

Research into extra-curricular activities in secondary schools

Hello. My name is Patrick and I'd like to hear about your views about extra-curricular activities;

- What are they?
- What do they offer you?
- What motivates you to participate?

What will you have to do?

1. Answer some questions about the extra-curricular activities you do: what you think about them and your views
2. Take part in an interview - it should last about 30 minutes.
3. The interview will be recorded. This allows me to gain an accurate record of what you say.

- You can stop at any time during the research
- You do not have to answer questions you do not want to.
- Your answers will be made anonymous.
- What you say is confidential to the project.

If you have other questions about the research you can email me at: patrick.sullivan.15@ucl.ac.uk

☞Decide if you want to take part: Put an X in the box and sign your name.

Yes please	**Yes but I don't want to be recorded**	**No thank you**
☐	☐	☐

Your Name: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix IV: Information sheet and consent form for parents

Research Information Sheet for the parents/carers of student participants

Research Title: Research Title: Extra-curricular activities in English secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer? Why are students choosing to participate?

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for taking the time to read this research information sheet. My name is Patrick Sullivan and I am currently a Year 3 Trainee on the 3 year Doctoral Course in Professional Child, Adolescent and Educational Psychology at UCL Institute of Education. I would like to invite you and your child to participate in a piece of research which forms part of my professional qualification. You should only give permission for your child to participate if you and your child so wish to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage your child in anyway. I will also be seeking consent from your child as well. Before you give permission for you and your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your child's participation will involve.

What is the purpose of this piece of research?

This research aims to explore what extra-curricular activities (ECAs) are, within the context of English secondary schools, as well as their purpose, i.e. their rationale and intended outcomes. The research also aims to explore the perceived benefits of participation in ECAs from different perspectives of key stakeholders, e.g. participating students, parents and leaders school ECAs.

What are the benefits to taking part in this research?

By taking part in this research, I hope to offer you, your child and your child's school an insight into how ECAs are viewed. These findings could help your school promote child's ECAs to more pupils, or to know which types of ECAs may benefit particular pupils. As your child's school is investing scarce resources into the running of ECAs, I would like to be able to support schools gain a greater understanding of what the benefits are to pupils participating in them. Consequently, I hope the findings will support your child's school and their investment in ECAs, to ensure that the limited resources schools have for ECAs is being used in the best possible way.

Does my child have to take part?

Participation is voluntary. Students do not have to take part. Should you give permission for your child to take part, and then change your mind, you will have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time.

What will happen to if I give my consent for both my child and myself to participate?

If you give permission for to take part you will be given this research information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. Your child will be asked to take part

in a semi-structured interview. The one-to-one interview will last no more than 30 minutes and the questions will be based around the research title above, but it is designed to be flexible so it can be guided by the your child's views. The interview will be recorded, subject to you and your child's permission, this allows an accurate record of what your child says. I will also then contact you by telephone, at a time that is convenient for, to ask you some questions based around the research title above. Once again the interview is designed to be flexible so it can be guided by your views. This telephone interview will also be recorded, subject to your permission. All recordings of data on audio-equipment will be deleted after transcription. Even if you have given permission for your child to take part, you are still free to stop your child's participation at any time during the interview and to have research data/information relating to your child withdrawn without giving any reason.

Will the information collected be kept confidential?

The interview will be audio recorded in order to support the analysis of the data. All information gathered will be anonymized and you and your child will be given an individual participant number. Your signed consent form will be stored separately from any audio data. It will not be possible to identify individual members or schools. The information collected is strictly confidential to the UCL IOE research project team (myself and my supervisors). Should you wish to withdraw your child from the research at any time and for any reason, all data/information gained will then be destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the study?

I will produce a final report summarising the main findings of my study which will be shared with colleagues within the Department of Psychology and Human Development at the UCL IOE, the main findings may also be shared with Southend Educational Psychology Service. Any feedback that is given to the participating schools, with regards to views expressed about ECAs will be anonymised generic themes.
Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Patrick Sullivan

███████████████████

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for your consideration in taking part in this research study.

Parent's consent form

Child's name: …………………………………………………

Please put a circle round your answers and sign your name on this form to let us know if you are happy for your child to participate in this piece of research.

	Yes	No
1. I am happy for my child to take part in the following research project within 'X' School.	**Yes**	**No**
2. I am happy for my child to be audio recorded for the purpose of obtaining detailed information for this research. I understand the recordings will be destroyed after this project culminates.	**Yes**	**No**
3. I have read and understood the information sheet provided.	**Yes**	**No**
4. I understand that my child is free to withdraw from the study at any time and that I can contact Patrick Sullivan if I have any concerns.	**Yes**	**No**
5. I am happy to be contacted via telephone to answer some questions about the extra-curricular activities my child participates in.	**Yes**	**No**
6. I am happy for this telephone conversation to be audio recorded. I understand the recording will be destroyed after the research culminates.	**Yes**	**No**

Parent/ guardian's Name:…………………………………………..

Signed: …………………………………………………

Date: …………………….
Contact telephone number: …………………………………..

Availability for telephone interview:
Please complete the table below illustrating times that would be convenient for me to contact you, to answer some questions over the telephone.

	AM	PM
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Appendix V: Information sheet and consent form for senior ECA leaders

Research Information Sheet for the key professional involved in the extra-curricular activity

Research Title: Extra-curricular activities in English secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer? Why are students choosing to participate?

Thank you for taking the time to read this research information sheet. My name is Patrick Sullivan and I am currently a Year 3 Trainee on the 3 year Doctoral Course in Professional Child, Adolescent and Educational Psychology at UCL Institute of Education. I am writing to ask for your consent to participate in a piece of research taking place at your school.

What is the purpose of this piece of research?

This research aims to explore what extra-curricular activities (ECAs) are, within the context of English secondary schools, as well as their purpose, i.e. their rationale and intended outcomes. The research also aims to explore the perceived benefits of participation in ECAs from the different perspectives of key stakeholders, e.g. participating students, their parents and yourself as the leader of an ECA.

What are the benefits to your school by taking part?

By agreeing to participate in this research I hope to offer your school –and you- an insight into how ECAs are viewed. These findings could help your school promote ECAs to more of your pupils, or to know which types of ECAs may benefit particular pupils. As you and your school are investing scarce resources into the running of ECAs, I would like to be able to support schools to gain a greater understanding of what the benefits are to pupils participating in them. Consequently, I hope the findings will support you and your school and their investment in ECAs, to ensure that the limited resources schools have for ECAs are being used in the best possible way.

What will happen if you give consent for your school to participate?

As part of the research, I will ask you to participate in a semi-structured interview, which will last no more than 30 minutes. A similar approach will be used with a selection of students from Key Stage 3 and their respective parents. The questions will be based around the research title above, but it is designed to be flexible so it can be guided by your views. Interviews will be recorded, subject to your permission this allows an accurate record of what you say. All audio-recordings of interviews will be deleted after transcription. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Parental consent will also be sought prior to engaging with students.

Will the information collected be kept confidential?

The interview will be audio recorded in order to support the analysis of the data. All information gathered will be anonymized and you will be given an individual participant number. Your signed consent form will be stored separately from your audio data. It will not be possible to identify individual members or schools. The information collected is strictly confidential to the UCL IOE research project team (myself and my supervisors). You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time and for any reason. All data/information gained from you will then be destroyed.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Patrick Sullivan

Please complete the consent form below by ticking the relevant box and entering your details.

Best wishes,
Patrick Sullivan

Trainee Educational Psychologist
UCL, the Institute of Education

I agree to be interviewed about my experiences of managing/delivering an extra-curricular activity.

☐ YES

☐ NO

Name of School ....

Name ....

Role ....

Signature ....   Date
....

Contact Details:

Phone ....

Email ....

Appendix VI: Interview schedule for senior managers

Interview schedule	School/code:	Date:	Person/code:
Setting notes (important to get detailed contextual information): • Time of day (i.e. morning/afternoon, just after break/lunch, what would they normally be doing at this time? • Physical setting (inc. pertinent features of room, seating arrangement, lighting); • Attention/motivation of head teacher. Do they seem comfortable/motivated to be participating?			

Introduction	Equipment (inc. specific info):
• If interviewing the head teacher, thank them for firstly agreeing for the school to participate in the research and for giving up some of their time to answer questions. If interviewing other senior leader, thank them for agreeing to give up some of their time to participate. • Turn on recording device to test voice levels and allow leader to hear their voice back (may help build rapport)	

Speech/Script of introduction	Action
➢ **Hello X,** my name is Patrick. ➢ **Thank** you so much for meeting with me today. ➢ **I really** appreciate you giving up your time. ➢ **I am** interested in learning a bit more about extra-curricular activities, particularly with regards to extra-curricular activities within the context of your school. ➢ **I was** hoping that today we could talk a little about the extra-curricular activities within the context of your school to help me with my research. ➢ **By taking part** in this interview/research I hope to be able to offer explore ECAs and how they are being experienced by CYP. Consequently I will be able to offer schools advice as to what makes a good ECA. So that the resources schools like yours are investing into ECAs is an investment which reaps as many benefits as possible. ➢ **Q. Is it OK for me to record what we say so that I don't make any mistakes remembering it!** *Head teacher's answer: Yes (we hope)* ➢ Thank you. ➢ I will use the tape to make a written record. Then I will destroy the tape. ➢ I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you said. ➢ (Before we start recording if there are any things you don't feel comfortable talking about, just say so. We won't talk about them!)	• Using a script will help the interviews to be conduct as standardised as possible. • It will be important to remind the head teacher throughout that, if there is anything they do not want to talk about, they are not obliged to. • It is important to not only listen to what the head teacher says, but also *how* they say it. Can engage in peer supervision in this regard.

Interview script			
Question (stem)	Prompt (if leader has difficulty understanding)	Extension (if something else is said that is useful)	Comments
1 Could you tell me, how would you define extra-curricular activities in your school?	How would you explain what an extra-curricular activity is to your staff, students or their parents? Do you have any extra-curricular activities in this school? What are the key features of these types of activities?		
2 Could you tell me about some of the extra-curricular activities taking place in your school?	Are there any clubs, groups, activities in the school? What are they? How are young people selected for them? How do young people come to join them? When do they take place? Who supervises them?		
3 What constitutes as an extra-curricular activity within your school?	Why do you perceive the examples you listed earlier as extra-curricular activities?		
4 Does your school collaborate with other schools/organisations in running extra-curricular activities?	Are there any extra-curricular activities that are jointly run with other schools or other agencies?		
5 What do you perceive the importance of extra-curricular activities to be?	Are there any benefits to participating in extra-curricular activities for staff, pupils and parents? Do they help young people who		

		participate in them? In what ways?		
6	How do you think other schools may define extra-curricular activities?	Do you think staff in other schools would use the same definition of extra-curricular activity as you? Would they give the same explanation? If yes, why? If not, why not?		
7	How do extra-curricular activities differ from curricular activities?			

Speech/Closing script	Action
➢ Are there any other points you would like to make or do you have any questions for me? ➢ That brings us to the end. ➢ I would like to thank you again for meeting with me today. ➢ Thank you for being so open and honest. ➢ Q. Do you have any questions about what we have talked about? ➢ I will just remind you that I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you have said. ➢ The recording will be destroyed when the research comes to an end. ➢ Is it ok to contact you, once I have analysed the transcript to check that I have understood you correctly? ➢ You also have the right to withdraw. ➢ If you later decide you do not want me to write about what we have discussed, lust let me know. ➢ Q. Does that all make sense? ➢ I hope you enjoy the rest of your day. ➢ Thank you once again.	

Appendix VII: Interview schedule for students (pre-pilot)

Interview schedule	School/code:	Date:	Person/code:

Setting notes (important to get detailed contextual information):
• Time of day (i.e. morning/afternoon, just after break/lunch, what would they normally be doing at this time?
• Physical setting (inc. pertinent features of room, seating arrangement, lighting);
• Attention/motivation of head teacher. Do they seem comfortable/motivated to be participating?

Introduction	Equipment (inc. specific info):
• Thank the student for agreeing to participate in the research and for giving up some of their time to answer questions. • Turn on recording device to test voice levels and allow leader to hear their voice back (may help build rapport)	Mobile phone Notepad and pen Information sheet/consent form

Speech/Script of introduction	Action
➢ **Hello X,** my name is Patrick. ➢ **Thank** you so much for meeting with me today. ➢ **I really** appreciate you giving up your time. ➢ **I am** interested in learning a bit more about extra-curricular activities within your school, particularly with regards to extra-curricular activities you attend. ➢ **By taking part** in this interview/research you are providing an insight into what ECAs are, within the context of a UK secondary school, as well as the rationale, and potential benefits associated with participating in them. Consequently the findings will be useful in helping schools understand what makes a good ECA. This will mean that students may have better access to ECAs in the future and that they are better designed to meet students' needs. ➢ **Q. Is it OK for me to record what we say so that I don't make any mistakes remembering it!** *Student's answer: Yes (we hope)* ➢ Thank you. ➢ I will use the tape to make a written record. ➢ Then I will destroy the tape. ➢ I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you said. ➢ (Before we start recording if there are any things you don't feel comfortable talking about, just say so. ➢ We won't talk about them!)	• Using a script will help the interviews to be conduct as standardised as possible. • It will be important to remind the student throughout that, if there is anything they do not want to talk about, they are not obliged to. • It is important to not only listen to what the student says, but also *how* they say it. Can engage in peer supervision in this regard.

	Interview script			
	Question (stem)	Prompt (if leader has difficulty understanding)	Extension (if something else is said that is useful)	Comments
0	Can you give me some examples of after school activities you do- or ones at lunchtime?			To help focus on the task and for you to check that they are focusing on what you are interested in!
1	Could you tell me, how would you define extra-curricular activities?	How would you explain what an extra-curricular activity is to new students or your parents? What are some of the extra-curricular activities taking place in your school? What are the key features of this type of activity?		
2	Why do you think your school runs ECAs?	What purpose do ECAs serve within the school? What do you perceive the importance of extra-curricular activities to be?		
3	You mentioned some ECAs when we started-are there any others you do?	Which ECAs do you participate in? Have you participated in any other ECAs in the past?		
4	Why do you participate in ECAs you go to?	What do you hope to get out of participating in the ECAs? Do you achieve/accomplish anything particular from participating in these specific ECAs?		
5	Are there any other additional benefits for you in participating in the ECA you attend?	Does participating in the ECA help you in other ways? In what ways?		

		Is there a positive impact on other people, you're school staff or your parents?		
6	Would there be other reasons for why you might participate in other ECAs-ones you have not mentioned?	Can you think of a time when you might want to participate in other ECAs? What would be happening to motivate you to participate?		

Speech/Closing script	Action
- Are there any other points you would like to make or do you have any questions for me? - That brings us to the end. - I would like to thank you again for meeting with me today. - Thank you for being so open and honest. Q. Do you have any questions about what we have talked about? - I will just remind you that I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you have said. - The recording will be destroyed when the research comes to an end. - Is it ok to contact you, once I have analysed the transcript to check that I have understood you correctly? - You also have the right to withdraw. - If you later decide you do not want me to write about what we have discussed, lust let me know. Q. Does that all make sense? - I hope you enjoy the rest of your day. - Thank you once again.	

Appendix VIII: Interview schedule for students (post-pilot)

Interview schedule	School/code:	Date:	Person/code:
Setting notes (important to get detailed contextual information): • Time of day (i.e. morning/afternoon, just after break/lunch, what would they normally be doing at this time? • Physical setting (inc. pertinent features of room, seating arrangement, lighting); • Attention/motivation of head teacher. Do they seem comfortable/motivated to be participating?			
Introduction • Thank the student for agreeing to participate in the research and for giving up some of their time to answer questions. • Turn on recording device to test voice levels and allow leader to hear their voice back (may help build rapport)			Equipment (inc. specific info): Mobile phone Notepad and pen Information sheet/consent form
Speech/Script of introduction		Action	
➢ **Hello X,** my name is Patrick. ➢ **Thank** you so much for meeting with me today. ➢ **I really** appreciate you giving up your time. ➢ **I am** interested in learning a bit more about extra-curricular activities within your school, particularly with regards to extra-curricular activities you attend. ➢ **By taking part** in this interview/research you are providing an insight into what ECAs are, within the context of a UK secondary school, as well as the rationale, and potential benefits associated with participating in them. Consequently the findings will be useful in helping schools understand what makes a good ECA. This will mean that students may have better access to ECAs in the future and that they are better designed to meet students' needs. ➢ **Q. Is it OK for me to record what we say so that I don't make any mistakes remembering it!** *Student's answer: Yes (we hope)* ➢ Thank you. ➢ I will use the tape to make a written record. ➢ Then I will destroy the tape. ➢ I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you said. ➢ (Before we start recording if there are any things you don't feel comfortable talking about, just say so. ➢ We won't talk about them!)		• Using a script will help the interviews to be conduct as standardised as possible. • It will be important to remind the student throughout that, if there is anything they do not want to talk about, they are not obliged to. • It is important to not only listen to what the student says, but also *how* they say it. Can engage in peer supervision in this regard.	
Interview script			
Question (stem)	Prompt (if leader has difficulty understanding)	Extension (if something else is	Comments

			said that is useful)	
0	Can you give me some examples of after school activities you do-or ones at lunchtime?			To help focus on the task and for you to check that they are focusing on what you are interested in!
1	Could you tell me, how would you define extra-curricular activities?	How would you explain what an extra-curricular activity is to new students or your parents? What are some of the extra-curricular activities taking place in your school? What are the key features of this type of activity?		
2	Why do you think your school runs ECAs?	Are ECAs important in your school? Why do you think that is? What purpose do ECAs serve within the school? What do you think the school perceives the importance of extra-curricular activities to be?		
3	You mentioned some ECAs when we started-are there any others you do?	Which ECAs do you participate in? Have you participated in any other ECAs in the past?		
4	Why do you participate in ECAs you go to?	What do you hope to get out of participating in the ECAs? Do you achieve/accomplish anything particular from participating in these specific ECAs?		
5	Are there any other additional benefits for you in participating in the ECA you attend?	Does participating in the ECA help you in other ways? In what ways? Is there a positive impact on other people, you're	Why do you think that is?	

		school staff or your parents?		
6	Would there be other reasons for why you might participate in other ECAs-ones you have not mentioned?	Can you think of a time when you might want to participate in other ECAs? What would be happening to motivate you to participate?		
7	As you know I am asking various students in this school these questions. But I have also been asking the same question in other schools outside this. Some of the topics which some students have talked about include friendships, relationships with staff, learning and transition. What do you think about those topics?" [Pause] What do you think?	Would any of those examples match your own thoughts and feelings?		
Speech/Closing script			Action	

Appendix IX: Interview schedule for parents

Interview schedule	School/code:	Date:	Person/code:
Setting notes (important to get detailed contextual information): • Time of day (i.e. morning/afternoon, just after break/lunch, what would they normally be doing at this time? • Physical setting (inc. pertinent features of room, seating arrangement, lighting); • Attention/motivation of head teacher. Do they seem comfortable/motivated to be participating?			

Introduction • Thank the parent for agreeing to participate in the research and for giving up some of their time to answer questions. • Turn on recording device to test voice levels and allow leader to hear their voice back (may help build rapport)	Equipment (inc. specific info): Mobile phone Notepad and pen Information sheet/consent form

Speech/Script of introduction	Action
➢ **Hello X,** my name is Patrick. ➢ **Thank** you so much for meeting with me today. ➢ **I really** appreciate you giving up your time. ➢ **I am** interested in learning a bit more about extra-curricular activities within your child's school, particularly with regards to extra-curricular activities your child attends. ➢ **By taking part** in this interview/research you are providing an insight into what ECAs are, within the context of a UK secondary school, as well as the rationale, and potential benefits associated with participating in them. Consequently the findings will be useful in helping schools understand what makes a good ECA. This will mean that students may have better access to ECAs in the future and that they are better designed to meet students' needs. ➢ **Q. Is it OK for me to record what we say so that I don't make any mistakes remembering it!** *Parent's answer: Yes (we hope)* ➢ Thank you. ➢ I will use the tape to make a written record. Then I will destroy the tape. ➢ I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you said. ➢ (Before we start recording if there are any things you don't feel comfortable talking about, just say so. We won't talk about them!)	• Using a script will help the interviews to be conduct as standardised as possible. • It will be important to remind the parent throughout that, if there is anything they do not want to talk about, they are not obliged to. • It is important to not only listen to what the parent says, but also *how* they say it. Can engage in peer supervision in this regard.

	Interview script			
	Question (stem)	Prompt (if leader has difficulty understanding)	Extension (if something else is said that is useful)	Comments
1	Could you tell me, how would you define ECAs?	How would you explain what an ECAs to your child or other new parents to the school? What are some of the ECAs taking place in your child's school? What are the key features of this type of activity?	Outside of normal currriculum outide of school hourw	
2	Why do you think your child's school runs ECAs?	What purpose do ECAs serve within the school? What do you perceive the importance of ECAs to be?	Would want students achieve for ofted	
			Instil motivation Parental request	
3	Does your child attend any of the ECAs operating in their school?	Which ECAs do they participate in? Have they participated in other ECAs in the past?		
4	Why does your child participate in these ECAs?	What do you hope your child will get out of participating in the ECAs? Do you think they achieve/accomplish anything particular from participating in these specific ECAs?		
5	Are there any other additional benefits to participating in the ECA your child attends?	Does your child participating in the ECA help them in other ways? In what ways? Is there a positive impact on other people, your family, school staff or other students?		

6	Would there be other reasons for why your child might participate in other ECAs?	Can you think of a time when your child might want to participate in other ECAs? Or, when you might want your child to participate in other ECAs? Why would that be?		

Speech/Closing script	Action
- Are there any other points you would like to make or do you have any questions for me? - That brings us to the end. - I would like to thank you again for meeting with me today. - Thank you for being so open and honest. Q. Do you have any questions about what we have talked about? - I will just remind you that I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you have said. - The recording will be destroyed when the research comes to an end. - Is it ok to contact you, once I have analysed the transcript to check that I have understood you correctly? - You also have the right to withdraw. - If you later decide you do not want me to write about what we have discussed, lust let me know. Q. Does that all make sense? - I hope you enjoy the rest of your day. - Thank you once again.	

Appendix X: Interview schedule for ECA leaders

Interview schedule	School/code:	Date:	Person/code:

Setting notes (important to get detailed contextual information):
• Time of day (i.e. morning/afternoon, just after break/lunch, what would they normally be doing at this time? • Physical setting (inc. pertinent features of room, seating arrangement, lighting); • Attention/motivation of head teacher. Do they seem comfortable/motivated to be participating?

Introduction	Equipment (inc. specific info):
• Thank the ECA leader for agreeing to participate in the research and for giving up some of their time to answer questions. • Turn on recording device to test voice levels and allow leader to hear their voice back (may help build rapport)	Mobile phone Notepad and pen Information sheet/consent form

Speech/Script of introduction	Action
➢ **Hello X,** my name is Patrick. ➢ **Thank** you so much for meeting with me today. ➢ **I really** appreciate you giving up your time. ➢ **I am** interested in learning a bit more about extra-curricular activities, particularly with regards to extra-curricular activity/activities that you lead. ➢ **By taking part** in this interview/research you are providing an insight into what ECAs are, within the context of a UK secondary school, as well as the rationale, and potential benefits associated with student participation. Consequently the findings will be useful in helping schools understand what makes a good ECA. This will mean that the resources schools like yours are investing into ECAs is an investment which reaps as many benefits as possible. ➢ **Q. Is it OK for me to record what we say so that I don't make any mistakes remembering it!** *ECA leader's answer: Yes (we hope)* ➢ Thank you. ➢ I will use the tape to make a written record. ➢ Then I will destroy the tape. ➢ I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you said. ➢ (Before we start recording if there are any things you don't feel comfortable talking about, just say so. ➢ We won't talk about them!)	• Using a script will help the interviews to be conduct as standardised as possible. • It will be important to remind the ECA leader throughout that, if there is anything they do not want to talk about, they are not obliged to. • It is important to not only listen to what the ECA leader says, but also *how* they say it. Can engage in peer supervision in this regard.

Interview script			
Question (stem)	Prompt (if leader has difficulty understanding)	Extension (if something else is said that is useful)	Comments
1 Could you tell me, how would you define extra-curricular activities?	How would you explain what an extra-curricular activity is to fellow staff, students or their parents? What is the extra-curricular activity you lead? What are the key features of this type of activity?		
2 How did you come to be involved with your ECA?			
3 Does the school have a rationale for what school staff run ECAs?	What purpose do ECAs serve within the school?		
4 What are the intended outcomes of students participating in the ECA you lead?	What do you hope the students will get out of participating in the ECA? Do students achieve/accomplish anything from participating in your ECA? What do you perceive the importance of extra-curricular activities to be?		
5 What are the benefits to participating in the ECA you lead for staff, pupils and parents?	Does participating in the ECA you lead help young people who participate in them? In what ways? Is there a positive impact on other stakeholders, i.e. school staff or students' parents?		

| 6 | Why do you think students choose to participate in the activity you lead? | Are students aware of the potential benefits you have outlined? Are there any other reasons for why students participate in this activity? | | |

Speech/Closing script	Action
➢ Are there any other points you would like to make or do you have any questions for me? ➢ That brings us to the end. ➢ I would like to thank you again for meeting with me today. ➢ Thank you for being so open and honest. ➢ Q. Do you have any questions about what we have talked about? ➢ I will just remind you that I won't put your name in the writing so no one will know what you have said. ➢ The recording will be destroyed when the research comes to an end. ➢ Is it ok to contact you, once I have analysed the transcript to check that I have understood you correctly? ➢ You also have the right to withdraw. ➢ If you later decide you do not want me to write about what we have discussed, lust let me know. ➢ Q. Does that all make sense? ➢ I hope you enjoy the rest of your day. ➢ Thank you once again.	

Appendix XI: Extract of coded transcript

Could you just start by telling me how you would define ECAS?

For me, it's any club after school hours so from 3 o'clock onwards.

ECA = after-school club

At school (i) we have a number of ECAs here, PE department is a huge one.

Variety of ECAs on offer   Sports-based ECAs

They do all through the year, there's tennis, badminton and rugby. Drama runs

ECAs occurrence = year round   Sports-based ECAs   Performing-Arts ECAs

right throughout the year. Music runs right throughout the year.

Performing-arts ECAs

You mentioned there about them happening after school, are there any other features that make them different to other school activities?

With drama club, we always do a performance where we invite the family come in

Parent involvement encouraged

so they can see exactly what the children have been doing during their drama club

parents aware of ECA activity

time. So this performance now, 'Greenall and Greynall', come February time

parents will be invited to see exactly what the children have been doing in drama

Parent involvement encouraged

club. This also links into their lessons as well, because obviously the GCSEs are

link between ECAs and lessons

changing so much, so this club now will be feeding into the drama class.

So what I'm hearing is, there's a possibility in certain ECAs for parents to have more of a connection with what's going on?

Yes, absolutely, definitely.

So for example more so than a normal lesson in the school day?

Yes.

Confirmation ECAs differ to lessons

Is there anything else you would say makes them different, from maybe say a lesson?

Yes, because I've got all different age groups in here. I've got year 7s working

ECAs = mixed year groups

with the year 8s and the year 7s and 8s working with the year 9s. Also I run year

different years interact in ECA

10 and 11 workshops so my year 11s will come in and they will do workshops with

Older peers support younger students

them so if I wanted to teach them a particular skills, for example flashbacks or

flash forwards, and my year 11s will come in after school and work with them as

well. So it's just breaking down those barriers. So in lessons they only work with

mixed years = breaks down barriers

their peers in that age group whereas in drama club they work with years 7, 8, 9,

lessons= no interaction of different years

10 and 11, which is wonderful.

How did you become to be involved with the drama club?

I've been doing the drama club for years. The old head teacher, he said 'would I

History of teacher running club   *head teacher encourages ECAs*

like to run a drama club' and I said yes. And what happens is, when they come

here on a Monday afterschool when we do auditions for a whole school

ECA= weekly occurrece

performance, these are my core, so I know these guys will take on the main roles

ECA participation = role in school production

and then other children who can't always come on a Monday have the opportunity

regular ECA participation not compulsory

to join.

Appendix XII: Literature Review Procedure

The literature review for the present research was formed from carrying out a literature search of the following databases, Web of Science, PsychInfo, PsychArticles, ERIC, British Education Index and library catalogues from UCL. These databases were explored between August 2016 and May 2018. Key words used in the searches included: extra-curricular activity/activities, extracurricular activity/activities, extra curricular activity/activities, school clubs, after-school activities, secondary school, primary school, college, university, extended school, adolescence, and adolescent development.