

***Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child
and Adolescent Psychology***

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**Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent
Psychology**

***An investigation into the practices teachers use to
engage students in the lowest attaining GCSE English
sets***

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Declaration of own work

I, Cathleen Halligan confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:



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Abstract

Grouping students at secondary school based on prior attainment remains a prevalent practice in England despite research that has found differences in academic progress between high and low sets. There have also been findings to suggest that pedagogical approaches differ between sets and it has therefore been suggested that the practice of setting disadvantages those placed in low attaining groups. Little research has considered the nature of student engagement in low attaining groups however, particularly in light of significant changes to the GCSE curriculum. There is also limited research that provides a detailed depiction of teaching practices in the lowest attaining groups.

The current study aimed to present a detailed account of student engagement, teacher interactions and pedagogical approaches employed by English teachers of low attaining groups in schools where students have previously made a high level of academic progress. The study used a mixed method, multiple case study design to report classroom practices and student engagement in three case study classes. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from: semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, qualitative lesson observation notes and systematic lesson observation schedules which were used to explore student engagement and teacher interactions.

Themes were generated across student and teacher interviews and lesson observations. The main findings suggested that teachers of the case study classes attempted to engage their students by fostering positive student-teacher relationships, using verbal praise and rewards to promote learning, minimising negative reprimands and adapting teaching to respond to their students' needs. Student engagement in case study classes was also considered in relation to behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement in learning. The research highlights the importance of student-teacher relationships and the promotion of student competence. The difficulty of developing student autonomy in the context of the current GCSE curriculum is also discussed.

Impact Statement

The current study aimed to present a detailed account of student engagement, teacher interactions and pedagogical approaches employed by English teachers of low attaining groups in schools where students made a high level of academic progress. The findings of the current study suggest that teachers attempt to engage their students by fostering positive student-teacher relationships, using praise to promote learning, minimising negative reprimands and adapting teaching to respond to their students' needs.

Implications for Educational Psychologists

The findings of the current study are applicable to the work that Educational Psychologists (EPs) engage in. Some of the implications for EPs include:

- EPs often engage in consultation with staff to support them to come to new understandings about students and plan for new ways to support them in the classroom. The findings of the current study can be used by EPs in consultation with teachers to encourage them to adapt how they support students in lessons and reflect on the way they use reprimand and encouragement.
- The current study has highlighted the importance of positive, caring relationships between teachers and students. It has been suggested that teachers require a space in which to have their own feelings understood (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015). EPs could provide school staff with this space through supervision, so they are better able to build effective relationships with their students.

Implications for Schools

The findings of the current study were incorporated into a 'recommendations for practice' document, showing suggested teaching strategies for low attaining students:

Supporting Low Attaining Students in the Classroom

Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

- 1. Demonstrate that you like your students**
 - Look for positive attributes that your class and individual students have
 - Where possible, incorporate opportunities for students to have fun through the sharing of jokes or structured activities such as role play

- 2. Demonstrate that you care about your students**
 - Remind students that they are capable of doing well
 - Show students that you have taken care over planning their lessons
 - Get to know your students personally. Show an interest in how they are and who they are!
 - Tell students that you expect them to do well in your subject

Use of Encouragement

- 1. Publicly recognise achievement**
 - Regularly communicate students' success to parents
 - Make in lesson rewards public so that other students can see them
 - Inform other members of staff if students have done well in lessons

- 2. Ensure that praise reflects what has been achieved**
 - Praise *learning* more than learning *behaviours*
 - Acknowledge behaviours that are conducive to learning using short praise phrases
 - Ensure that students are aware when they have made progress in learning
 - Ensure that praise for learning skills is very specifically related to what the student has achieved
 - Have high expectations for giving praise. Use it when work has met the standard you have set

Minimising Negative Reprimands

- 1. Directly address behaviour as a last resort**
 - Use negative repercussions sparingly (such as asking students to move seats or giving a formal consequence)
 - Explain that a negative repercussion may be given if behaviour is persistent
 - Ask students directly to stop engaging in a behaviour when other methods have been used

- 2. Use reprimands that reduce negative interactions with students**
 - Use a calm tone when issuing a reprimand and return to a positive tone shortly after giving a reprimand
 - Remind students of what they should be doing
 - Praise students about previous effort when you notice that they are not engaged
 - Offer students support with their work if you feel that they are not engaged because of a lack of understanding

Teaching that Responds to Students' Needs

- 1. Make the Curriculum Accessible**
 - Provide students with appropriately pitched model writing to emulate
 - Support students with organisation and presentation so that they are able to focus on the learning content of a task
 - Break independent tasks in to manageable steps for students to work through
 - Visually model a task before students attempt it independently
 - Explicitly teach new or challenging vocabulary

- 2. Support Student Independence**
 - Ensure that you are consistently available to support students. Be aware of when they might be struggling and use questioning to extend their thinking.
 - Encourage students to develop their own opinions and attempt tasks on their own, after appropriate scaffolding has been provided

Recommendations for practice document, showing suggested teaching strategies for low attaining students

The current study also has implications for school leaders:

- Senior leaders should consider how they can encourage low attaining students to become more autonomous and independent in their learning before they reach GCSE stage so that they are able to engage in the Key Stage 4

curriculum with less adult support. It would therefore be helpful to consider how schools can incorporate opportunities for independent learning and choice in to the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

- If attainment grouping is to be practiced within schools, curriculum leaders should consider how they allocate teachers to low attaining classes to ensure that there is equitable practice across groups. Schools should consider the teaching experience, subject specialism and effectiveness of teachers placed with these groups.

Implications for Policymakers

For teachers to support low attaining students most effectively, it will be important for educational policy makers to consider the following:

- Educational policy should consider student engagement not just in terms of behavioural engagement but also in terms of student enjoyment, interest and mastery. These elements should also be considered when developing the curriculum.
- It is important to note that the current research has presented a favourable depiction of how teachers are able to support students in low attaining groups. Despite this, previous research has shown that the experiences of low attaining students in schools who set is not always positive (Ireson & Hallam, 2001; Boaler et al. 1997b). Policy makers should consider whether grouping students based on prior attainment is an effective and equitable practice for all students.

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Glossary of terms

Attainment Grouping: The practice of grouping students in to classes based on a measure of prior attainment in the subject (see section 1.1).

Differentiation: Refers to the way in which teachers understand the differences between students and adapt teaching to respond to the range of strengths and needs within a group (Tomlinson, 2003). The approach accepts that students will not access a standard curriculum in the same way (Hertberg-Davis, 2009).

Encouragement: In the current study, this term is used to encompass all teacher interactions that aim to promote positive social and academic behaviours in the classroom (Conroy et al., 2009) by commending students on their achievements and communicating approval of their behaviours (Brophy, 1981).

Engagement: According to Fredericks et al. (2004), engagement in learning consists of behavioural, cognitive and emotional elements (see section 1.3).

Progress: In the current study, the term 'progress' refers to academic advancement. As with the Progress 8 measure introduced by the Department for Education in 2016, progress in the current research refers to the gains that a student makes from the end of primary school to the end of Key Stage 4 in national curriculum assessments (DfE, 2019).

Reprimand: A form of teacher interaction, directed toward a student, with the aim of preventing them from engaging in behaviour that does not follow the rules of the classroom and encouraging them to adhere to these rules (Mancuso & Eimer, 1982).

Scaffolding: This practice refers to the assistance and support that learners need in order to acquire new knowledge (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). The term relates to the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as suggested by Vygotsky (1978). Adults use different methods to support (or scaffold) new learning with the intention that students will then be able to do this independently.

1. Introduction

Attainment grouping is the process of grouping students according to a measure of prior attainment, such as Key Stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum levels (Ireson & Hallam, 2001). Schools take different approaches to this practice:

- *Streaming* is the process of separating students across all subjects, meaning that they are taught in the same groups for the majority of lessons (Hodgen, 2011);
- *Setting* places students in groups according to prior attainment in a particular subject area, meaning that students could be placed in different sets depending on the subject (Connolly et al., 2017).

Kutnick et al. (2005) report that setting is the predominant practice for grouping in English schools.

It has been suggested that students allocated to low attaining classes are disadvantaged by their set placement because the teaching they receive is poorer than that of their peers in higher sets (Boaler et al., 2000). Some research has explored the pedagogical practices and approaches thought to be effective for lower attaining students (i.e. Dunne et al., 2007), but this was based mainly on interview data and did not investigate the lowest sets exclusively. Previous research has therefore not presented a detailed description of how practices are used in the classroom to engage the lowest attaining students and support their learning. Additionally, previous research has not investigated the methods employed by teachers in high achieving schools to explore possible effective practices for the lowest attaining classes. The current study¹, therefore, aimed to explore student engagement, teacher interactions and pedagogical practices used by teachers in schools where students have typically made a very high level of progress.

1.1. Attainment Grouping

Kutnick et al. (2005) report that less than 5% of secondary schools stream students, meaning that setting is the predominant practice for grouping in England. In a study of pupil grouping in the south of England, it was found that 100% of students in Year 10 were set for Maths and 63% for English (Kutnick et al., 2005). However, this assertion is based on findings that are almost 20 years old ('Grouping in Secondary Schools' (GRIS), Blatchford, Kutnick & Baines, 1999; Ofsted, 2004) and data about contemporary grouping practices has not been collected in the UK. Although current

¹ 'The current study' refers to the study conducted for this project

practice is unclear, the term 'setting' will be used throughout this review as previous research has suggested that it is the most common practice in English schools.

The purpose of setting is to group students based on prior attainment in a subject. In reality however, other factors can influence set placement. These include behaviour, relationships with other students and access to learning support assistants (LSAs) (Dunne et al., 2011; Hallam & Ireson, 2007; Ireson et al., 2002). It is therefore more likely that students are allocated to groups based on a combination of prior attainment and teacher judgement (Taylor et al., 2018). Despite this, the current study will use the term 'attainment group' as opposed to 'ability group' because 'attainment' refers to achievement in national curriculum assessments whereas 'ability' cannot be measured. It is accepted that 'attainment group' is not a perfect term to describe the practice as research has suggested that students are not allocated to groups based purely on prior attainment (Ireson & Hallam, 2001; Muijs & Dunne, 2010). With this in mind, it will be important to consider that students in lower sets are unlikely to be a homogenous group because of the range of factors that could impact their allocation to a low set.

As prior attainment is not the only factor used to determine set allocation, it is perhaps unsurprising that certain groups have been found to be overrepresented in low attaining sets. These include young people from low socioeconomic status families (Cassen and Kingdon 2007; Peak & Morrison, 1988), those from certain ethnic minorities (Chambers, 2009; Troyna & Siraj-Blatchford, 1993) and boys (Kutnick et al., 2005). It has been demonstrated that students from disadvantaged backgrounds and certain ethnic minorities are underachieving at GCSE level in comparison to students with similar attainment levels from more privileged backgrounds or other ethnic groups (National Statistics, 2016; Sacker et al., 2001). This is a gap that has been shown to widen throughout a child's schooling (Clifton & Cook, 2012). It has therefore been suggested that students from disadvantaged backgrounds placed in low attaining sets are doubly disadvantaged due to the adverse effect of low set placement on GCSE grades (Francis et al., 2016).

1.2. The Attainment Grouping Debate

The Department for Education (DfE) asserts that setting pupils allows teachers to support lower attaining students and challenge those who are more able (DfES, 2005) by targeting resources and instruction to those working at a similar attainment level (Cahan et al. 1996). The Department for Education has previously asserted that "setting should be the norm in secondary schools" to ensure greater academic

progress (DfEE, 1997, p.8). More recently, the government has reported that schools are using the practice of setting to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers (DfE, 2015b).

Research into the impact of grouping on attainment has suggested that it has little overall benefit, however. Some research has suggested that there is no overall effect of setting for any attainment level at secondary age (Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005; Slavin, 1990). However, some research has demonstrated a disparity between sets, concluding that setting benefits those in higher sets to the detriment of those in lower sets (Higgins et al., 2016; Wiliam & Bartholomew, 2004). The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), a charitable organisation that aims to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged students, has recently advised that setting is 'not an effective way to raise attainment for most pupils' (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018, p.1). The large-scale Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies (see Baines, 2012) have also supported this assertion, demonstrating that the earlier schools begin setting students, the greater the disparity in attainment between students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds and their peers (see Baines, 2012). The studies conclude that increased attainment grouping creates more 'socially unequal performance' (OECD, 2010, p.13).

Recent literature has explored the inconsistency between government policy and the evidence base for setting. Francis et al. (2017) suggest that research evidence does not have the strength to counter the 'pro-segregation discourse' (p.13) promoted by the middle classes. They argue that the narrative presented by government is reflective of the longstanding assumption that 'ability' is fixed and it is therefore necessary to segregate students to maintain a social hierarchy. It has been suggested that governments are motivated to support setting in order to secure voters because the practice is valued by middle-class parents (Gerwitz, Ball & Bowe, 1995; Wiliam & Bartholomew, 2004).

To explore how inequity between sets could be addressed, the EEF has recently commissioned the 'Best Practice in Mixed Attainment Grouping Project' to examine the impact of mixed attainment grouping. Taylor et al. (2015) suggest that this is an unresearched area. Most teachers involved in the pilot project felt that mixed attainment grouping had a positive effect on pupil outcomes, particularly for low attaining students. However, impact on student outcomes has yet to be demonstrated (EEF, 2018). It is important to note that this project is in its early stages so the effect of

mixed attainment grouping in a randomised control trial has not yet been explored. Further work into the impact of mixed grouping is currently in process (EEF, 2018).

It is important to consider that the studies included in this section have primarily focused on academic attainment in national assessments rather than the process of learning and typical teaching practices in the classroom (e.g. Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005; OECD, 2010; Wiliam & Bartholomew, 2004). Research has suggested that there is inequity in the distribution of teachers to sets. Recent research by Francis et al. (2019) has found that teachers with a high level of qualification in the taught subject were more likely to be allocated to a high set than a low set. There was also evidence that teachers with leadership roles within schools were more likely to teach high sets (Francis et al., 2019). The authors conclude that this inequitable distribution of teachers could be contributing to the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers and is, thus, a form of social injustice. Some research has also explored differences in pedagogical approaches and teacher interactions between sets (Boaler et al., 2000; Warrington, 2017). Research by Dunne et al., (2007) has considered how teachers can support lower attaining students in the classroom; however, this study included data from middle attaining as well as low attaining groups. Therefore, a detailed description of teaching practices and student engagement in the lowest attaining classes has not been presented in previous literature.

1.3. Student Engagement

Engagement refers to a student's active involvement in learning (Wellborn, 1991). Researchers have defined engagement as having a behavioural, cognitive and emotional element (Fredericks et al., 2004). Fredericks et al. (2004) describe behavioural engagement as positive conduct, concentration and effort. Some researchers have distinguished between following classroom rules and self-directed academic behaviours (Buhs & Ladd, 2001) to highlight that students who do not display challenging behaviour can still be behaviourally disengaged if they are not completing the work set. Emotional engagement encompasses student happiness, interest in learning, boredom and anxiety (Fredericks et al., 2004). Finn (1989) also highlights what is described as 'value' which is the extent to which students want to achieve academically. Cognitive engagement refers to investment in learning, willingness to attempt a challenge and resilience when faced with failure. Fredericks et al. (2004) argue that cognitive engagement occurs when students demonstrate psychological investment in learning that is more than just behavioural compliance. It is also

suggested that cognitive engagement encompasses the strategies that students use to support their learning, such as persistence (Corno, 1993).

Defining engagement can be challenging because the definitions incorporate a range of psychological constructs which overlap across the different elements of engagement (such as effort). Axelson and Flik (2010) suggest that the process of student learning is so complex that it cannot be captured by three distinct forms of engagement and thus the concept is best understood as having many connected dimensions. Despite these limitations, the current study defines engagement using the behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects described by Fredericks et al. (2004) as they are generally considered to be the integral elements of the concept and have considerable evidence bases (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Defining engagement using these dimensions will also allow the researcher to consider the concept from more than just a behavioural perspective.

Research has begun to explore student engagement and set placement. Ireson and Hallam's (2001) interviews with students demonstrated that those in low attaining sets become disengaged with learning and report feeling stigmatized because of their class placement. In support of this, students have also reported that placement in a low set discourages them from putting effort into learning despite feeling that they want to do well (Boaler, 1997). It is difficult to ascertain the causal relationship between disengagement and set placement, however, because there are a range of factors that impact engagement. It is therefore unclear whether demotivation is a product of the setting system or whether set placement influences perceived engagement in learning. It has been suggested that disruptive, lower attaining students display less negative behaviour when in mixed attainment classes which would imply that setting can affect engagement (Hallam, 2002).

Research into student engagement and attainment grouping has focused on student perceptions but does not suggest how teachers can effectively engage young people in low sets. Research has highlighted certain teacher behaviours that enhance student engagement (Ross, 2009; Strati et al., 2017) but there is little research concerned with engagement for lower attaining groups specifically. Although it is useful to understand students' feelings about their set placement, it would also be beneficial to explore the nature of engagement in successful low attaining classrooms and the ways in which staff promote engagement in these classes.

1.4. Current Educational Context

Recent legislation has demonstrated the government's emphasis on ensuring progress for disadvantaged students, including the introduction of Pupil Premium funding (DfE & EFA, 2014) and the Progress 8 score which compares student progress to the national average (DfE, 2016). The most recent Code of Practice for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) also highlights teachers' responsibility to remove barriers to achievement and set high expectations for all students (DfE, 2015).

Alongside this, the current government appears to endorse further attainment grouping through the development of the grammar school system which is a form of streaming based on attainment. An additional annual £50m has been pledged for the expansion of grammar schools and, in 2017, the government confirmed that an investment of £320m would be provided to fund new free schools, including selective schools (House of Commons Library, 2017). The current Education Secretary, Damien Hinds, has called for a grammar school in each county (TES, 2018) which is consistent with the current Prime Minister's pledge to build new grammar schools across the UK (TES, 2017).

Reviews of the evidence suggest that there is little overall effect of grammar school expansion on academic outcomes because the benefits to grammar school students' attainment are offset by the disadvantage for students in non-selective secondary schools (Atkinson, Gregg & McConnell, 2006). In line with findings regarding attainment grouping, it appears that advantages for those in grammar schools come at the expense of their state school counterparts (Morris & Perry, 2017). Gorard and Siddiqi (2018) argue that the existence of grammar schools promotes social and economic segregation without directly leading to an improvement in academic attainment that can be reliably proven. Despite this, the endorsement of grammar school expansion in current educational policy suggests that the government remains dedicated to selective education and the prioritisation of more able children over others.

1.5. Summary of Research Rationale

Research has focused on the relationship between setting and attainment and has demonstrated that the practice has little overall effect (Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005). Despite the government's endorsement of the practice, it has been argued that grouping based on attainment is inequitable as benefits for those placed in higher sets

are offset by the negative impact on academic outcomes for students in lower sets (Higgins et al., 2016; OECD, 2010).

Research seems to suggest that there are differences in teaching and learning practices between sets (Boaler et al., 2000; Warrington, 2017) but there is little research that presents a detailed description of pedagogical approaches in use, particularly for low attaining groups. Studies that have considered practices for lower attaining students (e.g. Dunne et al., 2007) have been largely exploratory and based on interview data. As a result, there is currently no research that provides a detailed description of the practices teachers use to engage students in the lowest attaining classes. Additionally, little is known about the nature of student engagement in these groups. Previous research has also not considered possible effective practice for the lowest achieving students by conducting research in schools where low attaining students make a very high level of progress. The current study aimed to provide a detailed depiction of the teaching practices used in the lowest attaining English classes in schools where students typically make very high levels of progress. It also aimed to explore the nature of student engagement in these classes.

The current study explored practices in English lessons specifically as the subject is weighted heavily in the calculation of 'Progress 8' scores. Additionally, previous research into attainment grouping has often focused on Maths (Boaler et al., 2000; Hallam & Deathe, 2002; Warrington, 2017; Wiliam & Bartholomew, 2004), highlighting the need for further research into attainment grouping and pedagogical practices in English classrooms. Significant curriculum and examination changes have also occurred within the subject including changes to texts studied, assessment methods and a reformed grading system (Ofqual, 2015; AQA, 2014). The current study aimed to explore how teachers engage lower attaining pupils in a more challenging GCSE curriculum which has not yet been explored in research.

1.5.1. Value of the project

Despite 30 years of research into the practice of attainment grouping (Francis et al., 2017), few studies have explored how teachers engage young people in low attaining classes in the way the current study has. The current research has implications for teaching staff and external professionals who work with secondary schools, such as Educational Psychologists (EPs). For teachers, the study aimed to explore the practices that engage young people in low attaining sets and support them to access the current English GCSE curriculum. The study may also assist EPs in understanding

the views of young people in low attaining groups which have not been extensively explored in recent years. Schools may raise students to EPs due to concerns about engagement in learning. This research intended to provide recommendations as to how student engagement could be promoted in the English classroom to enable EPs to support staff. Furthermore, the secondary national curriculum has undergone significant changes in recent years, and it is important for EPs to be aware of how low attaining students can be supported in this context.

1.5.2. Researcher Background

It is important to acknowledge the teaching background of the researcher to ensure transparency and trustworthiness in this research. The researcher previously worked as an English teacher in an inner London secondary school which set by attainment from Year 7 to Year 11. As a result, the researcher had experience of teaching the previous GCSE curriculum to students who were educated in low sets for most subjects. Indeed, it was this experience that inspired the researcher to solely focus on those in the lowest attaining groups. It also meant that the researcher was aware of the difficulties that could arise for these students and had some experience of strategies that could be used to engage them. The researcher was also familiar with schools similar to those involved in the current study (i.e. schools in areas of social disadvantage where students make higher than average progress). As a result, she had an understanding of how students may be supported in high achieving schools who work with a disadvantaged population. See section 3.7 for further discussion of researcher reflexivity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview

This chapter will first consider research into the relationship between attainment grouping and academic outcomes. It will also explore the process of learning in low attaining groups with regards to engagement and teaching practices. Finally, it will consider early research into changes to the English GCSE curriculum and how this may impact low attaining students specifically. A systematic search of the literature was undertaken for this review. A description of the search process is outlined in Appendix 1.

2.2. Academic Outcomes and Attainment Grouping

Previous research has suggested that there is little overall effect of attainment grouping on academic outcomes (OECD, 2010; Slavin, 1990). Differences between sets have been observed and research has concluded that students in lower attaining sets can be disadvantaged by the practice (Higgins et al., 2016). Concerns have also been raised about the inequality that setting can create for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Oakes, 2005; OECD, 2010) (see section 1.2).

To explore the effect of attainment grouping on academic outcomes in schools in England, Ireson, Hallam and Hurley (2005) used a longitudinal design to track the academic progress of 6000 students from Year 9 to 11. Stratified sampling was used to compare data from a range of schools with different attainment grouping practices ('predominantly mixed ability' to 'high level of attainment grouping'). The relationship between setting and student attainment was explored not only in Maths, as the authors argue most attainment grouping research has considered, but also in English and Science. Measures of attainment were taken from end of Key Stage national curriculum assessments in Year 6 and 9 as well as GCSE attainment in Year 11.

The research found no overall effect of setting on GCSE attainment in any subject when gender, prior attainment and social disadvantage were controlled for. Only one statistically significant effect was found in Science: higher attaining students achieved slightly lower GCSE grades in schools with more setting and lower attaining students benefitted from setting. The authors note that the differences observed were minimal.

The authors interpret the finding that increased setting was linked to lower GCSE attainment for high attaining groups by suggesting that set placement is determined by

such a range of factors (such as classroom behaviour and relationships with other students) that sets are heterogeneous groups and students of similar prior attainment are often dispersed across high, middle and low sets. They argue that teachers do not differentiate as effectively in set groups as in mixed attainment groups as they perceive set groups to have similar learning profiles.

Due to the range of attainment found within sets, the researchers also explored whether set placement affected GCSE attainment. When prior attainment, gender, social disadvantage and attendance were controlled for, students who had achieved the same KS3 level achieved higher GCSE grades in higher sets. This was an overall effect across all three subjects. It was concluded that 'the overall advantage of being placed in a top set rather than a low set is just less than one GCSE grade in mathematics and English' (Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005, p.453). The authors note, however, that there were differences in the strength of this effect between students depending on their level of prior attainment in KS3 assessments.

Ireson, Hallam and Hurley's (2005) large scale study appears to demonstrate that there is little overall effect of attainment grouping, but students with similar prior attainment achieve higher GCSE grades in higher sets. Further research based in England has also found some disparity between sets. William and Bartholomew (2004) tracked the progress of 709 students from Year 8-11 in six schools. All schools taught in mixed attainment groups for Year 7 but had moved to attainment grouping by Year 11. The setting practices in each school differed considerably (e.g. set names, stage that setting began at). The researchers tracked National Curriculum data for Year 9 and Year 11. Unlike in Ireson et al.'s (2005) study, the researchers did not collect a KS2 measure of prior attainment, so progress was tracked between Year 9 to Year 11 only.

Overall it was found that, when KS3 attainment was controlled for, students in higher sets achieved half a grade higher than would be expected from their KS3 scores whereas students in the lowest sets achieved half a grade lower than expected. This pattern was observed in five of the six schools; however, the strength of this effect differed between schools. Possible reasons for these differences were not explored, although the authors speculate that the smallest differences were observed in schools that began setting students latest (in Year 10). This could suggest that increased setting creates more disparity in attainment between sets.

In both studies described (Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005; William & Bartholomew, 2004), findings presented are almost entirely quantitative, and the authors do not

triangulate this with qualitative data to explore contributing factors. As a result, it is difficult to establish why the effects were observed. Indeed, Ireson, Hallam and Hurley (2005) suggest that further research should explore the pedagogical approaches teachers use in classes grouped by prior attainment. Despite this, both studies present longitudinal data from large samples and draw conclusions about the effect of attainment grouping after controlling for prior attainment. The findings are also corroborated by those of large-scale international research (i.e. PISA studies), suggesting that the overall effect of setting is minimal. Despite this, differences in GCSE attainment due to set placement found in both studies suggest that the setting system disadvantages those placed in lower attaining groups.

The research discussed in this section was concerned with the effect of setting on eventual attainment. To further understand the impact of setting, other factors, such as student engagement and teaching practices, will be considered in the subsequent sections.

2.3. Student Engagement and Attainment Grouping

2.3.1. Student Engagement

It has been suggested that student engagement is an essential factor in increasing academic outcomes (Lee, 2014) as it has been linked to academic resilience which improves attainment (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Finn & Rock, 1997).

Research by Ross (2009) explored the impact of disengagement at KS4 on future outcomes. The research used data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, a nationally representative survey. 33,000 young people attending maintained schools, independent schools and pupil referral units were followed from Year 9 to 11. Engagement with education was defined in this study as the combination of a young person's future aspirations in terms of further education or training, a behavioural element (measured by the level of truanting) and attitude towards school. Students were given questionnaires to complete each year, which asked about these three measures.

It was found that students who were identified as 'disengaged from learning' reported disliking school and had low aspirations for the future. Fewer than 20% of this group achieved the minimum of '5 good GCSEs' (A*-C grade). Over one-third of the group left school with no qualifications. Beyond school, only 20% were in a job or training, and

25% were identified as not in education, employment or training. Ross (2009) argues that student engagement is therefore an important factor in achieving positive future outcomes. The study also explored significant predictors of engagement over time, using odds ratios. It was found that students were less likely to be at risk of disengagement if they felt their teacher was interested in their work, praised them and supervised their homework. Perceptions that a teacher had treated them unfairly was associated with an increased risk of disengagement with school.

Ross' (2009) research was focused on student engagement with school, generally. Further research has demonstrated that positive teacher-student relationships can also impact classroom engagement. It has been suggested that practical support is more critical for encouraging student engagement than emotional support (Strati et al., 2017). Appropriate questioning, resources and helpful feedback were found to be associated with increased student engagement. Interestingly, it was only negative emotional responses (such as teasing) from teachers that were associated with student *disengagement*: emotionally supportive strategies did not create engagement (Strati et al., 2017). The sample in this study was only drawn from one American school so may not be representative of students in the UK system. In addition, neither this study nor Ross' (2009) research considers engagement and disengagement in low attaining groups in the UK. There is also very little research that has explicitly explored pedagogical practices used to promote engagement in low attaining classes.

2.3.2. Engagement, Participation and Learner Identity

Engagement and active participation can also affect how students view themselves as learners. Gorard and Rees (2002) suggest that the development of an independent learner identity at school can affect student outcomes and later learning experiences. Indeed, Wenger (1998) has indicated that learner identity is cumulative and based on student participation in the learning experience. It is argued that positive learner identity is partly based on engagement; that is the interaction with information to create a new image of the world and yourself. Students who are not engaged in the construction of knowledge, due to lack of participation or recognition, develop a non-participatory identity and become marginalised within a school system (Wenger, 1998). Research has demonstrated that the development of a positive learner identity may be affected by attainment grouping. Solomon (1997) conducted interviews with students in years 9 and 10 and found that those in high attaining groups reported high levels of participation in learning and therefore, high levels of engagement. Students in low attaining groups felt that their learning consisted primarily of memorisation, little active

involvement and therefore, marginalisation, in line with Wenger's (1998) theory of identity development.

In support of this, research has shown that teachers perceive students in low attaining groups to require a high level of monitoring and repetition (Francis et al., 2017). This research highlights a discourse of 'dependency' (pg.64) surrounding these groups because teachers wish to protect students from the challenge of increased independence in learning. It is hypothesized that this may cause students to feel helpless to improve (known as 'learned helplessness', Abramson et al., 1978) which prevents them from actively engaging in learning throughout school (Francis et al., 2017).

Solomon's (1997) and Francis et al.'s (2017) research suggests that students in low attaining groups demonstrate little active participation in lessons and therefore develop poor learner identities due to their set placement. These studies are part of a small body of research into student participation and attainment grouping. Both studies are based solely on interviews with teachers and students so do not provide a detailed description of the nature of engagement in low attaining classrooms. Additionally, neither Solomon (1997) nor Francis et al.'s (2017) studies explored how students in low attaining groups can be encouraged to actively engage in learning.

2.3.3. The Perspective of Self-determination Theory

Ryan and Deci (2000a) argue that approaches to teaching are crucial facilitators for student engagement. The theory explores student-teacher relationships and students' motivations for learning and has been supported by several empirical studies over the last 30 years (Núñez & León, 2019). The theory holds the view that we all have an intrinsic desire to learn and that this motivation can be facilitated or inhibited depending on factors within the classroom (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). SDT suggests that it is students' experience of autonomy, competence and relatedness that promote the highest-quality engagement in learning. These three principles are referred to as basic psychological needs (Niemi & Ryan, 2009) and are said to lead to autonomous motivation, persistence and, ultimately, learning (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Autonomy relates to the students' experience of control and choice in learning which is supported by a sense of competence about what has been learnt (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to the theory, students must also feel related to and cared for by their teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Research has shown that perceived autonomy and

competence is a predictor for academic achievement, a higher level of student engagement and persistence in the face of challenge (Feri, Soemantri, & Jusuf, 2016; Jenö, Grytnes, & Vandvik, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Student autonomy has been related to more positive outcomes associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement (Jang, Kim, & Reeve, 2012). Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that autonomy is determined by the amount of external pressure students experience during learning and the theory suggests that teachers should use methods that aim to increase students' internal motivation. Strategies such as offering students choice, following students' pace in learning, ensuring that learning has a meaningful purpose and encouraging students to follow their initiative can increase autonomous motivation in the classroom (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Núñez & León, 2015). As a result, teaching strategies that apply external pressure on to students (such as rewards or punishments) are thought to hinder academic achievement because they do not help students to develop an intrinsic sense of autonomy and competence in their learning (Jenö, Danielson & Raahein, 2018).

It is important to note that, although SDT asserts that the basic psychological principles facilitate or hinder engagement, some research has suggested that there is a reciprocal relationship between these elements. For example, Sarrazin et al. (2006) have suggested that teachers can become more controlling when students display little effort, demonstrating how student response can affect the teacher's willingness to incorporate opportunities for autonomous learning. Similarly, Reeve (2013) found that students thought that their teachers allowed them to become more independent when the students themselves took ownership over and interest in their learning.

Self-determination theory may be used to explain the findings of Francis et al.'s (2017) and Solomon's (1997) research. These studies suggested that students in low attaining sets are afforded little opportunity for active participation in managing their learning and are frequently guided by teachers whom they depend on. SDT would argue that students in low attaining sets experience little autonomous motivation as much of their engagement is determined by external pressures placed upon them by adults. The factors that contribute to the lack of autonomy in low attaining groups and how teachers might be attempting to overcome this have not been considered in detail. Research into low attaining students' engagement in learning has also not overtly explored the concepts of relatedness and competence which could provide useful insights into student experience and pedagogical practices.

2.4. Pedagogical Practices for Low Attaining Students

Some research has begun to compare the teaching practices used across attainment groups. In a recent study, Warrington (2017) found differences in peer and teacher interactions and teaching and learning experiences between high, middle and low sets. Interview and lesson observation data suggested that students in low sets were least likely to engage in on-task discussion with peers and sustained discussion with teachers. Warrington (2017) also highlighted that students in low sets were more likely to be supported with a high level of scaffolding whereas students in high attaining groups were provided with less support and instruction for tasks. It is suggested that teachers of low sets did not encourage students to use problem-solving skills or apply their mathematical knowledge where students in high sets were required to use their knowledge to independently solve new problems.

Similarly, Boaler et al. (2000) explored how setting affects learning and pedagogy in Mathematics by collecting data from a sample of 6 schools in England. Boaler et al. (2000) carried out lesson observations, questionnaires and interviews with 72 Year 9 students. The study found that students in lower sets reported that they frequently had a change of teacher and felt that they did not have teachers who were subject specialists. In terms of lesson activities, students reported feeling bored because the work they were given was often too easy and involved copying from the board. They also commented that their teachers gave them answers to problems quickly. The authors conclude that this is related to teacher perception that students in low attaining sets cannot complete tasks. This assertion is speculative however as teachers were not asked for their views in this study.

Boaler et al. (2000) suggest that students taught in mixed attainment groups were more likely to feel that work was pitched at an appropriate level for their understanding than students in set groups. In a questionnaire, students were asked if the work set was at the 'right sort of level' (p.643) for them. Although more participants in mixed groups responded to this question by answering 'usually about right' (p.643) than in set groups, the difference between them was marginal, and there is no statistical analysis to suggest whether this was a significant difference. Based on their findings, the authors conclude that there is an expectation that students taught in lower sets should work at a lower level and that this low expectation creates disaffection among students. However, it is notable that in the quotes presented in the report, students do not appear to refer to motivation or engagement explicitly.

Since Boaler et al.'s (2000) study, further research commissioned by the Department for Education has attempted to explore the nature of effective practice for low attaining groups, incorporating the views of teachers into their measures. Dunne et al. (2007) used questionnaire and interview data to explore school practices for Year 8 and 10 students. The findings were based on interviews with staff and students and observations in 13 case study schools. Schools were selected because they had achieved positive value-added scores, indicating that students made progress. Schools also contained students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Staff and students reported that creating a positive learning environment, customising the curriculum and differentiating learning were important for supporting low attaining students. Teachers felt that they created positivity in the classroom by listening to pupil views and taking a relaxed approach to behaviour management. Positive student-teacher relationships were fostered through the use of praise, negotiation with students and rewards such as the use of computers.

Learning was highly personalised for students in low attaining sets which was achieved by allowing students to choose the level of challenge they wanted to attempt. Choice was evident in other areas of the curriculum: students often attended college courses as well as studying national curriculum subjects in school and, where possible, an alternative curriculum that included coursework and modular exams was chosen. Texts and assessments were adapted to ensure that they were motivating and appropriate for students. In individual lessons, teachers scaffolded activities, incorporated peer support into learning and gave students frequent feedback. This level of attention and customisation was perhaps possible because low attaining sets were generally small classes and teachers were assisted by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). Overall, this study appears to present a more positive view of teaching practice for low attaining groups than Boaler et al.'s (2000) research. It is important to consider the possible impact of the Department for Education over these findings, however, as they commissioned Dunne et al.'s (2007) research and continue to endorse attainment grouping.

Dunne et al.'s (2007) research incorporates the views of both teachers and students as well as information from lesson observations to present a relatively detailed description of how low attaining students are supported in mainstream schools. In some instances, however, the researchers did not have access to the lowest sets and interviewed teachers of middle attaining groups. The research was therefore more a review of teaching strategies for *lower* attaining students rather than the *lowest*. The reluctance to allow researchers into the lowest groups could suggest that classroom practice in

these classes is poor, as some previous research has suggested (e.g. Boaler et al., 2000).

Warrington's (2017) research combined qualitative and quantitative data to present a description of teacher interactions and teaching practices in low, middle and high sets. Despite this, Warrington's (2017) study does not consider how teachers are supporting the engagement of low attaining students in English. A shared limitation of both Boaler et al. (2000) and Dunne et al.'s (2007) research is that neither are transparent about how lesson observations were carried out, analysed and used to draw conclusions. As no detailed quantitative data are presented in either study, it is not possible to ascertain the frequency of practices in the observed classrooms: conclusions drawn seem to be mainly based on interview data in both studies. Additionally, both studies were undertaken some time ago and there have been several changes to the education system, not least marked changes to the GCSE English curriculum. Little is known about how teachers of low attaining students are attempting to engage and support young people in the context of a more restrictive, challenging curriculum.

2.5. The Current GCSE Curriculum

GCSE assessments have changed significantly in recent years. One major change to the English curriculum is the introduction of 100% closed book examinations as coursework and speaking and listening assessments no longer contribute to official GCSE grades (AQA, 2014; Ofqual, 2015). As low attaining students have been found to struggle with working memory, particularly central executive functioning (Gathercole & Pickering, 2001), examination of this nature could create an additional challenge for them. Additionally, removing functional English skills from the new curriculum means that students are no longer encouraged to acquire reading and writing skills that will assist them in their lives beyond school, as had been offered in previous curricula (Isaacs, 2014). As the curriculum does not test a range of skills (where low attaining students may have been more successful), it has been argued that they may be penalised by this new system (Isaacs, 2014). Indeed, early research has suggested that teachers believe their low attaining students are struggling with the demands of written examinations and the exclusion of speaking and listening assessments (Galton & MacBeath, 2015).

Course content has also increased in difficulty in terms of texts studied and the expectation to memorise quotations. Emphasis has been placed on exposing students to authors included in the English canon (who are generally acknowledged to be the

most influential literary figures) (AQA, 2014). As a result of this, it has been argued that the current curriculum is dominated by 19th-century literature and Shakespeare texts (Mansworth, 2016). Qualitative research has explored student attitudes toward studying the English canon. Coles (2013) observed Year 9 and 10 English lessons in London schools who were studying Shakespeare texts. A sample of teachers and students were also interviewed, and both sources of data were analysed for arising themes. Findings demonstrated that teachers often communicated to students that Shakespearean texts were too challenging for them and compulsory study of these texts confirmed students' preconceptions that they were not accessible. This study explored the attitudes of all students as opposed to low attainers exclusively. It does suggest, however, that teachers communicate lower expectations to students who find reading difficult. Introducing more challenging texts into the new curriculum may affect teachers' expectations of low attaining students and the classroom practices they employ.

Coles' (2013) research did not explore student and teacher attitudes to other aspects of the curriculum. It may be that the study of Shakespeare is particularly challenging whereas other elements do not pose such a barrier. Indeed, as these changes are so recent, much of the research discussed has only begun to hypothesize about how low attaining students may experience the new curriculum, based on the judgements of professionals. The current research intended to explore student and teacher attitudes towards classroom practice and observe Year 10 classes, studying for the new GCSE examinations.

2.6. The Research Problem

Previous research into attainment grouping has often focused on the relationship between setting and attainment at GCSE level without exploring the pedagogical practices that may contribute to this (Ireson, Hallam & Hurley, 2005; Wiliam & Bartholomew, 2004). Where research has explored teaching practices in low attaining groups, it has mostly been based on teacher and student interviews and, although lesson observations have been carried out, researchers have not been transparent about the data gathered from them. In studies such as those undertaken by Boaler et al. (2000) and Dunne et al. (2007), there was not a clear description of the approach used to observe lessons, the nature of the data gathered and how it was analysed.

There is also only a small body of research about student engagement in low attaining groups. Research has considered engagement and disengagement generally and

recent research by Francis et al. (2018) has begun to explore independence in learning for low attainers. How teachers engage these students in the current English GCSE curriculum has not been considered, however. In addition, much of the research into attainment grouping is now over 10 years old and so little is known about how teachers are supporting and engaging low attaining KS4 students in the context of what has been described as a narrowed, more challenging GCSE curriculum (Isaacs, 2014; Mansworth, 2016). The current study, therefore, aimed to explore the nature of low attaining students' engagement in English GCSE lessons.

The view currently presented in the literature is that students in low attaining groups are disadvantaged by their set placement both in terms of eventual attainment and in their access to high quality teaching (Boaler et al., 2000; Francis et al., 2019; Higgins et al., 2016). The current study therefore aimed to explore the pedagogical practices teachers use to engage low attaining classes in schools where students, including those who are low attaining, typically make a very high level of progress. Although Dunne et al.'s (2007) research attempted to explore practices for low attaining students in schools where students made progress, a primary shortcoming of this research was that it did not exclusively investigate the lowest sets. As such, there is currently no research that explores how teachers in very high achieving schools engage the lowest attaining students.

In the current study, interview data was collected to explore the perspectives and views of teachers and students with regards to student engagement and teaching practices in low attaining sets. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to further investigate the practices that teachers used in English lessons and how students were engaging in low attaining English sets. This study intended to provide a detailed description of teacher interactions, classroom practices and student engagement in the lowest attaining classes within schools in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage where students, including those who are low attaining, typically make higher than average progress.

The overriding research question was:

- What is the nature of the practices teachers use to engage students in low attaining English sets in high achieving schools in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage?

Subsidiary research questions were:

- What are teachers' and students' views about classroom practices used to engage students in low attaining English sets?
- What classroom practices do teachers use during lessons to engage low attaining students in English?
- To what extent and in what ways are students in the lowest attaining English sets engaged in English lessons?

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview

The current study included a development phase prior to the main phase. The development phase acted as a full pilot for the main phase, allowing the researcher to develop and pilot research tools, gather initial data and pilot the analysis of qualitative data. The main phase allowed for more detailed data collection in high achieving schools, to explore how teachers engaged students in these contexts.

This chapter will begin by presenting the overall research design and methodological perspective adopted for the research. It will then outline information about the participants involved in the study, the research tools used to gather data and the approach used to analyse data- first for the development phase and then the main phase. The chapter will conclude with a comment on researcher reflexivity.

3.2. Research Design

The current study used a mixed method, multiple case study design to explore teacher and student experiences of English lessons and collect a quantitative measure of teacher interactions and student engagement. This design was chosen to investigate participants' perceptions and collect descriptive data about teaching approaches which may have been lost in a large scale, purely quantitative study.

In the current study, each observed class was treated as a single case to explore practices within context, using multiple sources of evidence, as suggested by Yin (2009). As Willig (2013) suggests, the multiple case study design allows the researcher to compare a number of cases to develop a more general understanding of the issues being explored.

The research questions were explored using semi-structured interviews with teachers and students and qualitative and systematic classroom observation schedules. Interviews were thought to be preferable to questionnaires or surveys as the students involved may have found literacy-based activities challenging and so would be better able to express their views verbally. In addition, the current study aimed to present a detailed description of classroom practice. Interview data allowed the researcher to probe further into student and teacher experiences which would not have been possible with a questionnaire.

In lesson observations, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. A qualitative lesson observation schedule was developed to capture descriptive detail about the practices teachers were using, how they communicated with students and how students were engaged in lessons. This qualitative element was included because the research aimed to provide a detailed depiction of practices in low attaining classes. Systematic observation schedules were also used to collect a quantitative measure of both teacher interactions and student engagement. Previous studies into teaching practices for low attaining sets (e.g. Boaler et al., 2000; Dunne et al., 2007) have not provided quantitative data to support the qualitative findings gathered from classroom observations. The current study intended to incorporate numerical data with qualitative data to create a detailed description of teaching practices and student engagement in these classes.

According to Creswell et al. (2003), a mixed methods design involves collecting and integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The current study used a 'concurrent triangulation design', as described by Creswell et al. (2003). In this design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously and the strengths of one approach are used to offset the weaknesses of the other. In the current study, rich interview data were used to provide explanations for the findings from the systematic classroom observations. Qualitative and quantitative data were analysed separately and integrated at the interpretation phase to converge participant perspectives with numerical information about engagement and classroom practice.

Yin (2009) argues that, in case study research, the researcher should begin to explore a phenomenon through pilot work, using these ideas to develop the study further. This is how the development phase was used in the current study. The main phase of the research explored teaching practices and student engagement in three case study classes in schools where students made a particularly high level of progress, to explore practices in high achieving schools. This phase allowed for more detailed data collection, using learning from the development phase to inform the procedure and research tools.

3.3. Methodological Perspective

The current research adopts a pragmatic perspective. The perspective suggests that research should focus on using the most appropriate method to advance knowledge (Creswell & PlanoClark, 2007). Malcolm (1999) suggests that research questions should dictate whether the researcher uses qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods;

thus, the research questions should drive the research design. A pragmatic perspective proposes that any knowledge gained from research is 'relative and not absolute' (Feilzer, 2010, p.14) and the unpredictability of working with human beings requires researchers to be open to unexpected data. Coyle (2010) states that pragmatic research does not aim to find a 'truth' but to enhance understanding of phenomena. With this in mind, the current study aimed to explore practices used in classrooms with the intention of adding to a knowledge base about teaching practices for low attaining students while presenting the perspectives and experiences of teachers and students in case study classes. In addition, Thorne, Kirkham and MacDonald-Emes (1997) suggest that the prior knowledge of the researcher helps to form new knowledge and so the researcher's experiences can be acknowledged and utilised within pragmatic research.

3.4. Sample

3.4.1. School recruitment

Participants were recruited from schools in four local authorities in inner and outer London using purposive criterion sampling. The researcher approached schools who met specific inclusion criteria and invited them to be involved in the research. Information about schools was gathered from a government website that publishes performance data for UK schools (<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>).

To be included in the research, schools were required to:

- be comprehensive, state-funded schools;
- set students by attainment in English, throughout KS3 and 4 (to explore the experiences of students who had been set for English throughout their secondary education);
- have a proportion of students eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the past six years that was above the national average. This measure is considered an indicator of socio-economic disadvantage by the Department for Education (DfE, 2015b).

As this research was concerned with understanding teaching practices in high achieving schools in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, schools involved in the main phase of the study were also required to have consistently achieved a Progress 8

score that was within the ‘well above average’ range over two years. The Attainment 8² score for each school included in the main phase was also consistently above the national average.

A total of four schools were involved in the research. Schools A and B were involved in the development phase and Schools C and D in the main phase. Information about each school can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
*School population information (2017/18)*³

School	No. students on roll	EAL ⁴	EHCPs ⁵
School A	500	43%	2.4%
School B	1280	38%	2%
School C	1760	53%	1%
School D	2900	77%	1.5%

² ‘Attainment 8’ measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications. Both English and Mathematics are double weighted in the calculation of this score (DFfE, 2016)

³ Data retrieved for 2017/2018, from <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

⁴ Proportion of students who speak English as an additional language (EAL)

⁵ Proportion of students who have an educational, health and care plan which would indicate a special educational need

Information about the schools involved in the research and their pupil populations are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2

School outcomes information for pilot schools (2016/17, 2017/18)

School	Year	% of pupils eligible for FSM ⁶	Progress 8	Attainment 8	Progress 8 in English ¹
School A	2016/17	49%	'Above average'	Above average	+0.39
School A	2017/18	50%	'Above average'	Above average	+0.11
School B	2016/17	57%	'Average'	Above average	+0.19
School B	2017/18	54%	'Below average'	Below average	-0.04

⁶ National average eligibility for free school meals in a school population is 28.6% (retrieved from <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/> in May 2019)

Table 3

School outcomes information for main phase schools (2016/17, 2017/18)

School	Year	% of pupils eligible for FSM	Progress 8	Attainment 8	Progress 8 in English
School C	2016/17	41%	'Well above average'	Above average	+0.93
School C	2017/18	41%	'Well above average'	Above average	+1.13
School D	2016/17	37%	'Well above average'	Above average	+0.91
School D	2017/18	36%	'Well above average'	Above average	+0.67

There was also evidence that low attaining students in Schools C and D made a high level of progress. Although there is not a standardised measure that reports this, schools provided the researcher with their own data which reported the academic progress of their lowest attaining cohorts.

In School C, students in the lowest attaining English sets achieved an average value-added score⁷ of +1.04 in English Language (in 2017/18). This score is within the highest 25% of value-added scores across the country, according to the school data analysis tool, Alps.

In School D, the lowest attaining 25% of students (based on KS2 data) achieved an overall Progress 8 score (across all subjects) of +0.52 on average in 2017/18. This score is considered to be 'well above average' according to national measures of progress.

Schools were contacted by email and a follow-up phone call or meeting was held to discuss the nature of the research in more depth. In all cases, the initial contact was made with a senior leader who was not a potential participant in the study. It was

⁷The residual effect that schools have on their students' progress

therefore necessary for the researcher to explain the nature of the research to participants in more detail via the information sheet (see Appendix 2) and in person.

3.5. Development Phase

The development phase had two purposes: first, to develop and test the research tools and second, for the researcher to familiarise herself with low attaining classes and develop the research perspective. The development phase acted as a full pilot of the interview schedules and qualitative observation schedule used in the main phase of the research. It also allowed the researcher to pilot the approach to data analysis. Data collected from the qualitative observation schedule were used to develop a systematic observation schedule to record teacher interactions in the main phase. The pilot phase was also beneficial in terms of reflexivity as it allowed the researcher to become familiar with low attaining classes. This helped the researcher to adopt a more objective stance during the main phase, without placing her own interpretation on what had been observed.

3.5.1. Participants

Participants were drawn from Year 10 not only to enable comparison with the work of Dunne et al. (2007) but also because this year group were studying for the new GCSE assessments.

Certain inclusion criteria had to be met to include a class in the development phase of the research. The class had to:

- Be a Year 10 group, studying for GCSE English Literature and Language
- Be the lowest attaining class in the year group (e.g. set six of six sets)

It was explained to schools that the research was concerned with students in the lowest attaining sets only, to avoid including participants from middle attaining sets. This was to overcome the limitation of Dunne et al.'s (2007) research that some middle attaining sets were included, instead of the lowest sets, because the researchers were prevented from accessing the lowest groups. Taking this approach meant that schools were not able to choose which teachers were involved.

3.5.1.1. Teachers

Teachers of the lowest attaining English sets in Year 10 were interviewed and their lessons observed in the development phase ($n=2$). Information about the teachers observed and interviewed can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Teacher Information (development phase)

Teacher code	School code	Class Code ⁸	Gender	Years teaching	Ethnicity	Age bracket
Teacher 1	School A	10a4	Female	1	White British	21-30
Teacher 2	School B	10b7	Male	1	White British	21-30

3.5.1.2. Students

All students in both classes were given a parental consent form that they were asked to return to be part of the research. Of these, two students from class 10a4 returned the consent forms. One male and one female student from class 10a4 in School A were interviewed.

3.5.1.3. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from teachers and parents of students who were interviewed. Students' assent to be involved in the interview was gained via a student form. Teachers and students were made aware that their responses would remain anonymous and schools would be identified by a code which would not reveal their geographical location. The research was granted ethical approval from the UCL research ethics committee. A full description of ethical issues can be found in Appendix 4 and information sheets and consent forms in Appendices 2 and 3.

⁸ Class codes have been anonymised

3.5.2. Research Tools

In the development phase, data were gathered using a qualitative observation schedule, followed by student and teacher interview schedules.

3.5.2.1. Qualitative Observation Schedule

The purpose of the qualitative observation schedule was to gather descriptive detail about student engagement, teaching practices and teacher interactions that could be used to develop and inform the systematic observation schedules used in the main phase of the research.

Notes were recorded under the following overarching headings: learning outcome of the task, task type, differentiation, supporting resources, adult support, behaviour management strategies and teacher interactions with students. These categories were chosen and defined based on the findings of Dunne et al.'s (2007) research into teaching practices for low attaining students. The researcher's knowledge of teaching practices was also incorporated into the definitions of the categories.

Prompt questions under each heading were used as a reminder to encourage full note-taking during the observation. Appendix 5 provides full details of the observation schedule, definitions of each category and prompt questions. Notes under these headings were structured by the phase of the lesson that they were observed within, for example, a starter activity. The lesson phases recorded varied depending on the lesson being observed as lesson structures differed between teachers.

The observation schedule also included a column for 'student engagement' which allowed the researcher to comment on behavioural engagement during different phases and tasks (i.e. on or off task behaviour). Student engagement was recorded across the whole class by splitting them into three cross sections, based on where students were seated, and alternating between each group from the front of the class to the back. The researcher observed each group for approximately 30 seconds during the different phases of the lesson. Comments about general behavioural engagement were noted (e.g. 'all students are writing in their exercise books', 'some students begin to talk during silent writing task'). This approach was used to ensure that observations were undertaken across the whole classroom. The observer was seated at the side of the room to allow for a better view of the whole class.

Lessons in School A were 60 minutes in length. Lessons in School B were 90 minutes in length. One lesson was observed in each school.

3.5.2.2. Interviews

Interviews with teachers and students were used to gather rich information about participants' experiences and perspectives.

3.5.2.2.1. Teacher interviews

The teacher interview schedule was developed to collect information about teachers' experience of working with their class and the practices they used in lessons. Using interviews also allowed teachers to elaborate on why they used certain strategies and provided rich detail about their classes and approaches.

The interview schedule used open-ended questions to avoid leading participants to respond in a certain way. This also allowed the researcher to gather rich and detailed information about participants' perspectives and experiences. Interviewer prompts were used as follow up questions based on participants' answers.

Questions covered the nature of the class, their response to the current English curriculum, how students responded in English lessons and how teachers worked with the class. The areas covered in initial questions were thought to be open enough for teachers to talk freely about their class but also allowed the researcher to follow up on answers and ask further questions about student engagement and teaching strategies. Teachers were also asked to reflect on the observed lesson using open-ended questions. A full teacher interview schedule can be found in Appendix 6.

It is important to note that 'engagement' in the current study is defined as having behavioural, cognitive and emotional elements (Fredericks et al., 2004). These overarching themes were sometimes used as prompts during the interviews, depending on the responses participants gave. For example, when participants discussed student interest in learning, the researcher asked an open-ended follow-up question to encourage further discussion about this, thus exploring the emotional element of student engagement.

Teachers were interviewed after the lesson observation to ensure that their practice was not influenced by what had been discussed with the researcher. Teachers were informed that the researcher was previously an English teacher so that they felt

comfortable to share their views with someone who had similar experiences. It was also easier for teachers to share practices using subject-specific terminology which the researcher could interpret during analysis.

3.5.2.2.2. *Student interviews*

The student interview schedule was developed to explore students' perceptions of English lessons and their class teacher. Interviews allowed the researcher to probe further into student responses and clarify their meaning which would not have been possible if a survey or questionnaire had been used.

The student interview schedule asked students to reflect on what typically happened in their English lessons, what they liked and did not like in lessons and what they thought of their teacher. The interview schedule was developed based on recommendations for aiding communication when interviewing young people with learning difficulties (Lewis & Porter, 2004). A full student interview schedule can be found in Appendix 7.

A semi-structured approach was used to allow for flexibility so that students could share their views with the support of some planned questions. Students were asked follow-up questions, based on their responses to open-ended questions. When students struggled to answer a question, the researcher encouraged the student to refer to what had happened in observed lessons. This allowed students to substantiate their responses with examples. Throughout the interview, students were asked about 'English *lessons*' as opposed to 'English' to encourage them to reflect on their lesson experiences (such as their teacher, learning tasks and topics) rather than just the English curriculum.

Appropriately differentiated additional activities were designed to ensure that students could access the interview. The decision was taken to include these additional activities because they provided a scaffold with which to open up a further discussion which may have supported some low attaining students. Students were asked to select activity cards to prompt a discussion about what they found engaging or helpful in English lessons. These cards contained both a written strategy and an accompanying picture. Students were asked if they found any items on the cards helpful or enjoyable in English lessons. If they chose a card, they were then asked open-ended questions to elaborate on when they did these activities and why they chose the card.

Students were interviewed separately because the presence of a peer may have distracted them or created a bias in responding. The researcher wanted to explore students' perspectives without potential peer influence and for students' responses to remain confidential. It was not made explicit to students that the researcher had previously been an English teacher as this may have inhibited them from sharing their genuine thoughts.

3.5.3. Adjustments made in light of the development phase

In the development phase of the research, interviews and lesson observation notes were analysed separately, to distinguish between participants' perspectives and the observation of practice. Data from the two classes were combined. Data were analysed using thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), using the program N-Vivo:

1. Familiarisation with the data: The researcher transcribed interviews from audio recordings, and qualitative observation notes were collated into a word document. Transcripts were re-read and initial ideas for codes noted.
2. Generating initial codes: Initial thoughts were given meaning in the form of a descriptive code. Data were coded line by line. Some data were coded more than once
3. Search for themes: Codes were sorted into overarching themes and then organised into sub-themes
4. Reviewing themes: Themes were checked to ensure they were representative of the codes and transcripts

A summary of the findings of this analysis can be found in Appendix 8.

Qualitative data from the pilot lesson observations were used to support the development of the student and teacher observation schedules. Based on the findings of the development phase, the decision was made to focus on teachers' use of encouragement and reprimand as the methods teachers used to manage behaviour emerged as themes from the pilot data. The categories included were also informed, in part, by the development phase of the research. For example, 'direct reprimand' and 'indirect reprimand' categories were included in the teacher observation schedule to reflect the finding that teachers often used indirect reprimands to reduce conflict.

As a result of the development phase, questions on the student interview schedule were made more open and less leading. An initial question was added to the interview schedule: 'Tell me about your English lessons. What are they like?'. Follow up questions were then asked to encourage further discussion based on students' responses.

The definition of engagement was also made explicit in student interviews. Students were shown a simplified definition that incorporated elements of the behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement that it was felt they would be able to access. Students were told that 'engagement' included:

- Doing the task set by the teacher
- Being interested in what you are learning
- Focusing and concentrating on tasks in lessons

This definition was explained verbally and written on a card so that students could refer back to it during the interview. Students were then asked an additional question about what their engagement was like in English lessons, using this definition. Follow up questions about what supported or hindered their engagement were asked based on their responses.

3.6. Main Phase

The purpose of the main phase of the research was to gather a more detailed picture of classroom practices and student engagement by observing a higher number of lessons, interviewing more students and collecting quantitative observation data. The current study also aimed to provide a depiction of practices in high achieving schools where low attaining students make a very high level of progress. Schools selected in the main phase reflected this.

3.6.1. Participants

Similar to the development phase, participants were drawn from Year 10. It was also explained to schools that the research was concerned with students in the lowest attaining sets only.

Specific inclusion criteria were applied to the case study classes in the main phase of the research. The class had to:

- Be a Year 10 group, studying for GCSE English Literature and Language
- Be the lowest attaining class in the year group (e.g. set six of six sets)
- Be taught by a teacher who had at least two years' teaching experience

- Be from a school where all students had made ‘well above average’ progress consistently over the past two years

After applying these inclusion criteria, data were collected from two classes in School C and one class in School D.

3.6.1.1. Teachers

Teachers of the lowest attaining English sets in Year 10 were interviewed and their lessons observed in the main phase ($n=3$). Information about the teachers observed and interviewed can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Teacher Information (main phase)

Teacher code	School code	Class Code ⁹	Gender	Years teaching	Ethnicity	Age bracket
Teacher 3	School C	10c5	Male	6	White British	21-30
Teacher 4	School C	10d5	Male	2	British Asian	21-30
Teacher 5	School D	10e6	Female	6	Black British	31-40

3.6.1.2. Students

Four students from each class were interviewed in the main phase of the research ($n=12$) and their behaviours recorded during the lesson observation.

In the main phase of the research, teachers were asked to identify one student from the highest attaining third, two students from the middle attaining third and one student from the lowest attaining third of their class to be interviewed and observed. They were advised to identify these students based on a combination of their most recent attainment and their target grade. Selecting participants who were working at different levels allowed the researcher to record behaviours and experiences that represented the diversity of attainment within low attaining groups.

⁹ Class codes have been anonymised

Student involvement in the research also depended on parental consent. In one class, no parents of the lowest attaining students agreed for their children to take part in the study and so two higher attaining students and two middle attaining students were included for this class.

In 10c5 (School C), three boys and one girl were involved in the research. In 10d5 (School C), four boys were interviewed and observed, and one girl was observed. In 10e6 (School D), two boys and two girls were interviewed and observed. Of the 13 student participants, one had an Education, Health and Care Plan to support them with their special educational needs. Five students spoke English as an Additional Language (EAL).

3.6.1.3. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from teachers and parents of students who were individually observed and interviewed. Students' assent to be involved in the interview was gained via a student form. A short questionnaire which explained the nature of the classroom observation was used to gain students' agreement to be observed. They were informed that, by completing the questionnaire, they were assenting to participate in the observation component of the research. Teachers and students were made aware that their responses would remain anonymous and schools would be identified by a code which would not reveal their geographical location. For a full summary of ethical considerations, see Appendix 4.

3.6.2. Research Tools

During the main phase, qualitative data were collected using teacher and student interviews and qualitative lesson observation notes. The purpose of this was to provide rich and detailed information about student engagement and teaching practices as well as to explore students' and teachers' perspectives and experiences.

Quantitative data were collected through the use of two systematic observation schedules, used to capture numerical information about teacher interactions and student engagement which could be integrated into the overall description of practices and engagement in low attaining groups.

3.6.2.1. Qualitative Observation Schedule

Qualitative notes were recorded using the observation schedule piloted during the initial phase (see Appendix 5) to gather descriptive detail about the practices used in the observed lessons. Qualitative notes were recorded at two time points during the lesson. Learning objectives and information given by the teacher about what would be covered during the lesson were recorded at the start. The end of the lesson was typically where teachers reviewed learning or when students had an independent task to complete, so information about how teachers summarised learning from the lesson and how students engaged with independent tasks could be recorded. This approach then allowed the researcher to focus on the quantitative schedule for a sustained period to make recording more accurate.

3.6.2.2. Systematic Observation Schedules

3.6.2.2.1. Student observation schedule

A systematic observation schedule was used to collect numerical data about the level of student engagement observed during the lesson. As discussed, engagement in the current study is defined as having a behavioural, cognitive and emotional element. This systematic observation tool was used to record *behavioural* engagement only. Emotional and cognitive engagement would be difficult to capture using a tool of this nature as these elements are not directly observable.

The schedule was developed based on a tool used in previous research (see Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett & Chowne, 2006). The categories recorded on and off task behaviour with regards to individual activity, interactions with peers and interactions with adults. In the current study, 'on task' behaviour is defined as engagement with the learning activity that the teacher expects students to be accessing. 'Off task' behaviour is any behaviour that is unrelated to the learning activity.

A count of '1' was recorded for the behaviour observed at each time point (see Figure 1). The researcher observed one student at each time point. For example, if Student 1 was observed to be independently working on the task set by the teacher, a count of 1 was recorded in the 'Individual On Task' category at the appropriate observation point. The researcher made qualitative notes alongside the schedule to capture detail about what had been observed. See Appendix 9 for the full observation schedule and definitions of each category.

	Observation Point	1	2	3	4	5	
Individual (no interaction)	On task						
	Off task active						
	Off task passive						
	Routine						
	Other						
Target to Peer Interaction	On task						
	Off task active						
	Social						
	Routine						
	Other						
	Disruptive						
Target to Adult Interaction	Identity	Teacher					
		Other					
	Interaction	Talking					
		Attending					
		N/attending					
		Other					
	Activity	On task					
		Off task					
		Routine					
		Social					
		Other					

Figure 1: An example of coding using the student observation schedule

3.6.2.2.2. Teacher observation schedule

The teacher observation tool was developed to explore how teachers interacted with students and used reprimand and encouragement in lessons. It was developed based on findings of previous literature into teaching practices for low attaining sets (Dunne et al., 2007). Findings from the development phase also informed the categories included and how these were defined.

Dunne et al. (2007) found that creating a positive classroom environment was one of 'three main ways in which schools and teachers motivate and inspire low attaining pupils to learn' (pp. ix). This is corroborated by a review of the research literature carried out for The Sutton Trust which suggests that classroom climate is one of the six key elements required for effective teaching (Coe et al., 2014).

In both Dunne et al.'s (2007) and Coe et al.'s (2014) research, the quality of teacher-student interactions and relationships are considered to be essential to ensure high-quality teaching. Additionally, in a review of 46 studies published between 1999 and 2014, Quin (2017) found that higher quality relationships between teachers and students were associated with higher levels of psychological engagement and academic achievement. Dunne et al.'s (2007) findings also suggest that teachers use reprimand and encouragement to build relationships with students in low attaining sets: both teachers and students felt that low attaining groups require praise, encouragement, rewards, and careful use of reprimands (Dunne et al., 2007). It seemed appropriate therefore to focus on teachers' use of encouragement and reprimand using the systematic observation tool in the current study as this is considered a key element in the development of teacher-student relationships for low attaining students in Dunne et al.'s (2007) research. It was also a key finding of the development phase in the current study.

The teacher observation tool recorded the target of the teacher interaction (an individual student, small group, the whole class, another member of staff, students interacting or no interaction) and the type of interaction observed (encouragement, reprimand, routine, work-based, instruction, question/feedback, social or other interaction). If the interaction type was recorded as 'encouragement' or 'reprimand', the researcher recorded further information about the nature of this interaction, including what the encouragement or reprimand was given for and how it was delivered.

A count of '1' was recorded to describe the behaviour observed at each time point (see Figure 2). Information was recorded at each time point about the target and type of interaction and, if recorded as 'encouragement' or 'reprimand', the reason for this and the method used to deliver it. For example, if the teacher was observed to verbally praise a student for their understanding of a concept, a count of 1 would be recorded under 'Individual', 'Encouragement', 'Skill' and 'Direct' for the relevant observation point. The researcher made qualitative notes alongside the schedule to capture detail about what had been observed.

Interaction Target							Type of Interaction							Reason					Delivery					
Observation Point	Individual	Group	Whole Class	Staff	Students interacting	Not interacting	Encouragement	Reprimand	Routine	Work based	Instruction	Question	Social	Other	Skill	Effort	Outcome	Behaviour	Other	Direct	Indirect	Use of formal system	Consequence	Other
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								

Figure 2: An example of coding using the teacher observation schedule

The full teacher observation schedule and definitions of each category can be found in Appendix 10.

3.6.2.2.3. Inter-coder reliability

The researcher used the student and teacher observation schedules with a second observer to check for inter-coder reliability and to enable the researcher to familiarise herself with using the tools before lesson observations. This was carried out using a set of pre-recorded lessons, separate to the sample of the current study. The researcher and the second observer watched the video recording for a 5 second period which was then paused for coding to be completed. The researcher and second observer each completed 200 coordinated observation scans for both the teacher and student observation schedules to measure inter-coder reliability.

These were analysed using Cohen's Kappa to determine the level of agreement between the two coders' judgement across the 200 observation scans, while controlling for chance. There was excellent agreement between the two coders using the student observation schedule, $\kappa = .975$, $p < .0005$. There was also excellent agreement between the two coders using the teacher observation schedule, $\kappa = .942$, $p < .0005$.

3.6.2.2.4. Structure of systematic observations

A time interval approach was used for the systematic observation schedules. The behaviour of the class teacher or one student was recorded within an observation window involving 'tuning in' 'observing' and 'recording'. Behaviour was tuned into for 5 seconds (the researcher located the participant and ensured that they could see them clearly) and observed for 10 seconds. A further 5 seconds were then available for recording. This approach was taken to maximise the number of observation points recorded. A total of 4 students were observed during each lesson. The researcher

alternated between the teacher and student observation schedule every 10 minutes. A time interval approach was selected in this instance because the behaviours being recorded were frequently occurring and discrete as suggested by Ostrov and Hart (2014).

3.6.2.3. Lesson observation procedure

Each class was observed by one observer on three occasions over one term to increase the likelihood of gathering a representative picture of a typical lesson. This allowed the researcher to build a richer picture of teaching practices and student engagement that was more likely to be reflective of a typical lesson. Additionally, students and teachers could become familiar with the researcher being present in the classroom. Prior to the first lesson observation, the researcher introduced herself to the class and explained that she was researching what students and teachers did in English lessons.

The structure for recording in each lesson observation was as follows: the researcher recorded qualitative field notes for a proportion of the lessons at the start and end of the observation; systematic observation schedules were used for the remainder of the lesson. The researcher alternated between the student observation schedule and teacher observation schedule every 10 minutes. The number and duration of lessons observed can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Lessons observed in School C and D

	School	Length of a single lesson	Lessons observed	Total time observed
10c5	C	50 minutes	3 double lessons	300 minutes
10d5	C	50 minutes	2 double, 1 single	250 minutes
10e5	D	60 minutes	3 single lessons	180 minutes

3.6.2.4. Interviews

As with the development phase, interviews were used to collect rich and detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and perspectives.

The semi-structured interview schedules piloted in the initial phase were adapted, as discussed, (see section 3.5.3) and used in the main phase. Teachers and four students from each class were interviewed once. Teacher interviews took place a few days after all three lessons had been observed to ensure that their practice was not influenced by the discussion they had with the researcher. Student interviews were carried out following at least one classroom observation at a time during the school day that was convenient for participants. The researcher interviewed all participants in a quiet room on their own. Teacher interviews varied in length from 36 minutes to 44 minutes. Student interviews were approximately 15 minutes in length.

3.6.3. Data Analysis

3.6.3.1. Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of interviews and qualitative observation notes primarily involved an inductive approach, where codes generated were grounded in the data. The analysis was intended to be a reflection of the views of participants and the practices used in the classes in this study only. As previous research has not provided a detailed description of pedagogical approaches, teacher interactions and student engagement for low attaining students in very high achieving schools, it did not seem appropriate to analyse the data in relation to a theoretical concept. This allowed the researcher to develop a picture of practices in the classes as they were observed and reflected on by teachers and students.

Although an inductive approach to analysis was used, the researcher's prior knowledge of theory will have influenced the process (as suggested by Braun et al., 2019). For example, although themes emerged from the data itself, some knowledge of theory concerning teaching practices and student engagement was used when naming them. It seemed appropriate to be mindful of this knowledge when naming themes because it allowed the researcher to make sense of the emerging ideas and concepts.

Due to the number of research tools and case study classes, data were analysed using the following process:

1. Initial analysis: The researcher completed a separate analysis of each research tool (teacher interview, student interviews and lesson observation notes), for each class

2. Analysis of case study classes: Themes generated from research tools were integrated to create main themes for each class
3. Integration of analyses across classes: Themes for each class were integrated to develop main themes across cases

This approach meant that the researcher could capture findings for each class individually as well as overall findings across the cases.

At each stage of analysis, the researcher followed the recommendations for carrying out thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

First, interviews were transcribed by the researcher from audio recordings and initial thoughts about the data were noted. Observation notes were collated into a word document for each lesson. For an example of transcripts from student interviews, teacher interviews and lesson observation notes, see Appendix 11.

In the first stage of analysis, data from each research tool (teacher interview, student interviews and lesson observation notes) for each class were analysed separately to draw out the unique characteristics of each case and capture the similarities and differences between cases. Qualitative observation notes, teacher interviews and student interviews were also analysed separately to address the subsidiary research questions and to explore the perspectives of teachers and students, capturing their voices.

The researcher used N-Vivo to code the transcripts and notes line by line. Student interviews, teacher interviews and qualitative observation notes from each class were coded separately and in turn. Some extracts of the transcripts were coded more than once. The decision was taken to code descriptively to represent the views of participants and develop a detailed description of pedagogical practices used in the observed classes. The researcher was also aware of her previous teaching experience and the potential bias that could be created if coding were too interpretive. A selection of the researcher's codes were checked with a peer who confirmed that they were reflective of the data set and descriptive in nature.

Using N-Vivo, codes were then grouped to create themes for each research tool and each class, separately. Themes were created by collating codes into broad, superordinate themes which had emerged from the data (e.g. use of reprimand, teaching and learning practices). Codes were then organised into main themes within

each superordinate theme. These themes were then refined further to create more precise subthemes. For an example of the codes generated and their organisation into themes and subthemes, see Appendix 12.

In the second stage of analysis, the main themes that arose from each research tool were combined, under superordinate themes similar to those that had emerged in the first stage of analysis. Themes for each class remained separate so that the researcher could present findings that were unique to each case study class. At this stage, the process was completed manually as opposed to using N-Vivo. This was so that the researcher could visualise the links between themes and explore alternative interpretations of the data. Analysis at this stage was slightly more exploratory in nature as the researcher attempted to group themes according to their meaning. See Appendix 13 for an example of how themes were combined.

The themes generated were defined and organised into a visual map for each class. On the visual map, it was made clear which data sources had contributed to the theme (i.e. (T) teacher interview, (S) student interview, (O) lesson observation notes). Each theme name was checked to ensure that it accurately represented the data. See Appendix 14 for a list of themes and definitions for each case study class.

In the final stage of analysis, themes were integrated across classes to present an overall picture of teaching practices. The main themes for each class were combined under the same superordinate themes that had been used in the previous stage. As a result of analysis at this stage, the superordinate theme names were refined to best reflect the data. These themes were then organised into a visual map. Again, the researcher carried out this process manually to explore how the themes related to each other. This analysis was also exploratory in nature as the researcher reflected on the meaning of different practices. See Appendix 15 for a list of integrated themes and definitions.

To enhance the validity of the analysis, themes were discussed with a supervisor and a peer to check their coherence, plausibility and reflection of the data set. Themes and subthemes were reviewed by re-reading the transcripts and edited to ensure they were reflective of the data set.

3.6.3.2. Quantitative Analysis

Frequency data from the systematic lesson observation schedules were analysed descriptively. The data were not analysed using inferential statistics because the

research questions did not call for such analyses. Additionally, repeated observations of individuals in the same setting breaches the assumptions that underpin inferential tests.

One aim of the quantitative analysis was to represent the level of student engagement in lessons. A further aim was to represent the types of interactions teachers had with students, why encouragement and reprimand were used and how this was delivered.

The data from the teacher and student observation schedules for each class were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were generated using cross-tabulations to explore the following:

- Frequency counts and percentages of on-task and off-task student interactions in each class
- Frequency counts and percentages of interaction types that students demonstrated in individual, peer and adult interactions in each class
- Frequency counts and percentages to show the target of the teacher interaction in each class
- Frequency counts and percentages to show the teacher interaction type given the target of the interaction for each class
- Frequency counts and percentages to show the reason that encouragement and reprimand was given in each class
- Frequency counts and percentages to show the method that teachers used for encouragement and reprimand in each class

3.7. Reflexivity

Trustworthiness and credibility of the researcher are of importance when undertaking qualitative research as the researcher is the primary instrument in the gathering and analysis of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher's understanding of mainstream secondary schools, teaching practices for low attaining students and the curriculum, were of importance when analysing lesson observations and interviews. This is supported by Yardley's (2000) assertions that previous experience allows researchers to be sensitive to the context of data collected and more rigorously engaged with the data.

The researcher acknowledges that her previous experience as an English teacher may have also created the potential for bias. There may have been a possibility that the

researcher was informed by preconceived views when interviewing participants and analysing data. The researcher attempted to mitigate this by:

- Using open questions and prompting based on participant responses as opposed to closed questions and pre-determined prompts
- Reviewing the emerging codes and themes with a research supervisor and a peer so that they could be refined and adapted
- Ensuring that coding was descriptive in nature and reflective of what had been observed in lessons or discussed in interviews

4. Findings

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents results from the analyses of teacher interviews, student interviews, qualitative lesson observation notes and quantitative lesson observation schedules. There is not sufficient space to do justice to the case studies and provide an integrative analysis of the themes across cases. The results are therefore organised into two sections. First, a short section, summarising findings for each case study class and second an integrative account of the findings across cases.

Interview and lesson observation data for the development phase of the research were also analysed. A summary of the findings of this phase can be found in Appendix 8.

Throughout this chapter, quotes from **student interviews**, **teacher interviews** and **observation data** will be presented in different colours to distinguish between the different sources of data.

4.2. Case Study Findings

The following section will outline findings related to each case individually to present the distinct characteristics of the classes. Subthemes were included in this section because they were either unique to the case study class or found across the different data accounts for the case (i.e. teacher interviews, student interviews **and** lesson observations). Thematic maps presented in this section indicate the research tool that contributed to the theme as follows: (T) teacher interview; (S) student interview; (O) lesson observation notes. A full list of themes, subthemes and their definitions for each class can be found in Appendix 14.

4.2.1. Class 10c5

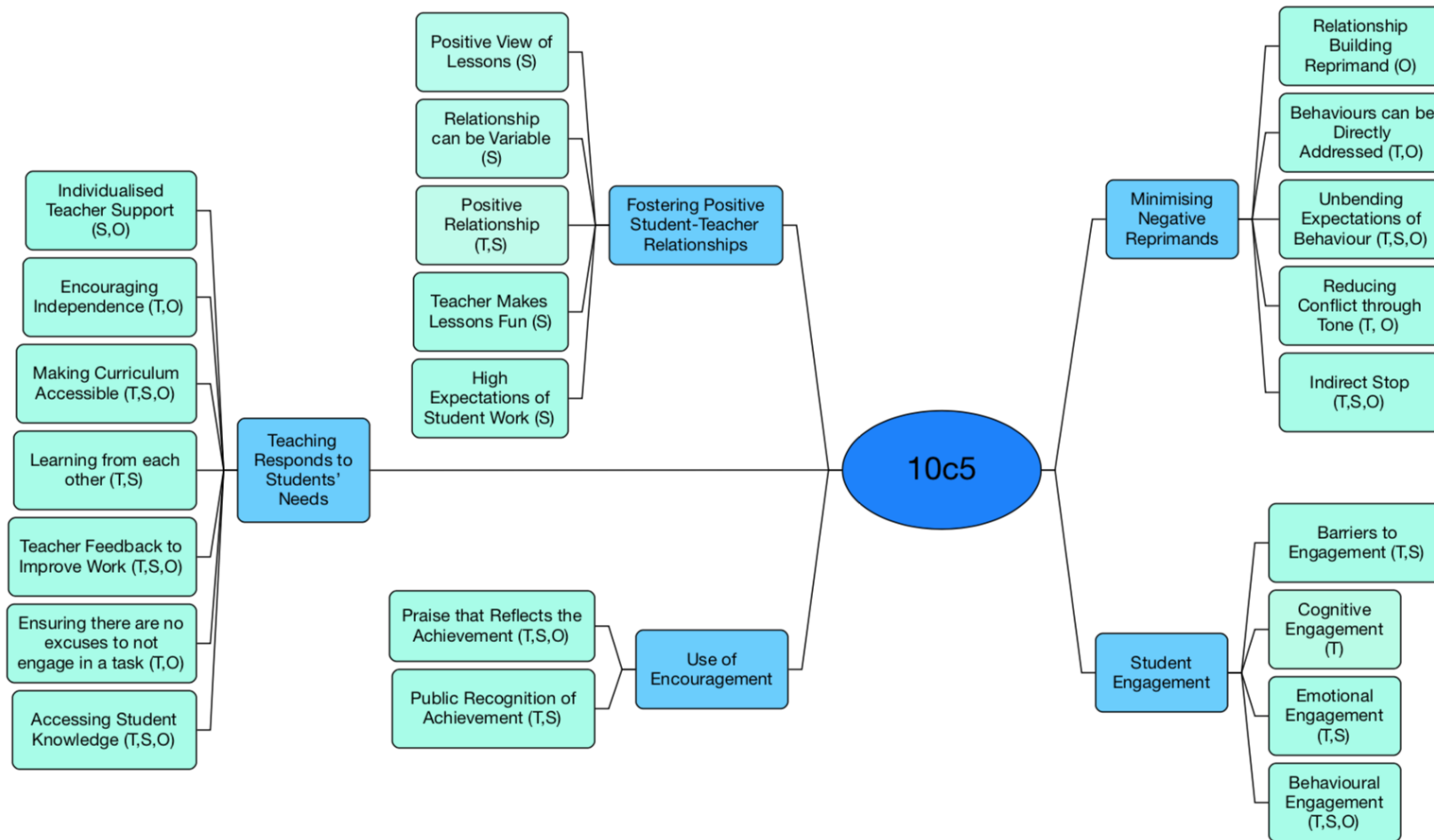


Figure 3. Thematic map showing practices and student engagement in 10c5

4.2.1.1. Class Context

Class 10c5 was made up of 12 students (8 male, 4 female). In all three observed lessons, the class were taught and supported by one teacher only. The class teacher was second in charge of the English department and had been teaching for six years. All students in the class sat at in pairs, facing the board or facing their peers at a table.

In the three observed lessons, students in 10c5 were focusing on descriptive writing skills. This skill is required for the English Language GCSE and is an examined question in 'Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing' for the AQA exam specification.

4.2.1.2. 'Accessing Student Knowledge'

A practice that was particular to this class was the use of a text emulation strategy to model writing. This subtheme was used as a strategy to 'Access Student Knowledge' (see Appendix 14 for a full list of themes and definitions).

A subtheme that arose from both the teacher interview and lesson observations was the use of modelling to support students with descriptive writing. The teacher described the use of a text emulation strategy where students were provided with a model description written by the teacher to ensure that it included structural devices and vocabulary that students would be able to transfer to their writing. The teacher explained that this process involved:

"Picking out vocab [from the model text], picking out sentence structures [from the model text], taking out paragraph structures [from the model text], thinking how you could apply that to your own...paragraph structure" (Teacher 3, 10c5)

In the observed lessons, students highlighted and recorded ideas from the model text that they would like to use in their own description. They were provided with a table to complete which supported them to record what technique, word or idea they would like to take from the model and plan how they could incorporate this into their writing.

The teacher reflected that students seemed to understand the text emulation approach, used it in their writing and were able to write for a sustained period during the third lesson. The teacher explained that:

“I was really impressed by them. I was really proud of them and it was one of those teaching moments of ‘Yes, it’s worked’” (Teacher 3, 10c5)

In the third observed lesson, the teacher praised students for specific writing skills they demonstrated during the sustained, independent writing task. For example:

“That’s the best piece of writing I’ve seen from you so far.”

*“What a fantastic first sentence.”
(Lesson 3, 10c5)*

After the final observed lesson, the teacher commented that:

“I said to most of them in that lesson, and it’s true, this is the best piece of writing I’ve seen from you.” (Teacher 3, 10c5)

4.2.1.3. ‘Unbending Expectations of Behaviour’ and ‘Praise that Reflects the Achievement’

A further theme that was unique to this class was the teacher’s high expectations. The teacher described that he had ‘unbending expectations’ (Teacher 3, 10c5) of students’ behaviour. This included being strict with students to ensure they wrote information in their books and giving consequences for students who were late or did not have the correct equipment. Two students also discussed how the teacher had high expectations for their behaviour and could be ‘very firm’ with the class (Student, 10c5):

“Say if he says, ‘Step out the class’... after he’ll say, ‘You’re a better student than that, you should be learning’” (Student, 10c5)

In lesson observations, the teacher clearly communicated his expectations for students’ behaviour when reprimanding them. The approach seemed to be used to prevent any potential conflict or argument with students about the teacher’s instruction:

*“You’re going to read without talking to anyone as you come into the classroom”
(Lesson 2, 10c5)*

Although the teacher’s high expectations emerged as a theme, his use of reprimand in lesson observations demonstrated a variety of approaches to enforcing these expectations. The teacher attempted to minimise conflict with students when delivering

reprimands. This included the use of quick and quiet reprimands. Another theme that emerged from the lesson observation analysis was the use of strategies that indirectly reprimanded unwanted behaviours. These included supporting students to reduce distractions when he noticed that these were impacting focus, and encouraging students to maintain focus by praising them:

To a student who is playing with pens: 'You only need one' (Lesson 3, 10c5)

"You're doing really well. Please don't lose focus" (Lesson 2, 10c5)

When discussing how he encouraged students, the teacher explained that he had high expectations when giving praise, meaning that it was used sparingly:

"I do think they know they have to work for [praise]. They do know that if I'm praising them, I probably mean it and they're not just going to get it for doing a basic thing." (Teacher 3, 10c5)

"When they genuinely achieve something impressive, I will always make a big deal about it" (Teacher 3, 10c5)

The teacher explained that his reasoning for this was in part because he wanted students to become "intrinsically motivated" to ensure that they were not "just...doing things for ticks on the board". He reflected that he would like students to "get to that point... where they're motivated because they're producing something really good" in lessons (Teacher 3, 10c5).

This was corroborated by lesson observation data which demonstrated that the teacher used praise differently depending on what he was responding to. For example, students were named and thanked using a short phrase for focusing during independent learning activities or reading tasks (e.g. *'Lovely focus, thank you very much'*). In contrast, the teacher provided more specific praise for learning skills that students demonstrated during independent writing tasks:

"3 really clear steps. Slow build-up of a story. Fantastic." (Lesson 1, 10c5)

"Nice use of the word 'yet'" (Lesson 2, 10c5)

"Good use of the word 'meekly'" (Lesson 2, 10c5)

4.2.1.4. Summary

In class 10c5, the teacher successfully used a text emulation strategy where students applied the vocabulary and structures of a piece of model writing to their own descriptions. Students were asked to use this strategy over a series of lessons so that it became familiar and their planning was supported through activities that built up to a final writing task. Communicating high expectations to the class both in terms of behaviour and learning was also a key theme for this case, evident in the teacher's use of praise which was more specific when students demonstrated good learning rather than good behaviour.

4.2.2. Class 10d5

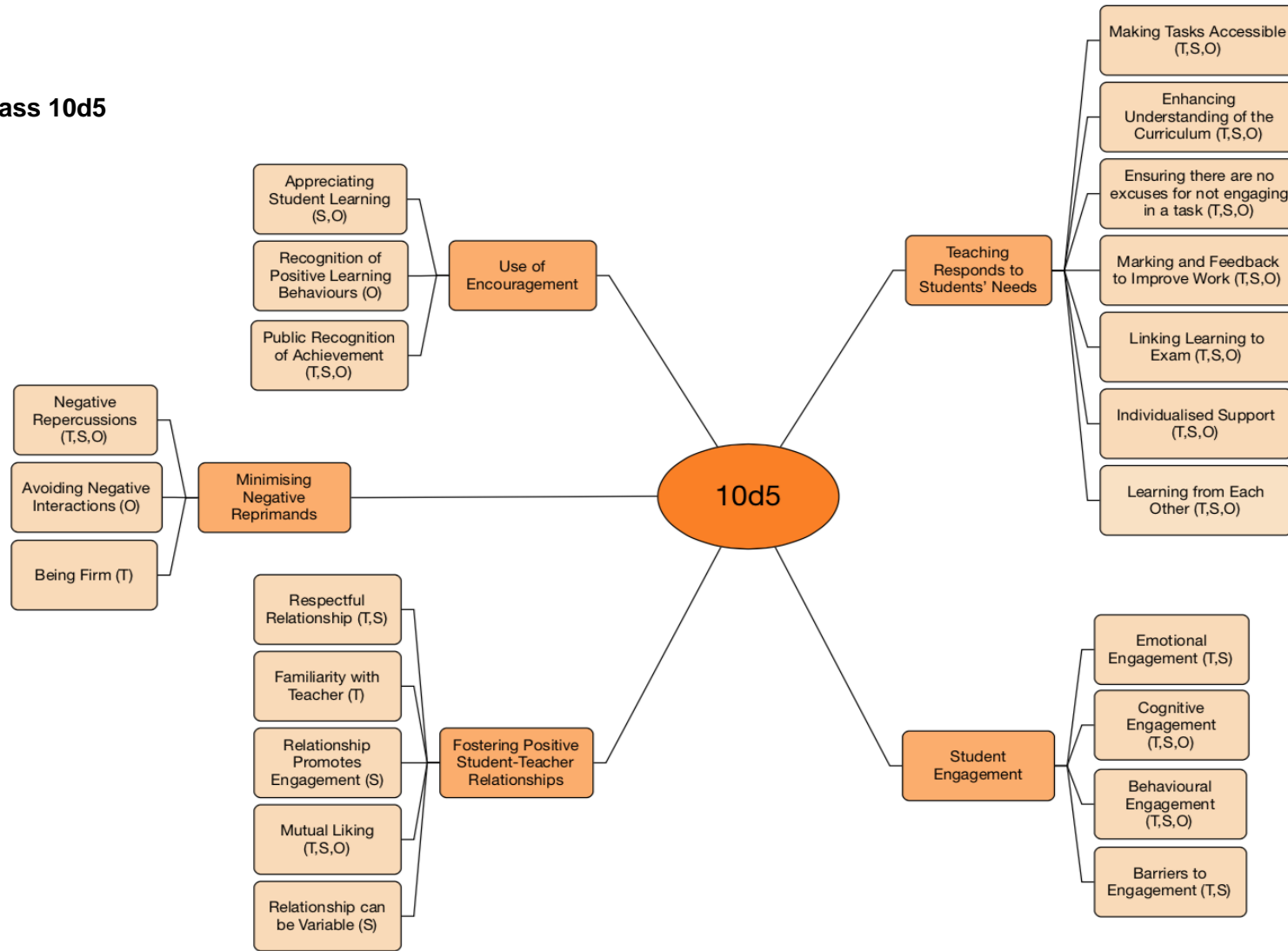


Figure 4. Thematic map showing practices and student engagement in 10d5

4.2.2.1. Class Context

Class 10d5 was made up of 13 students (8 male, 5 female). Some students sat at a table with a peer, but some sat alone which the teacher felt improved their focus. In one of the three observed lessons, a Learning Support Assistant was also present in the classroom: she was seated next to one student for the duration of the lesson. The class teacher had two years' teaching experience and had an additional whole school responsibility as Head of Boys' Achievement.

In the first observed lesson, students in 10d5 were focusing on descriptive writing skills. This skill is required for the English Language GCSE and is an examined question in 'Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing' for the AQA exam specification. In the remaining two lessons, students were learning how to answer an inference question which is required for the English Language GCSE and is examined in 'Paper 2: Writer's Viewpoints and Perspectives'.

4.2.2.2. 'Appreciating Student Learning' through 'Public Recognition of Achievement'

Three students discussed the impact of receiving positive verbal feedback about their work from their teacher. Students reflected that this created a sense of pride and helped them to understand the task:

"He shows us what we do right, so we carry on doing it" (Student, 10d5)

In lesson observations, the class teacher also used verbal praise to acknowledge students' thinking skills and enthusiastically encouraged students when they demonstrated learning skills. This was evident through a change in tone or a gesture:

Teacher pats student on back to praise work (Lesson 1, 10d5)

A key element of this theme was the public nature of praise. In lessons, this was achieved through using the school reward system of achievement points which were awarded to students for good contributions to class discussions, engagement in independent tasks or the quality of their work. It was often accompanied by verbal praise. These were recorded on the board, against the students' name, under the title 'Recognition'. Three students also commented on the teacher's use of achievement points:

“I know I’m going in the right track because every time I get an achievement point it means that I’m getting stuff right” (Student, 10d5)

The class teacher explained that there was value in the public nature of the praise delivered to this group:

“Other students [in different sets]...would automatically know why they’ve got [an achievement point] but [my class] might not actually know why they’ve got that.” (Teacher 4, 10d5)

The teacher also explained that he rewarded his students through phone calls and postcards to parents. Positive interactions with home were thought to serve as reminders to both parents and the teacher of the good things that the student could do:

“In other areas of the school...they’re getting ‘concerns’ [reprimands recorded on the school system]... I think [one student] got two concerns in a week and his mum...was waiting for that negative phone call and when I flipped it round she was really happy because it reminded her and me also, that he can be good, he can behave” (Teacher 4, 10d5)

In summary, the teacher used encouragement to recognise and reinforce learning skills that students demonstrated and highlighted their success to others (e.g. parents, other students).

4.2.2.3. ‘Ensuring there are no excuses for not engaging in a task’

The class teacher explained that students required “clear guidance” (Teacher 4, 10d5) for independent tasks through repetition of instructions which were supported with written prompts on the board. Prompts for tasks were clearly presented: **important information on the interactive whiteboard was highlighted in different colours, information that could support students in a task was presented in a ‘help box’, and pictures accompanied key terms.** The teacher used random questioning to clarify whether students had understood instructions and expectations for independent tasks before asking the class to start working on their own.

The teacher also discussed how he planned short, preparatory activities before asking students to complete an extended, independent task. These included discussion

activities or tasks on a mini-whiteboard. The teacher explained his approach to planning lessons for this group:

“I try to plan backwards so I plan what I want them to achieve by the end of [the lesson]” (Teacher, 4, 10d5)

In lesson observations, the class teacher also supported students with organisation. For example, students were allocated time to stick worksheets into books, the teacher managed equipment while students worked on a task and some work was printed on different coloured paper so that the teacher could easily indicate what information the students needed to use.

These strategies seemed to be methods for limiting possible barriers to engaging in an independent activity. By providing students with clear prompts and guidance and building up their knowledge base for the task using preparatory activities, students experienced fewer difficulties when working independently (such as using the incorrect sheet or forgetting the structure for the paragraph they were writing).

4.2.2.4. Summary

Public acknowledgement of students' work emerged as a key theme for this case. It served as a means of congratulating students on their achievements and demonstrating to them that they were doing things correctly. The teacher also set up activities and provided additional support that would help to reduce the barriers that students may experience when working independently thereby limiting possible reasons to not engage in the task.

4.2.3. Class 10e6

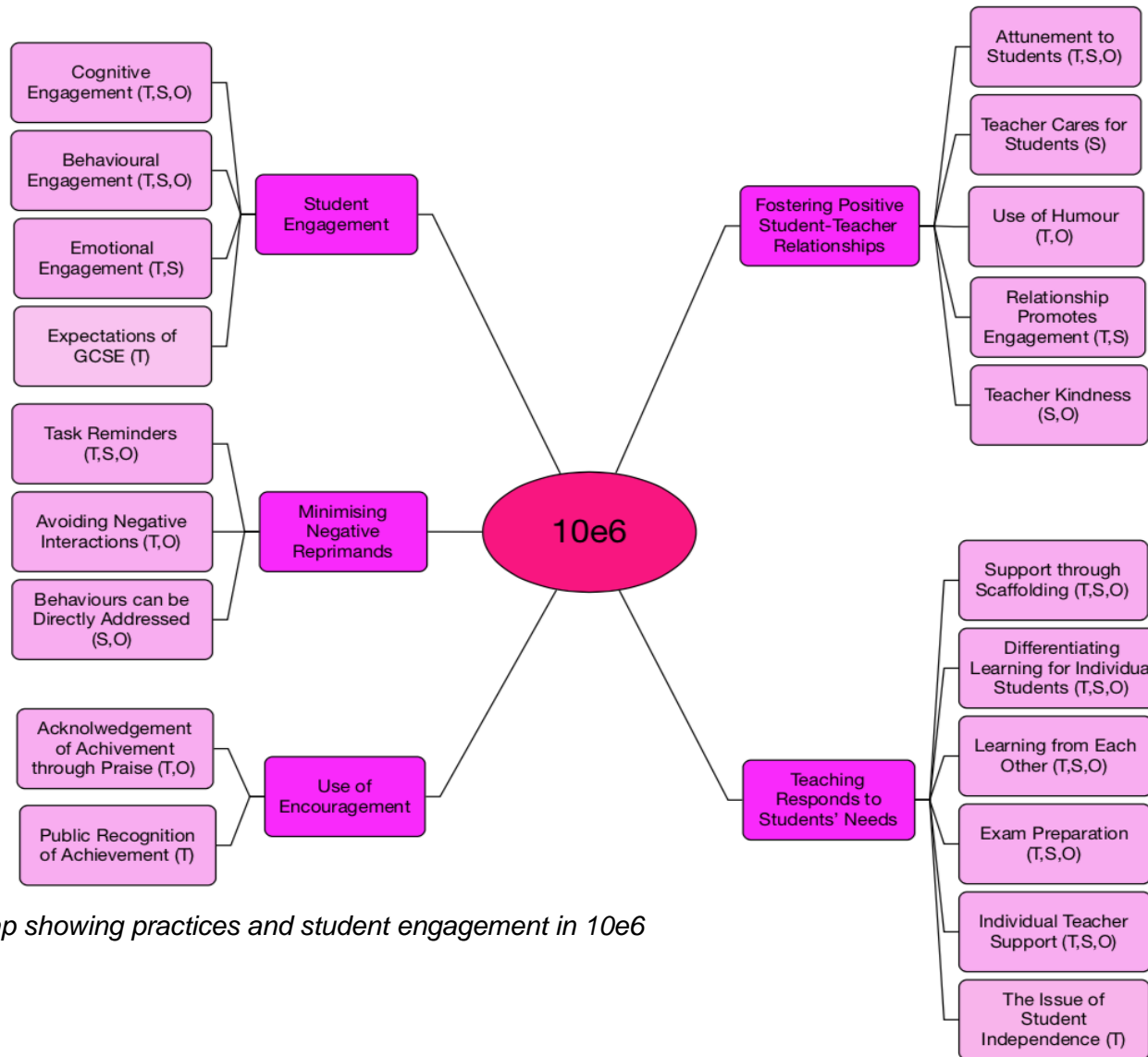


Figure 5. Thematic map showing practices and student engagement in 10e6

4.2.3.1. Class Context

Class 10e6 was made up of 15 students (8 male, 7 female). All the students sat at a desk with more than one peer. Some tables were arranged into groups and some were set out in rows. In one of the three observed lessons, a Learning Support Assistant was also present in the classroom: she was seated next to one student for the duration of the lesson. The class teacher had six years' teaching experience and was also the Deputy Special Educational Needs Coordinator for the whole school.

In one observed lesson, students were focusing on descriptive writing skills. This skill is required for the English Language GCSE and is an examined question in 'Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing' for the AQA exam specification. In the remaining lessons, students were studying "A Christmas Carol" which is examined as part of the English Literature GCSE.

4.2.3.2. 'Attunement to Students'

A key theme, unique to this particular class, was the teacher's efforts to understand and be attuned to students in the group. Two students discussed the importance of having a teacher who understood how they learnt and could respond appropriately to them:

"If you're not fully engaged, [a bad teacher] will force you but [my current teacher] will be mindful of why you don't want to do it." (Student, 10e6)

"She doesn't put pressure on me, she understands if I don't get it... She can see from our eyes if we understand it or not" (Student, 10e6)

In lesson observations, the teacher showed a personal interest in students by checking in with them about their current state and encouraging them to share their own experiences, relevant to the content of the lesson.

The teacher reflected on how she got to know students and the interactions she had with them about topics that were not directly related to the content of the lesson:

"I ask them what they're doing just generally at home, plans they've got at the weekend... And some of the quieter ones, I like to ask them how they are, how they're feeling" (Teacher 5, 10e6)

The class teacher also explained why she felt that being personally interested in students was valuable:

“[Having a conversation] separates and breaks up the work so it’s not monotonous and it’s not so focused on business.” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

“English is a subject where we’re talking about the world and people’s feelings and I think it’s very important to have a dialogue with them.” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

She reflected that the pressures of the curriculum meant that there was not always sufficient time for personal conversations with students during lessons which she felt was unfortunate.

4.2.3.3. ‘Learning from Each Other’

Two themes that emerged from the data for this particular class related to collaborative learning in the classroom, both between the teacher and student and between students themselves. The theme of peer learning was unique to this class.

The class teacher reflected on how she used class discussion and whole class questioning to check students’ understanding and support them to develop their thinking:

“Questioning, asking them if they have questions, give me an example, what do you remember” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

In lessons observations, class questioning was used to assess learning from the previous lesson and independent activities. In some instances, these questions were directed to the whole class:

When students are getting close to the answer, teacher asks for whole class response- ‘So he doesn’t what?’ (Lesson 2, 10e6)

The teacher also used class questioning to extend students’ answers either by adding more information to their response or asking for students to elaborate, re-word or justify their answer.

All students discussed the value of learning interactions between the class and their teacher including hearing the contributions of their classmates, responding to teacher questions and discussing content as a whole class group:

“It’s nice to hear that [other students] have similar ideas to you. I’ll think ‘maybe it’s not that’ and then someone else will say it and I’ll be like ‘aah, so at least I know that now’” (10e6, Student)

Both the teacher and students reflected on how class questioning was also used as a strategy to promote engagement as it required students to be focused and ready to share a response:

“She picks people and you kind of have to be listening” (10e6, Student)

“[I’ll say] ‘You’ve got 2 more minutes’...so they know they have to come up with something because Miss is going to maybe pick me in 3 minutes time. To create a sense of urgency that ‘I need to do this’” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

In lesson observations, the teacher sometimes took responses from students who had their hands up but often chose students to respond without asking the class to raise their hands. The teacher offered some supports when using this approach including giving students thinking time before asking for contributions or allowing students to choose a classmate to help them with an answer if they were struggling.

Students and the teacher also discussed how opportunities for peer working were incorporated into lessons. Two students discussed that the class engaged in group or pair activities such as joint writing or asking peers for help with a task. In her interview, the teacher reflected on the use of group writing activities and the group task that students were set in the final observed lesson. The teacher explained that she incorporated this into the unit because she wanted students to practice:

“collaboration skills...how do you work with someone else even if you’re not friends...how do you share a task” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

In this task, students were required to read an information sheet about an element of historical context related to ‘A Christmas Carol’ and incorporate key facts into a poster. The teacher reflected that the students were better able to work collaboratively by the end of the group task despite being reluctant to engage with their peers initially. She

felt that all students attempted and made some progress with the activity. The teacher reflected that, although the class had been set group activities previously, the curriculum did not allow for as much collaborative work as she would like to include.

4.2.3.4. Summary

The teacher's attunement to the students in her class was demonstrated through her understanding of their needs and personal interest in them as individuals. Her responsiveness to their difficulties in lessons was valued by the students interviewed. A theme unique to this case was the use of collaborative working through group activities to develop students' joint working skills. The class also worked together through class feedback and discussion which was used to check understanding and extend knowledge.

4.3. Integration of Findings Across Cases

This section presents the similarities and differences in pedagogical practices used across case study classes. It integrates qualitative and quantitative data. Findings are organised under the following superordinate themes: fostering positive student-teacher relationships; use of encouragement; minimising negative reprimands; teaching responds to students' needs. A full list of themes that were integrated to create the overall thematic map (see Figure 6 below) can be found in Appendix 15.

Findings in this section relate to the following subsidiary research questions:

- What are teachers' and students' views about classroom practices used to engage students in low attaining English sets?
- What classroom practices do teachers use during lessons to engage low attaining students in English?

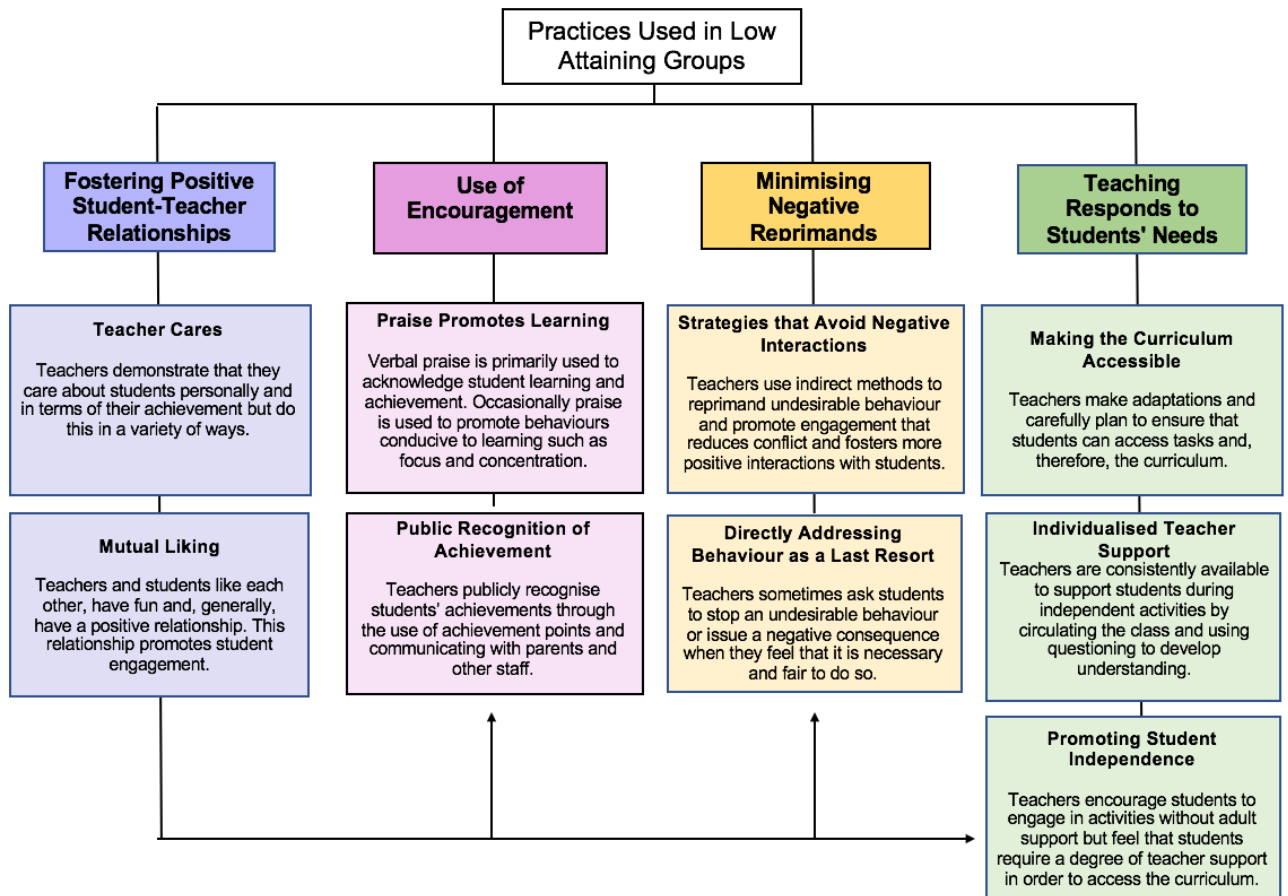


Figure 6. Thematic map showing practices used in case study classes

4.3.1. Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

Across all classes, there seemed to be a sense of mutual liking between students and teachers. Almost all students in all classes spoke explicitly about the positive relationship that they had with their teachers. Students discussed the importance of getting along with their teacher, their belief that they had a good teacher and used words such as 'nice' (10d5, Student), and 'kind' (10e6, Student) to describe them. Two students in 10c5 and 10d5 also explained that their relationships with their teachers could be variable, depending on the day:

"Sometimes I can be a bit silly which destroys it [the relationship], so I have to start all over again." (10d5, Student)

One student in 10c5 spoke of the importance of getting on with his teacher but reflected that their relationship varied from day to day. When he was not getting on well with his teacher, the student explained that he wanted the lesson to end so that he

could leave the classroom. Although the student did not explicitly identify how he felt when he clashed with his teacher, his need for time away seemed to be related to having an opportunity to calm down which would allow him to engage in learning, next lesson:

“[On ‘bad’ days] I want [the lesson] to end as soon as it could...I don’t want to see him for a couple of days.” (10c5, Student)

All teachers spoke about their classes positively, referred to them affectionately and commented on their positive attributes:

“They’re a very sweet class” (10e6, Teacher 5)

“I’ll be sad to say bye to them [at the end of Year 11].” (10d5, Teacher 4)

“It’s very easy to feel quite a lot of affection for them” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Teachers’ use of humour and fun in lessons emerged as a theme across all classes. In observations of 10d5 and 10e6, teachers shared jokes with students and laughed with them. The teacher of 10e6 explained that:

“There are a few people in there who like to go back and forth with me so we like to go back and forth with each other” (10e6, Teacher 5)

Three students in 10c5 also explained that their teacher made them laugh and sometimes joined in with their jokes in lessons.

Students in 10d5 and 10e6 spoke explicitly of the link between student-teacher relationship and engagement in lessons, explaining that they were more likely to want to complete tasks, answer questions and ultimately achieve more, if they liked their teacher:

“I don’t want a teacher who’s really bad to be with and really rude because that...wouldn’t make me work hard” (10d5, Student)

“I’ve done two assessments in Year 10 and I’ve done well in both of them. Me and Miss do get on, that has a major impact on the grade.” (10e6, Student)

A theme that emerged from student interviews across all classes were the different ways that teachers demonstrated that they cared about their students. Three students in 10c5 explained that their teacher had high expectations of their learning. They felt that he communicated that he expected them to do well in lessons because they were capable:

“He expects me to do a lot of the creative writing as well because he knows I’m really good at that” (10c5, Student)

“If you’re really stuck on something, he doesn’t make you think that you’re... what’s the right word... not smart enough” (10c5, Student)

Students in 10c5 and 10d5 thought that their teachers were skilled at teaching them, planned enjoyable lessons where they learnt a lot and spent time preparing for their lessons:

“My English teacher, he works very hard for the lesson” (10d5, Student)

All students in 10e6 felt that their teacher cared about their learning, was kind to them and tried to be fair:

“But [if she asks you to move seats] she doesn’t move you next to someone that you would be uncomfortable with.” (10e6, Student)

“She’s like ‘if you do this then you’ll get good grades and I want you to get good grades so you need to pass’”. (10e6, Student)

A theme that arose in 10d5 and 10e6 was the importance of familiarity between students and teachers. Teachers in both classes talked about their efforts to get to know their students personally and reflected that this was important to create a positive relationship between them:

“English is a subject where we’re talking about the world and people’s feelings...And if I want them to open up...then they need to feel comfortable around me. So it’s important to get to know them in that way.” (10e6, Teacher 5)

“Getting to know them on a personal level has helped...they see me as a familiar face around school now” (10d5, Teacher 4)

The teacher of 10d5 also reflected that this relationship had developed over time and, although challenging initially, his consistency had meant that students responded better to him in Year 10 than they had in Year 9:

“A couple of weeks ago I said I’ll be taking them through for Year 11 they were really happy... which was lovely to see the difference one year can make” (10d5, Teacher 4)

Although the methods that teachers used differed, each strategy communicated to students that their teachers cared about them and their learning. Students seemed to understand that their teachers were invested in their progress and willing to support them to achieve this.

4.3.1.1. Summary

Teachers and students in all classes reflected on the positive relationship between them, and there seemed to be a general sense that teachers and students liked each other. Students also spoke about the importance of teachers demonstrating that they cared for them. The methods teachers used to achieve this differed across classes. The unifying feature was that they communicated interest and investment in their students’ progress.

4.3.2. Use of Encouragement

A theme that emerged across all case study classes was how teachers used encouragement to acknowledge and promote student learning. In lessons across all classes, there was evidence of teachers praising students who demonstrated learning skills through enthusiastic tone and praise phrases:

Teacher praises student for adapting definition of inference: ‘That’s better, ‘digging deeper’” (10d5, Lesson 3)

‘Excellent. Well remembered’ (student response to question about last lesson’s learning) (10e6, Lesson 3)

Although all teachers acknowledged students’ learning, the teacher of 10c5 provided specific praise for the precise learning skill demonstrated. Praise seemed to reflect what students had achieved (i.e. short praise phrases were given for class

contributions and more precise praise was used to specify the skill students had demonstrated):

“What I love about that is how your structure is moving through the different steps. It’s really controlled” (10c5, Lesson 1)

Students in 10d5 and 10c5 explained that they enjoyed receiving praise from their English teachers as it made them feel proud and was an acknowledgement that they were doing well in lessons:

“I feel really proud when I get rewards and praise” (10d5, Student)

“I’ll be happy because I like getting a lot of good comments from Sir” (10c5, Student)

Encouragement also seemed to be used to promote behaviours that were conducive to learning across all classes. This was communicated through thanking or naming students who appeared engaged and praising the whole class for following instructions:

“Thank you very much X, X, X, X” (teacher names students who are reading) (10c5, Lesson 3)

“Really good focus this morning. Let’s keep this up” (to the whole class) (10d5, Lesson 3)

Teachers of 10c5 and 10e6 also spoke about the expectations they had when giving students praise. The teacher of 10e6 reflected that she sometimes gave praise for behaviours that she did not feel would warrant specific acknowledgement in other sets:

“[Some students] do the minimum [homework] but they give me something and they’re very excited...of course, that’s an expectation but I will say ‘well done’ because I know it’s not something they do with every teacher.” (10e6, Teacher 5)

The teacher of 10c5 reflected that praise was sometimes given for quite small positive behaviours but that the nature of the praise given was reflective of what was being commented on:

“They’ll get basic praise for basic things” (10c5, Teacher 3)

“When they genuinely achieve something impressive, I will always make a big deal about it. But I do think they know they have to work for it” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Quantitative findings from lesson observations suggested that teachers primarily gave praise when students demonstrated learning skills rather than to acknowledge good behaviour (see Table 7). It may be that teachers had high enough expectations of behaviour that they did not feel it was necessary to congratulate students on behaviours that they expected (such as paying attention). Instead, encouragement was used to celebrate the progress that students demonstrated in their learning.

Table 7

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) showing the reason that encouragement was given in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

		Skill	Effort	Outcome	Behaviour	Total
10c5	C	34	0	2	0	36
	%	94.4%	0%	5.6%	0%	100%
10d5	C	20	2	0	4	26
	%	76.9%	7.7%	0%	15.4%	100%
10e6	C	11	0	1	0	12
	%	91.7%	0%	8.3%	0%	100%

A further theme that emerged was the use of public recognition: students’ achievements and progress were shared with parents (through postcards and phone calls home), other school staff and their peers. All teachers spoke about their use of rewards that publicly acknowledged students’ behaviour and learning which they felt students enjoyed receiving and could be motivated by:

“I go round and see what they’re doing and if I notice something I’ll put [an achievement point] on the board.” (Teacher 4, 10d5)

“Reading out their examples of work [to the whole class] and saying what I really like about it” (Teacher 5, 10e6)

Students in 10c5 and 10d5 said that they felt proud when they received rewards. They also commented that praise reassured them that they were doing things correctly. Rewards that students mentioned included receiving achievement points, in-lesson competitions and positive communication with parents. No students said that receiving rewards made them feel embarrassed and there was no evidence in lesson observations of students responding negatively to receiving rewards or praise. It could be that students wanted to please their teachers because of the positive relationships they had formed with them.

4.3.2.1. Summary

The use of praise and rewards was a theme that emerged across all classes and data types. Across the classes, verbal praise was used to acknowledge that students had demonstrated learning skills, primarily. Although praise was used to promote behavioural engagement in a task, all classes emphasised giving praise to celebrate cognitive engagement in the content of the lesson. Publicly recognising student success through praise and rewards seemed to be valued because it created a sense of pride and reassured students that they were doing well in lessons.

4.3.3. Minimising Negative Reprimands

Across all classes and data types, there was evidence of teachers directly reprimanding and addressing students' behaviour. In observations of classes 10c5 and 10e6, teachers told or asked students to stop engaging in the target behaviour using a verbal reprimand:

“Can you stop talking and listen to other people speaking in the class” (10e6, Lesson 3)

“I don't want you to put your head on the desk again” (10c5, Lesson 2)

A theme that emerged from all classes was the teachers' use of strictness or firmness when reprimanding students. This seemed to be used on occasion or when it was felt to be necessary. This theme arose from student and teacher interviews:

“She's strict when she has to be” (10e6, Student)

“When I’m telling them off, it’s quite a clear and sharp tone.” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Teachers in all classes publicly reprimanded behaviour using negative repercussions. These included teacher-directed consequences such as asking students to move seat or stand outside the classroom and use of the school’s formal consequence system. This theme emerged from lesson observations across all classes. Teachers sometimes explained why the student had received the warning and, on other occasions, the students’ name was written on the board without comment. Where formal consequences were given, teachers had previously warned students that they would receive this if they engaged in the behaviour again and so the strategy seemed to be used as a last resort:

Teacher puts student name on board when it is the second time she has said name (student is talking and not reading) (10e6, Lesson 2)

Teachers in 10c5 and 10d5 spoke about their use of the formal consequence system which seemed to be used sparingly, as a warning to students:

“I would use the school system...more usually when there’s more general off task-ness and it needs to be a bit more of a shock” (10c5, Teacher 3)

“[Students] need to visually see it [the consequence] so if they’re on a warning or a caution sometimes I have to put that on the board” (10d5, Teacher 4)

Students in all classes discussed their teacher’s use of negative repercussions such as moving seats or being sent outside the classroom:

“If there’s people who distract you, you just tell the teacher and she’ll move them or give them a warning” (10e6, Student)

“If we’re...not listening to [the teacher] he’ll tell us to leave the class” (10c5, Student)

Interestingly, students explained how these public reprimands were used but did not express annoyance at receiving them. There was also no evidence that students argued with teachers when they were given a negative consequence during the

observed lessons. It could be speculated that the positive student-teacher relationships in these classes meant that public reprimands did not negatively affect students.

In contrast, across all classes and data types, teachers primarily used indirect methods of reprimand which allowed them to avoid negative interactions with students. In lesson observations, there was evidence of teachers using an 'indirect stop' method to communicate to students that they wanted them to modify their behaviour without explicitly asking students to do so. This was delivered by saying the student's name, asking the student questions about the work they were completing as a means of re-engaging them in a task, using non-verbal reprimands such as pauses and reducing potential distractions (such as taking away extra pens). Teachers also attempted to remind students to engage in a task without explicitly telling them to do so. In these instances, the reminder was unrelated to the task itself but seemed to implicitly communicate that students were expected to re-engage with the task set:

'Bags off, jackets off' to students who haven't started writing yet (10d5, Lesson 2)

'Have a seat, X' to a student who is standing up and not completing the task set (10c5, Lesson 3)

Another strategy that all teachers used to reprimand behaviours indirectly was to give reminders of the expectations for behaviour or a task. This was observed across all classes:

'Girls at the back we're listening to each other' [when students are talking during class feedback] (10e6, Lesson 1)

Reminders for students to work: "I want to see you doing [the task set]. Let's go' (10c5, Lesson 1)

Students in 10c5 and 10e6 spoke about how their teachers used task reminders if they were not following instructions, listening in lessons or engaging in the task:

"Even if she sees me stop for one second she'll be like 'pick up your pen again, it's time to go'" (10e6, Student)

Teachers of 10c5 and 10e6 also discussed their use of indirect reprimands which they felt were often enough to stop negative behaviours or re-engage students in a task:

“A lot of it would just be a name because generally I know that they can do what I’ve asked them to do” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Quantitative results from lesson observations demonstrated that teachers primarily used indirect strategies when delivering reprimands (see Table 8). Although all teachers used some direct statements and consequences to reprimand behaviours, indirect methods were predominantly employed when reprimanding students.

Table 8

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) showing the method teachers used for reprimand in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

		Direct	Indirect	Formal System	Consequence	Total
10c5	C	3	15	3	2	23
	%	13%	65.2%	13%	8.7%	100%
10d5	C	9	31	1	1	42
	%	21.4%	73.8%	2.4%	2.4%	100%
10e6	C	5	19	0	2	26
	%	19.2%	73.1%	0%	7.7%	100%

A strategy used in both 10c5 and 10e6 was the use of reprimands that also seemed to serve as a means of forming relationships with students. In lesson observations for both classes, teachers used praise as part of the reprimand to remind students that they had been doing well previously or that they were skilled enough to attempt a task:

‘X, you can do this by yourself come on. You don’t need anyone’s help’ (When student starts to talk) (10e6, Lesson 3)

“You’ve both got really good plans. Can you start writing now’ (to students who are not writing and are talking to each other) (10c5, Lesson 3)

In class 10c5, the teacher used individual teacher support as a means of preventing students from engaging in off-task behaviours. The teacher sometimes offered individual support when he noticed that students were losing focus during an independent task or approached students to support them with their work shortly after reprimanding them for not engaging in a task. The teacher therefore communicated to students that he was aware of the reason for their off-task behaviour and was available to support them in their learning.

The teacher of 10e6 utilised her relationship with the class when reprimanding behaviours. For example, she referred to her own feelings about behaviours that she was unhappy with or used the word 'we' when reminding students of what they should be doing. This strategy highlighted the relationship between teacher and students, and communicated to students how they should be behaving:

“Year 10 you’ve disappointed me” (in relation to students’ behaviour in a cover lesson) (10e6, Lesson 2)

“We are reading” (10e6, Lesson 2)

Use of tone also emerged as a theme across all classes. In lesson observations across all cases, there was evidence of teachers delivering reprimands in a whisper or a quiet tone. In 10d5 for example, the class teacher gave some reprimands discretely by approaching students individually and whispering to them. In 10c5 and 10e6, reprimands were also sometimes given quietly, and teachers quickly returned to a positive tone after giving a reprimand. The class teacher of 10c5 spoke about how he tried to be positive after giving a reprimand to communicate that the negative interaction had ended:

“When they come in and I’ve been cross with them outside...I’ll start the lesson...in a totally different tone. I won’t carry over any of that [negative tone]” (10c5, Teacher 3)

4.3.3.1. Summary

Across classes, there was some evidence that teachers gave direct reprimands to address students’ behaviour, including giving a direct verbal reprimand, using a firm tone and issuing students with negative consequences. Despite this, teachers in all classes primarily used indirect reprimands which meant that they avoided having

negative interactions with students. These strategies allowed teachers to communicate that they wanted students to modify their behaviour without directly asking them to stop, thus avoiding a conflict with students.

4.3.4. Teaching Responds to Students' Needs

4.3.4.1. Making the Curriculum Accessible

Across lesson observations and interviews for all classes, there was evidence of how teachers made individual tasks and ultimately, the curriculum, accessible to students. In lesson observations across all classes, activities were broken down into smaller steps, allowing students to plan the elements they would need to attempt an extended task. For example, in 10c5, **the teacher guided students to write a paragraph by using a 'slow writing' strategy where students were given criteria that each sentence had to meet (e.g. 'your first sentence must be a complex sentence')**. By breaking tasks down in this way, teachers ensured that students were able to access a more challenging task (e.g. writing a high-quality descriptive paragraph that met the success criteria expected in the exam mark scheme).

Teachers in all classes also reflected on how they made tasks accessible and manageable. They spoke about needing to slow the pace of their lessons and break tasks into smaller steps:

"I broke down the [group] task so everyone knew what would be happening rather than 'Here's 20 minutes, pull something out and go'". (10e6, Teacher 5)

Students in all classes also explained how their teachers supported them to access a task using: **sentence starters, explicit teaching of new vocabulary and approaching a more complex task, gradually:**

"Bit by bit. He doesn't go, here's something now go and do a sentence or a paragraph. He explains every step." (10c5, Student)

Teachers in 10d5 and 10e6 also provided students with prompts that would aid their understanding in a task. In lesson observations, **both teachers ensured that prompts and reminders for tasks were clearly presented (on the interactive whiteboard or a worksheet) and used pictures both as stimuli for tasks and to support key vocabulary.** The teacher of 10e6 also discussed the importance of linking learning to students' own

experience or understanding, particularly when teaching 19th-century texts. This was also evidenced in lesson observations.

A theme that emerged across all classes was how teachers prepared students and supported them to access GCSE exam questions. Students explained that their teachers taught them acronyms to structure paragraphs for each question (e.g. **Point, Evidence, Language analysis, Explanation**) and asked them to practice questions in lessons. Students in 10c5 and 10e6 also spoke about how their teachers explicitly taught them what the exam would look like and how to approach each question (e.g. **underlining the part of the text that the question asks about**).

Teachers in all classes explained that they prepared students for exams by explicitly teaching strategies that students could use to structure their responses, showing them model paragraphs and asking them to recall quotations and facts (as exams are closed-book):

“they do have strategies written out in their books...and I quiz them on them and I get them to repeat them over and over again.” (10c5, Teacher 3)

There was evidence of explicit teaching for exam questions in lesson observations in 10d5 and 10e6. For example, in 10d5, **the class teacher reminded students how the exam paper would be structured, the marks available and which skills they needed to apply to each question.**

4.3.4.2. Individualised Teacher Support

A theme that emerged across all classes was the availability of the teacher to support students during independent activities. This was used to check that students understood the task and to extend their ideas.

Students in 10d5 explained that their teacher had a good understanding of how they learnt and was, therefore, able to personalise lessons for them by providing challenge activities (which was a theme that emerged from lesson observations) and supporting them through tasks:

“He understands how we work” (10d5, Student)

Students in 10c5 and 10e6 discussed the individual support that their teachers provided. Students seemed to value their teachers' consistent availability and continued support when they were struggling with a task:

“Questions that we’re stuck on, he’ll help us and he’ll never give up on us.” (10c5, Student)

“Because it’s a smaller class you get to have more personal help which can really benefit you because I’m not that good at [English]” (10e6, Student)

Observation data also demonstrated that all teachers supported students individually throughout independent tasks by **circulating the classroom to read what students had written, answer questions and explain concepts**. Some of this support seemed to target students who teachers felt would struggle with a task (based on the fact that they had found the previous activity challenging).

Quantitative data demonstrated that teachers spent a large proportion of the observation periods interacting with students individually (see Table 9). In 10c5 and 10e6, individual interactions were the most common interaction type (58.9% and 51.7% respectively) demonstrating that teachers provided support during independent activities and questioned individual students during whole class feedback most frequently. Although individual interactions were not the most common interaction type in 10d5, the teacher did engage in these interactions for 41% of the time.

Table 9

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) showing the target of the teacher interaction observed in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class		Individual	Group	Whole Class	Staff	Students Interacting	No Interaction	Total
10c5	C	159	3	79	0	29	0	270
	%	58.9%	1.1%	29.3%	0%	10.7%	0%	100.0%
10d5	C	97	7	124	0	10	0	238
	%	41%	3%	52%	0%	4%	0%	100.0%
10e6	C	93	8	73	1	3	2	180
	%	51.7%	4.4%	40.6%	0.6%	1.7%	1.1%	100.0%

When teachers across all classes were engaged in individual interactions with students, the most common interaction type observed was ‘questioning and support’ (see Table 10). This included taking responses during whole class feedback and the use of questioning to help students understand a concept or task. This suggests that teachers regularly engaged in discussion with individual students in the observed lessons. In contrast, teachers provided direct explanation to individuals in only a small proportion of cases suggesting that most individual support was interactive and involved students in discussion (10c5 =11.9%; 10d5 =3.1%; 10e6 =10.8%)

Table 10

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) showing the interaction types when teachers interacted with individual students in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class		Encouragement	Reprimand	Work Based	Instruction	Question	Routine	Social	Other	Total
10c5	C	35	21	19	5	75	4	0	0	159
	%	22%	13.2%	11.9%	3.1%	47.2%	2.5%	0%	0%	100.0%
10d5	C	22	27	3	3	40	2	0	0	97
	%	22.7%	27.8%	3.1%	3.1%	41.2%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
10e6	C	10	20	10	2	46	2	3	0	93
	%	10.8%	21.5%	10.8%	2.2%	49.5%	2.2%	3.2%	0.0%	100.0%

4.3.4.3. Promoting Student Independence

A theme that emerged in interviews and observations for 10c5 and 10e6 was the issue of student independence. Teachers in both classes explained that they wanted to encourage students to think and work independently. The teacher of 10e6 reflected that she would like students to be less dependent on teacher support to prepare them for exams:

“I think that’s important for me to leave them because in the exam they’re going to get information that they won’t know what it means” (10e6, Teacher 5)

Both teachers explained that they encouraged independence by asking students to make choices in tasks, justify an opinion and take responsibility for their learning. The teacher of 10c5 also explained that it was important to teach the skill needed for an exam question as well as the paragraph structure used to answer it:

“I do think there’s a danger of learning...the structure [to answer an exam question] rather than the skill...I do try and get them to engage with explaining to me what the skill is before we look at the strategy” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Despite the intention to encourage independence, both teachers felt that it was necessary to provide students with additional support because they would be reluctant or unable to engage in a task without it:

“As soon as you say, can you do this sentence yourself, I’d be lying if I said they were happy to do that...they tail off” (10e6, Teacher 5)

In lesson observations of 10c5, **students seemed to need feedback during independent writing tasks, frequently asking their teacher for reassurance about their work and what they were ‘allowed’ to write.** There was evidence that students engaged in writing tasks more readily after receiving individual support.

Teachers spoke about the support that they offered students which included **providing scaffolds for writing tasks, structures for answering exam questions and explicit guidance about how to approach a task or present an activity:**

“Lots of very explicit guidance in terms of how and when and where... so for example... saying, I want you to give yourselves half a page and, in the middle, draw a circle...” (10c5, Teacher 3)

How the teacher encouraged independence was also a theme that emerged from lesson observations in 10c5. On some occasions, the teacher encouraged students to attempt learning tasks themselves and not rely on him for individual support during the task:

“I’ll come over and help you when I see you trying yourself.” (10c5, Lesson 2)

“You have full creative control over this story. If you have a problem, you can change it. It’s your story.” (10c5, Lesson 2)

Quantitative findings for all classes suggested that interactions with the whole class were primarily used to question students or provide them with instructions for independent activities (see Table 11). Instructions for independent tasks were the most common interaction type when the teacher interacted with the whole class in 10c5 (55.7%). Teachers in 10d5 and 10e6 gave instructions to the whole class in 28.2% and 27.4% of cases respectively which was the second highest whole class interaction type for these classes.

In contrast, for all classes, a smaller proportion of whole class interactions were described as ‘work based’, meaning that teachers were less likely to teach concepts through direct explanation without engaging students in a dialogue or setting up an independent activity (10c5 = 29.1%; 10d5 = 7.3%; 10e6 = 19.2%). This suggests that teachers attempted to set up independent learning opportunities or involve students in discussion. This made students active in the learning process: direct explanation would have been teacher-led, allowing students to be passive. Although this does not explicitly demonstrate that teachers were encouraging student independence, it does suggest that teachers attempted to engage students in their learning by requiring them to complete a task themselves or engage with the content through questioning.

Table 11

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) showing the interaction types when teachers interacted with the whole class in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class		Encouragement	Reprimand	Work Based	Instruction	Question	Routine	Social	Other	Total
10c5	C	1	1	23	44	5	5	0	0	79
	%	1.3%	1.3%	29.1%	55.7%	6.3%	6.3%	0%	0%	100.0%
10d5	C	0	4	9	35	38	31	6	1	124
	%	0.0%	3.2%	7.3%	28.2%	30.6%	25.0%	4.8%	0.8%	100.0%
10e6	C	2	4	14	20	29	3	1	0	73
	%	2.7%	5.5%	19.2%	27.4%	39.7%	4.1%	1.4%	0.0%	100.0%

As suggested in Table 11, there were some differences in how teachers interacted with the whole class. The teacher of 10c5 used a large proportion of whole class interactions to give instructions for independent activities. The teachers of 10d5 and 10e6 were more likely to direct questions to the whole class. This could suggest that the teachers of 10d5 and 10e6 prioritised teacher to student discussion and incorporating opportunities to check students’ understanding. In 10c5, more emphasis was placed on preparing students to engage in their own learning.

4.3.4.4. Summary

Teachers made tasks, and therefore the curriculum, accessible to students by breaking activities and exam questions down and building up to more complex tasks gradually. To support students during a task, teachers provided individualised, consistent support. As a result, students felt that they could rely on their support if they were struggling. Finally, teachers in two classes expressed a desire for students to engage in learning more independently and, although there were attempts to promote this, teachers felt that there were barriers to increasing student independence in their classes.

4.3.5. Student Engagement

The following section combines qualitative and quantitative findings to explore the final subsidiary research question:

- To what extent and in what ways are students in the lowest attaining English sets engaged in English lessons?

Across all classes, themes related to behavioural, cognitive and emotional engagement (as defined by Fredericks et al., 2004) arose from the data. The following section discusses findings under these headings.

4.3.5.1. Behavioural Engagement

Students in all classes talked about their focus and attention, explaining that, for the most part, they focused in their English lessons. Some students cited looking at the teacher and being quiet as ways of demonstrating this. Students in all classes explained that on occasion they did not focus and engage in the work set in lessons. The teacher of 10c5 explained that some students in his class demonstrated a high level of focus in lessons whereas others could focus for only a short time.

Students in 10c5 and 10d5 referred to the amount of work that they completed as a means of demonstrating engagement. Students explained that, when they were focused, they completed all the work set, including extension activities:

“If it’s one of those good lessons I get through all the work” (10c5, Student)

In all classes, students were recorded as engaging in on task behaviours for the majority of the observation periods, demonstrating that students observed were

behaviourally engaged for the majority of the observations overall (see Table 12). Values relating to 'other', 'routine' and 'social' categories have been omitted from this table. Only values relating to 'on-task' and 'off-task' behaviours have been included.

Table 12

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) of 'on task' and 'off task' behaviours recorded overall in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class			Individual	Peer	Adult	Total
10c5	On Task	C	200	8	28	236
		%	69%	3%	8%	80%
	Off task	C	36	11	0	47
		%	12.5%	4%	0%	16.5%
10d5	On Task	C	164	4	28	196
		%	64%	2%	11%	77%
	Off task	C	27	24	3	54
		%	11%	9%	1%	21%
10e6	On Task	C	112	23	29	164
		%	58%	12%	15%	85%
	Off task	C	4	15	0	19
		%	2%	8%	0%	10%

Behaviour in lessons also arose as a theme across interview data in all classes. Teachers discussed that their students could engage in low-level disruptive behaviour, such as talking. All teachers felt that their classes did not exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. The teacher of 10c5 explained that there was a small group of students in his class who often distracted others but that these students could be engaged during some activities. Students in 10d5 and 10e6 talked about having difficulty managing distractions including talking to other students or playing with objects around them.

In lesson observations in 10c5 and 10d5, there was evidence of all students engaging in copying tasks such as recording the title and learning objective. In independent tasks

set by the teacher, it was recorded that most or all students began these activities when they were set and sustained their engagement throughout the task. Some variation in engagement was recorded for certain activities in all classes, however. For example, in 10c5, although most students engaged during an extended writing task, some students began to talk to each other and were not writing, particularly when the teacher was helping a student in a different part of the classroom. When students in 10d5 were asked to read a non-fiction text independently (as they will be asked to do in the GCSE paper), some students asked the teacher to read the source aloud, and there was evidence of students looking around the room rather than reading the text.

Qualitative lesson observation notes seem to demonstrate that, although students were generally engaged in tasks, this varied based perhaps on the cognitive demand of the task set. Students generally engaged easily in copying activities but there was more likelihood of them becoming distracted during tasks that required sustained attention and a higher level of independent thought, such as longer writing tasks or independent reading.

When students were not interacting with an adult or peer (i.e. 'individual'), the majority of these interactions were on task for all classes (10c5 = 83.3%, 10d5 = 85.4%, 10e6 = 93%). Most off-task behaviours in 10c5 and 10d5 were classified as 'off task passive' (10c5 = 12.5%, 10d5 = 11.5%) which demonstrates that, when students were off task and not interacting, they were most likely to be quiet and not engaging in an alternative activity. In 10e6, most other behaviours were classified as 'routine' (3%), a task set by the teacher that was unrelated to learning (such as sticking a sheet in to exercise books) (see Table 13). This demonstrates that, when students were off task and not interacting, they were most likely to be engaging in a classroom management activity that their teacher had requested them to complete.

Table 13

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) of student engagement in individual interactions in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class	Interaction Type	C	Off		On			Total
			Task	Task	Task	Passive	Active	
10c5	Individual	C	200	30	6	4	N/A	240
		%	83.3%	12.5%	2.5%	1.7%	N/A	100.0%
10d5	Individual	C	164	22	5	1	N/A	192
		%	85.4%	11.5%	2.6%	0.5%	N/A	100.0%
10e6	Individual	C	112	3	1	4	N/A	120
		%	93%	3%	1%	3%	N/A	100.0%

Behavioural engagement in learning during peer interactions differed between classes (see Table 14). In 10c5 and 10d5, students were more likely to be off-task when interacting with peers (10c5 = 80%; 10d5 = 58%). In 10e6, however, students were most likely to be on-task when interacting with peers (57.5%). This may have been because students were completing a group activity for the majority of the final observed lesson in 10e6 and so had opportunities for on-task interactions with peers. Interactions with peers did not tend to be as a result of group activities in 10c5 and 10d5.

Table 14

Frequency counts (C) and percentages (%) of student engagement in peer interactions in 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Interaction			On	Off Task	Off			
Type		C	Task	Passive	Task	Routine	Social	Total
10c5	Peer	C	8	N/A	11	0	0	19
		%	42%	N/A	58%	0%	0%	100.0%
10d5	Peer	C	4	N/A	24	1	1	30
		%	13.3%	N/A	80%	3.3%	3.3%	100.0%
10e6	Peer	C	23	N/A	15	0	2	40
		%	57.5%	N/A	37.5%	0%	5%	100.0%

4.3.5.2. Cognitive Engagement

The teacher of 10c5 and students in 10e6 and 10d5 discussed the relationship between student understanding of the content and engagement in lessons. Students in 10e6 felt that, when they were struggling with a task or unsure of what to do, they were more likely to become distracted or lose focus:

“Sometimes I don’t even try it because I don’t know [what to do]” (10e6, Student)

Students in 10d5 also explained that they sometimes struggled to understand the content of the curriculum, citing **reading, challenging vocabulary and spelling as barriers to their understanding**. It is important to note that some of the student sample spoke English as an Additional Language which may have contributed to these difficulties.

The teacher of 10c5 explained that, when he taught or supported a concept or activity well, students were generally more able to engage in the task because they felt confident:

“Now I know their needs and they’re quite on it it’s rare that you get someone sitting there just not doing it” (10c5, Teacher 3)

There was evidence of students engaging in classroom discussions in both 10d5 and 10e6. Both teachers felt that their students were motivated to respond to teacher questions and contribute their ideas although the teacher of 10d5 reflected that a couple of students in the class were reluctant to do so. Students in 10d5 explained that they demonstrated their engagement by answering questions in lessons. In lesson observations of both classes, there was evidence that most students wanted to contribute a response to a teacher question or add to a whole class discussion by raising their hands.

4.3.5.3. Emotional Engagement

A theme that emerged from interviews in all classes was the variation in students' enjoyment of and interest in English. The teacher of 10e6 felt that her students were becoming bored of 'A Christmas Carol' because they struggled to access the 19th-century language but reflected that they had shown interest in the story by commenting on the characters or asking questions. The teacher of 10c5 agreed that his class enjoyed learning the narrative of a set text:

"They're happy to engage in the changes in direction in a story- they quite like a bit of a shock or a surprise and they'll react to it accordingly" (10c5, Teacher 3)

There were similarities in the elements of the curriculum that students enjoyed. Students across classes explained that they enjoyed creative writing tasks, reading and role-playing set texts and watching clips related to texts:

"I like writing creative stories where there's just me writing whatever I want."
(10c5, Student)

Students across classes explained that they did not enjoy writing analysis paragraphs and reading non-fiction texts. It seemed that students were more interested in elements of the curriculum that allowed them to use their imagination and did not require them to adhere to success criteria related to the GCSE exam.

One student in 10c5 discussed the relationship between enjoyment and engagement, explaining that he was more likely to engage in lessons that he found interesting:

"If I'm enjoying the lesson then my focus will be top" (10c5, Student)

The remaining students in 10c5 explained that they were interested in English and enjoyed completing tasks in lessons.

The teacher of 10e6 reflected that students in her class wanted to do well in their GCSEs but, although they were willing to do some work, they were not willing to put in the amount of work needed to meet the expectations of the current curriculum:

“When I first met them, they said ‘Miss I want to work hard... And they’re all striving in their own way to do well in that classroom... I don’t think they’re as willing to put in the work as they say they are’ (10e6, Teacher 5).

The teacher of 10d5 also felt that students in his class wanted to do well in their exams. He explained that his class could become anxious about their performance in practice questions because they were fearful of getting things wrong and that this may be why they seemed to have more interest in writing than reading:

“Something that I think they really enjoy is creative writing and there’s less of a chance of it being wrong” (10d5, Teacher 4)

Students in 10d5 explained that they wanted to achieve a good grade in their GCSE and were motivated to learn new things in lessons. One student in 10e6 explained that he was motivated to do well in English because he wanted to move to a higher set and achieve highly in his exams.

4.3.5.4. Barriers to Engagement

Students in 10c5 and 10d5 explained that their mood could impact engagement in lessons. They felt that their engagement could vary depending on the day. Students described that, if something negative had happened before the lesson, they could find it difficult to focus and engage with their teacher:

“Sometimes I just get a bit moody and maybe don’t want to do anything” (10c5, Student)

The teacher of 10d5 explained that, for one student in the class, their mood affected their engagement:

“He might be totally withdrawn from the lesson and then I’ve lost him” (10d5, Teacher 4)

Students in both classes also spoke about the negative influence of their peers on their engagement. Students felt that sitting near friends could be distracting which affected the amount of work they were able to produce:

“Sometimes when I sit next to my friends we’ll get silly and go off task” (10d5, Student)

“That guy who sits near me, I try to focus but he keeps saying stuff. Not rude stuff, just stuff. It means I don’t really focus” (10c5, Student)

Some students cited sitting alone as a helpful strategy for their engagement as it helped them focus on the task. It is important to note that peer working was not a common practice observed across case study classes. As such, students in these classes may have preferred working alone because they were not accustomed to engaging in learning when working alongside their peers.

A final barrier to engagement were difficulties arising from the expectations of the current English curriculum. Teachers across all classes described how the GCSE curriculum had been challenging for their low attaining students to access and there was some suggestion that it was not well suited to them:

“I think the changes with the exam are almost setting them up to fail if they’re a bottom set” (10e6, Teacher 5)

All teachers spoke of the emphasis on memorisation in the current curriculum which they felt put their students at a disadvantage because they struggled to remember what they had learnt:

“A lot of them have problems with memory recall so it means that when I see them on a Monday, if I see them on a Tuesday they find [it] quite hard [to remember what they’ve learnt], so remembering for Summer 2020...” (10e6, Teacher 5)

Teachers of 10c5 and 10d5 explained that their students struggled to remember the elements of the exam, including how to approach each question and:

“the difference between language and literature [exam papers], sometimes they get confused” (10d5, Teacher 4)

Teachers of both 10c5 and 10d5 commented on the difficulty of texts that students were expected to access, particularly those that they will read and interpret for the first time in the examination, without additional support:

“The difficulty and density and speed of the unseen text element of the language exam is going to be very difficult for them and I think it’s very likely that they’ll feel quite overwhelmed... [unseen texts] are quite long for them...the language is often quite complex” (10c5, Teacher 3)

Teachers of 10d5 and 10e6 reflected that the pace and nature of the GCSE curriculum made it very difficult to incorporate opportunities for peer working into lessons which they felt was a disadvantage of the system. Finally, the teacher of 10e6 also spoke of the tension she felt between moving her students through the curriculum and developing a positive relationship with them:

“There’s a lot of pressure to get this done, get that done and you almost feel like you’re just ticking boxes...rather than really form a bond with them and build your relationship with them” (10e6, Teacher 5)

4.3.5.5. Summary

Students demonstrated a high level of behavioural engagement in all classes: students typically focused and worked on tasks set. There were some differences in engagement between activities which could have been due to the level of cognitive demand that the task required: engagement seemed to be more variable when students had to complete a task that required independent thought and sustained attention. In term of emotional engagement, students seemed to be motivated to achieve in English GCSE, but their interest in the curriculum varied depending on the area of study and the level of creativity it afforded them. Teachers also discussed some of the difficulties associated with the current curriculum including the difficulty of texts and emphasis on memorisation.

5. Discussion

5.1. Overview

This chapter will discuss the findings of the current study in relation to previous research. It will review findings relative to the three subsidiary research questions. The overall findings will be positioned within self-determination theory to explore the possible theoretical implications of the practices discussed. This discussion will also consider the strengths and limitations of the current study, its implications for schools, policymakers and EPs and areas for future research.

5.2. Introduction

This study investigated the pedagogical practices teachers use to engage low attaining groups in three classes in schools where students have previously made higher than average academic progress. It also aimed to describe student engagement within these classes. It was intended that combining qualitative and quantitative data would present a detailed description of teaching practices and student engagement in low attaining classes.

The study aimed to address the following, subsidiary research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: What are teachers' and students' views about classroom practices used to engage students in low attaining English sets?
- RQ2: What classroom practices do teachers use during lessons to engage low attaining students in English?
- RQ3: To what extent and in what ways are students in the lowest attaining English sets engaged in English lessons?

In the following discussion, RQ1 and RQ2 will be considered initially. These research questions were explored by synthesising interview and classroom observation data. RQ3 will be discussed separately, considering quantitative and qualitative findings to present how students in case study classes engaged in English lessons.

5.3. Discussion of findings in relation to previous research

5.3.1. Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

Respondents in all classes reflected on the positive relationships between teachers and students. There was also evidence of teachers using humour and incorporating opportunities for students to have fun in lessons which students seemed to value. Students also explicitly spoke of the link between having a positive relationship with their teacher, engagement in lessons and motivation to achieve in English.

Although a small number of students reflected that their relationship with their teacher was not always positive, all students felt that they generally had a good relationship with their teacher and spoke about them positively. This contrasts with previous research which has found that teachers of low attaining groups are often inexperienced and less likely to be subject specialists than teachers of high attaining groups (Boaler et al., 2000; Francis et al., 2019). This was not the case in the classes involved in the main phase of the current study. Teachers had between two and six years of teaching experience, were subject specialists and had additional responsibilities within the school, including second in charge of department.

A further theme that emerged from student interview data was the importance of teachers demonstrating that they cared about their pupils. Teachers achieved this by taking time to prepare lessons, communicating high expectations for what students could achieve, communicating that they thought students were capable of doing well and being kind and fair. This supports Ross' (2009) findings that students can become disengaged with learning if they feel that they have been treated unfairly by their teachers. The unifying feature of the methods described in the current study was that teachers communicated that they were interested and invested in student progress.

The findings of the current study are corroborated by Dunne et al.'s (2007) findings which suggested that there was a sense of mutual respect between teachers and students and student-teacher relationships 'came across as positive in the general atmosphere of the school and in the observations' (p.65). The current study has provided additional detail about methods teachers used to create these positive relationships and the attributes that students valued in their teachers.

In the current study, positive student-teacher relationships seemed to be central to other practices employed by teachers of case study classes, including the use of

encouragement, reprimand and teaching and learning practices. As such, these themes will also be considered in relation to student-teacher relationships.

5.3.2. Use of Encouragement

The use of praise and rewards was a theme that emerged across all classes and data types. Although there was evidence of praise being used to promote behavioural engagement (i.e. focus and concentration), quantitative data suggested that teachers in all classes used praise primarily to celebrate cognitive engagement in the content of the lesson and to recognise student success in learning. In lesson observations, teachers used various methods to praise students which seemed to differ based on what students were being praised for. These included changes in tone, using short phrases to acknowledge good behaviour and contributions to class discussion (e.g. *'Well done'*, *'Good idea'*). More detailed verbal praise was given when students demonstrated a particular skill, specifying what students had achieved (e.g. *'What I really love about your structure is...'* (10c5, Teacher 3)).

Teachers may have used encouragement to primarily acknowledge learning as opposed to behaviour because they expected students to be focused and attentive. Thus, teachers communicated that they had high expectations of students and used this to encourage learning. As one teacher stated: *'I want them to start being more intrinsically motivated...I want them to get to that point...where they're motivated because they're producing something really good'* (10c5, Teacher 3). Students also seemed to value receiving praise for their work because it made them feel proud and reassured them that they were doing well in lessons. This is supported by Ross' (2009) research, which suggested that praise is a significant predictor of student engagement.

The finding that praise was used to motivate low attaining students is also supported by the findings of Dunne et al. (2007). The current study furthers that of Dunne et al.'s (2007) research in that it provides examples of how teachers used praise in the classroom. Dunne et al. (2007) also reported that schools provided low attaining students with rewards for effort and behaviour as opposed to academic achievement to allow them to have their successes recognised. Although teachers did praise behaviour in the current study, it was academic achievement that was acknowledged and celebrated primarily.

A further theme that emerged from the current study was the use of rewards that publicly recognised students' achievements and, to a lesser extent, behaviour. These

included the recording of achievement points which were visible to the whole class, positive communication with parents and reading examples of good work to the whole class. Students reported that they found this public acknowledgement rewarding, with several interviewees citing positive phone calls to their parents as a particularly affirming experience. The value that students placed on their teachers' acknowledgement is perhaps related to the positive relationship they had with them. Rewards seemed to create a sense of pride and reassurance for the students interviewed which may not have been the case if students did not like their teacher.

In contrast to the findings of the current study, Dunne et al. (2007) found that teachers used rewards such as allowing students to work on computers after completing a written task. Using rewards that publicly acknowledged achievement was not discussed in Dunne et al.'s (2007) findings. The rewards identified in the current study seemed to recognise student achievement and success. Task-related rewards as referred to in Dunne et al.'s (2007) research may create a 'carrot' and 'stick' approach to teaching, designed to coerce students to engage in a task. This did not seem to be the case in the current study.

5.3.3. Minimising Negative Reprimands

Across classes, there was some evidence that teachers gave direct reprimands to address students' behaviour when other strategies had been exhausted. These methods included giving a direct verbal reprimand, requesting that students stop the undesirable behaviour, using a firm or strict tone and issuing students with negative consequences such as moving seats, standing outside the classroom for a short time or using the school's formal consequence system. In the lessons observed, these strategies were used sparingly, and teachers tended to initiate them when behaviours were persistent and students had received prior warnings. The fact that students and teachers generally had a positive relationship may have also meant that this sparing use of direct, public reprimand did not seem to negatively affect students.

Despite this, quantitative data suggested that teachers in all classes used indirect reprimands most frequently. This approach communicated to students that the teacher wanted them to modify their behaviour without directly asking them to stop, thus avoiding a direct and public conflict with students. Qualitative lesson observation data provided further information about the various methods that teachers used to reprimand students indirectly. Across all classes there was evidence of teachers using the following strategies to reprimand students:

- *Indirect 'Stop'*: Teachers attempted to modify students' behaviour without addressing the behaviour or the individual directly. The reminder was not directly related to the individual or the task but implicitly communicated that students needed to re-engage with the task set or stop the behaviour. For example, asking students to take their coats off as a prompt to begin reading or giving the whole class a reminder about chewing gum when one was student chewing.
- *Non-verbal Reprimand*: Teachers used pauses and looked at students who were engaged in a behaviour that they would like them to stop.
- *Discrete Reprimand*: Teachers sometimes delivered reprimands in a whisper or approached students individually to speak to them about their behaviour (which other students were unlikely to hear).
- *Reminder of Expectations*: Teachers explained what students should be doing or what the expectations of the classroom were in order to help students remain engaged.
- *Use of Questions*: Teachers asked students questions, including what stage they had reached in a task or to check their understanding of what they had learnt if they saw that they were not engaged.
- *Praise Reprimand*: Teachers praised students' previous efforts or achievements when asking them to re-engage with a task or focus in lessons.
- *Support Reprimand*: Teachers approached students to support them with their work when they noticed that they were not focusing on the task.
- *Relationship Reprimand*: Teachers referred to their feelings about students' behaviour (e.g. 'I'm very disappointed') or used 'we' when asking them to modify their behaviour.
- *Reducing Conflict through Tone*: Teachers used tone carefully during and after a reprimand. Reprimands were given quickly, students were not given an opportunity to respond to the reprimand, and teachers sometimes used the

word 'please'. Teachers returned to a positive tone very quickly after giving a reprimand.

Teachers seemed to use these methods to avoid negative interactions with students while still communicating their classroom expectations. The teachers in the current study seemed to take a positive, relational approach to their interactions with students as opposed to an authoritarian style. It has been suggested that, when managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom, it is crucial to consider the underlying anxiety that may be causing this behaviour (Nash, Schlösser & Scarr, 2016). As such, challenging or disengaged behaviour can be interpreted as a defensive strategy that protects students from potentially harmful emotions. It is therefore important for teachers to seek to understand the feeling underlying the behaviour as opposed to focusing purely on preventing the observable behaviour (Youell, 2006). Based on this theoretical stance, it has been argued that a punitive approach to reprimanding undesirable behaviours is not particularly effective for students who are disengaged, and a compassionate response is considered more successful (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006). Indeed, some of the methods that teachers in the current study used to reprimand behaviours indirectly, seemed to have been underpinned by their positive relationships with students. For example, teachers used discrete reprimands and often delivered reprimands in a quiet tone. This strategy meant that teachers did not publicly humiliate individual students for disengagement.

It could be suggested that this compassionate approach to reprimanding behaviour allowed teachers to show that they understood the feelings underlying students' behaviours. This finding is supported, in part, by Dunne et al.'s (2007) research which suggested that teachers of low attaining students took a more relaxed approach to managing behaviour that relied on negotiation and flexibility. Like the current study, Dunne et al. (2007) found that teachers avoided directly asking students to stop what they were doing. The findings of the current study elaborate on how teachers achieved this and provide specific examples of how teachers approached student behaviour in case study classes.

It is important to note that teachers' use of reprimands in the current study may have been generally successful because of the positive relationships between teachers and students. It might have been that students wanted to meet the teachers' expectations because they were motivated to please them which is unlikely to have been the case if a good relationship had not been established.

5.3.4. Teaching Responds to Students' Needs

A key finding of the current study was how teachers made tasks, and therefore the curriculum, accessible to students using a range of strategies. In lesson observations, teachers provided prompts that would aid students' understanding of both the expectations for the task and the learning content of the lesson. These included giving clear and explicit guidance for the steps that students needed to follow in a task, supporting students to present their work neatly, linking learning to students' experiences and using visual supports (such as pictures and video clips) when teaching new concepts. Students valued help with learning unfamiliar vocabulary and the support structures that teachers put in place such as worksheets with information to prompt them and starter sentences to help them structure their writing.

There was also evidence that teachers broke tasks down into more manageable stages to ensure that students could access extended, more challenging independent tasks typically set later in the lesson. For example, the teacher of 10c5 used a text emulation strategy to help students structure their descriptive writing. In 10d5, planning sheets were provided before students attempted a language analysis paragraph to remind them how to organise their analysis. Both teachers and students discussed this graduated approach and slower pace in lessons. Teachers also coached students in exam strategy by explicitly teaching writing structures that they could use for each question, drawing their attention to how the exam was organised (including the number of marks available for each question) and reminding students of the skills that were being assessed.

In classroom observations and interviews, there seemed to be an implicit expectation amongst teachers and students that students could and would access GCSE exams. Although additional supports were put in place, there was no evidence to suggest that students were excused from working towards this end goal because they were in a low set. The findings of the current study contrast with Boaler et al.'s (2000) research which concluded that teachers had low expectations of students in low sets. Students in low attaining groups felt that the work they were set was too easy and they were often given answers quickly, without having the opportunity to access the task themselves. Similar to the findings of the current study, however, Dunne et al. (2007) also found that teachers scaffolded activities by working at a slower pace, using visual supports, linking learning to real life and breaking down activities to build up to a more challenging task.

Dunne et al.'s (2007) research also found that teachers emphasised practical activities in lessons such as the use of computers and the incorporation of games which they felt were more suited to a low attaining class. Teachers in the current study did not utilise these activities in the observed lessons. This may have been because teachers in the current study had high expectations of what students could achieve in lessons and set tasks that were primarily focused on writing and coaching for exams. It may also be that the challenges of the English GCSE curriculum compelled teachers to teach in this way. Unlike when Dunne et al.'s (2007) study was conducted, teachers in the current study could not offer an alternative pathway to achieving a qualification in English. Teachers seemed primarily focused on supporting students to perform in examinations which may have been due to the importance placed on GCSE outcomes in school league tables (West, 2010). Teachers may have struggled to support students in developing learning skills that could lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the subject. Interestingly, it was raised in some teacher interviews that the intensity of the current curriculum prevented them from incorporating activities that would support the development of other skills such as collaborative working.

Teachers also provided individualised, consistent support. Teachers differentiated activities, asking certain students to incorporate metaphor into their writing, for example. Students reported that they felt they could rely on their teachers to help them if they were struggling. They discussed that their teachers had a good understanding of how they learnt and could support them when they found the work challenging. Students also valued the reliability of having a teacher who would '*never give up*' on them (10c5, Student).

Quantitative data also suggested that teachers provided students with a high level of individual support. Teachers in all classes frequently interacted with students individually, using questioning to check and develop students' understanding. Qualitative observation data also demonstrated that teachers targeted their support towards individual students by providing verbal feedback on their work and circulating the class during tasks to ask and answer questions. Again, the positive nature of the relationship between students and teachers may underpin these findings. Receiving individualised support and attention from their teacher may have helped students to develop a good relationship with them. Equally, the fact that students had a positive relationship with their teacher may have meant that they were willing to accept their support. The importance of individual support found in the current study is supported by the findings of Dunne et al.'s (2007) research which found that students recognised that their teachers put in additional effort to help them make progress.

In contrast to this, the issue of student independence also arose as a theme across two classes. Teachers expressed their desire for students to engage in learning more independently with less reliance on their support. There was a small amount of evidence in lesson observations that teachers were attempting to promote independent learning. For example, quantitative data suggested that teachers in all classes only provided a small amount of direct explanation; their interactions were more likely to be used to prepare students for independent tasks or engage them in discussion.

Despite this, teachers explained that students were reluctant to work independently and often sought reassurance from them. There was evidence that student engagement was more variable during tasks that required sustained effort, cognitive engagement and independent thought (such as reading a challenging text or writing at length). The issue of student independence was also referenced in Dunne et al.'s (2007) research as teachers felt that low attaining students could be dependent on adult support. This is further highlighted by Francis et al. (2017) who found that teachers interviewed felt that students in low attaining groups required a high level of monitoring in lessons and protection from the challenges that increased independence might bring. Francis et al. (2017) concluded that there is a discourse of 'dependency' (pg.64) within low attaining groups that prevents students from developing the confidence to attempt tasks themselves.

Although the difficulty of encouraging student independence did arise in the current study, the findings suggested some positive practice such as promoting challenge and high expectations for low attaining groups. The findings of the current study differed to those of Boaler et al.'s (2000) research, where it was found that low attaining students frequently engaged in tasks that they felt were too simple for them, including copying activities. In the observed lessons, classes were not frequently asked to engage in low-level tasks such as copying, and there was evidence that they were provided with more challenging extension activities, thereby contesting the theme of low challenge that Boaler et al. (2000) found in low attaining groups.

It is important to note that the pedagogical approaches outlined in the current study may not be unique to lower attaining classes. Indeed, it is possible that the practices discussed could be used to engage and support students of all attainment levels. As Norwich and Lewis (2001) highlight, research evidence does not appear to suggest that there are specific pedagogies for students with varying special educational needs. Indeed, Norwich and Lewis (2001) conclude that common teaching practices can be

relevant to lower attaining students but some more intensive or explicit teaching is also necessary for students who struggle with learning. Thus, teachers of students with additional needs do not need to adopt wholly different approaches but should make adaptations to adequately respond to the needs of learners. It could be argued that some of the findings of the current study are consistent with previous research concerning effective teaching practices and instruction (such as formative feedback, providing examples and effective questioning (Hattie, 2012)). As Norwich and Lewis (2001) suggest, however, it may be that teachers in the current study made some adaptations to typical approaches in order to respond to the needs of learners within the group. Further research comparing the pedagogical approaches across sets could explore this further.

5.3.5. Student Engagement

Student engagement in the current study was defined as having a behavioural, emotional and cognitive element, as suggested by Fredericks et al. (2004). Full definitions of these terms can be found in section 1.3.

Quantitative data suggested that students in all classes demonstrated behavioural engagement for more than 77% of the observation windows. Qualitative lesson observation data also suggested that students were generally focused and worked on the tasks set in lessons. It was discussed, however, that this focus could vary as some students explained that they could become distracted or not work as hard as they would like to. Teachers of all classes described that their groups demonstrated low-level disruptive behaviour and some disaffection with learning but did not display particularly challenging behaviour.

The findings of the current study support those from Dunne et al. (2007) who found that students in low attaining sets had difficulty managing distractions and sustaining attention. Challenging behaviour was also cited as a challenge for teachers in Dunne et al.'s (2007) study. Although there was some evidence of lapses in behavioural engagement in the current study, overall engagement across the case study classes was high, and there was little evidence of challenging behaviour. It is important to note that the current study selected very high achieving schools, unlike in Dunne et al.'s (2007) research where schools were only required to have a positive value-added score. This may have accounted for the difference in findings.

Barriers to engagement were also identified. Students described that their mood could negatively impact engagement in lessons which could be affected by something that happened earlier in the day. Some students also explained that peers in their class could negatively affect their engagement and cited sitting alone as a facilitator to engagement. Across the observed lessons, there was only a small amount of evidence of peer working. It could be argued that greater emphasis on peer interactions and collaborative learning may have encouraged students to engage in more task focused peer talk and promoted independence in learning activities. In the current study, learning was predominantly teacher-led, and interactions were primarily between teachers and students. It could be argued that establishing effective peer working is challenging in the GCSE classroom because of the emphasis placed on individual outcomes in examinations. Teachers are therefore less able to place importance on developing peer working skills because the examination system encourages students to be dependent on their teachers. Two teachers in the current study highlighted in their interviews that they did not feel that the GCSE English curriculum allowed for sufficient opportunity to develop group working skills.

As discussed previously, there were also some differences observed in engagement between activities in lessons. Students seemed to struggle more when engaging in activities that required sustained attention and independent thought which could suggest that the cognitive demand of the task impacted behavioural engagement. Linked to this, teachers also felt that the current GCSE curriculum disadvantaged low attaining students. They expressed concern that their classes would struggle with the emphasis placed on memorisation and may have difficulty accessing challenging texts when they did not have adult support in examinations.

In terms of emotional engagement, interviews suggested that students wanted to achieve in English GCSE. One teacher felt that this created some anxiety for students as they worried that they may not do well. This was in contrast to the findings of both Dunne et al. (2007) and Boaler's (1997) research which found that low attaining students lacked motivation and were discouraged from doing well because of their set placement. In the current study, one student made direct reference to his dissatisfaction with his placement in the lowest set and cited moving up to the next group as his motivation for working hard in lessons. Set placement was not mentioned by any other students interviewed (although students were not asked about this directly as this was not the focus of the research).

Students also spoke about the relationship between enjoyment and engagement, explaining that they were more likely to focus in lessons and pay attention when they were interested in the content or if learning was fun. Some students explained that their teachers attempted to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable by showing short clips of the novels they were reading, incorporating role play or allowing them to work in a group.

Students' interest in the GCSE curriculum varied however, depending on the area of study. Many explained that they enjoyed the freedom of creative writing, following the plot of a text and role-playing what they had read. Teachers also felt that their students particularly enjoyed creating and reading stories. Some students expressed that they had less interest in reading non-fiction texts and writing paragraphs that analysed the language used in texts. The level of autonomy students felt over the work they produced could account for these differences in student enjoyment. Analysing language in a way that meets the success criteria of the exam mark scheme may have felt restrictive for students and could have created more opportunity for them to be incorrect. In contrast, creating a descriptive piece allowed students to use their own ideas: as the teacher of 10c5 told a student in a lesson about creative writing: '*You have full creative control over this story*' (10c5, Lesson 2). Applying the concept of autonomy as it is defined in self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), it could be that students had more interest in creating and reading stories because they had the opportunity to develop independent ideas with fewer constraints.

There was evidence that students in case study classes engaged in classroom discussions. It is argued that this demonstrated a form of cognitive engagement in learning. Fredericks et al. (2004) suggest that engagement in classroom discussions indicates *behavioural* engagement rather than *cognitive* engagement. Fredericks et al. (2004) argue however that, where effort is 'focused on learning and mastering the material' (p.64), this constitutes cognitive engagement. The current study would argue that providing ideas in classroom discussion suggests engagement with what is being learnt rather than just behavioural compliance.

Students participated in learning by contributing their ideas, answering teacher questions and demonstrating their learning verbally. As Wenger (1998) suggests, learner identity develops based on student participation in the learning experience. Students discussed the importance of classroom discussions to aid their understanding and demonstrate their knowledge. Teachers also tended to choose students to answer questions rather than taking responses from students who had their hands up to

encourage a range of students to contribute to the discussion. This may have also communicated to students that teachers expected them to be engaged in the lesson thus enhancing behavioural engagement. The use of classroom discussion seemed to be a method of actively engaging students in the content of the lesson to prevent them from becoming passive.

5.4. Positioning Findings within Self-determination Theory

The findings of the current study will be considered in light of concepts drawn from self-determination theory (SDT). The theory was thought to be relevant to the findings of the current study because it emphasises student-teacher relationships and the provision of effective support with learning. SDT posits that all students have a propensity for learning and are intrinsically motivated to enjoy discovering new things (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). The theory argues that students' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness must be met in order for them to develop this intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999).

Niemi and Ryan (2009) suggest that competence can be supported in the classroom by providing appropriate support and feedback, giving students the information they need to master a task and setting challenging activities to ensure progress. In the current study, teachers used strategies that responded to the needs of their classes by making the curriculum accessible and providing students with individualised support. This seemed to allow students to be successful in learning tasks and develop their understanding. Praise was also focused on promoting learning skills, and students were rarely publicly reprimanded which may have made them feel more competent in the classroom.

It is argued that students will feel a sense of relatedness with teachers if they feel that the teacher genuinely likes, respects and values them (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). Students are more likely to learn and challenge themselves if they feel a sense of belonging and connection with their teacher (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). In the current study, a sense of mutual liking was evidenced between teachers and students. Teachers also demonstrated that they cared about their students and were invested in their achievement. This positive relationship seemed to underpin the approaches that teachers used (such as the use of indirect reprimands) and influenced how students responded.

Students in the current study valued the care and support that their teachers showed them. They explained that there was a link between connectedness with their teacher and engagement in learning: *'If you don't really get on with your teacher, you might not do as well in the subject so it's important to have a good relationship with your teacher'* (10d5, Student). It has been suggested that learning occurs within a relationship between the adult and child (Youell, 2006). As such, when teachers form emotional connections with young people, this develops their capacity to learn (Hinshelwood, 2009) as suggested in the current study.

The final basic psychological need for learning is autonomy where students are encouraged to develop independent thought and have a sense of control over their learning. This can be developed in the classroom by providing students with choice, acknowledging students' feelings about what they are learning and reducing the pressure to achieve a certain level in assessments (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). There was little evidence that teachers used strategies to encourage autonomous learning in the current study and there were only a small number of opportunities for students to engage in peer working. Some teachers, however, discussed their desire to increase student independence and incorporate more group activities. Although teachers made attempts at this, they reflected that students found it difficult to engage in the curriculum without adult support. Indeed, in lesson observations, students sought reassurance and assistance during independent tasks, perhaps supporting the suggestions of previous research that there is a discourse of 'dependency' in low attaining groups (Francis et al., 2017, p.64).

Self-determination theory argues that when teachers are made to teach towards a specified outcome (i.e. GCSE exams), they tend to use more external reinforcement, hindering the development of engaging practices that would enhance students' intrinsic motivation (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). Despite teachers' efforts to encourage competence and develop positive relationships with students in the current study, it seemed more challenging to use some of the practices associated with developing autonomy. This may have been due to the pressures placed on them to teach towards GCSE examinations.

The current study would argue that this effect may be particularly pronounced because of the challenges of the current curriculum. Since the curriculum reforms, emphasis has been placed on memorisation, examination focused assessment and the study of challenging literature (AQA, 2014; Mansworth, 2016; Ofqual, 2015). Students in the current study reflected that they enjoyed elements of English that allowed them to be

creative with fewer restrictions but struggled with understanding the language of challenging texts and following structures when writing language analysis paragraphs which are required throughout both English Literature and Language exams. Teachers also felt that the emphasis of the current GCSE curriculum places low attaining students at a disadvantage.

Unlike when Dunne et al.'s (2007) research was undertaken, the current system does not allow for alternative curriculum pathways that low attaining students may find more accessible. It could be argued that the current English GCSE curriculum offers little opportunity for students to be autonomous learners, particularly low attaining students who may struggle to develop independent thoughts about texts that they have difficulty understanding. As a result, students may be struggling to autonomously access the current curriculum without relying on additional support from their teacher. It is therefore speculated that the constraints of the current GCSE curriculum might have hindered teachers in the current study from incorporating activities that would develop autonomy.

The current study did not directly compare the findings from case study classes to those in schools where students made lower academic progress. However, using self-determination theory, it is possible to speculate about key practices that may have enabled the observed engagement in the current study. What seemed to underpin teachers' practice was that they had high expectations of student competence and skill. These expectations were implicitly communicated through their use of strategies that made a challenging curriculum accessible to their students. Frequent prompts that promoted engagement were used to create a 'no excuses' culture within classes where students were expected and supported to participate in learning.

Additionally, the relationships between teachers and students emphasised mutual respect and individual care which would perhaps have motivated students to respond positively to the challenging expectations of their teachers. Students in the current study spoke of the importance of their teachers' support and praise. This could suggest that their motivation to engage came from a desire to have their competence and success recognised by an adult that they respected. It could be argued that teachers were required to extrinsically motivate students because the GCSE curriculum does not allow teachers to facilitate autonomous learning or emotional engagement (and, therefore, foster an intrinsic motivation to learn). Due to the emphasis placed on GCSE outcomes in school performance data and league tables, teachers may have felt compelled to focus on short term learning for exam performance as opposed to

fostering independent learning skills (West, 2010). Ryan and Deci (2000b) suggest that there are varying forms of extrinsic motivation which differ in terms of learner autonomy. Further research could explore how pedagogical approaches are used in low attaining classes to foster the varying forms of extrinsic motivation and student and teacher perceptions of these methods.

5.5. Strengths of Research

The current study used a mixed methods design to explore teaching practices and student engagement. This provided numerical data that supported qualitative findings, something that previous research has not included (e.g. Dunne et al., 2011). For example, in relation to the use of reprimand, the researcher was not only able to triangulate teacher and student views with qualitative lesson observation findings but also present numerical support for the frequent use of indirect reprimands in classes. The qualitative element of the research also provided rich detail that was combined with numerical findings. As Yardley (2000) argues, integrating data from various sources allows the researcher to gather a comprehensive and rigorous understanding of the topic which the various research tools allowed for in the current research.

A further strength of the research was the incorporation of the development phase which enabled improvement of the validity of the research tools. Incorporating the development phase allowed the researcher to pilot and adapt some of the research tools. The systematic lesson observation tools were also piloted on recorded lessons and compared with those of another coder to check for inter-coder reliability. The incorporation of this phase also helped to generate initial ideas that were explored further in the main phase of the research. As Yin (2009) suggests, the use of a pilot study in case study research allows the researcher to explore ideas that can be developed through further exploration, thus improving the validity of the main phase research.

Low attaining students' engagement within the context of significant curriculum changes has not been explored in previous research, making this study pertinent. As Tracy (2010) argues, qualitative research can be evaluated, in part, based on the topic's worthiness and the contribution it makes to practice. The current study endeavoured to explore a relevant area of educational practice to suggest strategies that teachers in effective schools are using with low attaining students. It is intended that the findings of this study will add to a relatively small knowledge base about pedagogical approaches for these groups.

Finally, the researcher's background as a former English teacher supported the interpretation of the data and consideration of the implications of findings. Yardley (2000) asserts that commitment to the research topic and sensitivity to the context that the research is being conducted in, including understanding participants' perspectives, are characteristics of good qualitative research. She also suggests that, for the research to be transparent, the researcher must acknowledge the influence of their own prior experience and motivation for carrying out the research. The researcher's understanding of the possible pressures of teaching a low attaining GCSE group and the experience of planning lessons for these students was helpful in understanding participants' responses and meant that the researcher was committed to exploring the topic in depth.

5.6. Limitations of Research

The current study reflected the experiences of three classes across two schools in London contexts only. As a result, the findings of the current study cannot be immediately generalised to other settings in different contexts. It is important to note that the current study aimed to provide a detailed description of practice and engagement by combining various data sources. As such, it is argued that the findings of the current study are potentially transferable but not generalisable in that they provide an insight into practices which could be explored further in future research. The findings also suggest practices that could be considered by other teachers of low attaining sets and adapted to suit their own contexts.

Despite measures taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the research tools (i.e. pilot work prior to the main phase, inter-coder reliability tested on a recorded lesson), there were limits to how lesson observations were carried out. Due to ethical and practical constraints, it was not possible to audio record the observed lessons. This, therefore, made it difficult to compare the data collected with a second observer. The researcher accepts that having a second observer with whom to compare observation coding may have further enhanced the reliability of the data gathered from lesson observations. The researcher also acknowledges that, due to her presence in lessons, it is possible that a Hawthorne effect may have impacted the observation data.

Additionally, only a proportion of students from each case study class were interviewed and observed as part of the research. It may have been that only the most compliant students were involved because gathering parental consent was dependent on students returning a parental consent form. If other students were observed, student

engagement levels could have been different from those recorded in the current study. Additionally, the views of only certain students were represented in student interviews. Further research could interview and observe a larger number of students. Interviews with students were also quite short. The researcher found that students struggled to elaborate on their views during interviews and tended to make salient points, succinctly. Interviews carried out over time may provide an opportunity to explore students' attitudes towards set placement and future aspirations, although this was not the focus of the current research.

Although it was beyond the scope of the current study, the current research did not explore the broader experiences of low attaining students in case study schools such as pastoral support or the attitudes of school leaders towards low attaining students. It seems likely that the placement of experienced teachers in low attaining groups involved in the current study was indicative of the attitudes of senior leaders who were responsible for allocating teachers to classes. Therefore, it could be that the experiences of the students included in the research were a result of variables other than the practices employed by the class teacher. Further research would be needed to investigate this.

Additionally, the current study did not explore the relationship between individual students' academic progress and teaching practices in the case study classes, so it is not possible to assert that the practices discussed were directly related to engagement or academic progress. The current research can present a picture of the experiences in case study classes in schools where students typically make good progress, but it is not possible to draw conclusions about the relationship between the pedagogical approaches observed and students' academic attainment.

Finally, the researcher acknowledges that her experience as a former English teacher may have been a limitation as well as a strength due to the potential influence this may have had over the data. Although measures were taken to mitigate researcher bias, the researcher accepts that her status as a research practitioner with prior experience in this area could have influenced how teachers responded in interviews or the interpretation of data. Further research could be carried out by researchers from varying backgrounds to gather a range of perspectives on the topic.

5.7. Areas for Further Research

The current research has highlighted practices that teachers used in low attaining English classes including strategies for making the curriculum accessible, methods for providing individualised support and approaches to reprimanding and encouraging students. Research could explore these practices further to consider the impact that they have over student engagement and, ultimately, academic and motivational outcomes.

The current study was also only conducted in schools that contained a higher than average proportion of students eligible for free school meals and where students made a high level of progress. Schools involved in the current study also set students for English based on prior attainment from Year 7. Further research could explore the experiences of teachers and students in schools with differing structures, populations and outcomes to consider how practices vary across contexts.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to explore how wider school systems support low attaining students including pastoral support teams and school leaders. Eco-systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) would suggest the importance of a range of factors within a students' environment and, as such, it seems likely that wider school ethos and systems would have impacted how students in the case study classes were taught in individual lessons. Further research into the influence of factors outside the classroom may provide some suggestion about the school-wide systems that are conducive to creating a positive classroom environment for low attaining students.

Finally, as the current study has detailed pedagogical practices and student engagement in low attaining groups, it would be interesting to compare these findings to the experiences of teachers and students in middle and high attaining sets. Similarly, it would be interesting to explore how low attaining students are supported within mixed attaining classes to compare their experiences to those of students in set groups.

5.8. Implications of the Research

5.8.1. Implications for Educational Psychologists

The current study has provided a rich picture of practices used in low attaining case study classes in schools where students make a high level of progress. EPs work

closely with school staff in a range of contexts and are often called upon to support students who are struggling to access the curriculum or engage in learning.

Interestingly, participants in the current study did not discuss the input of external professionals which may suggest that EPs should consider how they could contribute to teachers' work with low attaining students. Some of the implications of the current study for EPs include:

- Although challenges for teachers of low attaining students have been discussed, the findings of the current study generally highlight the positive practices that teachers are using with these groups. EPs are well placed to work in a solution focused way, identifying strengths and planning ways that practitioners can move forward (Morgan, 2016). When working with school staff, EPs could share examples of positive practice that have been highlighted in the current study and support them to implement these within their own contexts.
- The current study provides suggestions as to how student engagement can be promoted in low attaining groups through teacher-student interactions and lesson planning that meets the needs of students with different skills. It has been suggested that schools value EPs' contribution to staff training (Lee & Woods, 2017). The findings of the current study could be incorporated into such training to support continued professional development for school staff.
- Keeping the views of young people at the centre of decision making for their support has been highlighted in recent years (e.g. SEND code of practice, DfE, 2015) and is considered an essential element of EP practice (Hobbs, Todd & Taylor, 2000). This research presents the perspectives of students in low attaining groups and could support school staff to understand what students value about their teachers and learning experiences.
- EPs often engage in consultation with staff to support them to understand the underlying communication behind students' behaviours, develop new understandings and plan for alternative ways to support them in the classroom (Wagner, 2000). The findings of the current study suggest that the teacher's understanding of their students is important in developing positive relationships and ensuring that support meets students' needs. Through consultation, EPs could guide teachers to develop their understanding of student behaviour and adapt their approach, using some of the strategies discussed in the current research.

- EPs also work with senior staff in schools to support the development of whole school policies such as those for behaviour management. The emphasis in the current study on the development of relationships as a strategy for enhancing engagement in the classroom could be used by EPs to reframe these policies and encourage staff to consider the importance of relationships for promoting engagement in learning.
- The current study found evidence that the development of positive, caring relationships between teachers and students was important for promoting student engagement in low attaining groups. It has been suggested that, as teachers routinely engage in emotionally charged interactions as part of their role, they require a space in which to have their feelings understood or risk burnout (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015). EPs are typically trained in group processes and are therefore well placed to supervise school staff, so they are better able to build effective relationships with their students.

5.8.2. Implications for Schools

The current study explored the pedagogical approaches that teachers used to engage students in low attaining English classes. Many of the approaches discussed, including how teachers developed relationships with students, are not subject specific and could be applied in other subjects. As such, it seemed appropriate to incorporate these practices into a 'recommendations for practice' document, showing suggested teaching strategies for low attaining students (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Recommendations for practice document, showing suggested teaching strategies for low attaining students

Supporting Low Attaining Students in the Classroom	
<p style="text-align: center;">Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships</p> <p>1. Demonstrate that you like your students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for positive attributes that your class and individual students have • Where possible, incorporate opportunities for students to have fun through the sharing of jokes or structured activities such as role play <p>2. Demonstrate that you care about your students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that they are capable of doing well • Show students that you have taken care over planning their lessons • Get to know your students personally. Show an interest in how they are and who they are! • Tell students that you expect them to do well in your subject 	<p style="text-align: center;">Use of Encouragement</p> <p>1. Publicly recognise achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly communicate students' success to parents • Make in lesson rewards public so that other students can see them • Inform other members of staff if students have done well in lessons <p>2. Ensure that praise reflects what has been achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise <i>learning</i> more than learning <i>behaviours</i> • Acknowledge behaviours that are conducive to learning using short praise phrases • Ensure that students are aware when they have made progress in learning • Ensure that praise for learning skills is very specifically related to what the student has achieved • Have high expectations for giving praise. Use it when work has met the standard you have set
<p style="text-align: center;">Minimising Negative Reprimands</p> <p>1. Directly address behaviour as a last resort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use negative repercussions sparingly (such as asking students to move seats or giving a formal consequence) • Explain that a negative repercussion may be given if behaviour is persistent • Ask students directly to stop engaging in a behaviour when other methods have been used <p>2. Use reprimands that reduce negative interactions with students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a calm tone when issuing a reprimand and return to a positive tone shortly after giving a reprimand • Remind students of what they should be doing • Praise students about previous effort when you notice that they are not engaged • Offer students support with their work if you feel that they are not engaged because of a lack of understanding 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching that Responds to Students' Needs</p> <p>1. Make the Curriculum Accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with appropriately pitched model writing to emulate • Support students with organisation and presentation so that they are able to focus on the learning content of a task • Break independent tasks in to manageable steps for students to work through • Visually model a task before students attempt it independently • Explicitly teach new or challenging vocabulary <p>2. Support Student Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you are consistently available to support students. Be aware of when they might be struggling and use questioning to extend their thinking. • Encourage students to develop their own opinions and attempt tasks on their own, after appropriate scaffolding has been provided

The current study also has implications for school leaders in terms of how low attaining students can be supported in the wider school system:

- Senior leaders should consider how low attaining students can be encouraged to become more independent in lessons before they reach GCSE stage. This would be a worthwhile investment as it would enable students to autonomously engage in the KS4 curriculum and ultimately, learning beyond examinations. It would, therefore, be helpful to consider how schools can incorporate opportunities for independent learning and choice into the KS3 curriculum.
- Senior leaders should explore the emotional needs of teaching staff to consider how able they are to emotionally support and build relationships with students. Teacher burnout and wellbeing is an area of concern nationally (Kinman, Wray & Strange, 2011) and this may be impacting how teachers respond to students, particularly those who struggle to engage with learning. Schools could consider incorporating staff supervision into their practice to help teachers build the capacity needed to develop positive relationships, use indirect reprimands and remain calm with students.
- If attainment grouping is to be practiced within schools, curriculum leaders should consider how they allocate teachers to low attaining classes to ensure that there is equitable practice across groups. The current study has demonstrated that teaching low attaining students requires skill. It is crucial, therefore, for schools to consider the teaching experience, subject specialism and effectiveness of teachers placed with these groups.

5.8.3. Implications for Policymakers

For teachers to support low attaining students most effectively, it will be important for educational policymakers to consider the following to ensure that these students are accessing a beneficial curriculum in a supportive learning environment:

- Educational policy should reflect findings regarding the various elements of student engagement as suggested by previous research (see Fredericks et al., 2004) and supported by the findings of the current study. Student engagement should be considered not just in terms of behavioural engagement but also in terms of student enjoyment, interest and mastery. These elements should also

be considered when developing curricula to ensure that they facilitate the fullest spectrum of student engagement.

- The current study has concluded that, despite the presence of positive practices within case study classes, the constraints of the current curriculum are such that they do not allow students to develop a sense of autonomy or access learning without a high level of additional support and differentiation. Policymakers should, therefore, explore the impact of the curriculum changes on lower attaining students in terms of academic outcomes, motivation and interest in learning. It would be helpful for them to consider how appropriate and applicable the current curriculum is for low attaining learners and to consider possible adaptations that may support them to be more actively engaged with learning.
- It is important to note that the current research has presented a favourable depiction of how teachers can support students in low attaining groups. Despite this, previous research has shown that the experiences of low attaining students in schools who set based on attainment are not always positive (Boaler et al. 1997, 2000; Ireson & Hallam, 2001). Policymakers should consider whether grouping students based on prior attainment is an effective and equitable practice for all students or whether an alternative approach would support lower attaining students more effectively. For example, perhaps student independence may be better facilitated in mixed attainment classes where students could be exposed to more peer learning. It would also be beneficial to explore the factors that contribute to effective teaching for mixed attainment groups as research has suggested that this may be a more equitable practice overall (Francis et al., 2017).

5.9. Final Conclusion

The findings of the current study present a predominantly positive depiction of teaching practices and student engagement in low attaining case study classes. The current study has highlighted how teachers used reprimand skilfully in order to maintain positive relationships and reduce conflict with students. It has also stressed the importance of consistent teacher support and suggested how teachers can communicate that they care for their students.

The current study proposes that teachers' ability to foster positive relationships with their students is central to their practice and underpins their approach. Crucially, the current study has demonstrated that low attaining students *are* engaging in English lessons, but the findings have highlighted that engagement is also dependent on students' enjoyment and understanding of what they are learning. The current study posits that the GCSE English curriculum has created barriers for low attaining students, particularly in terms of promoting independence in learning and student enjoyment. Despite this, teachers involved in this research were committed to overcoming these difficulties through skilful interactions with students, careful lesson planning and consistent care and support. As one student said of their teacher:

"He'll never give up on us. He'll always be there for us" (10c5, Student)

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6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1

Literature Review Search Terms

A review of the literature was carried out using a systematic approach. This was achieved through searching psychological and educational databases including ERIC and PsychINFO as well as using the UCL Explore search engine and Google Scholar to ensure a comprehensive search of the literature. These search engines also allowed me to find government commissioned reports and information from the Department for Education.

While reading through the literature, a snowballing technique was used to identify further research studies and commentaries that would be valuable in the review. This allowed for a search of particular researchers and their relevant research (such as Hallam's research in to ability grouping). The key studies used in the literature review were carried out after the year 2000 and studies before this were excluded. There have been few studies in to attainment grouping since 2010 and so it was necessary to widen the search. The key studies covered were also UK based and this was used in the search terms.

A search for 'low attaining students' and 'ability grouping' (using the search terms below) in the UK produced 2,301,660 results. The search was narrowed by filtering for papers published since the year 2000. This produced 1,806,720 results. Papers were selected based on relevance. A snowballing technique was then used to find further relevant research.

To search **ability grouping**, the following terms were used:

- Ability grouping
- Attainment grouping
- Setting
- Streaming/tracking were not used as these are practices predominantly used in the US

To search **low attaining students**, the following terms were used:

- Low attaining
- Low ability

To search **teaching practices**, the following terms were used:

- Teaching practices
- Teaching and learning
- Teaching

6.2. Appendix 2

Example Information Sheets for teachers and students

Exploring teaching practices for young people in the lowest attaining sets in English

March 2017 to August 2019

Information sheet for teachers

You are being invited to take part in a research project. It is important that you understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please do email me if anything is unclear or you have any questions.

Who is conducting the research?

My name is Cathleen Halligan and I am inviting you to take in part in my research project, 'Exploring teaching practices for young people in the lowest attaining sets in English'. I am currently a Trainee Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychologist at UCL Institute of Education. This means that I am studying to become an Educational Psychologist, who works with schools, families and young people to support the development of young people from 0 – 25. I am particularly interested in the teaching and learning practices teachers use to support adolescents.

This research will be supervised and supported by my tutors at the university, Ed Baines and Tom Connor.

Why are we doing this research?

I am interested in finding out how teachers engage and enhance the progress of young people in Year 10 English lessons. In the current study, I am focusing on the lowest attaining English sets (e.g. Set 5) to find out more about the teaching and learning practices that are supportive for them. The views of students in these classes and their teachers have not been widely explored in research so I am interested in uncovering the current pedagogical practices used in these English classes.

Why am I being invited to take part?

The study will include interviews with teachers of lower ability Year 10 classes and students in these classes. I will also be observing English lessons to document the teaching and learning practices that teachers of these classes employ. Your school have expressed an interest in being part of this research study. Your data and insight will be crucial to understanding how teachers are engaging and enhancing the progress of lower ability students.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

Your involvement in the research is entirely voluntary and there will be no penalty for you or your school if you do not agree to take part. One of your English lessons with your Year 10 group will be observed. During this lesson, Cathleen will be noting what happens in the lesson and how students respond to this. Consent will be obtained from students and their parents. You will be asked to complete one face to face interview with Cathleen which will be between 35-45 minutes in length. The interview will be recorded (audio only) and will take place at your school. Questions will cover the nature of your class and the strategies you use to engage them and enhance their progress. The audio recordings of your interview will be used only for analysis and in

the eventual research report. Cathleen and the research supervisors will be allowed to listen to the original recordings to assist Cathleen with the data analysis.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

Although your responses to interview questions will be recorded and incorporated into the research report, you and your school will remain anonymous throughout the process and your name will not be attributed to any of your responses. Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless during the interview/observation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm. I will have to inform relevant agencies in this instance.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

I hope that the topics we discuss will give teachers an opportunity to reflect on their teaching experiences and those of their students however, if at any point during the research you feel uncomfortable or anxious, you are completely entitled to stop the interview or lesson observation. You have the right to withdraw your contribution to this research up until the time that the report is written, which will be in February 2019. You will not be able to withdraw your contribution after this time. If any information that may indicate a child protection concern is divulged during the interview or lesson observation, I will have to pass this information on to your school's safeguarding lead.

If you would like to make a complaint about the research or researcher, you are able to contact the research supervisor at e.baines@ucl.ac.uk. If you do not feel that your complaint has been dealt with to your satisfaction, you can take your complaint to the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee (ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your responses will be explored and analysed by the researcher to find recurrent themes across teachers and students which will be used to write a report detailing teaching practices for students in the lowest attaining sets. In this report, I may quote parts of your interview directly but your name and your school's name will not be used. Results will be shared with you after the research- a summary of these will be sent to your head teacher for circulation or I may ask to check her analysis with you to ensure that it is reflective of your views. The interview and lesson recordings will be retained until the research has been completed and written up (September 2019) and the anonymised transcripts and lesson notes will be retained until the end of my qualification in September 2019. During this time, myself and my research supervisors will have access to the audio recording, which will be stored on an encrypted USB.

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

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form and return to Cathleen.halligan.16@ucl.ac.uk by [insert date].

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at Cathleen.halligan.16@ucl.ac.uk.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.

Notice:

The data controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. UCL's Data Protection Officer is Lee Shailer and he can also be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data will be your consent. You can provide your consent for the use of your personal data in this project by completing the consent form that has been provided to you.

Your responses will be kept on an encrypted USB until the end of my doctoral course in September 2019. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

How do teachers help you in English lessons?

March 2017 to August 2019

Information sheet for students

My name is Cathleen Halligan and I would like to hear your opinions of English lessons for a research project.

I am training to become an Educational Psychologist which means that I work with young people at school so that they can learn and be happy. I am interested in finding out what your English lessons are like and what you think about them. I am doing my research in your school because they put students in to groups based on the grades they have got.

What will happen if you take part?

- You will have an interview with me at your school. I will ask you questions about your English lessons and ask you to complete some activities about them.
- The interview will last between 20 and 40 minutes.
- I will record your voice during the interview.
- I might share some of your words with two supervisors at my university who are checking my work. I won't use your name if I do this.
- I won't use your name or the name of your school when I write my report about the things that you've said.

If you don't want to be interviewed, you can tell me at any point and we will stop. After the interview, you can tell me if you want me to delete your interview and not use your words. You can do this until February 2019.

If you tell me something that makes me think that you or someone else is in trouble, I'll have to tell a teacher at your school.

If you have any questions before we have the interview, you can ask me when we meet or ask your English teacher who can email me.

6.3. Appendix 3

Example Consent Forms for Parents and Students

Teaching practices for young people in the lowest attaining English sets

March 2018- August 2019

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form.

	Y	N
I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research		
I agree to be interviewed by Cathleen		
I agree for my lesson to be observed by Cathleen		
I am happy for my interview to be audio recorded		
I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations they will not be attributed to me or my school		
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used		
I understand that, after the research, I can withdraw my contribution to this research at any point until February 2019 but this will not be possible after this time.		
I understand that I can contact Cathleen at any time		
I understand that the results will be shared with Cathleen's research supervisors and examiners as this is an assessed piece of work		

Name _____
Signed _____ Date _____

Teaching practices for young people in Set 5 for English

March 2018- August 2019

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return to your child's English teacher.

Yes No

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research

I agree for my child to be interviewed by Cathleen if they are selected by their teacher

I am happy for my child's interview to be audio recorded

I agree for my child to be observed in an English lesson by Cathleen

I understand that if any of my child's words are used in reports or presentations they will not be attributed to them or their school

I understand that my child can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if they choose to do this, any data they have contributed will not be used

I understand that, after the research my child can withdraw their contribution to this research until February 2019 but this will not be possible after this time.

I understand that the results will be shared with Cathleen's supervisor and examiners as this is an assessed piece of work

I have discussed the information sheet with my child

Child Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Research Study: Understanding English Lessons

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Today, I am sitting in your lesson to understand more about the activities you do in English. I want to find out what you enjoy in lessons and what helps you learn.

As part of my study, I'm going to write down the things your teacher does and the tasks in your lesson. I'm also going to write things down that I see individual students do.

If you don't want me to write down things that you are doing, then **do not** fill out the questions below and hand it back to me blank. By filling in this questionnaire you are agreeing to be involved in this study.

I won't be telling others about what you specifically do and I won't use your name in my research.

Name:

School:

Class:

6.4. Appendix 4

Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

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 simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

***Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process**

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review.**

If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

For further information see Steps 1 and 2 of our Procedures page at:
<https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php>

Section 1: Project details

A	Project title	How do teachers engage and enhance progress for students in low attaining English sets?
B	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)	Cathleen Halligan (qtnvch2)
C	*UCL Data Protection Registration Number	Z6364106/2018/04/06
D	Supervisor/Personal Tutor	Ed Baines/Tom Connor
E	Department	Psychology & Human Development Department
F	Course category	DEdPsy
G	If applicable , state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed	N/A
H	Intended research start date	April 2018
I	Intended research end date	August 2019
J	Country fieldwork will be conducted in <i>If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be required before ethical approval can be granted:</i>	UK
K	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	No

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 Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled trial/other intervention study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of personal records |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires | <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic review if only method used go to Section 5. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Action research | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data analysis if secondary analysis used go to Section 6. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literature review | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, give details: |

Please provide an overview of the project, focusing on your methodology. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, data collection (including justifications for methods chosen and description of topics/questions to be asked), reporting and dissemination. Please focus on your methodology; the theory, policy, or literary background of your work can be provided in an attached document (i.e. a full research proposal or case for support document). Minimum 150 words required.

The current study will explore effective pedagogical practices in the lowest attaining sets and the effect of these practices on student engagement.

Research Questions

- What practices do teachers and students believe work to engage and enhance progress of young people in the lowest attaining English sets?
- What practices are teachers using in low attaining English classes to engage students and support their progress?
- How do pedagogical practices affect student engagement in English classes?

Research Design

The current study will use a mixed method design to explore teacher and student experiences of English lessons and collect a quantitative measure of classroom practices and student engagement. This design has been chosen to expose participants' perceptions and nuances in approaches to teaching and learning which may be lost in a large scale, purely quantitative study. An inductive approach will be used, where analysis is grounded in the data. This seems appropriate in this instance as low attaining sets are a heterogeneous group and grounding the analysis in the data will allow for exploration of their individual perspectives. The current study aims to explore these individual experiences. The research questions will be explored using semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, semi-structured lesson observations and systematic classroom observations.

The proposed project will have two phases:

1. An initial, development phase to gain the views and experiences of teachers of the lowest attaining sets in Year 10 and students in these classes.
2. A mixed methods phase in two case study schools to explore teaching and learning practices in the lowest attaining sets in Year 10.

Phase 1: The study will use semi-structured interviews to explore teacher and student perceptions of the strategies that are useful to support progress and engagement in English lessons. Semi-structured lesson observations will be used to begin to explore the practices teachers are using in lessons. Themes arising from these lesson observations will be used to inform questions during the follow up interview. This development phase will also be used to identify areas of practice that will be explored further in the second phase.

Phase 2: Based on the findings from phase 1, the focus of the second phase will be the effect of two areas of teaching and learning practice over student engagement. Systematic lesson observations will be used to explore this. Further semi-structured interviews with students and teachers will ask them to reflect on the lesson observed to gain views about supportive and engaging practice.

Sample

Participants will be recruited from schools in London, using purposive sampling. The researcher will use contacts in secondary schools and teaching communities such as Teach First to advertise the research. Up to 8 schools will be involved in the initial phase. The schools involved in the research will be comprehensive state schools and will set students by attainment in English, throughout Key Stage 3 and 4. Schools will be contacted by email or letter to the headteacher and then a follow up phone call will be made to discuss the nature of the research in more depth. It is likely that the initial contact will be a senior leader. Therefore, there may not be consistency in how the link member of staff describes the nature of the study and so it will be necessary for the researcher to explain that nature of the research in more detail via the information sheet and in person before the research is undertaken.

In the development phase, participants will be drawn from Year 10, not only to echo the work of Dunne et al (2007) but also because this year group will be studying for the new GCSE assessments. The teacher/s of only the lowest attaining English set/s in Year 10 will be interviewed. Two students in each class will also be interviewed. Teachers will be asked to select a male and female student of average attainment for the group. Interviewing average attainers will avoid the confounding variable of differing attainment. As it is likely that some students in a low attaining sets will have additional needs (such as speech and language difficulties or learning difficulties) the teachers will also be asked to select students within this average range who they feel would be able to talk to an unfamiliar adult. It is felt that asking teachers to select students will be more ethical than choosing students randomly. Students will be interviewed separately because the presence of a peer may distract them or create a response bias as they may not want to reveal what they find helpful or challenging in lessons, in front of another member of their class. A semi-structured lesson observation will also be carried out in each Year 10 class whose teacher and students have been interviewed. During this observation, the researcher will record levels of student engagement using

a systematic observation schedule. The researcher will also record what the teacher does in the lesson in relation to differentiation, student support and behaviour management. This will take place before the interviews so that participants are not aware of the areas the researcher is interested in.

The second phase will focus on two schools from the initial phase sample. These schools will be selected based on the measures of student engagement taken during the initial lesson observations. It is intended that one school selected will have demonstrated a particularly high level of student engagement in the observed lesson while the second school will have demonstrated a lower student engagement level. This is in order to collect data from classes where engagement is especially high and compare this to classes where engagement is at a moderate level.

Systematic lesson observations will be used in English lessons and the class teacher will be asked to reflect on the lesson in a semi-structured interview afterwards. A selection of students of average attainment from each class will also be interviewed after the lesson to gain their views. However, this selection method may be adapted depending on the outcomes of the initial phase.

Research Tools

Development Phase:

A semi structured interview schedule will be used for teachers of the lowest attaining sets. Questions will cover how the teacher adapts lessons to meet the class' needs, the strategies they use to engage them in learning and how they support their class' progress (RQ1).

Student interview schedules will ask students to reflect on what happens in their English lessons, which activities engage them, what helps them to make progress and what they find difficult in English lessons. These questions will be explored using activities that are appropriately differentiated for them, including card sorting activities, picture labelling, drawing and providing starter sentences as scaffolds. These have been developed based on recommendations for aiding communication when interviewing young people with learning difficulties (Lewis & Porter, 2004). A semi-structured approach will be used to allow for flexibility as some students' in low attaining sets may find sharing their views challenging.

Prior to the lesson observation, the students in each class will be given a short questionnaire to complete. This will serve as a consent form for students to agree to be part of the observation but will also ask them to choose lesson activities that they find most engaging and helpful in supporting their learning. A semi-structured observation schedule will be used to collect information about teaching and learning strategies and student responses to activities (RQ1 and 2). This will be recorded as a narrative of the lesson. The researcher will have a copy of the lesson materials to support these notes during the analysis. These qualitative notes will record teacher behaviours in relation to: learning outcome of the task, task type (e.g. matching, gap fill, open question, discussion, exam style writing task, teacher talk), differentiation, scaffolding and behaviour management strategies (positive or reprimands). The researcher will make notes of teacher behaviours under each of these headings. Certain students will also be selected randomly to record their behaviours, relating to engagement. A systematic

observation schedule will be used to record this behaviour. Consent will be obtained from these students' parents.

Second Phase:

A systematic observation schedule will be designed, based on the findings of the development phase. It will focus on two key practices identified in the development phase and will record student engagement relating to these practices (RQ3). In order to define these categories, it will be important to pilot these schedules initially and adapt them accordingly.

Prior to the lesson observation, the students in each class will be given a short questionnaire to complete. This will serve as a consent form for students to agree to be part of the observation. It will also ask them a series of rating questions about their engagement in English lessons, based on the findings of the development phase.

Further interview schedules will be created for teachers of these classes and two students which will ask them to reflect on the observed lesson. Questions will focus on the strategies they found most helpful to encourage engagement in learning and student responses to teaching and learning practices.

Interviews will be recorded on an audio recorder and saved on an encrypted USB. The interviews will then be transcribed by the researcher and the data set will be analysed for initial codes and themes.

The research will be written in to a 35,000 thesis report, using direct, anonymous quotations from interviews. The findings of the research will be communicated to participants through an accessible write up, sent to head teachers.

Section 3 Research Participants (tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early years/pre-school | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults <i>please specify below</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ages 5-11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown – specify below |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ages 12-16 | <input type="checkbox"/> No participants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young people aged 17-18 | |

NB: 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 \(SCREC\)](#).

Adults: English teachers

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 <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
* Give further details in Section 8 Ethical Issues <input type="checkbox"/>			

Section 5 Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)			
a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	No <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
* Give further details in Section 8 Ethical Issues <input type="checkbox"/>			
<i>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 8 Attachments.</i>			

Section 6 Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)			
a.	Name of dataset/s		
b.	Owner of dataset/s		
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>If no, do you have the owner's permission/license?</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Do you plan to anonymise the data?</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>	
		<i>Do you plan to use individual level data?</i> Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		<i>Will you be linking data to individuals?</i> Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
e.	Are the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)?	Yes* <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>
g.	If no , was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>
h.	If no , was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No* <input type="checkbox"/>

* 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.	Data subjects - Who will the data be collected from? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students in the lowest attaining English sets in Year 10• Teachers of the lowest attaining English sets in Year 10
b.	What data will be collected? Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview data with students• Interview data with teachers• Questionnaire data from students• Lesson observation data (systematic observation and qualitative notes about teacher behaviours)
c.	Disclosure – Who will the results of your project be disclosed to? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The researcher and two research supervisors (Ed Baines/Tom Connor)• A final summary of the findings will be communicated to the teachers involved and the head teacher so they can be circulated to parents
d.	Data storage – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick*, encrypted laptop* etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anonymized transcripts and audio recordings will be kept in a password protected file on a password protected computer. Observation notes will be anonymised from the start and any data that is not anonymised will be kept in a locked room.
e.	Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution) – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
f.	<i>How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anonymised transcript data will be until completion of the programme (approximately September 2019). Audio recordings of interviews will also be destroyed at the end of the course, after the research project has been completed. <p>Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are:</p> <p>No</p> <p><i>Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.)</i></p>

No

Section 8 Ethical issues

Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*
Participant recruitment: A selection of schools will be approached by the researcher based on whether they set students from Year 7 in English. In some instances, the researcher will recruit schools through a known contact and, in some cases, head teachers will be contacted directly as the schools will not be known to the researcher. A key contact in each school will be identified by the researcher and contacted by email to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in the research. They will approach teachers of the lowest attaining English sets in Year 10 (initial phase) to briefly explain the nature of the study. The researcher will then contact teachers and send them information about the study to share with students who are selected to be interviewed. The contact in the school will support the researcher in sending out information sheets and consent forms to parents of students who in the lowest attaining sets in Year 10.

Confidentiality: Teachers and students will be made aware that their responses will remain anonymous and schools will be identified by a code which will not reveal their geographical location.

Informed Consent: Teachers will be given an information letter, outlining the nature of the study and inviting them to participate in the interview and lesson observation. They will be asked to complete the consent form asking them to agree to participate in the research.

Students who are to be interviewed will be given an information sheet and consent form that has been appropriately differentiated for them. Language will be reduced and the layout of both the information sheet and consent form will be organised clearly. Prior to the lesson observation, the researcher will give students in the lesson observation classes a short questionnaire to complete with a paragraph outlining the nature of the research. It will be explained in this paragraph that the researcher will be noting what they do in the lesson but that their names will not be used. It will be made clear that, by completing the questionnaire they will be giving consent to participate in the observation.

Parents of students in the classes that will be observed will be asked for opt-in consent for their child to participate in an interview if they are selected and for their child's behaviours to be recorded as part of the lesson observation. They will receive an information letter explaining the nature and purpose of the research and a consent form to sign. The researcher will not record any observed behaviours from students whose parents have not given consent nor will they be interviewed.

Protection of participants: Interviewing students in low attaining sets will require careful consideration to ensure that they have a positive experience. The process of being

involved in research interviews may be daunting or overwhelming and so it will be crucial to explain the role and position of the researcher very clearly. Differentiated resources will be used to introduce the researcher/research and to engage the student in the interview. Students will be chosen by their teachers and interviewed individually. This should reduce anxiety that may be caused by having to discuss lessons with a peer present.

A further issue may be in the explanation of the purpose of this study to low attaining students and their parents. Identifying these young people as 'low attaining' may cause offense or impact self-esteem. It will be important therefore, to explain to the young people involved that the research is concerned with how teachers ensure that their class is interested in their work and is making progress. The emphasis will be placed on developing an understanding of their own class specifically rather than drawing a distinction between sets. It will be explained to parents that this study is concerned with teaching and learning practices for their child's class specifically. The label that the school gives to these classes will be used in the information to parents (e.g. Set 5, Set E etc).

Teachers will be briefed to not leave the classroom during the lesson observation. If this has to happen for any reason, another member of staff will be asked to supervise the lesson. The researcher will be aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school and will pass on any safeguarding concerns to them, if they arise. It will be explained to participants that their responses will be treated confidentially, unless there is a safeguarding concern, prior to the research. If there is an incident during the lesson (e.g. aggressive student behaviour), the researcher will not intervene. This will be explained to staff before the lesson observation.

Participant Selection: How the purpose of the research is communicated to schools will be crucial in ensuring that participants are selected ethically. It will be important to communicate to schools that the study is concerned with understanding teaching and learning practices in these groups as opposed to highlighting that it will also be looking for effective practice. This may create a bias in the teachers who are put forward for interviews. In the initial phase, it will be requested that the researcher speak to all teachers of the lowest attaining groups in Year 10 to get a more credible picture of teaching and learning. Allowing teachers to choose the students who are interviewed is considered to be more ethical than choosing students randomly as teachers will be able to put students forward who they feel would be most comfortable to speak individually to an unfamiliar adult.

Data storage: Interviews will be recorded on an audio recorder and saved on an encrypted USB. The interviews will then be transcribed by the researcher and the data set will be analysed for initial codes and themes. An anonymous extract from an interview transcript will be shared with another coder to compare with the researcher during data analysis. Codes and extracts from transcripts will be shared with the researcher's two research supervisors to check emerging themes.

Dissemination of findings: The research will be written in to a 35,000 thesis report, using direct, anonymous quotations from interviews. The findings of the research will be communicated to participants through an accessible write up, made available to school and staff.

Section 9 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

a.	Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research (<i>List attachments below</i>)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach email • Information sheets and consent forms for parents, teachers and students • Questionnaire/consent form for students to agree to be part of the observation 		
	<i>If applicable/appropriate:</i>		
b.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
c.	The proposal ('case for support') for the project	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Full risk assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	

Section 10 Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

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	Cathleen Halligan
Date	20/3/18

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

6.5. Appendix 5

Qualitative Lesson Observation Schedule

Learning outcome of task	
How is this communicated to students?	
What aspect of the curriculum does it relate to?	
What skill is being practiced?	
Task type	
Time given for task	
Student led or teacher led?	
What are students asked to do?	
How is the task explained to students?	
Individual/pair/group work?	
What materials/resources are students given?	
Differentiation	
Evidence of challenge for higher attaining?	
Differentiation by task?	
Differentiation by outcome?	
Differentiation by content?	
Differentiation by support?	
How is differentiation communicated to students?	
Differentiated questioning?	

Scaffolding	
What additional support is provided in the learning activity?	
What additional support is provided while students are working?	
Who is delivering additional support?	
How are students supported during whole class feedback?	
Behaviour management	
How do teachers communicate expectations of behaviour? (language and tone)	
How are students engaged in whole class feedback?	
Teacher response to low level disruption?	
How are reward systems used? (what for and language used to deliver)	
How are consequence systems used? (what for and language used to deliver)	
Praise	
Comments to build rapport	
Use of classroom routines	

6.6. Appendix 6

Teacher Interview Schedule

Interview Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be part of my research. Today, I'm going to be asking you some questions about your experience of teaching Set X. Please read the information sheet and, if you agree to be part of the study, sign the consent form.

You can withdraw from the research at any time with no negative repercussions. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

What are your class like?

- How are they to teach?
- Strengths/needs
- Engagement
- Progress

How have they responded to the current English curriculum?

- 100% exam
- Increased difficulty of texts
- Closed book exams
- Focus on grammar and accuracy
- 19th century texts

How do your students find English lessons?

- Barriers to engagement?
- Barriers to progress?
- Barriers to learning?
- Elements they enjoy?

(If barriers to learning are discussed) What do you feel would be helpful to support your class to overcome these barriers?

- What do students need from teachers?
- What do staff need support with?
- What do students and staff need from external professionals?
- What changes in school systems could support these students?

How do you teach this class?

- Adaptations/strategies
- Scaffolding
- Differentiation (up and down)
- Adapting texts/assessments
- Structure of lessons
- Activity choices

(If teachers discuss engagement) What strategies do you use to engage your class in learning?

- Student teacher relationships
- Behaviour management
- Feedback (written and verbal)
- Activity/resource types (use of media, visuals, shorter tasks, discussion?)
- Mistake making culture
- Responding to 'class feedback'

(If teachers discuss progress) What strategies do you use to support their progress?

- Exam practice
- Feedback
- Differentiation (scaffolding and differentiating up)
- Use of support staff

Reflections on the observed lesson

Tell me about how you planned the [observed] lesson?

- How did the lesson fit within the curriculum?
- Why did you decide to plan it this way?
- What was the rationale for the learning activities you chose to include?

Tell me about how you delivered the [observed] lesson?

- Behaviour management strategies?
- Interactions with students?

How do you think students responded to the lesson?

- Engagement in learning activities
- Participation in whole class feedback
- Work completed
- Enjoyment/interest
- Focus and concentration
- Students' understanding/level of difficulty

*How do you think students responded **to you** during the lesson?*

- Student-teacher interactions
- Behaviour management strategies
- Use of rewards/consequences

What do you think was successful about the [observed] lesson?

If you could do the lesson again, would you make any changes to the decisions you made? What changes would you make?

6.7. Appendix 7

Student Interview Schedule

Interview Introduction

See student information sheet. The researcher will read this information to students.

Interview Questions:

1. *Tell me about your English lessons. What are they like?*
 - a. *What activities do you do in lessons?*
2. *(If students discuss things that they like) Are there other things that you like about your English lessons?*
3. *(If students discuss not liking elements of English) Are there any other things that you don't like in English lessons?*
4. *Tell me about your teacher. What are they like?*

Definition: In this interview, I'm going to ask you a question about 'engagement' in your lessons. By that I mean how much you do the task set by the teacher, how interested you are in what you're covering in a lesson and how much you focus and concentrate on what you are learning in the lesson.








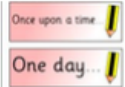


5. *How would you describe your engagement in English lessons?*
6. *Are there things that your teacher does to keep you engaged in English?*
7. *(If students discuss variable engagement) Are there any things that stop you from being engaged in lessons?*
8. *How would you describe your understanding of the things you study in English?*
 - a. *What helps you to understand English better?*

NB: To help students extend their responses (if they are struggling), the researcher asked students to think about an observed lesson and reflect on what they were doing and what the teacher did during that lesson.

Scaffolded cards

Look at the cards. Do any of these things help you improve in English?

- (If they choose a card) When do you do these tasks?
- Tell me about that? What was helpful about this task?
- (If student doesn't choose a card) Is there anything else in English lessons that help you to improve?

<p>Doing practice exam questions</p> 	<p>Listening to the teacher talking</p> 
<p>Having class discussions</p> 	<p>Repeating what you've learnt before</p> 
<p>Having pictures and words together</p> <p>look</p> 	<p>Extra revision sessions</p> 
<p>Having a Learning Support Assistant to help you</p> 	<p>'Help boxes' (sentence starters, vocabulary boxes)</p> 
<p>Getting comments from your teacher in your exercise book</p> 	<p>Learning from a classmate</p> 

Look at the cards. Do any of these things help you enjoy your English lessons?

- (If they choose a card) When do you do these tasks?
- Tell me about that. What did you enjoy about this task?
- (If student does not choose a card) Is there anything else that you enjoy in your English lessons?

<p>Getting on with your teacher</p> 	<p>Getting rewards and praise</p> 
<p>Watching videos and clips</p> 	<p>Drama and role play</p> 
<p>Classroom discussions</p> 	<p>Feeling that your teacher is listening to you</p> 
<p>Working in a group/pair</p> 	<p>Having a choice of more challenging activities to complete</p> 
<p>Having different activities to complete in a lesson</p> 	<p>Having visuals (pictures/drawing/mindmaps) in activities</p> 

6.8. Appendix 8

Results of the Pilot Study

Interview Data

In interviews, teachers and students discussed interactions in low attaining sets, how students can be supported and how students have responded to the English curriculum.

Student Response to the Curriculum

Barriers to learning

Both teachers described the range of attainment levels in their classes, explaining that some may achieve a pass grade but others were working below this and that this can make lesson planning challenging.

Both teachers and students felt that they had difficulty accessing the skills needed for GCSE examinations. Both teachers cited difficulties with understanding the English language (as some students had moved to the UK recently) and understanding vocabulary. Students also felt that grammar and punctuation were areas that they found challenging. The teacher in School A explained that despite her class' good understanding of plot, they struggled to demonstrate the skills that the GCSE exams demand:

“[they can] narrate stories on a very basic level but that’s not helpful for them at all in the exam because they have to analyse, respond to the text, talk about the language used” (Teacher 1, School A)

Both teachers commented on student behaviour, citing a lack of motivation and a negative attitude to learning as contributors to challenging behaviour. Both teachers acknowledged that difficulties with motivation may be due to student frustration as they are not always successful in English lessons.

“They’re quite unmotivated. I think that’s what causes their behavioural problems.” (Teacher 1, School A)

“I think it’s relating to, if they believe they can’t do something that is frustrating for them” (Teacher 2, School B)

The Current Curriculum

Both teachers explained that the amount of content that their class were expected to cover for the GCSE examinations was a challenge, particularly for their classes:

“It’s just so vast. I think a massive part is that they just get confused because there’s four papers they have to sit.” (Teacher 1, School A)

Both teachers and one student also explained that the texts included on the English syllabus are very challenging due to the complexity of the plot and language:

“When I read a story or something, I don’t normally get it” (Student, School A)

“It’s very very hard for them to access the language [of the texts studied] with the vocabulary they possess.” (Teacher 1, School A)

Both teachers and one student felt that some texts and having to repeat skills and texts could be unengaging:

“I don’t think they were that interested [in the newspaper article read in the lesson]. I would say most of them don’t read newspapers at home so not really great for them to have to sit and look at 2 newspaper articles” (Teacher 1, School A)

Student Engagement

Characteristics of engagement were described by both teachers and one student. Engagement was described as: looking at the teacher, reading a text when asked, contributing to class discussions and writing information in exercise books.

Both teachers explained that students struggled to demonstrate ‘on task’ behaviours, could be slow to begin an activity and did not engage consistently across lessons. Both students also cited distractions as a barrier to engagement in lessons, particular talking

to their peers or finding it difficult to focus because other students were talking. Both students felt that they needed to ignore others or move seats to maintain engagement during a lesson.

“Sometimes I can’t sit next to Student X because I just laugh. She’s always the first one to start laughing in the classroom and it distracts me” (Student, School A)

“It’s always annoying me if someone’s over there and I can’t focus and I don’t hear what Madam said and she has to repeat the question” (Student, School A)

Both teachers and one student explained that there was a link between lesson content and student engagement. One student cited that class discussions and working in a pair were activities that they found engaging. Teachers felt that students were most engaged with studying plays and poetry possibly because they were able to more easily understand and contribute an opinion about the content:

“In ‘An Inspector Calls’ [GCSE text]... they enjoy[ed] understanding it and then being able to have their own opinion” (Teacher 1, School A)

“[Poems are] generally shorter... it doesn’t take a long time to form a connection with what’s going on.” (Teacher 2, School B).

Teacher-Student Interactions

Building relationships

All participants mentioned the importance of positive interactions between teachers and students. Working collaboratively with students, offering encouragement, greeting students and using humour were all cited as examples of positive interactions. Similarly, both teachers and one student mentioned the importance of showing a personal interest in students to build positive relationships:

“The way she talks to us about, like when we came from our weekends she talks about ‘how was your weekend’ and all that” (Student, School A)

Teachers felt that this was easier to achieve in low attaining groups because of the small class size. Both teachers also felt that it was important to continue this outside of lessons:

“At lunchtime... I sit and have lunch with a few of them or play skipping” (Teacher 1, School A)

Both teachers and one student explained that celebrating student success was important to develop relationships and encourage engagement. This could be achieved through verbal praise, acknowledging progress and publicly displaying good work:

“Right now [our teacher] puts things on the wall for us, each of our names and the best work that we do in the classroom, she puts it up there” (Student, School A)

Both teachers felt that developing trust between the teacher and student was important. Teachers felt that students needed to become comfortable with the adult and trust that they would support them in order to develop a trusting relationship.

Both students felt that it was important for their teacher to be kind to them. They explained that, when their teacher was more positive, they felt able to approach them to ask for additional help. One student explained that he found it easier to focus in lessons when his teacher was in a positive mood.

“I like when she’s really happy because I can go up to her and say ‘Madam, can you come here’” (Student, School A)

“She’s really friendly rather than being just a teacher.” (Student, School A)

All participants explained that it was important to be receptive to the needs of students during lessons by noticing when students required additional support and being sensitive and understanding towards students’ difficulties with learning:

“If I don’t know the word or if I feel stress[ed] or something she goes up to me and says ‘X are you alright?’” (Student, School A)

Use of rewards

One teacher (School B) explained that, although he used the formal reward system (merits) sometimes, not all students found this motivating.

Reprimands

One teacher (School A) described that reprimands were used for disruptive behaviour, not listening to the teacher and talking more than she felt was acceptable. She also explained that reprimands could be used as prompts to promote on task behaviour.

Both teachers outlined strategies they used to give more formal reprimands including detentions after school, giving students an official warning by writing their name on the whiteboard and removing them from lessons. One teacher (School B) also referenced utilising the support of parents when students were struggling to engage in lessons.

Both teachers often spoke of strategies they used to reprimand students without creating conflict or confrontation:

“It’s important to make sure your expectations are clear and then walk away to give them a moment to think about that. So it’s not a confrontation” (Teacher 2, School B)

Asking students questions about the task they had been set was described as a useful strategy to remind a student of what they should be doing without assuming that they have not been paying attention. Giving individual, verbal reminders of classroom expectations were also thought to be preferable to using a formal reprimand system as it was felt that students in these groups benefitted from a more informal approach:

“You can be as strict and as serious as you like...but if they’re not listening to what you say...they’re not going to take it on board whereas they’re more likely to do so if they think the person speaking is worth listening to.” (Teacher 2, School B)

“With a small class like this I’m inclined to be slightly more relaxed and rely on informal reprimand than formal” (Teacher 2, School B)

Both teachers explained that positively encouraging students by reminding them of what they *should* be doing could be more effective than directly reprimanding them:

"[Sometimes I'll say] 'Come on, can you focus on your work, you're doing well, make sure you keep it up'" (Teacher 1, School A)

Learning Support for Students

Teacher Support

All participants explained that it was helpful for teachers to break information down or scaffold activities. Strategies described included:

- Explicitly teaching a success criteria for exam questions
- Using visual supports alongside verbal presentation of information
- Providing model responses for students to emulate
- Reducing the challenge of an activity
- Repeating/revising content
- Scaffolding reading activities through supporting with challenging vocabulary and explicitly teaching reading skills
- Scaffolding writing activities by providing writing frames and setting preliminary activities that students could then use to write a longer response
- Providing additional support with tasks outside lessons (both students commented on this)

Providing students with individualised support and attention was also felt to be an important strategy in low attaining classes by all participants. This was felt to be helpful to sustain student engagement, support students who were struggling with a task and check student work:

"That's what's different with this class. It's not as much about standing at the front...and talking at the class. It's actually talking to as many individuals throughout the lesson." (Teacher 2, School B)

"If they don't understand anything, if I can see on their faces that they're confused I'll ask 'did you understand this' try and explain it again" (Teacher 1, School A)

This strategy was also thought to be helpful because it allowed teachers to respond to students' needs:

“I don’t normally have to put my hand up because she’s always there, she always comes.” (Student, School A)

Student Independence

Although one teacher expressed that she would like her students to engage in activities independently (Teacher 1, School A), both teachers felt that students in their classes struggled to remain on task and access independent tasks:

“Big independent tasks can result in them closing down a bit. They just say they can’t do it and write three lines.” (Teacher 2, School B)

“But I don’t think they were ready for it by the last bit of the [article read in the lesson]. They weren’t able to independently work out the message of that paragraph” (Teacher 1, School A)

Both teachers reflected on the need for students to have written evidence of learning despite a lack of engagement which sometimes required them to copy teacher notes in to exercise books:

“When they’re not going to be interested, like today, it’s just about them getting the notes down, just [to] get a really basic idea” (Teacher 1, School A)

Similarly, both teachers commented that they often read texts aloud because students would not understand the content without this input. It seemed that, as students found it difficult to engage with independent tasks, teachers felt that there was a need for them to maintain control during activities by asking students to copy or listen to the teacher read.

Observation Data

Data from two lesson observations (lesson 1¹⁰ and lesson 2¹¹) was coded and these codes used to create themes and subthemes. Three main themes found were: the nature of student engagement, strategies to promote engagement and how teachers supported students in the classroom.

¹⁰ Data collected from School A

¹¹ Data collected from School B

Nature of Student Engagement

Distractions: During written tasks in both lessons, students were recorded to become distracted by other activities (such as drawing) or were slow to begin a writing activity. Students were observed to engage in a written task at points but became distracted when beginning an activity independently. In both lessons, teachers attempted to reduce distractions by preventing students from engaging in things that could divert their attention from the task set (such as looking at folders, adjusting blinds and fidgeting with pens).

Engagement during teacher input: In both lessons, students displayed behaviours that would suggest disengagement during periods of the lesson where the teacher was talking and questioning members of the class. Students demonstrated this by not answering whole class questions or talking while the teacher was addressing the whole class. In lesson 2, on some occasions, students appeared to look at their teacher during questioning but there was no student response which could suggest that the class were unsure or were not attending to the question (which was presented verbally).

Passive 'engagement': In both lessons, students were quiet and 'on task' when they were required to copy from the board or to listen to the teacher reading an extract aloud. Students appeared to be more 'on task' during these activities than when given an independent activity which students were slow to begin but did eventually engage with. This was a trend observed in both lessons.

Understanding of task: In both lessons, students seemed to have some difficulty with understanding the task set. In lesson 1, students who had not begun the activity looked around the room, at their books and at the interactive whiteboard without beginning the activity which could suggest that they were unsure about how to do the task. In lesson 2, the teacher often repeated the instructions for the task to remind students exactly what they needed to do. Students began the activity after repeated instructions.

Strategies to promote engagement

Use of Reprimand

Direct Reprimand: In both lessons, teachers used a direct statement to prevent students from engaging in distracting behaviours such as talking or turning around in their chairs:

“You’re talking. You need to stop.” (Teacher 1, Lesson 1)

“X, turn around” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

Formal Reprimand: The school consequence system was used rarely in both lessons. In lesson 1, two students were given a formal warning. The teacher did this by silently writing their initials on the board. In lesson 2, students were only reminded that they could receive a formal reprimand but these were not used.

Reducing conflict: In both lessons, teachers primarily used indirect strategies to re-engage students in activities or prevent distracting behaviours. Using humour, negotiation, reminding students of expectations and asking students questions about the task were strategies that were used frequently.

‘(teacher notices disengagement) “X have you written about Alice?” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

“(to student) X is giving an answer so you need to be listening” (Teacher 1, Lesson 1)

Positive Strategies

Teachers in both lessons responded positively to students by celebrating successful work or contributions, using an enthusiastic tone and praising students’ performance.

“X has done really well to pick up on the fact that time is really important [in this article]” (Teacher 1, Lesson 1)

“I’m seeing much improved answers which is really good to see” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

Classroom management strategies

Teachers in both lessons used time reminders and countdowns while students were working independently or to manage transitions between activities.

Communicating Expectations

The teacher of lesson 2 communicated his expectations for a task or response to an exam question to students:

“I want to make sure that when you do your exam next year, everybody gets 4/4 in this question” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

“I expect everyone to have a good paragraph and by that I mean at least 5 marks [out of 8]” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

Teacher Support

Clueing: In lesson 2, the teacher offered students a prompt that may help them answer a question (such as directing them to the part of the text where they may find the answer).

Questioning: In both lessons, teachers used questions to scaffold and extend students' thinking. These were used as prompts or reminders about how students should approach a task:

“What are we trying to find information about? [Alice] Just Alice? [Student response] And her surroundings, well done” (Teacher 2, Lesson 2)

Verbal modelling: In both lessons, teachers rephrased students' verbal responses to demonstrate how they could be improved.

Explicit teaching of exam strategy: In both lessons, teachers explicitly taught students strategies that they could use in an exam. They also presented a success criteria for exam questions both verbally and in written form. This was broken down in to small steps in the form of a tick list or a bullet point list of reminders.

Reading support: In both lessons, teachers provided literacy support for students. To support reading, both teachers read extracts aloud and explicitly taught unfamiliar vocabulary. Teachers asked questions about word meanings, defined words verbally and with visual prompts and pre-empted vocabulary that they felt students would struggle with.

6.9. Appendix 9

Student Observation Schedule

Class code:

Lesson No.:

Sheet No.:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
Individual (no interaction)	On task																	
	Off task active																	
	Off task passive																	
	Routine																	
	Other																	
Target to Peer Interaction	On task																	
	Off task active																	
	Social																	
	Routine																	
	Other																	
	Disruptive																	
Target to Adult Interaction	Identity	Teacher																
		Other																
	Interaction	Talking																
		Attending																
		N/attending																
		Other																
	Activity	On task																
		Off task																
		Routine																
		Social																
Other																		
	Disruptive																	

If the student displays more than one behaviour during the 10 second window, the behaviour that the student displays for the majority of the window will be recorded.

Individual (no interaction)

- On task: Student is independently completing the task that has been set or tracks the speaker during teacher talk or class feedback.
- Off task active: Student is not engaging in the task set by the teacher and is engaging in alternative activity (e.g. student gets out of seat during learning task/whole class learning, student plays with an item or doodles during learning task/whole class learning)
- Off task passive: Student is not engaging in the task set by the teacher and is quiet (e.g. student is not looking at speaker and is silent, student is day-dreaming)
- Routine: Student is not engaging in the task set by the teacher because they are performing a classroom management activity that the teacher has requested them to do. Student is not expected to be engaging in a learning activity.

Target to peer interaction

- On task: Target interaction with peer is related to the task set by the teacher (eg. target asks peer a question about the task)
- Off task active: where the student is off-task but is engaged in an interaction that is unrelated to the activity with another student. There is an expectation that students should be doing something that the teacher has requested of them.
- Social: off task behaviour that the teacher is aware of and has not attempted to stop. They are not expected to be working on a task (eg. student asks peer a question unrelated to activity but the class have not been set a specific task)
- Routine: Target is performing a classroom management activity with a peer on the instruction of the teacher/supporting adult and is not engaging in the learning activity. Student may be discussing something unrelated to this routine task but they must be engaging in task set by teacher

- Disruptive: Interaction with peer is reprimanded by teacher as being disruptive or draws the attention of 2 or more students who are not directly involved in the interaction. This is a distinct category that may be ticked in conjunction with another category (eg. off task active interaction that is also 'disruptive').

Target to adult (teacher or additional adult) interaction

This category is chosen when there is an individual interaction between the teacher and the student. When students are listening to whole class teaching, this is recorded as an 'individual interaction'.

Interaction Types

- Talking to: Target is speaking or communicating directly with adult (eg. asking a question/making a comment/having their hand up to ask/answer teacher a question)
- Attending: Target is listening to adult (eg. listening to a teacher explanation). This incorporates whole class learning opportunities and individual interactions between the adult and student.
- Not attending: Target is not listening to adult during an activity that requires them to attend to the adult. To decide whether a student is "not listening", they must be doing something else that would suggest that their interaction with the teacher is not being given their full attention (eg. doodling, looking around the room, talking to a peer)

Activity Types

- On task: Target interaction is related to the learning activity (eg. student answers a question, student asks an adult for additional support, student offers an opinion about the lesson topic/activity, student is looking at adult when they are speaking, student needs to be reminded to engage with the learning activity and does this promptly)
- Routine: Target interaction is related to a classroom routine on the instruction of the teacher
- Social: Target interaction with teacher is unrelated to learning activity but teacher has not attempted to stop the interaction
- Off task: Target interaction with teacher is unrelated to learning activity and teacher has attempted to stop the interaction (eg. student needs to be reminded to engage with the learning activity and does not return to the task)

- Disruptive: Interaction with peer is reprimanded by teacher as being disruptive or draws the attention of 2 or more students who are not directly involved in the interaction. This is a distinct category that may be ticked in conjunction with another category (eg. off task active interaction that is also 'disruptive').

6.10: Appendix 10

Teacher Observation Schedule

Interaction Target

	Individual	Group	Whole Class	Staff	Students interacting	Not interacting
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Type of Interaction

Encouragement	Reprimand	Routine	Work based	Instruction	Question	Social	Other

Reason

Skill	Effort	Outcome	Behaviour	Other

Delivery

Direct	Indirect	Use of formal system	Consequence	Other

Interaction Target: This refers to who the teacher is interacting with

- Individual: The teacher is interacting with one student. This category would also be selected if the teacher is listening to a student speaking.
- Group: The teacher is interacting with a small group of students
- Whole class: The teacher is addressing the whole class
- Staff: The teacher is interacting with another member of staff
- Students interacting: The teacher has set an activity that requires students to interact with each other or work independently and so the teacher is not explicitly interacting with students
- Not interacting: Teacher is not interacting with staff or students (e.g. writing on the board)

Type of Interaction: This refers to the type of interaction taking place between the teacher and others

- Encouragement: Any interaction where the teacher is attempting to *get students to do something* through use of rewards, compliments, support or praise
- Reprimand: Any indication that the teacher is attempting *to prevent or stop* a behaviour through use of punishment, criticism or verbal reminder of expectations.
- Work based: The interaction is about the content of the lesson (i.e. whole class teaching, explanation of a concept, modelling, reading aloud)
- Instruction: The teacher is giving or clarifying an instruction for an independent activity
- Question/feedback: The teacher is engaged in questioning or feedback that relates to the lesson content. This incorporates students providing responses to teacher questions and teachers supporting students during activities through discussion and questioning.
- Routine: The interaction is concerned with classroom management and organisation and is not directly related to the learning activity (e.g. countdown to end task, handing out resources)
- Social: This is a social interaction which is not related to the content of the lesson
- Other: Any other interaction type not covered in the above categories

Reason: The student behaviour that the teacher is either encouraging or reprimanding

- Skill: Related to a learning skill the student has demonstrated whether in a verbal response or written work
- Effort: Related to the attempt a student has made. For example, how hard a student has tried to complete an activity, their response to making a mistake, acknowledgement that the student has tried hard or is not trying hard.

- Outcome: Related to the physical outcome of a piece of work set by the teacher. This could relate to the amount the student has completed, how quickly they have finished or the presentation of their work
- Behaviour: Any comment related to a behaviour the student is demonstrating. This also encompasses instances where the teacher is reprimanding or encouraging students because they are 'focusing' on the task set.
- Other: Any other reason not covered in the above categories

Delivery: How the teacher communicates the encouragement or reprimand

- Direct: Teacher addresses student behaviour with a direct statement or action. In the case of reprimands, student/s are directly asked to stop doing something.
- Indirect: Teacher addresses student behaviour indirectly. This may be delivered through a reminder of the expectations of a task, using questions to remind students of what they should be doing or highlighting other students' behaviour to be used as a reminder.
- Use of formal system: Teacher makes use of the whole school behaviour policy. This could include setting detentions or giving house or individual points
- Consequence: Teacher gives another consequence that is not included within the school's formal behaviour policy. This could include use of an in class reward system, asking students to move seats or removing privileges.
- Other: Any other method of delivery not covered in the above categories

NB: The interaction type that is observed for the majority of the 10 second observation window is recorded. The only exception to this is if there is evidence of 'encouragement' or 'reprimand' during the 10 second window. In these instances, this interaction type is prioritised over other categories, regardless of its duration.

6.11: Appendix 11

Example Transcripts from 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Teacher Interview 10e6
15/11/18
36 mins 34 secs

Can you start by telling me what your class are like?

Character wise they're a very sweet group of students I have to be honest. When I first met them they said 'Miss I want to work hard but I haven't been helped in previous years' so I do think there's a combination of them not quite realising that they're not pushing themselves as much as they could be and also having an understanding of academically what they can do with the effort they are putting in at the moment. They are happy, they are interested in moving images so any way you can bring in a video, a clip, music in to learning you do get their attention more. They find reading quite a struggle, we do have a significant number of EAL students in there and very weak SEN students in there.

What sort of needs do your SEN students have?

Someone who's cognitive, expressive and receptive language and recall, memory, she's unable to retain information and she's working on P levels. So matching words, short 1 syllable words to images is where she is at the moment. Trying to work on 19th century literature is quite an ask but we're looking at themes. So because we're looking at CC, we're looking at what Christmas is, images linked to Christmas, how it makes you feel. So she's accessing but at a very different level. And then I have the EAL students. One speaks no English at all, he's come in to lessons three times a week, he has EAL once a week. I've liaised with EAL coordinator but they've said get him to copy things out which I don't think is particularly helping him because I can't actually communicate and say 'you need to do this', he finds it very hard and he goes back to Urdu which I don't speak. He can speak it but his Urdu isn't very clear so it can be hard to communicate with him. And I have another EAL student whose English is a lot better but his understanding isn't at the level needed to access what they are doing. And then I have other students who aren't EAL, they aren't SEN but for one reason or another just aren't engaging and find it hard to do a simple task, they're very easily distracted because they're not interested unless we can talk about modern society, Donald Trump, talking about a capitalist society, we talk about America we talk about money, we talk about payday loans and people needing money and benefits and that interests them a lot more but every time we have to bring it back to 19TH century English I can see them going off. But at least they've got the themes.

And you mentioned engagement. How would you describe their engagement with learning as a class?

Peaks and troughs to be honest. Sometimes they're fantastic and they really enjoy quote games, I try to give them games at the beginning, a worksheet and short activities. They're interested in that especially where they can get a positive SIM, they can win a prize, they're happy with that. But anything that requires a little more focus and processing, anything that requires doing work at home which it will do at GCSE has been challenging. I've not had them for very long, it's only November, and I'm hoping it will get better by the end of this year and next year so we're doing homework in very short bursts so not essays or answering detailed questions but bullet points and mindmaps, that's the best thing for them to do. Some of them will engage, let's say about 30% will do the work and quite a few of them as well because English isn't their first language, will just really struggle even if it's differentiated, because nobody can

help them at home and they aren't willing to go to homework club and they aren't willing to come and see me after school. Or they'll come but there are four of them and there's the issue of one speaking Urdu, one doesn't speak Urdu properly and not English so you've got the same issues again.

So that was particularly about their engagement in homework, in the classroom, what sort of things do you do to maximise their engagement?

Clips, visual aids, getting them to discuss things, drama, collaborative writing we do a lot. I find that's a lot better when we write in small groups or when I write with them on the board so I'm typing it and they carry on. Again, they're very happy to copy what you're doing but as soon as you say, can you do this sentence yourself, I'd be lying if I said they were happy to do that, as soon as it happens they tail off so it's something we have to keep practicing really. Doing games, recalling quotes or adjectives, dictionary searches, short bursts, nice and short, 5 minutes maximum and then move on to something else. We try.

And you mentioned about 19th century literature. How do you think they've responded to the current English curriculum generally?

They have, as with most secondary students who are in lower sets, they aren't that excited about it. When you tell them what the new topic is, they very rarely cheer but they are interested, they ask questions. The majority of them are enthusiastic. They will make links to Scrooge, if I say 'that wasn't a very nice thing' they might say, oh that sounds like something Scrooge would do. Although they may not look like they're listening all the time, they are listening, they are processing so that's fantastic. I think it's quite hard for them to be honest. I think the changes with the exam are almost setting them up to fail if they're a bottom set because one it's all exams so they don't have that chance, that level playing field by having coursework or controlled assessment. A lot of them have problems with memory recall so it means that when I see them on a Monday, if I see them on a Tuesday they find that quite hard so remembering for Summer 2020... I don't think they quite understand the gravitas, the amount of work they need to do. They're very excited to get a 9 but they haven't understood that a 9 requires a lot more than what they're currently doing and I don't think they're as willing to put in the work as they say they are. They'll say 'Miss I can do it' but when it comes to looking at their homework or their classwork it doesn't match so it's that understanding. I think the problem as well is at home, parents also think 'why can't they get a 7 or an 8' so it's not like there's someone at home to guide them to say 'you need to do this', it's only the class teacher so there's a lot of pressure there and I don't think they realise how much things have changed.

In terms of how challenging it is?

How challenging it is, the expectations of the work the grade boundaries, the fact that they're competing with people across the country and it's not just people in their classroom or their school. It feels like there are a lot of barriers at the moment.

You talked about this a bit already but how do you think your students find English lessons?

I think they are finding it a bit boring at the moment to be honest. I know when they come in they say 'Miss we're not reading any more are we?'. It's a novel and they don't like reading in that class. I noticed that from day one when I had them in September, reading a newspaper article. Our first unit was narrative writing, I think they preferred that. Narrative writing and descriptive writing, something they're so used to doing. Novel writing, because the language is so tricky, it's not a contemporary text so making sure they understand the vocabulary in the text and then understand the story, the find

a lot of layers and to process those layers and then do the task in front of them. I do think they're finding it a little bit boring. I think when we do our vocabulary tasks and our quote task which is repetitive but I like doing it because they can see that they're achieving every lesson at least they're getting better at their quote recall. So I like to do that at the beginning and the end so at least there's something in there that's a constant that they're getting and then we revisit everything else so it's a slower progress when it comes to the main body but our starter and our plenary are 'well I was able to do that, I remember this task' so that's my way of, so they don't feel so disheartened about the whole thing.

What do you think is helpful for them to understand what you're studying in English?

They need to know about historical context, they need to know a lot about vocabulary and they need to know a lot of technical accuracy which is, I wouldn't want to say trickier but it probably is more so than the other areas we're covering. Again, because so many of them are EAL, it's a whole other level to add to it, learning basic English and now can we make sure we're writing grammatically correctly and can we look at why someone might have written in this way, in this period.

So what are you having to do at the moment to help them to access that?

A lot of reading, close analysis, terminology, spelling tests. A lot of extracts that we're looking at and pulling out smaller parts than maybe the other class are doing and zooming in on the language and thinking about how society is presented. A lot of comparing to our current society. Thinking about what's going on in our world today. And having an opinion is very important. Why do you think this? Why did you make this choice? I feel this way because... so they're able to form their own opinion rather than saying 'I don't know'.

We've talked a lot about lesson activities. How would you describe how you deliver lessons to them? The interactions you have with them.

I ask them what they're doing just generally at home, plans they've got at the weekend, I like to tease them a bit in that class because for some reason they like the banter and taking the mick so we have a lot of teasing in there. I like to make comments about, there are a few people in there, who like to go back and forth with me so we like to go back and forth with each other. And some of the quieter ones, I like to ask them how they are, how they're feeling, what's going on, how was the work, did they understand it, do they have any questions. I try to form a relationship with them but to be honest, the last few weeks it has been quite intense and I've been off for a few lessons so I have been playing catch up with them. There's a lot of pressure to get this done, get that done and you almost feel like you're just ticking boxes and trying to get through a list rather than really form a bond with them and build your relationship with them. Because you'll stop yourself and you'll look at the clock and you'll think 'I can't, I've got to move on, got to move on, we've got to do this'. So finding that balance is very hard. I'm still working on it with them.

And the things you described like asking them how their weekend was, why do you do that?

It separates and breaks up the work so it's not monotonous and it's not so focused on business. Just making it a bit more interesting especially as English is a subject where we're talking about the world and people's feelings and I think it's very important to have a dialogue with them. And if I want them to open up and tell me how they feel, how they respond to things, then they need to feel comfortable around me. So it's important to get to know them in that way. And I see them a lot more than their other

subjects, I see them 4 times a week so if something is wrong, if anyone notices something I'm more likely to be the one myself, a Maths teacher and a tutor, we see them the most in school.

How do you use reprimands with them?

I don't think I use them as much as I should only because, I think it's just the way I teach, because they are a set that don't always do their work, if I'm constantly sanctioning them, from past experience it just doesn't work that well. So I think I'm a lot more lenient with them. When they don't do the work, I'll give them an extension, you need to give this to me before AM registration the next day and so far that has actually worked really well, fingers crossed that continues. The majority of them do the work though thinking about it but the levels are very different. So I've got 4 who do it very well and I have a few who'll barely do it, they'll do the minimum but they give me something and they're very excited 'Miss I did the homework' but of course that's an expectation but I will say 'well done' because I know it's not something they do with every teacher.

Calling home I've not had to do negatively but I will do it for a positive thing and I think that might also be why they do the work.

Tell me a bit more about that.

If they're doing something impressive I'll just call to say 'I just wanted to let you know that such and such handed in a piece of work that I was impressed with, I liked what they did here, I'd be even happier if they could do this but they're doing really well and I like the way they're contributing in class' or I'll give a positive SIM or let their YCT (Year Care Team Lead) know and usually they'll tell them or I'll tell the student and they'll follow them and say 'did Miss tell you' and I think they get quite excited about that. They like that their teacher is quite aware of that and they've told somebody else rather than just expecting it and ignoring it.

So those are different ways of encouraging them outside lessons. Do you do anything in lessons to encourage them?

The usual positive SIMS, praise, reading out their examples of work and saying what I really like about it. When I read some homework I'll say I really enjoyed this piece of work that I read from the class I'm going to read it out to everybody. What did you like about this? I'll ask somebody else in the classroom, what would you take from here for your work. They like that, I haven't come across anybody who... it's funny, in my higher sets some of them don't like it when you say they've done well but in this class they quite like it when you say they've done well to the whole class, that you're impressed with their work. That works well.

Why do you think they like it?

I guess it's acknowledgement. It gives them a confidence boost. And they're all striving in their own way to do well in that classroom. Maybe there's more of a competitive element in the top set. Maybe when someone reads out a piece of work they're more likely to hear whispers of 'well I could do that' whereas I think in the bottom sets, my class anyway, they don't do that. Even if they feel that way they keep it to themselves. And they listen. They might be a bit sarcastic but they'll clap and be like 'oh well done, you did well' so I guess they feel more comfortable. And I've got a much smaller class so we can be in an environment which is a bit more homely.

And you mentioned about them being distracted when you give them a task to do. How do you manage that?

Calling them out really and said 'so and so, can you get back on it' or 'I can hear what you're saying' or 'I'll pull out information from their conversation and make it public 'Oh thank you, we don't want to share that information' and we all giggle and have a laugh and we get back on it for maybe 4 minutes and then it starts all over again [laughs]. Or saying 'let's stop, let's have a spotlight. What are you up to, what have you done, what have you pulled out so far. Somebody else has something different, I'd put this down. Ok you've got 2 more minutes' giving them the timer so they know they have to come up with something because Miss is going to maybe pick me in 3 minutes time. To create a sense of urgency that 'I need to do this' rather than 'I've got two minutes of Miss leaving us to our own devices'.

Thinking about the lessons I observed, can you tell me how you planned them? You can pick one and talk about that.

They were doing a group task. The seating plan has just been changed because I want certain people to work together and I'm moving them according to their groupings as well.

How did you make the decisions about where they were going to be sitting?

So I have three students who are EAL and high needs SEN and they have an LSA. They were spread across the room and one was at the front and I found that that wasn't very helpful because they'd be talking while I was speaking and him being there, when I go and work with him, distracts the class. So three of them are in the back to the side which makes it easier to get to them, for the LSA to speak to them but there still part of the group. I have moved my most confident speakers closer to the front because they were at the back and I noticed that they were getting distracted and I thought if I have them at the front, they're closer to the board and they're more likely to focus on the task. At the back, they're more in the middle but they've each got somebody on their table who's strong so they're not on their own. It's to guide them when they're lost. And people who talk to each other are away from each other, behaviour wise.

We haven't done much group work for this unit so that was my reason for doing that. And I've been talking a lot at them because there is a lot of reading, a lot of vocabulary to understand so I thought today we're going to do context. Planning wise, they've looked at context, we've been looking at Scrooge's reaction to charity so I thought it was a good place to bring in life for the poor in Victorian England. I gave them small chunks of information. A lot of our lessons are planned for the whole Year 10 cohort and then we differentiate them. So I took out information that was on the main slides and I added some other information from the other sources where I thought the language was a bit easier and I could change the vocabulary of the sources that are already on the system. I divvied them up and I gave the group who I thought had slightly weaker students an easier subject to tackle and a topic that we'd done in class together so it's not brand new and I gave the groups at the front new topics. I broke down the task so everyone knew what would be happening rather than 'here's 20 minutes, pull something out and go'. So it was broken down for you need to pick this information out, you need to read, defining it, write it in your own words, make a link to the text. So that was my rationale.

I thought it was quite unlikely that they would be presenting, quite unlikely that they would finish their poster but to start with the research so you can see what they're like when they're interacting with each other. And it's something we've discussed so it's not leaving them floating in an ocean.

How do you think they responded to it?

They responded not as well as I wanted them to but they all attempted it. I think every single person had written down some words and defined them so they'd covered the first part. They'd read the extract, some with a better understanding than others, but I think that's important for me to leave them because in the exam they're going to get information that they won't know what it means and they'll have to make sense of it. That was my way of saying 'ok you've got to give it a go' and me typing a paragraph for you and you writing one or two sentences, which is what we've been doing for weeks, now it's your time to show what you can do. And then next week when they bring their research in, they'll present and that will hopefully give them gumption to be a bit more confident with their ideas because once they're standing in front of each other nobody likes to say 'I don't know'. So hopefully they'll say a bit more and I'll say 'it's really important that you push yourself and you don't wait for somebody else to spoon feed you the answers'.

What do you think about that class in terms of spoon feeding them?

I've been doing that a lot. When I first got them I said I wasn't going to do that, I hate doing this but I've found I've had to do it with them because otherwise they just don't do anything. And I think that they're Year 9 and 8 experiences of English, because they're a lower set, they're used to being spoon fed and the problem is it's quite a big jump from KS3 to 4 and if they've been doing that for the last three years, it's very hard to go, I'm not doing that anymore. You have to do that with them. So I'm happy to do the cloze paragraphs, sentence starters, writing paragraphs together but I'm hoping by, another 2 weeks' time, they should be writing on their own. Sentence starters, paragraphs but not me giving them all of it, maybe writing their own opinion at the end.

We do PEACE paragraphs and they know what each one stands for because they've been doing it since Year 7, it's just reminding them. They've got the sheets at the front for what [each bit] stands for, here's the AOs, here's an example response, we're used to highlighting and annotating and thinking about sentence starters but you learn through practice and if someone's constantly doing it with you you don't, you give up, you don't do it yourself. They're so used to being on autopilot that when you let them go they think they can't do it but actually they can. They just have to try.

Because we have a new unit each half term, it does mean that after three weeks you kind of have to let go and let them try. I can't just work with them like that until Christmas because there'll be a whole new unit with a whole new thing and you'll have to start helping them to write all over again. So I do wish we had more time but that's the way it is.

What do you think of the pace you work at over a half term unit?

It's a ridiculous pace. Ridiculously fast. What we have to cover and the amount of time we have and the lessons allocated. If you have a top set, it's easier because they are able to do the work at home, independently and to get the top levels you need to work at home, you can't just rely on what you do in a lesson. But if you have a weaker set, it's fine if you're doing the basics but if there's the expectations that they students should be getting this grade when at the moment they don't know where to put capital letters and full stops and they don't know the homophones so they're mixing their and there together or they don't know how to use quotes and then you want them to analyse something, which is the next three stages up, you think, you've got the same amount of time as everyone else but the difference is that they aren't doing anything at home and they are, and your attendance is not as good as someone else's, it just doesn't balance out at all. You try to do the best you can for them and get the technical accuracy because realistically that's what they're going to need when they leave school. [Grammar and punctuation?] Yeah and spelling, how to structure an argument.

Thinking about the lesson yesterday, how do you think you delivered that lesson in terms of your interactions with them?

I tried to make sure I didn't talk much. I think by 15 minutes in I'd stopped talking and I'd set them on their way. I have a tendency to really go in to detail, make sure they understand every single thing but I didn't want to do that because they wouldn't have enough time to work as a group.

Is that through questioning?

Questioning, asking them if they have questions, give me an example, what do you remember. But I thought 'no, this is your instruction, you go' it's on the board, I've said it, that's the end. Let's see if you can work'. Walking around and look over people's shoulders and asking what they've got, if they're focused, what they would write, how they could link it. Just getting them to connect the dots themselves. Listening to the groups to see whether they were collaborating with each other, are they collaborating with each other. As you could see at the beginning, a few of them were quite reluctant, sat there like 'I'm reading in my head' and just reminding them that this is our class, can we work together please. Working on collaboration skills as well as pulling out information, how do you work with someone else even if you're not friends, how do you get on with them, how do you ask someone questions, how do you share a task.

How do you think they'd got on with that by the end?

I think they were a lot better at that by the end compared to how they started. They were talking to each other, not always about the task but they were talking to each other. Each group spoke about the work at some point so that was good.

How do you think the students in that class respond to you?

They're all respectful, they're all very polite. The majority of them put their hands up. If I pick them, which I do without hands, everyone tries to give me an answer. I don't think I very often get 'Oh I don't know'. Maybe once or twice from a particular girl but if I break it down they'll give me something. They all try to put in some effort. If someone pauses for a time, someone's always keen to give an answer... they just want to show off their knowledge. I do really like them, they're a very sweet class as trying as they can be when I'm trying to get them to remember something or hand in the work. They aren't a difficult class with behaviour, they're willing. We have chats, we have a laugh and I will say 'this is a bit dry today, I'm sorry, but maybe next week we'll do something a bit more exciting' and I'll get 'fine Miss, alright' They'll listen. They'll tell me that they want to do certain things and I'll try to implement it as best as I can. We work quite well and I'm very lucky with that because I know there are other classes, lower sets, where it is a constant battle trying to get them to understand that it's to do with their behaviour. It's very low level, can you stop talking, get back on task but it's more about do you know these words, how can we understand it, how can we put it together, can we remember what we did last lesson. That's what I'm working on more with them so I'm very lucky because I don't have that battle of get them to listen and then move on to the next stage which some other teachers have to deal with.

If there was anything you would change about the lesson I was in, what would you change?

I would probably get them to do a mini plenary. I wanted them to do an exit pass to recap an adjective to describe the lesson based on what they'd looked at. So I'd do something like that to round up their knowledge and make a note in their book. So I tried to do that, write a sentence for what you've learnt or a word about what we did

today so when they look back they've got something to remind them in case they forget which happens quite a lot.

With the second lesson, I can't remember whether I got them to do a character, quote retrieval but if I didn't then it would have been that and then at the end, close your book, can you remember a quote. So it's more recapping. But because I'd been off I spent a bit of time talking about their behaviour from what I recall so I don't think I did as much of a plenary as I'd like to. I find that I don't often get to plenaries because we're trying to get to some reading or we're trying to finish up a paragraph. So just can you write down something you remember or a shape an object a picture, something that you can use to recall next lesson or can you share something you remember what we did today without looking in your book.

What do you think was successful about the lesson yesterday?

Working as a group, their collaboration. Being able to use a dictionary without asking me, which is a big skill for that class, looking in the dictionary. Being able to look at Victoria context and make sense of some of the language in there that was unfamiliar. Not all the words were in the dictionary. And a few of them put their hands up to ask me questions but they were also able to add 'I think this' so giving me their own opinion.

Student: 10c5
Male
15/10/18
14 mins 7 secs

Can you tell me about your English lessons?

So it's good. I'll say that we learn quite a bit, we learn about, we do a bit of reading, we do quite a bit of... we learn a lot of different stuff that we don't know. We read about 5 minutes every lesson, we read a lot of texts. We do a lot of learning in our books. We do lots of questions. If it's difficult, my teacher will help us with things that we...

How does he help you?

He helps us, he'll give us something that we already know and then be like what does that link to. Or if we're really stuck then he might give us a little clue to make us think a bit more.

What sort of activities do you do in lessons?

We do reading, we do questions, quick answers. On Thursdays, because it's 45 minutes, we just do feedback.

What's that?

Because on a double period we do a lot of questions and that so on a Thursday we'll get the feedback so we'll get our answers back, all the things.

And what do you think of the things you do in your lessons?

It's good because I'll learn more. Things that I don't know, I'll learn. Especially as I'm good at English now...

What do you like about it?

I like the questions that we solve and I like when we watch little video clips. Because I've been in that class for about a year now and so I'm used to it as well.

Can you tell me about your teacher? What is your teacher like?

He's good. He's very firm with us so if we do something then he has the rights to tell us to leave or something. He helps us a lot with stuff that we're stuck on he'll help us. He'll never give up on us, he'll always be there for us.

Can you tell me a bit more about that? How do you know that he won't give up on you?

He'll always try his hardest to tell us stuff to do. We'll never stop learning, he'll always be fine with us, always be there for us. Questions that we're stuck on, he'll help us and he'll never give up on us.

You said earlier that sometimes he's a bit firm with you, what sort of things does he do?

Say if we're talking, he'll tell us to stop. Say if we're being annoying to him and not listening to him he'll tell us to leave the class, just to like, and he won't take nothing. He'll be a nice teacher, he'll take a bit of jokes sometimes.

And when he asks you to step outside the class, how long is that normally for?

Maybe for a minute or so. Say if he says step out the class while he's helping someone after he'll say 'you're a better student than that, you should be learning. I know you like that'.

And you said that he's nice and he can take a joke, can you tell me a bit more about that?

Say if we say something funny, he'll laugh with us. If it's not annoying then he wouldn't shout.

And can you tell me about your relationship with your teacher?

It can be, maybe different days, I'm being honest, sometimes good and sometimes a little little bit bad. Like on the last lesson I had, I wasn't really good. I was ill and I just had a bad day so I was really like, I felt really let down [he had let *himself* down]. Whereas on the other days I do really good, I work really hard.

When it's good, what's your relationship like?

Yeah it's good. We do the questions, he's always like 'Well done, X', he'll give us achievement points. When it's like a dull relationship, I'll just feel bad because I'll usually be on the table, I won't really be doing nothing. He'll be like 'X, please work a bit harder'.

So he has to ask you to do more whereas on the good days you get loads done?

Yeah.

Can you think of any other things you do in English? Any other activities or ways of learning?

I do Booster English as well and we do a coursebook. We do working out on this paper. We read the text and answer the questions. And we do creative writing and we do a lot of questions on that. We read really long texts and we do a PELE and then a PELEC and then we do a SPEW and we do it three times.

Right. So I know what a PELE and a PELEC is but can you tell me what a SPEW is?

So I think the SP is... wait no, we do OME. I know what the SPEW is but the OME. It's opinion/point and then the M, I forget the M, but I know the E is explanation.

So is that a way of making a paragraph?

Yeah yeah.

And you talked a little bit about your teacher helping you, what sort of things does he do?

So say I was stuck on a question, he'd help me work it out if I was really stuck on it. If there's something that's not going well then he'll never give up on me.

So in this interview, I'm going to ask you a question about engagement. And what I mean by engagement is this: that you're on task, whether you're doing the task set, how interested you are in what you're learning and what your focus and concentration is like.

How would you describe your engagement in English lessons?

So I do good, I do get a lot of work done. Sir expects a lot from me, out of everyone in the class he says you're one of the people I expect a lot from. He expects me to do a lot of the creative writing as well because he knows I'm really good at that. He knows I do really well in my tests that I've done. Last year I got the highest...

So does he say that to you?

Yeah he says you were really good in that, I expect a lot from you. He knows that I'm really good at learning. He knows that I'm always on task all the time. Probably a little times I'm off task a bit dull but yeah. I'm really interested in lesson. I like doing the work that he sets. We're doing this thing with this story and I like doing that. I am focused in lessons. Whenever he says you've got something to do I also ways do it. Like if he says 'get your reading book out', I'll do it. Because we're used to that, I'll do it quickly. I'll just start reading my book.

And what helps you to be engaged in lessons?

Not being distracted by other people. So there are boys who are my friends but they do try to distract me so I try to ignore them and just do my learning.

Is there anything that your teacher does to help you be engaged in lessons?

Maybe like, because there's 5 things. Sit up, have a good posture, look at Sir when he's speaking to you don't look at everyone else [qualities of active listening]. He lets us read at the start so you get ready so you don't get distracted by other people.

And is there anything, it sounds like you're engaged in most lessons, but on the days where you're not, is there anything that helps you to focus in lessons, helps you to be interested in lessons?

Sir says, always try your best X, don't give up. When he says 'you should be working more, come on, at least do a little bit'.

Tell me about your understanding of the things that you study in English.

I can understand it quickly compared to some other people. I can understand it quickly and there's nothing really that... there is some stuff that's kind of hard like the extensions but I can understand it really quickly.

Tell me about the things that are a bit harder.

The extensions. After you do something that you're good at you get to the extension part and it's kind of hard.

Can you think of an example of an extension that Sir would give you?

Say there's 5 questions to do, the extension would be the meaning of it. So there's some words that you might know but you've got to find the meaning of it and that would be kind of hard because you have to use the dictionary and something like that.

So the extensions are harder and sometimes that's a bit tricky?

Yeah.

Help Cards

So I want you to pick out which cards, if any, that help you to understand English better.

[Student picks 4 cards] **Could you pick a top 2?**

Having a learning support assistant to help you.

Wait, do you mean my teacher?

I mean an extra adult. Ah no then, I thought yeah...

Having class discussions. Tell me about that one then.

If there's something I already know and that's something that someone else knows then we have a big discussion then I sort of get it. That's really important because we do it a lot of times. I probably wouldn't know and then someone else might know what it means.

So being able to talk to people in your class. Does that happen in your English lessons?

Yeah it happens quite a bit yeah because we can help each other.

So you're allowed to talk to each other and work with each other.

Yeah.

Comments from your teacher in your exercise book.

Yeah I like that a lot because there'll be a lot of the good stuff and I'll be happy because I like getting a lot of good comments from Sir.

Does he put any other comments in your book?

We have a WWW and a LR so we do it again if we don't get it right.

Listening to the teacher talking.

Yeah because if I didn't listen then I wouldn't know what to do.

And out of these cards, can you pick a top 2 that you enjoy in English lessons?

Feeling that your teacher is listening to you.

If he feels that I'm listening to him then he knows I have a good impression of him.

And tell me about this one.

I like watching video clips. Say when something happens in the book, we watch a video clip and I know what it is.

So it helps you to understand...

Yeah it helps me to understand it.

Class code: 10d5
Double lesson (pd 3&4)
Teacher 4
8/10/18

Learning Objective: To explore different types of complex sentences so that I can use them in my writing

- Effort made to link learning to relevant experiences- Nando's reference for subordinate and main clause/Theresa May dancing for practicing complex sentences
- Interactive whiteboard used to
- Questions used to extend students' thinking and check understanding (can students explain why they have given an answer)
- Teacher circulates around classroom during independent tasks
- Teacher gives students' instructions for independent tasks more than once after starting students off on tasks- teacher doesn't always use clear timings for activities and re-explains activity during independent tasks
- Teacher ensures that definitions and important information is written on board and referred back to during activities
- Teacher highlighted important information in different colours on board
- Students given help sheet to remind them how to use complex sentences which they stuck in their books and were encouraged to look back on later in the lesson
- Most activities had a challenge and super challenge option- teacher addressed these to certain students so they were encouraged to complete the challenge
- Use of pictures/clip throughout to help students with creative writing- helped them to come up with ideas
- Teacher took ideas from group and wrote on board to use as models
- Information on board was covered and revealed in sections so there was not too much information
- Teacher clicks to get student attention
- Teacher claps student on back to praise work
- 'I gave you a 1 on your report but I don't want to have to change that'
- Teacher approaches student to help them when he sees they are not working
- 'Thank you to the front tables [for listening]'
- Teacher helps student to stick sheets in book

- Teacher waits/pauses when students are talking
- Teacher says that he'll speak to student after lesson [about behaviour]

Entry/silent reading

- I shouldn't hear your voice, I should just see you reading
- Whole class- I should just see you reading (repeat)
- Uses recognition on board- name and tick for focusing on reading
- Goes to speak to student about not having reading book- make sure you get one, go and get one from the shelf
- Whispers to student about getting distracted to pre-empt others distracting her
- Student goes to get sheets from printer- sir asks her to write her name on the board (recognition)
- Good focus Y10 keep it up

Student engagement:

- Some students reading
- Some students staring
- All students quiet
- Some students distracted by teacher writing on board- looks

Intro/date, title, LO

- Teacher talks through learning journey for lesson (reading, features of complex sentences, identify different sentences, watch clip, word bank, creative writing, peers assess, quiz)
- Takes student responses- what are the key words in today's LO- teacher highlights them on board
- Shows students paper (on board)- out of 40 marks- shows them a screenshot of the exam paper
- Who can remember the breakdown on the 40 marks (AOs)- teacher writes this on board
- Asks 1 student- how many do you write- 1 or 2 (on exam paper)
- LO/title/date on board

- Starter is covered up with box so that students can only see LO
- Asks student to read LO out- nice and loud
- When you get your book, open it up, date title LO
- Lovely to see you so interested in your book- if you want to borrow it let me know. Don't do that to it though because it's not mine (ripping page)
- Eyes this way
- Going to give you another 30 seconds
- Good to see you using good writing and using rulers well done
- Student pings ruler- 'no'
- Well done NAME (for students who are writing)
- Really good focus
- Writes name and ticks under recognition
- You remembered the AOs well done (gives 2 recognition ticks)

Student engagement:

- All students copy LO

Starter

- MWB- write a simple sentence/compound sentence about images
- Use a simile or metaphor (challenge)- asks more able student to read challenge down
- Ask students to read out answers on MWB
- Wherever you're at, just pause
- Well done to students who are writing

Students watch clip

- Students watch clip to plan vocabulary under nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs
- Students feedback what each of the word types mean- teacher writes on board
- On board- example of how students should present vocabulary plan in books
- Pictures from clip are on board with task
- Student circulates around class to support

- Ticks off learning journey- reminds students that they've got to 4 on journey- says that next time they need to do the rest of the learning journey
- The only thing you should have in your hands is your pen
- Name and Name- just so you know I'll be talking to you after the lesson. Please stop.
- Teacher pauses clip, waits, 'guys'
- Shhhh (during clip)
- Remember to be thinking of words (when hearing some talking during clip)
- Teacher waits for quiet before starting clip again
- We're going to watch it again but if one person talks I'll stop it and you'll have to do it from memory
- Guys it's not even been a minute yet (in response to some talking)
- You're going to be writing a paragraph about this. Take it seriously.
- I could just give you a picture and be really boring but I've chosen an interesting clip- so you need to be writing down
- Teacher stops video when student talks- X thank you for ruining it
- Student sent outside- you need to reflect for 2 minutes on your attitude- student is outside for approx. 1 minute- teacher speaks to her and then lets her back on

Engagement:

- All students watch clip
- Some students talk to peers about clip
- Some students respond to clip during clip (oh no, he's dead, oh my days)
- Second time watching- students watch in silence
- Almost all students have pens in hands to write vocabulary down
- Some students write words at the start of the clip

6.12. Appendix 12

Example of codes and themes for student interviews in 10c5

Lesson Activities
Group Discussions
Learning from a classmate
Getting help from other classmates.
Learning from peers is helpful
Student can't ask peer for help because he doesn't know answer
Students talk to partner
working well with other people
Student doesn't like group work
Conversation changes topic when working in groups
MWB activities
Students use mini whiteboards
Preparing for Exams
Student understands how to structure PELE paragraphs
Students learn paragraph structures for exams
Teacher shows students how to annotate the exam question
We did the structure of PELE ELE ELE
Reading Tasks
I read mostly non-fiction
Read at the start of lessons
reading as a class
Reading helps you understand what it's about
Students read in lessons
Writing Tasks
Students learn about sentence structures
Students write in lessons
Student-Teacher Relationship
Difficulties in Relationship
Relationship between teacher and student varies depending on day
Sometimes teacher and student do not get on and the lesson doesn't go well
Student doesn't like it when teacher doesn't choose them to contribute

Student wants to get out of the lesson when he is not getting on with teacher
When you don't get on with teacher it's hard to do lesson
Getting on with your teacher
He's a nice person
If student is on teacher good side then teacher is good
Teacher and student get on fine
Teacher and student smile
Teacher and student speak to each other in a nice way
High Expectations of Student Work
Students don't stop learning
Teacher expects a lot from student
Teacher thinks students are capable
Student feels that teachers thinks he's good at creative writing
Student wants to share so that teacher thinks they're good
Teacher doesn't make student feel that they aren't smart enough
You do the extension after doing something you're good at
Positive View of Lessons
He's a great teacher
He's a great teacher (2)
My teacher's good
We learn new things
Learn new things in English
Learn quite a lot in lessons
Lessons are good
English lessons are good
His lessons are enjoyable
Teacher is experienced
Teacher has experience
Teacher has knowledge about English
Public Recognition of Achievement
APs for sharing ideas
Teacher gives achievement points
Communication with home is rewarding
Parent doesn't think student studies
Rewards and praise enjoyable

Teacher calls home to tell parent that student has done well in lesson
Teacher gives praise
Praise makes student feel proud of what they've done
Student likes getting good comments from teacher
Teacher recognises that student has done something well
Teacher Makes Lessons Fun
He makes some funny voice acting
He's sometimes funny.
Teacher has a laugh with students
Teacher takes jokes
When we did role play he was part of it as well
Use of Reprimands
Firmness
Teacher can be angry if student does something they shouldn't do
Teacher can get angry if student is late
Teacher has a right to tell students off
High Expectations for Behaviour
Teacher reminds students that they need to be on time because they're exams are close
When student is outside class teacher reminds them that they're better than that
Negative Repercussions
He keeps us behind
Teacher can ask students to leave classroom
Students asked to leave class if they're not listening
Students sent outside class for 1 minute
Reminders of Expectations
Reminders for active listening help engagement
Teacher reminds student to do some work
Teacher reminds student to not give up
Teacher tells students to stop talking
Student Engagement
Amount of Work Completed
Can get deep in to writing when focused
Do lots of learning in books
If student puts head down they can work hard

If you put your head down, lesson will go faster
Lesson goes quickly if you want to learn and pay attention
In good lessons student can complete all the work
Some days student works very hard
Sometimes student completes work quickly
Student completes extension task in a good lesson
Student feels bad because they're not doing lots of work
Student gets a lot of work done
Student only just finishes work in a bad lesson
Student tries to understand task independently
Student would like to contribute more
Teacher knows that student is on task
Work can be completed slowly when student doesn't get it
Barriers to Engagement
Mood and engagement
If student isn't feeling it they won't do well
Less focus is student doesn't want to learn in lesson
Lessons depend on students' mood
Student can't stop thinking about negative incident before lesson
Student had a bad day and did not work as well as he wanted
Student struggles with engagement if something negative has happened before
Student wants the lesson to end when it's not good
Peers can affect focus
Independent work helps engagement
Student can focus when seated alone, at the back
Student tries to ignore distractions from other students
When students are talking over others.
Link between Enjoyment and Engagement
If I'm enjoying the lesson then my focus will be top
If the lesson is boring student loses focus
Student isn't distracted in fantastic lesson
Teacher can get head down if they like the task
Positive Classroom Behaviour
English lessons are quiet
Everyone was quiet

I'm calm
Student follows classroom routine
Student follows instructions
Student Focus
Focus because class is small
focused
Looking at teacher when focused
listened well to the teacher
Student can be off task a little bit
Student finds it hard to be on task in a long writing task
Student focuses well
Student looks at the board when teacher asks
Varying Interest in Curriculum Content
Creative writing
Likes creative writing
Student is interested in adding metaphors and similes in to writing
Student is interested in using different sentence types
Student likes to create own story
Student likes to use high level vocabulary in writing
Student likes to use own words in writing
Student likes to write creative stories
Student likes writing paragraphs (creative writing)
Student likes writing stories
Drama and role play
Drama and role play is enjoyable
Drama helps with confidence
Drama keeps mood going
Drama Text
Student was interested in the themes of AIC
Fun to act out what has been read
Role play is fine
Student enjoyed acting texts out in class
Student likes drama
Student was interested in acting out text
Students do role play activities
Lack of Interest

Lesson could be more adventurous
Sitting down for a double lesson is boring
Sometimes lessons are fantastic and sometimes not
Non-fiction work can be boring
Reading texts and answering questions is boring
Student is interested in lessons
Like solving questions
Sometimes lessons are fun
Student is interested in English lessons
Student likes doing work set
very interesting
Watching videos and clips
Enjoy watching video clips of what is read
it gives you a little break from all that stress and study
Watching a video clip helps understanding
Watching videos allows students to take a break
Watching videos and clips
Student Understanding
Difficulties with Understanding Curriculum
Can be stressful if you don't understand work
Extension activities are hard
Language in Macbeth hard to understand
Old fashioned language of Shakespeare is hard
Student finds it hard to answer the correct question in exam
Student found the plot of Macbeth complicated
Student Confidence in Understanding
Student feels that he understands things quickly
Student feels they can achieve target grade if they focus
Student feels they can do the work
Student understands English well
Student understands sentence types well
Teacher Support
Consistent Teacher Availability
Student finds help from teacher useful
Student likes that class is small
Students can ask for help do they understand work

Teacher explains things well when students are stuck
Teacher gives clues when helping students
Teacher is consistently available
If student asks a question teacher helps quickly
Teacher helps if students are stuck
Teacher helps when work is difficult
Teacher helps with questions students are stuck on
Teacher is always there for students
Teacher will continue to support student if they're finding something hard
Teacher will continue to support students with things they're stuck on
Teacher won't give up on students
Having class discussions
Class often discuss things
Classroom discussions give students a break from being bored
Contribute to class [whole class feedback]
Student finds class discussions helpful
Student can learn from another students' question
Class discussions allow students to hear thoughts from others
Listening to Teacher Talking
Helpful to listen to teacher explain something more deeply and show students what to do
Listening to the teacher talking
Student finds it helpful to listen to teacher so he knows what to do
Teacher explains things in an interesting way
Making Tasks Accessible
Sir gives us sentence starters
Tasks to understand text
Students have to use the dictionary to find the meanings of words
Students write after reading text
Teacher asks students to make links when they're stuck
Teacher breaks activities down
Teacher directs students to underline the section they need to read
Teacher explains each step of the task
Teacher Feedback
Comments in your exercise book

Comments help students know if they're on the right track
He gives us a EBI and a WWW.
Student finds written feedback helpful
He doesn't really mark them
Learner response task to help students improve
Students edit work based on feedback
Students look at their feedback weekly
Teacher marks student work in lesson

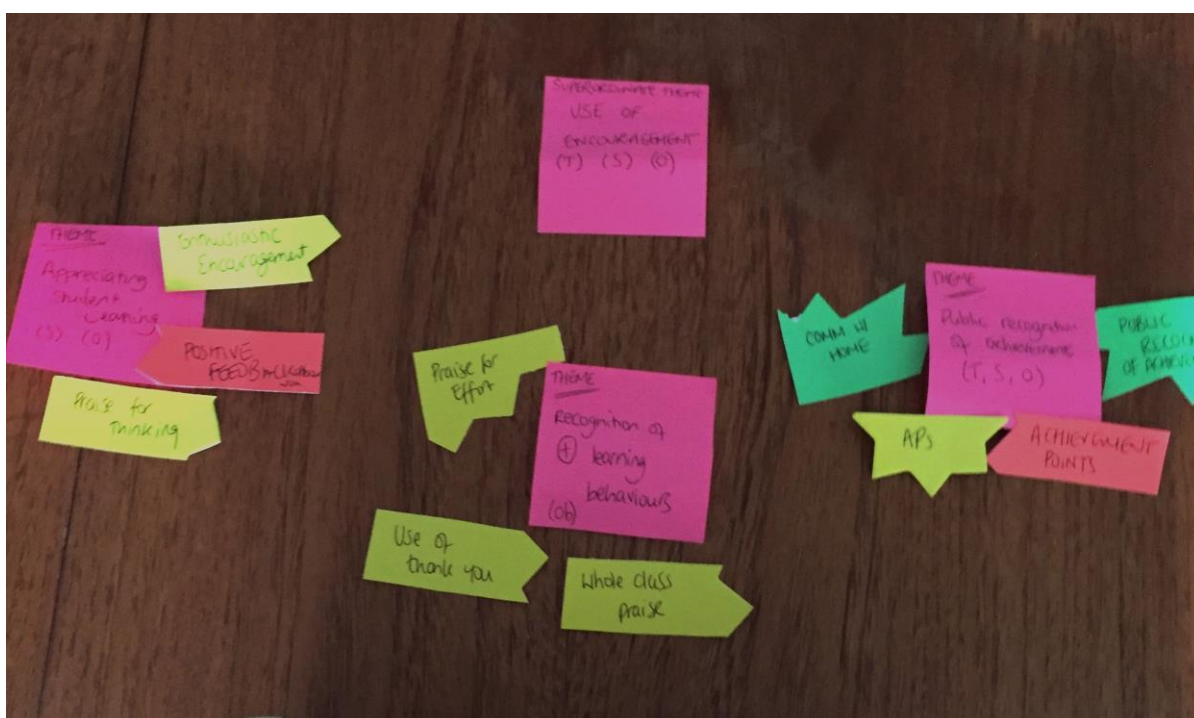
6.13. Appendix 13

Example of how themes from student interviews, teacher interviews and lesson observation notes were integrated for each class

The picture below shows how subthemes from each research tool were integrated in the second stage of qualitative analysis. This allowed the researcher to develop main themes for each case study class. This example is taken from class 10d5. It relates to the superordinate theme 'Use of Encouragement'.

Key:

- Pink: Superordinate theme and main themes
- Yellow: Subtheme from lesson observations
- Orange: Subtheme from student interviews
- Green: Subtheme from teacher interview



Superordinate Theme: Use of Encouragement
<i>Theme: Appreciating Student Learning</i> Praise for thinking (O), Positive Feedback (S), Enthusiastic Encouragement (O)
<i>Theme: Recognition of positive learning behaviours</i> Praise for effort (O), Use of thank you (O), Whole class praise (O)
<i>Theme: Public recognition of achievement</i> Achievement points (O), Achievement points (S), Communication with home (T), Public recognition of achievement (T)

6.14: Appendix 14

Definitions of Themes for 10c5, 10d5 and 10e6

Class 10c5

Category	Theme	Sub Themes	Definition
Use of Encouragement	Public Recognition of Achievement (T,S)	Communicating Praise to Parents (T) Public Recognition of Achievement (S) Rewards (T)	The teacher rewards students using achievement points, communicating their achievements to parents and choosing students to contribute answers.
	Praise that Reflects the Achievement (T,S,O)	Praise for Focus (O) Specific Praise for Skills (O) One Word Praise for Feedback (O) Praise for Demonstrating Learning Skills (T) Teacher gives Praise (S) High Expectations for Praise (T)	The nature of the teacher's verbal praise is dependent on what students are being praised for and the teacher has high expectations for giving praise. The teacher acknowledges and praises students when they demonstrate their learning skills but behaviour has to be consistently good to receive praise for this.
Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships	High Expectations of Student Work (S)		Teacher communicates to students that he expects them to produce good work because they are capable of doing well in the subject.
	Teacher Makes Lessons Fun (S)		Teacher sometimes joins students in a joke and organises role play activities which students enjoy.
	Positive View of Lessons (S)		Students like English lessons because they learn new things and feel that they have a good, experienced teacher.
	Positive Relationship (T,S)	Getting on with your teacher (S) Student-Teacher Relationship (T)	Teacher and students get on with each other, speak about each other positively and interact in a positive way.
	Relationship can be Variable (S)	Difficulties in Relationship (S)	There can be some variation in the relationship between student and teacher as students can become frustrated with their teacher.
Minimising Negative Reprimands	Indirect Stop (T,S,O)	Use of Reminders (T) Task Reminder (O)	Teacher indirectly reprimands undesirable behaviour by reminding students of the

		Reminder of Expectations (S) Reducing Distractions (O) Non-Verbal Reprimand (O) Indirect Stop (O)	expectations in the classroom, removing potential distractions and using gestures or pauses.
	Reducing Conflict through Tone (T,O)	Careful Tone (O) Positivity after Reprimand (T) Reducing Conflict (O)	Teacher attempts to avoid conflict when reprimanding students by using a quiet tone, using the word 'please' and giving the reprimand quickly.
	Unbending Expectations of Behaviour (T,S,O)	High Expectations for Behaviour (S) High Expectations for Behaviour (O) Unbending Expectations of Behaviour (T)	Teacher clearly communicates and consistently enforces high expectations for students' behaviour.
	Behaviours can be Directly Addressed (T,O)	Use of Formal System (T) Direct Verbal Reprimand (O) Negative Repercussions (S,O) Firm Tone (T) Firmness (S)	Teacher occasionally directly asks students to stop the undesirable behaviour or issues a consequence such as moving students' seats or giving them a formal warning when behaviour is persistent.
	Relationship Building Reprimand (O)	Praise Reprimand (O) Support Reprimand (O)	When reprimanding students, teacher reminds them of how well they have done previously and offers them support with a task after issuing a reprimand.
Teaching Responds to Students' Needs	Accessing Student Knowledge (T,S,O)	Listening to Teacher Talking (S) Drawing out Student Knowledge (O) Text Emulation to Model Writing (T) Text Emulation Strategy (O)	Teacher provides supports to draw out students' knowledge and skills. These include providing them with model examples of writing that they can emulate, asking them to make links to prior knowledge and using prompt questions to support their thinking.
	Ensuring there are no excuses to not engage in task (T,O)	Repeating tasks to increase familiarity (T) Support with Presentation (T) Practical Support (O)	Teacher provides students with equipment, gives them explicit guidance to ensure their work is well organised and exposes them to similar activities across lessons so that students become familiar with tasks. Teacher asks students to share their

		Requirement to Share Work (O)	work after an independent activity to check that they have engaged in the task.
	Encouraging Independence (T,O)	Encouraging Independence (O) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging Independent Thinking (T) • Student Need for Feedback (O) 	Teacher attempts to encourage students to work independently and develop their own thoughts about lesson content. Students ask for reassurance during independent writing tasks.
	Individualised Teacher Support (S,O)	Consistent Teacher Availability (S) Supporting Independent Tasks (O) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Responses (O) 	Teacher is always available to support students when they are unsure of what to do during independent activities. Teacher uses questioning to extend student ideas when giving individual support.
	Teacher Feedback to Improve Work (T,S,O)	In Class Feedback (T) Teacher Feedback (S) Feedback to Improve Work (O)	Teacher gives students written and verbal feedback about their work during lessons so that they understand what they have done well and how they can improve.
	Learning from Each Other (T,S)	Having Class discussions (S) Group Discussions (S) Pair talk (T) Whole Class Feedback (T)	Whole class and pair discussions are engaging and sometimes help students understand the content of the lesson.
	Making the Curriculum Accessible (T,S,O)	Making Tasks Accessible (S,O) Support with Organisation of Ideas (O) Breaking Tasks Down (T) Preparing for Exams (S) Building Vocabulary (T) Tasks to Understand Text (S)	Teacher responds to students' needs by supporting them to access the curriculum by breaking tasks down in to smaller, more manageable steps, explicitly teaching unfamiliar vocabulary and supporting students to plan their ideas before writing.

		Within Class Differentiation (T)	
Student Engagement	Behavioural Engagement (T,S,O)	Student Focus (T,S) Positive Classroom Behaviour (S) Low Level Behaviour Difficulties (T) Amount of Work Completed (S) Engagement in Copying Activities (O) Engagement in Independent Tasks (O) Engagement in Reading (O)	Students are able to focus in lessons and complete the work set but this can vary between lessons. Students engage in copying activities and independent tasks but can become distracted during writing activities.
	Emotional Engagement (T,S)	Enjoyment and Engagement (T,S) Varying Interest in Curriculum Content (S) Disaffection with Learning (T) Motivation to Learn (T)	Students enjoy some elements of English lessons such as reading stories and creative writing but are not interested in all lessons. This can affect engagement. Some students are motivated to achieve in English and some are less willing to try to engage in tasks.
	Cognitive Engagement (T)	Student Understanding and Engagement (T) Student Confidence in Understanding (S) Difficulties with Understanding Curriculum (S)	Students are more likely to engage well with a task if they have been supported and have a good understanding of the activity. Students feel that they are good an English but struggle with some elements that the curriculum expects proficiency in (such as understanding Shakespearean language).
	Barriers to Engagement (S)	Mood and Engagement (S) Peers and Engagement (S) Difficulty of Exam (T)	Negative feelings before a lesson and distractions from peers can prevent students from engaging in tasks. The difficulty of texts in the current curriculum could be a barrier to student success.

Class 10d5

Category	Theme	Sub Themes	Definition	
Use of Encouragement	Appreciating Student Learning (S,O)	Positive Feedback about Work (S) Praise for Thinking (O) Enthusiastic Encouragement (O)	Teacher praises students for demonstrating their learning through positive feedback and enthusiastic praise.	
	Recognition of Positive Learning Behaviours (O)	Whole Class Praise (O) Use of Thank You (O) Individual Praise for Effort (O)	Teacher recognises positive behaviour that is conducive to learning by thanking students and praising effort.	
	Public Recognition of Achievement (T,S,O)	Use of Achievement Points (S,O) Communication with Home (T) Public Recognition of Achievement (T)	Teacher publicly recognises students' achievements through the use of achievement points and communicating with parents.	
Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships	Respectful Relationship (T,S)	Teacher Works Hard (S) Mutual Respect (T) I Have a Good Teacher (S) Students Want to Impress Teacher (T)	Students and teacher respect each other. Students demonstrate this by wanting to impress teacher and teacher demonstrates this by preparing well for lessons.	
	Familiarity with Teacher (T)	Familiarity with Classroom Expectations (T) Getting to Know Students (T) Consistency in Teacher (T)	Student behaviour has improved as a result of familiarity with their teacher's expectations who is consistent and gets to know students personally.	
	Relationship Promotes Engagement (S)		Students are more likely to engage in learning activities if they get on with their teacher	
	Mutual Liking (T,S,O)	Use of Humour (O) Teacher Likes Class (T) Students Like Teacher (S)	Teacher and students like each other. The teacher uses humour in lessons.	
	Relationship can be Variable (S)		Students sometimes have negative interactions with their teacher and have to rebuild their relationship with him.	
	Minimising Negative Reprimands	Negative Repercussions (T,S,O)	Consequences (S,O)	Teacher uses the school's formal consequence system and gives his own consequences (e.g.
			Use of Formal System (T,O)	

			asking students to move seats or stand outside the classroom) to reprimand students' behaviour
	Avoiding Negative Interactions (O)	Discrete Reprimand (O) Reminder of Expectations (O) Use of Questions (O) Indirect Stop (O) Non-Verbal Reprimand (O) Use of Names (O) Use of Shh (O)	Teacher uses strategies to reprimand student behaviour without directly asking students to stop the behaviour, reprimanding students quietly and reminding students of what they should be doing.
	Being Firm (T)		Teacher uses a firm or strict tone because he wants students to focus.
Teaching Responds to Students' Needs	Making Tasks Accessible (T,S,O)	Scaffolds for Reading and Writing Tasks (T) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support with Vocabulary (S) Reducing Challenge (T) Visual Aids (S,O) Watching Videos and Clips (S) Recapping Learning to Support with a Task (O) Support with Planning (O)	Teacher uses a range of scaffolding strategies during an independent task and teaches at a slower pace so that students are able to access the activity.
	Ensuring there are no excuses for not engaging in a task (T,S,O)	Support with Organisation (O) Prompts Clearly Presented (O) Clear Guidance for Tasks (T) Preparing Students before independent task (T) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking Understanding of Task (O) Following a 'Learning Journey' (S,O)	Teacher supports prior to and during an independent task to help remove barriers to students engaging in the activity.

	Enhancing Understanding of the Curriculum (T,S,O)	Drama and Role Play (S) Class Reading (S) Teacher Explanation (S,O) Repeating Learning (S) Enhancing Understanding (O) Teacher Modelling (T) Modelling Learning Task (O)	Teacher uses strategies to ensure that students understand the content of the lesson through modelling, repetition of previous learning and explanation.
	Learning from Each Other (T,S,O)	Whole Class Discussions (S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions to Extend Thinking (O) • Students Feedback (O) Group and Pair Work (S) Group Work (T) Pair Discussion (O)	Teacher uses whole class discussions to extend students' knowledge and check understanding. Students engage in group and pair work which can be engaging and supportive.
	Marking and Feedback to Improve Work(T,S,O)	Written Feedback to Improve Work (T) Written Feedback (O) Feedback and Marking (S)	Teacher gives students written feedback about their work so they understand what they have done well and have some direction as to how they can improve their work.
	Linking Learning to the Exam (T,S,O)	Beginning exam teaching early (T) Teaching the approach to the Exam (T) Preparation for Exam (S) Exam Preparation (O)	Students are explicitly taught strategies to help them structure exam questions from the start of the GCSE course.
	Individualised Support (T,S,O)	Personalised Support (S) Challenge Activities (O) Adapting Planning Based on Student Response (T) Personalising how Teaching is Targeted (T) LSA Support (S) Individual Support during Independent Tasks (O)	Teacher differentiates support so that it is suited to students' needs and planning is adapted based on student understanding. The teacher provides individual support during independent tasks.

Student Engagement	Emotional Engagement (T,S)	<p>Student Anxiety about Performance (T)</p> <p>Interest in English (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of English (S) • The Link between Focus and Interest (S) • Curriculum and Interest (S) • Teacher Creates Interest in Lessons (S) <p>Motivation to Learn (S)</p>	<p>Students are concerned about doing well in their exams and are motivated to learn new things. Students report that their interest in English is variable but they focus more in lessons when they are interested in tasks.</p>
	Cognitive Engagement (T,S,O)	<p>Engagement in Class Discussions (T,S,O)</p> <p>Difficulty Understanding Content (S)</p>	<p>Limited vocabulary knowledge is a barrier to accessing exam questions. Most students answer teacher questions and contribute ideas in classroom discussions to demonstrate their knowledge.</p>
	Behavioural Engagement (T,S,O)	<p>Focus in Lessons (S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty Managing Distractions (S) • Difficulty Focusing (S) <p>Low Level Disruption (T)</p> <p>Engagement in Independent Tasks (O)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the Task Set (S) <p>Engagement in Copying Tasks (O)</p> <p>Engagement in Independent Reading (O)</p> <p>Engagement in Watching Clip (O)</p>	<p>Students focus in lessons and attempt to complete all the work set but sometimes find it difficult to manage distractions and display low level disruptive behaviour.</p> <p>Students engage in copying tasks and some independent activities but engagement can be variable when students struggle with the task.</p>
	Barriers to Engagement (T,S)	Impact of Student Mood (T,S)	<p>Negative mood, disruptive peers and when lessons occur within the school day can affect engagement.</p>

		Impact of Lesson Timing (T) Impact of Peers (S) Difficulties with Learning for the Exam (T)	Students struggle with memorisation and understanding texts in GCSE curriculum.
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Class 10e6

Category	Theme	Sub Themes	Definition
Use of Encouragement	Acknowledgement of Achievement through Praise (T,O)	Praise for Demonstrating Learning (O) Teacher Acknowledgement of Success (T)	Teacher acknowledges students' achievements through praise
	Public Recognition of Achievement (T)	Public Praise (T)	Praise is communicated to heads of year, parents and peers.
Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships	Attunement to students (T,S,O)	Getting to know students (T) Teacher Understands Students' Learning (S) Personal Interest in Students (O)	Teacher attempts to get to know students and has a good understanding of their needs.
	Teacher Cares for Students (S)		Teacher shows she cares about students by communicating that she wants them to do well in English
	Relationship Promotes Engagement (T,S)	Relationship Promotes Engagement (S) Positive Relationship (S) Positive Attitude to Class (T)	Students and teacher like each other. Students feel that there is a link between their relationship and focus in lessons.
	Use of Humour (T,O)	Use of Humour (T,O)	Teacher makes jokes with students that make them laugh.
	Teacher Kindness (S,O)	Teacher Kindness (S) Positive Tone (O)	Students describe teacher as kind and teacher uses a calm, positive tone when talking to students.
Minimising Negative Reprimands	Task Reminders (T,S,O)	Teacher Reminders (S) Use of Reminders (T) Reminders of what students should be doing (O)	Teacher reminds students of what they should be doing to re-engage them in a task
	Avoiding Negative Interactions (T,O)	Indirect Stop (O) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Names (O) • Use of Questions (O) 	Teacher uses strategies to reprimand student behaviour without directly asking students to stop the behaviour. Reprimands are given in such a way

		Non-verbal Reprimand (O) Lenience (T) Praise Reprimand (O) Relationship Reprimand (O) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of 'we' (O) Humour Reprimand (T) Careful Tone (O) Reducing Volume (O)	that they avoid conflict with students (e.g. quiet tone, praising students for the work they have done previously, using humour).
	Behaviours can be Directly Addressed (S,O)	Direct Verbal Reprimand (O) Negative Repercussions (O,S) Being Strict (S)	Some behaviours are directly addressed using a verbal instruction or a consequence such as moving seats or using the formal consequence system.
Teaching Responds to Students' Needs	Individual Teacher Support (T,S,O)	Teacher Feedback and Assessment (S) Individual Teacher Support (T,S,O) Answering Questions (O) Support During Independent Task (O)	Teacher circulates class during tasks and asks/answers questions to help students develop their understanding.
	Exam Preparation (T,S,O)	Exam Preparation (T,O) Recall activities (T) Exam Practice (S) Repeating what you've Learnt (S) Recall Activities (T)	Students are explicitly taught strategies to help them answer exam questions and link their learning to the assessment objectives/requirements of GCSE exams.
	Learning from Each Other (T,S,O)	Class Discussion (T,S) Class Questioning (O) Learning Through a Group Task (O) Peer Working (T,S)	The teacher uses class questioning to check understanding and extend students' thinking. Students sometimes write collaboratively, complete learning tasks in a group or discuss their work with a peer on their table.
	Differentiating Learning for Individual Students (T,S,O)	Differentiation (O) Differentiation (S) Within Lesson Differentiation (T)	Lessons are planned to meet the varying abilities within the class. Students are set more challenging tasks after completing main task, class work at a slower pace to other sets and the teacher pitches certain activities towards different students.

	Support through Scaffolding (T,S,O)	Making Tasks Manageable (T,S,O) Prompts to aid understanding (T,S,O) Linking to Student Experience (O) Physical Supports (O) Teacher Modelling (O) Teacher Explanation (S)	Students are supported to access activities through visual prompts, breaking tasks down and teacher explanation/modelling.
	The Issue of Student Independence (T)	Desire to Increase Independence (T) Encouraging Independence (T) Need to Support Students (T) Student Attitude towards Independence (T)	Teacher would like students to work more independently and includes some activities where students do not rely as heavily on teacher support. Teacher feels that students are reluctant to work without teacher support and sometimes need this in order to access the curriculum.
Student Engagement	Cognitive Engagement (T,S,O)	Understanding and Engagement (S) Thinking before writing (S) Contribution to Class Discussion (T,O)	Students answer questions and contribute to class discussions to demonstrate their understanding. Engagement in activities depends of the understanding that students have of the task.
	Behavioural Engagement (T,S,O)	Engagement in Group Work (T) Variation in Engagement (T) Low Level Disruption (T) Managing Distractions (S) Home Learning (T) Focus in Lessons (S) Engagement in Independent Tasks (O) Engagement in Reading (O)	Engagement can be variable across lessons but students often focus in independent activities. Students can become distracted but behaviour is not particularly challenging.
	Emotional Engagement (T,S)	Student Interest in Content (T,S) Variation in Preferences for Content (T)	Students show some interest in elements of the curriculum but are not consistently interested in English. Students want to do well in GCSEs but do

		Willingness to Work (T) Motivation to Engage (S)	not always know how much work they have to put in to achieve as they would like to.
	Expectations of GCSE (T)	Expectations of GCSE (T)	Students in the class struggle to access the curriculum because it is not well suited to their needs.

6.15: Appendix 15

Evidence of how themes were integrated across classes

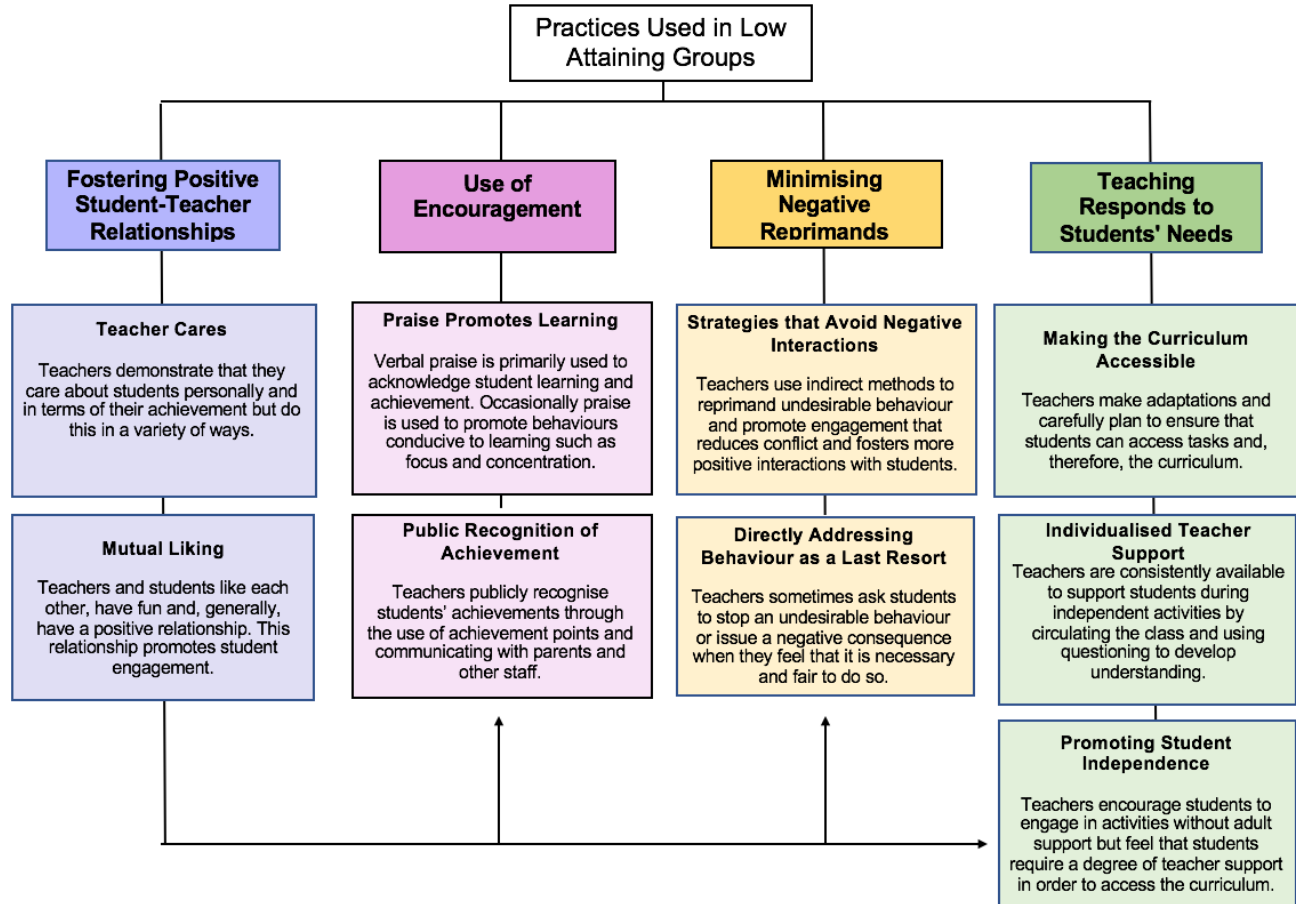


Figure 6: Visual map showing practices used in low attaining groups across classes

Superordinate Theme	Theme	Subthemes/Class
Use of Encouragement	Praise Promotes Learning	Praise that Reflects the Achievement (10c5)
		Recognition of Positive Learning Behaviours (10d5)
		Appreciating Student Learning (10d5)
		Acknowledgement of Achievement through Praise (10e6)
	Public Recognition of Achievement	Public Recognition of Achievement (10c5, 10d5, 10e6)
Minimising Negative Reprimands	Strategies that Avoid Negative Interactions	Reducing Conflict through Tone (10c5)
		Avoiding Negative Interactions (10d5, 10e6)
		Indirect Stop (10c5)
		Relationship Building Reprimand (10c5)
		Task Reminders (10e6)
	Directly Addressing Behaviour as a Last Resort	Behaviours Can Be Directly Addressed (10c5, 10e6)
		Negative Repercussions (10d5)
		Being Firm (10d5)
		Unbending Expectations of Behaviour (10c5)
Fostering Positive Student-Teacher Relationships	Teacher Cares	Teacher Cares for Students (10e6)
		Attunement to Students (10e6)
		Teacher Kindness (10e6)
		Respectful Relationship (10d5)
		Familiarity with Teacher (10d5)
		High Expectations of Student Work (10c5)
		Positive View of Lessons (10c5)
	Mutual Liking	Positive Relationship (10c5)
		Mutual Liking (10d5)
		Relationship can be Variable (10c5, 10d5)

		Use of Humour (10e6)
		Teacher Makes Lessons Fun (10c5)
		Relationship Promotes Engagement (10d5, 10e6)
Teaching Responds to Students' Needs	Making the Curriculum Accessible	Making the Curriculum Accessible (10c5)
		Making Tasks Accessible (10d5)
		Accessing Student Knowledge (10c5)
		Enhancing Understanding of the Curriculum (10d5)
		Support through Scaffolding (10e6)
		Linking Learning to the Exam (10d5)
		Exam Preparation (10e6)
		Differentiating Learning for Individual Students (10e6)
		Ensuring there are No Excuses to Not Engage in Task (10c5, 10d5)
		Learning from Each Other (10c5, 10d5, 10e6)
		Individualised Teacher Support
	Individual Teacher Support (10e6)	
	Individualised Support (10d5)	
	Marking and Feedback to Improve Work (10d5)	
	Teacher Feedback to Improve Work (10c5)	
	Promoting Student Independence	The Issue of Student Independence (10e6)
		Encouraging Independence (10c5)

