

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
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**'Fixing' Children: Producing a
Hierarchy of Learners in
Primary School Processes**

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Abstract

This research project emerged in the context of the apparent paradox between the then New Labour Government's agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other. I sought to enquire into how these tensions were negotiated and what understandings of inclusive education emerged in the primary school context; situating these processes within wider local and national policy contexts. An ethnographic study was undertaken, located in one inner London Primary school. Fieldwork involved non-participant observation over one academic year; concluding with semi-structured interviews with both children and staff.

Routine moments of every day classroom experience revealed 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose, 1999 p.135) functioning as 'disciplinary power' that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' (Foucault 1979). 'Dividing practices' (Foucault 1979) such as grouping by perceived ability pervaded children's daily classroom experiences as school staff worked to enact the plethora of initiatives and directives issued from central government agencies. Through the same processes that served an over-riding drive to 'fix' or repair children in order to meet the normative demands of the 'standards agenda' expressed most visibly in high stakes testing, nationally set targets and associated 'league tables', it is suggested that children as school pupils were increasingly 'fixed' as educational subjects positioned in a finely graded hierarchy.

I argue that routine processes of 'good practice' in every classroom functioned as 'gentle' exclusionary practices (Bourdieu and Champagne 1999 pp. 422-423) constituting 'student identities within the terms of enduring and predictable categorisations' (Youdell 2006 p. 177). This problematises 'the interpretation of what 'inclusiveness' is and to whom it extends' (Graham 2006 p.20).

Declaration

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

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudine Rausch', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Claudine Rausch

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Introduction

This chapter is intended as an overture: introducing key themes and issues in the thesis. It has been influenced by questions and discussion during the examination meeting as part of the 'upgrading' process from MPhil study to PhD. These questions recalled for me my first day in 'the field' as vividly illustrative of both key methodological issues as well as subsequent findings. I was therefore fascinated to subsequently find the chapter by Walford (2001) titled *First Days in the Field*, 'presumptuously copied directly from Blanche Geer's classic chapter first published in 1964'. Walford continues, 'Her concern is with the relationships between initial fieldwork experiences, her thinking before entering the field and her final understanding achieved at the end of the research process' (Walford 2001 p.50). On a modest scale, I hope to achieve some of this here.

Keeping with the musical analogies, this introductory chapter could be used to >> fast forwardⁱ directly to ensuing chapters in which these key issues and themes are further explored. The thesis is the written report of an educational ethnography (Walford 2008); a case study that sets out to explore inclusion and exclusion in the primary school contextⁱⁱ. It comprises a literature review, methodologies chapter, four chapters in which data are presented and discussed and a conclusion. I will outline these in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Asking Questions: Entering the field

Just as Clough and Barton assert 'how we choose to research a subject is itself constitutive of that subject' (1995 p.2) so the commencement of a report immediately raises methodological and ethical questions. As Murphy and Dingwall (2001) counsel, I have done 'much to protect settings and participants by removing identifying information...routinely using pseudonyms, and altering non-relevant details' (p.341). I have endeavoured to use pseudonyms that retain the gender and are in keeping with respondents' ethnicity, but in light of the assertion that 'it is very unlikely that individual anonymity can be maintained through pseudonyms in relation to the other people involved' (Walford 2002 p. 98) I have omitted precisely detailing job titles as far as possible. But that is to jump ahead beyond fieldwork.

As I entered my research school – I shall call it Viner Primary School - on that first morning of fieldwork I had written two initial chapters, exploring literature and methodologies relevant to my proposed study, most of which are retained in the following two chapters of this thesis. As these chapters detail, I had questions ('foreshadowed problems', Malinowski 1922) around inclusion and exclusion but I did not wish to impose my understandings upon participants. As Walford outlines, 'the ethnographer tries to make sense of what people are doing by asking 'What's going on here? How does this work?' and hopes gradually to come to an understanding of 'the way we do things around here' (Walford 2008 p. 7). He continues 'answering those questions requires that the ethnographer be open to learn from those who inhabit that culture, and willing to see everything and suspend premature judgement on what should be selected as data. This quality of openness lies at the heart of ethnography, its processes, purposes and ethics' (Walford 2008 p. 7). I discuss the 'raising of research questions' in Chapter 2, (>> p. 59), particularly the development of my research questions as the research progressed. My ensuing data chapters (4 – 6) trace the evolution of those initial research questions around 'inclusion' and exclusion, as my own theoretical understandings developed.

These inductive elements of ethnographic research posed particular problems around informed consent,

'Informed consent means that potential participants should be told exactly what the research seeks to investigate and what will be done with any of the information that they give to the researcher, This is non-unproblematic even with highly statistical quantitative research...But in ethnographic work this problem is raised continually'

Walford 2008 p.30.

Whilst I had outlined my research as a doctoral study, I did not wish to pre-empt or close down opportunities for understanding, by narrowly constraining my interests to inclusion and exclusion. I stated my interest in finding out 'what it is like to be a child at Viner School at the beginning of the 21st century' and that I would take my lead, developing my understandings of this school from my observations and encounters with children and staff. I was gradually allowed access to different classes across the school as trust developed over time. I asked permission from children and staff to observe activities and they also

subsequently suggested and volunteered opportunities for observations. Murphy and Dingwall (2001 p. 342) note the difficulties raised by 'the emergent nature of research design and analysis in ethnography' and that 'at the point of negotiating access, researchers typically do not have all the information that fully informed consent might require' (Murphy and Dingwall 2001 p. 342-3). Walford (2008 p.30) accurately observes that, 'The initial focus for research often broadens to include features that were never a part of the original plan...participants have to accept that other aspects may eventually be written about. This demands a high degree of trust on the part of participants'. This was very much true of this study, with findings reaching beyond the confines of my initial questions and understandings.

Having set out to explore inclusion and exclusion, anticipating insights into the sorts of 'first order questions' posed by Slee, 'Who is in and who is out?' and 'how does this happen?' (Slee 2011 p. 42), I did not anticipate finding a latticework of interlocking processes and interventions by which *all* pupilsⁱⁱⁱ were sorted into a finely-graded hierarchy via staff judgements as to their perceived 'ability'^{iv} and dispositions towards learning. 'Dividing practices' (Foucault 1979) pervaded everyday processes and interactions, with staff judgements about pupils not simply *describing*, as Deborah Youdell (2011 p.9 *my emphasis*) articulates, but also *producing* different sorts of learners': the 'making' of the primary school pupil. Data collected over a year and its analysis pressed me to engage in 'a process of struggle to make sense of things' (Ball 2003c, p. 2); the production of social inequalities in and through education (Ball 2003c p. 7). Reading much later, Bourdieu and Champagne's 'Outcasts on the Inside' (1999 pp. 422-423), this title resonated with my findings, as did their description of streaming and selection of pupils at an ever younger age as 'gentle' exclusionary practices, 'spreading out the process of elimination, the school system turns into a permanent home for potential outcasts'.

Researching inequality: making links between questions, purpose and methodologies

These insights, after thousands of painstaking hours' transcription and analysis were some way off as I *entered* fieldwork. Despite at the outset, thinking a great deal about situating my research project theoretically, about researching inequality, emancipatory research and 'the adjective 'critical'^v there is a sentence in my methodologies chapter, that I wrote at that time: prior to fieldwork. It reads, 'I would

like my research to be of some use, and struggle with what 'use' might mean'. Looking back, this sentence is a revealing one. Having been surrounded as a teacher by confident official proclamations of 'what works' and subjected to the onslaught of criticism, not least two recent OFSTED inspections^{vi} the unhelpful sentence ringing in my inner monologue as I entered fieldwork was, 'If you're so clever, how would you do it?'

Leonardo observes both that 'critical social theorists are not in the habit of justifying that oppression exists, but prefer describing the form it takes' and that 'critical education means having to confront the reality of inequality...coming to terms with social arrangements that create structural disparities and understanding their sources' (Leonardo 2009 p. 18). On near-completion, I can now look back and relate to Len Barton describing his work to Allan and Slee (2008 p. 43) as 'inherently political and as performing the work of raising questions and challenging'. Having now lived 'a process of struggl[ing] to make sense of things', Leonardo's observation that 'answers are only as deep as the questions that educators and students are able to pose' (Leonardo 2009 p. 19) holds meaning for me in relation to this thesis. It partially answers the 'use' for this research, because I can now begin to look towards areas and questions that future research might explore based on my findings.

This is not so easy at the outset of fieldwork. Engaging personally with staff, understanding only too well the impacts on practitioners of supposed experts/'outsiders' making judgements and apparently 'knowing better' together with the immediate preoccupations of information overload as fledgling researcher. Walford (2001 p. 53) acknowledges that 'The first days in the field are often seen as the most challenging, and emotionally awkward... the researcher is often overwhelmed by the amount of new information that is necessary to take in'. Perhaps I would have been reassured more at that stage by Leonardo's observation that 'CST [Critical Social Theory] in education does not ask students to wait until answers to difficult social problems are available before they critique them, as if a person cannot point out a fire because she cannot extinguish it' (2009 p. 19). If I ever do get the opportunity to teach future research students, it is a quote I hope to commit to memory.

The first day of my fieldwork was a bit of a shocker. In her detailed exploration of ethnographic fieldwork, Delamont (2002 p. 48) talks of 'fighting familiarity', by which

she means that 'central features of education are so taken for granted that they are invisible'. If possible, I would say it was the exact reverse. Released from the 'busyness' of teaching (Ball 1998, 2003, Jeffrey and Woods 1998), I found the classroom only too 'visible'. I see that Delamont (2002 p. 16) also recognises the capacity to be shocked throughout periods of fieldwork, and that whilst Geer's paper (1964) 'focuses attention on the 'first' days in the field, it would be misleading to infer that the issue of 'strangeness' is of relevance only during the initial phases of fieldwork' (Delamont 2002 p. 116). I was propelled immediately into the minutiae of everyday life in school; processes and practices, 'hierarchies and everyday injustices' (Youdell 2011 p. 8). Day to day familiarities such as where children were seated in their classrooms, allocation of work tasks and children going out of their classroom for 1:1 or small group instruction^{vii}.

I 'write myself in' to this thesis. Citing Bourdieu (2001), Puddephatt et al describe 'a reflexive approach to sociology' as 'the only way to be critical about one's own work and present it with at least some insight into the social and political context in which it was created' (Puddephatt et al 2009 p. 10). Allan and Slee (2008 p. 45) describe Len Barton's work as having 'produced new ways of looking and thinking for others and himself'. It is the 'and himself' that stands out for me in this sentence, what Allan and Slee (2008 p. 45) speculate as appearing to be 'engaging in the practices of the self, as outlined by Foucault (1988)'.

Discussing reflexivity further in my methodologies chapter, I cite Clough and Barton (1995 pp. 3 – 4) who state that 'The biggest lie that a so-called 'methodology' tells is of the distance between us and our work; hence we elaborate the clinical nature, the sterile cleanliness of the instruments we use' (Clough and Barton 1995 pp. 3 – 4). I describe 'writing myself in' as 'thinking out loud on the page' and endeavouring to engage the reader in a reciprocal process to disrupt this notion of 'sterile cleanliness'. Puddephatt et al. trace the development of reflexivity and what they term "down and dirty" accounting of the problems encountered' (2009 p. 10) but question why ethnographers have been 'reluctant to put forward honest, reflexive accounts of where and how their theory was generated' (Puddephatt 2009 p. 11). One of the academic readers of my first three chapters stated her irritation at this approach, venting this frustration with a question in the margin about a dozen pages in, 'have we started yet?'. Whilst I have returned to and edited chapters, they were written in the order in which they are presented in the thesis, from one to seven and as such I have wanted to maintain the progress through my understandings as they

have developed. Therefore the first dozen pages *are* hesitant and the development of the theory can hopefully be traced through reflection upon data across the chapters.

Day 1: access, ethics and dilemmas

Following my first morning observing in an allocated Year 1 class (children aged 5 – 6 years' old), I decided to go to lunch with the children to get to know my way around the school. The children had lunch in a large room; a separate building in the playground. They queued up outside this building and once inside they sat at different tables, depending whether they had 'school dinners' or 'packed lunch'^{viii}. Those who had school dinners waited in a queue to get served. This was all explained to me by pupils from the Year 1 children I had encountered that morning whilst they waited in the queue. I didn't ask, they spoke to me carefully, initiating the conversation and explaining the routine. It made me feel as if I was being looked after like a 'new kid' which was really nice. Summarising her relationship as researcher with the girls in her studies, Lynn Davies (in Ball 1985 p. 29) described being treated 'as a sort of class gerbil'. Whilst this captures moments such as this lunch queue and the hundreds of subsequent interactions with children throughout the period of fieldwork, it belies the experience of participant observation, not least the power balance inherent in representation of data. Feeling on the edge of a precipice as to whether I was doing research 'properly' and what 'properly' might mean, the experience of fieldwork was constantly uncomfortable. 'Ethnography', Timmermans and Tavory assert, 'is not about establishing rapport but about living rapport where every step one takes may preclude others' (2007 p. 497). This, together with their description 'Compared to the clean auditory quality of an interview, observations are steeped in sensory overload' (Timmermans and Tavory p.497) capture something of the relentless process of wondering whether one is 'seeing' everything, or missing crucial events and insights whilst 'living rapport' throughout fieldwork, even in these first few hours.

Earlier that first morning these Year 1 children's teacher, Ms. Jones, had told me that I would be called 'Claudine' by the children, like the non-teaching staff, not by my surname as teachers were addressed. At the start of the day, Ms Jones told the children that 'we have a visitor today who is finding out what it is like to be a child at Viner school'. This is what I had said my research is about: to find out what it is like to be a pupil at school in the new millennium. On hearing this at our first meeting,

the head teacher voiced her concern that this was 'too vague', meaning I think, that my research would not get anywhere. I explained that the themes would emerge further during the progress of the research.

Following what I would later understand had been a 'trial period' in this year 1 class, I was granted access to classes across the school by the head teacher^{ix}. I repeated this same explanation of my research to children and their staff in the various classes. Whilst I was not, as Ball (1985 p. 40) describes, found 'sitting unannounced at the back of the classroom one Monday morning', gate keeping was controlled by the head teacher. Homan (2001 p.332) likens gatekeepers' trust in researchers' professional care and motives to judging the skill of instructors entrusted to keep students safe during outdoor pursuits – an act of 'loco parentis'. In this situation, the head teacher's judgement about granting access was based on my recommendation as an experienced teacher from a known head teacher, together with registration at the Institute of Education. Having previously enquired with experienced researchers about informed consent^x and in response to my query during our meeting before the half term break, the head teacher had said that as she was giving me permission to be in school, I had her permission to talk with children and staff and that she did not want me contacting parents directly.

Not *assuming* consent, I entered each new classroom having sought permission of the class teacher and where possible, the teaching assistant^{xi}. Echoing the concern that 'no-one consults the pupils' (Ball 1985 p. 39) I endeavoured to be sensitive to those who did or did not wish to speak to me. As Homan (2001 p.330) observes however, 'the younger the children are, the more candid and trusting they may be' and with this comes ease of conversation together with the weight of responsibility for confidentiality, respect for privacy and awareness of one's hierarchical power as an adult in a primary school. On the first occasion in each classroom, at the beginning of a lesson when the children were all together, I was allowed a time by each class teacher to explain that I was finding out what it was like to be a pupil at Viner Primary School at this time. Firstly establishing an understanding of 'research' with children as 'finding out more about', I made a link during these discussions with topics about which the children were 'finding out more' in class (e.g. seeds, water, Romans). I explained that I would like to understand school life, its processes and experiences from the children's perspectives and as such, I found a myriad of processes and routines, likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests being explained by children.

Earlier on in my first morning in school, following the initial 'gate-keeping' meeting with the head teacher a fortnight before, I arrived in time to attend the staff briefing meeting at 8.45 am. Deciding what to wear had not presented me with any dilemmas; I wore clothes I would wear if I were going to work – as a primary school teacher. Casual trousers, plimsolls and a 'fleece' top.

This aspect of 'role management' seemed uncomplicated, and I note that Bob Burgess observes that,

..the age, gender, ethnicity and social class of the researcher will influence the kind of data that the ethnographer is able to collect. Indeed, even the same ethnographer may be involved at different periods of his or her life in collecting different data, given the vantage point that he or she might have.

Burgess 2006 p. 294.

This is relevant to my positioning as 'teacher'/insider. I noticed, for example, those teachers closest in age/experience to me more likely to assume I shared knowledge, with comments such as 'you'll know this...' or a comment around for example, organising the batteries, wires and bulbs for work with children on electrical circuits. It is also relevant to the dilemmas around 'insider' status as discussed in this chapter (below) and highlighted, for example, at the beginning of chapter 4 where I discuss teachers' decision-making processes.

At the morning meeting I chose a seat next to a teacher holding the meetings log book. As I sat down she said, 'You're Claudine. <I nod> Peggy [the head teacher] says you can come to my class'. Amongst other matters raised at this briefing meeting, was an item about the playground, which I later realised was the 'Playground Friends' peer mentoring scheme. I also noted a request by the head teacher [driven by an OFSTED inspection] for [representative samples of] 'lower, middle, higher, ability work' to be handed in for which she says she 'has [pupils] names from last year', together with those students' targets'. In the light of my subsequent findings and analyses as I near completion of my thesis, I see a poignancy in these tentative first field notes: the juxtaposition of 'Playground Friends', a pre-fabricated package for 'including' children at playtimes nestled against a request (for OFSTED inspection) embedded in taken-for-granted structures of pupil ability^{xiii}.

Back in the lunch queue after my morning in class, and emboldened by the children's welcome, I decided to ask a few of the other children seated in the dining room about arrangements. Questions like, 'so do the kids who eat packed lunches sit here?' or 'can you choose where you sit?' The children eating a school dinner answered that they could choose where to sit but that the children with packed lunches 'sit over there', pointing to a different section of the hall. Therefore, within each section (school dinners or packed lunch) the children reported that they could choose where to sit. Whilst talking to some of the children eating a school dinner, cramped as an adult into the small child-sized fixed seating, I noticed Kalim, who had been sitting next to Leon in the packed lunch area, get up to go to the rubbish bin at the edge of the room. I recognised both boys from my first observation in the Year 1 class that morning, together with both of their names from the repeated 'tellings off' or what more neutrally might be termed 'prompting' I had observed during the first 90 minutes of the day.

I was in class for 90 minutes from the start of the day at 9am until assembly time just past 10.30am and in that time observed that Leon had received only negative prompting. I recorded notes in my new pink notebook^{xiii} and compress field-notes from that first morning here. Having been told 'don't be silly Leon' on first entering the room, for a 'silliness' incident that despite watching I could not discern, he was then told by name 'you're laughing Leon' two minutes later by a teaching assistant. His name was announced [as a prompt] and in response to writing, 'Look at the 'a' Leon': the teacher publicly picking him out by name to indicate the only thing he had written *incorrectly* on his little whiteboard in response to the first word the children had to write. He endeavoured to interrupt this process by saying 'done it Miss!' whilst holding up his little hand-held white board, in response to her next question: for all of the children to write 'm-m-m-m-mat' on their small, individually hand-held white boards, whilst sat in rows on the carpet. The teacher's reply, without any other acknowledgement to this appeal, was a terse 'You don't need to say it'. Four minutes later he was told, the only child who was, that he was 'irritating' and that 'we don't need a running commentary' when he repeated the word 'pat' in order to write it down. Half way through the lesson Leon inexplicably disappeared out of class for 15 minutes, for what I later discovered was one of the 'literacy interventions', '15 Minutes a Day'. On his return the class were still seated in the same positions on the carpet, now looking at a 'big book' their teacher was reading to them at the front of the class. It was a well known picture book called 'My cat likes to hide in boxes' (Sutton 1978). The children called out comments such as 'I haven't been to France'

when, for example, 'the cat from France' page was read by the teacher. The children's comments were all ignored and the teacher waited for quiet. 'The cat from France', the teacher read at the front, pointing to the words with a stick, 'likes to sing and dance'. Leon says under his breath, 'I've seen a cat dance'. Whether or not the comment was audible, there was no acknowledgement.

After sitting on the carpet for an hour, the children were required to go to 'their table' and write a sentence starting 'I like' or 'I want' relating to a cat. 'I want a *lovely* cat, I want a *ginger* cat' the teacher wrote up on the small board at the front as examples. Again inexplicably, after half an hour of this writing task and four minutes before the end of the lesson, the teacher shouted 'Leon! How rude!' again, without me seeing what it was that was 'rude'.

I found the morning in class extremely dispiriting. I had come into my fieldwork with lofty expectations of sophisticated and insightful findings. The experience of small children aged five being sat on a carpet for an hour, their utterances ignored and one being repeatedly told off was not the vision of educational complexity I had been hoping for. I felt my observational skills lacking, the children's educational experience grim and my implied [internal] criticism of a well-meaning and welcoming teacher utterly depressing^{xiv}.

Squashed into my tiny seat in the lunch room, I saw Kalim turn away from the bin and suddenly start to cry. He walked immediately to one of the mealtime supervisors, still crying. Despite being within reasonable earshot I am not clear what he said to her, so I wonder whether the mealtime supervisor could have gleaned what had just occurred. I heard something about Leon and his sandwich in the bin. Without any further questioning, without asking Leon or discussing the issue, the mealtime supervisor walked over to where Leon was sitting and told him off saying that he would be staying in at lunchtime.

Leon also started crying. Kalim sat back down next to him.

After a few minutes, I decided to go over to ask Kalim and Leon the packed lunch/school dinner seating question I have been asking other children. Without answering it, Kalim tells me, with some urgency, his side of the sandwich/sobbing incident. I haven't asked, and he doesn't seem upset at this point. He explains that Leon said his sandwich looked bad, so he went to throw it in the bin, but he didn't want to throw it in the bin. Leon adds, as a point of information, that the sandwich *had*

looked green and it looked bad. There is no argument between the two boys as they report this to me. Kalim says that Leon had made a comment about the sandwich (whether with malicious intent or genuine distaste for the sandwich's appearance I have no idea - and Kalim did not suggest his view on this). On the strength of this comment, Kalim had evidently gone and put his sandwich in the rubbish bin. Kalim did not offer further explanation as to why he subsequently got upset. It appeared to me from what he had said and from having earlier observed his behaviour at the bin, that having put his sandwich in the bin, Kalim (possibly suddenly realising what he had done and that maybe he had little else to eat), regretted his actions and burst into tears. Leon explained again that he'd thought the sandwich looked bad.

I wondered why the mealtime supervisor had not talked it through with the boys, even if only to say something along the lines of 'you shouldn't insult someone else's food' to one and 'you shouldn't have taken it seriously' or 'you should have checked with an adult' to the other. I am duly cautioned in my judgements by Pike's suggestion that 'lunchtime staff are constructed as deficient against the norm of professional middle class teachers' (p. 285), but I have also as a teacher witnessed a wealth of fairness, advice and good sense being dispensed to children by mealtime staff. It seemed to me equally 'silly' that Kalim had thrown away his own sandwich and not made his own judgement or sought a second opinion. Leon had no opportunity to offer his version of events to the mealtime supervisor and I could not see why he had been so harshly dealt with.

What the boys said next stunned me. Following the sandwich discussion, and still struggling from my morning, I decided to take the opportunity to ask the two boys what had happened when [their teacher] had said Leon had been very rude, since I hadn't caught what had precipitated this. I asked indirectly, recalling that I had heard Mrs Jones saying someone had been rude and did they remember what had happened? Leon answered that another pupil had said something, and that he had pulled a face. I later asked a different child about this, who said that it was a kind of challenge, to pull a face. Back in the lunch room, by way of explanation, the two boys then volunteered by turn,

'We're bad boys'

'we've got behavioural problems'

'yeah, we've got bad behaviour'.

Leon and Kalim, aged 5

I did not ask them who had said this, or how this belief had come about. I think (my mind reeling with but they're so young! Who has given them this vocabulary?!) and not wanting to overtly accept (and therefore re-inscribe) this statement as valid, I gasped, 'Oh' and gave a 'surely not' type frown. I noted that they were neither boastful nor downcast about it. It was said as a statement of fact. Data from children came from both informal discussions and more formal interviews. This statement somewhat belies the layers of complexity and challenge posed by interviewing children. As well as this dilemma around 're-inscription', there were ongoing judgements to be made around trust, perceived role and purpose. As well as listening to and sharing many stories and items (for example a collection of Formula 1 car pictures, verbal display of lion sounds, renditions of the Bob the Builder theme) when I explained I was 'finding out more about what it is like to be a child at primary school', I also negotiated the practicalities of when I could talk with children in class (i.e. potentially taking them 'off task') and conversations in unlikely situations: for example a child-initiated conversation as said child swung upside down on playground equipment in the driving wind. On one occasion I was taken aback when a child (aged 8), seated on one of the 'low' tables (as the children termed them; see Chapter Three below) commented on my illegibly scrawled handwriting – his face etched with sympathy at this deficit on my part - whilst at the same time reassuring me, 'don't worry I can't read'. The latter statement conveying this to be a good thing in the context – because he was communicating this would preserve the anonymity of my field notes.

The exchange with Leon and Kalim above reminded me afterwards, not at the time, of a moment in Reay and Wiliam (1999 p.345)

Hannah: I'm really scared about the SATs [standard assessment tasks]. Mrs O'Brien [a teacher at the school] came and talked to us about our spelling and I'm no good at spelling and David [the class teacher] is giving us times tables tests every morning and I'm hopeless at times tables so I'm frightened I'll do the SATs and I'll be a nothing.

Diane: I don't understand, Hannah. You can't be a nothing.

Hannah: Yes, you can 'cause you have to get a level like a level 4 or a level 5 and if you're no good at spellings and times tables you don't get those levels and so you're a nothing.

Diane: I'm sure that's not right.

Hannah: Yes it is 'cause that's what Mrs O'Brien was saying.

In her paper 'What does it mean when an ethnographer intervenes?' Barbara Dennis describes 'transformative engagement with participants - hoping to leave the site better, not undisturbed' (2009 p. 131) and outlines 'four primary modes of intervening: interpersonal, administrative, enactment and modelling' (Dennis 2009 p. 135). I discuss 'emancipatory research' further in my methodologies chapter and state that whilst I made a concerted effort to understand participants' perspectives in their own terms, it did not involve actions on my part to alter those conditions directly at the time of the fieldwork. As such, when I consider ethical dilemmas and 'intervention', it is not with an intention of '*transformative engagement*'.

Dilemmas and role management in the field

As Teacher in Charge of a Pupil Referral Unit, one of my responsibilities had been the safe 'physical management' of children. Put more directly, it meant working within the parameters of DfES Circular 10/98 and 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils'. I mention this for two reasons. Three if you include 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' as being very high on the list of reasons for my wanting to research inclusive education and work as a teacher in mainstream schools to challenge school exclusions. The first reason is for the quote 'hold and make no worse'. Used during 'Team Teach' training^{xv}, this phrase was applied to 'practice' scenarios as a first response to physical attack by a child or young person. Specifically, having a fistful of hair grabbed or sustaining a bite, the principle being that the head and neck (the head attached to the hair in the first example, the same head as the teeth in the case of the bite) are protected by being mobilised (held) and further injury prevented (made no worse). Perhaps it is an unfortunate analogy, but looking at Mike Oliver's 1992 paper later in my methodologies chapter, there is a precedent for participants being cautioned against researchers, as a potential assault requiring protection. Murphy and Dingwall discuss further (2001 p. 340) the harm ethnographers can cause. So 'hold and make no worse' was the sentence that came to mind in regard to my level of intervention at school. I did not seek to 'leave the site better, not undisturbed' (Dennis 2009 p. 131) but at the same time, I did not wish to make it in any way 'worse'.

The second reason I mention Team Teach and physical restraint is in relation to dilemmas. My response to Leon, Kalim and other children in the course of conversations and questions during fieldwork presented me with frequent dilemmas. My 'surely not' frown was typical of my unguarded first responses to – for example -

children's assertion of their positioning in the classroom. As such, I see Diane Reay also intervenes in the quote above ('You can't be a nothing', 'I'm sure that's not right') in a similar way to my 'surely not frown'. Entering into questions and conversations that elicit – however unwittingly - these sorts of 'difficult' comments from children brings with it ethical dilemmas. Having produced these responses through a line of questioning one wonders whether this is in itself productive, and then, whether to intervene by voicing or expressing an opinion or risk re-inscription by *not* commenting. There were situations in which I did not intervene: a frequent example would be children asking for a spelling or guidance in a task. In these situations I would not offer assistance, and if asked directly I would re-direct them to ask the adult in class (teacher or teaching assistant), usually saying that I was 'not sure'. I wished to observe how their question would be answered in the run of things.

I found an illuminating example of an ethical dilemma faced by Dawn Goodwin during the fieldwork for her ethnographic doctoral research of expertise in anaesthesia. She describes her insider status, a nurse who had worked for five years in the hospital she was studying, as 'simultaneously advantageous and potentially detrimental' and that 'these characteristics were integral to how the fieldwork developed' (Goodwin et al 2003 p. 570). Whilst not a teacher at Viner School - there were parallels with my known teacher status, particular examples of which can be seen in Chapter 4, in which teachers describe the children in their classes. Becoming 'increasingly sensitive to the ethical implications of capitalizing on [her] insider [nurse] status' Goodwin describes responding by 'reiterating [her] identity as a researcher regularly and by negotiating consent every time [she] formally observed anaesthetists'. She continues,

Incidents and issues that came to my attention informally I would try to follow up during the formal data collection, where the ambiguous status of the data, whether on- or off-the-record, was clarified. Nevertheless, I could not halt the flow of informal observations and insights that I absorbed by virtue of working in the anaesthetic department, nor could I erase my presence when conversations occurred around me...I began to negotiate the ordinary 'everyday dilemmas' that are part of the practice of ethnography.

Goodwin et al 2003 pp. 571 - 2

These responses echo my experiences during fieldwork, particularly the audio recording of discussions, for which I sought permission and during each session would overtly signal putting on my small digital recorder. The 'situation' Goodwin describes is one in which she was formally observing a consultant anaesthetist in the operating theatre. A second consultant anaesthetist entered and suggested 'tak[ing] this opportunity to have a confidential conversation'. Illuminating firstly an example in which Goodwin stopped taking field notes, she therefore turned her attention to 'the patient, the monitoring, and anaesthetic equipment' and in so doing realised that 'the patient's blood pressure had fallen, the fluid infusion had run out, and the anaesthetic infusion was also almost finished'. She continues,

'I now had to consider, although I was no longer employed as nurse, whether I still had a professional obligation to notify the anaesthetist. A side effect of this action would be a retreat back down the path I had taken from participant to observer. During these rapid deliberations, the anaesthetic machine's alarms sounded, the confidential conversation swiftly concluded, and the anaesthetist's full attention returned to the patient.

Goodwin et al 2003 p. 572

My interest in this example is that I found it difficult not to intervene to 'help' children day to day, maintaining as far as possible my position as 'observer'. This meant engaging sometimes in discussions and questions to clarify my understandings, showing pleasure at being shown work, engaging in conversations, but mostly sitting and observing. It is with some relief that whilst I felt torn by not 'offering help' these were not in the immediate sense 'life or death' situations such as that faced by Goodwin. I also mention my work at the Pupil Referral Unit because in that and other educational settings I had been faced with quick decisions around unpredicted perilous situations: the dilemmas of how to intervene when a young child threatened to jump out of a second floor window - sitting on the windowsill as I stood by the door, another jumping into a lake in a public park, another leaping into an animal enclosure, to say nothing of the millions of seemingly mundane daily interactional decisions. In this sense, the experience of dilemmas and decision-making were not new, but different; in my new and isolated role of ethnographic researcher.

At the end of this first day's fieldwork I went home. Later that day there was a seminar at college I had wanted to attend: Professor Stephen Ball, at that point much read and cited but not as yet my supervisor, was speaking. Keen as I had

been to hear Stephen and see my research colleagues, I hid under my duvet and did not go. I did not want to continue with research if this is what it involved.

When I returned to school the following week and for the months after that, the process of participant observation^{xvi} was no less difficult. However seemingly good natured, subsequent episodes with both children and staff felt nothing like the delightful ‘democratization’ process talked happily about between Mitch Duneier & Les Back (2006 p. 549), ‘the idea of bringing the research subject into the process of taking notes of their own, helping me to know what were important research questions to know about, democratizing the research process...’

Wacquant’s (2002) subsequent critique of this same ethnography (Duneier 1999) suggests that in Duneier’s ‘wish to articulate and even celebrate the fundamental goodness—honesty, decency, frugality—of America’s urban poor’ he ‘gives us a one-sided, truncated picture’, alerting us to the complexities of every methodological approach whatever its strengths. And as I reflect upon these ethical dilemmas I do not want to be one of the white women sobbing – as captured so insightfully by Leonardo (2002 p.39). In this paper he analyses whiteness and incidents of white women crying in the context of discussions about racism; eliciting sympathy and in so doing weakening the impact of the inequalities under discussion. It is not, as they say, all about me; but my response does capture, like the women Leonardo characterises, the facing of one’s professional complicity that Shireen Benjamin (2002 pp. 27 – 28) articulates so clearly. Benjamin draws upon Skeggs’ ‘triad of power’ (Skeggs 1997 p. 23 in Benjamin 2002 p. 27), reflecting upon issues of power, responsibility and ethics in ethnographic methodology and as a teacher being similarly ‘multiply positioned’ as Benjamin (2002 p. 27) termed it, in relation to teachers, pupils and research endeavour.

Many years later, I wrote the following abstract summarising this thesis for PhD examination entry:

Drawing upon post-structuralist theory, it is proposed that staff judgements about their pupils were not simply descriptive, but also productive of pupil identities: the ‘making’ of the primary school pupil. Through the same normative processes that served an over-riding drive to ‘fix’ or repair children in order to meet the normative demands of the ‘standards agenda’, it is suggested that pupils were increasingly ‘fixed’ as educational subjects. As such, I argue that educational inequalities were

being made and re-made as apparently unanticipated and unquestioned outcomes of the many processes comprising 'good practice', notably grouping by 'ability'. Relating back to my initial questions, my findings problematise 'inclusiveness' and the reach of exclusionary processes across a school judged by OFSTED to be outstanding.

This succinct paragraph, one I could not have begun to construct or for that matter understand as I entered fieldwork, reminds me of Clough and Barton's (1995 pp. 3 – 4) phrase 'sterile cleanliness':

'The biggest lie that a so-called 'methodology' tells is of the distance between us and our work; hence we elaborate the clinical nature, the sterile cleanliness of the instruments we use'. (Clough and Barton 1995 pp. 3 – 4). I have written myself in to ensuing chapters, endeavouring to engage the reader in a reciprocal process; what I term 'thinking out loud' on the written page. I have done this to disrupt this notion of 'sterile cleanliness'; attempting to illuminate processes, dilemmas, analyses: that is, these many moments of observation, interaction, generous access granted by staff and children at this school.

Overview

In Chapters One and Two I have retained much of the original Literature Review and accompanying Methodologies chapter submitted at the outset of the research programme, prior to fieldwork. I decided, as I have discussed in this chapter, to retain much of these early essays with their exploration of a range of issues of interest at the outset of my research subsequently editing to add commentary, literature and methodology that has transpired to be directly relevant to my findings.

In Chapter Three I outline processes through which educational inequalities are made and re-made in the apparently unanticipated and unquestioned outcomes of pupil grouping, specifically grouping children for different classroom activities by their perceived 'ability'. I begin to open up themes emerging from interlocking policy processes and imperatives in this inner city primary school. Responses from staff and pupils suggested that in the push for ever increasing SATS results to meet government targets and measures of 'success', a hierarchy of educational winners and losers was being created by practices assumed to be a model of good practice from the start of schooling.

In Chapter Four I explore teachers' decision-making processes underpinning the school environment. Drawing upon the work of Foucault (1979) I demonstrate that 'dividing practices' such as grouping by 'ability' pervade children's daily classroom experiences. Making links between daily decision-making and their wider context, I discuss ways in which staff work to enact the plethora of 'initiatives' and directives issued from central government agencies. I propose that small moments of every day classroom experience reveal 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p.135) functioning as 'disciplinary power' that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' (Foucault 1979). As such I suggest that the same processes that serve an over-riding drive to 'fix' or repair children in order to meet the normative demands of the 'standards' agenda', increasingly 'fix' children as educational subjects in a finely graded hierarchy.

Chapter Five is what I termed when writing 'the SEN (Special Educational Needs) one^{xvii}', in which I further explore the latticework of what staff refer to as 'interventions', particularly those that take place outside the classroom. I explore 'arenas' (Fulcher 1989), where children are discursively produced in classroom hierarchies. Findings are presented in which 'special educational needs' meetings and staff discussions around out-of- classroom interventions combined with curricula pressures to produce children in terms of worry and concern. Problems, or the absence of problems were individualised via understandings of internal deficits and causation, particularly focused on issues of ability and parenting. Going back quarter of a century, my findings here echo Len Barton, who cites Galloway (1985) in noting:

that the common elements in these approaches [withdrawal groups, specific curriculum, special units] do not give mainstream teachers opportunity or encouragement to consider how the school contributes to the pupil's difficulties in the first place.

Barton 1986 p.286

In Chapter Six I finally - given my original research questions - get around to focussing upon 'inclusive education' and inclusion in this school; a school that is judged and spoken by staff and OFSTED as being 'very inclusive' and including 'all pupils'. My findings propose that inclusion is constructed within the traditional framework of special educational needs (Armstrong 2005) involving, as Slee (2001 p. 117) describes 'a deep epistemological attachment to the view that special educational needs are produced by the impaired pathology of the child'. Data

discussed in chapters five and six echo Slee's assertion that 'For some, inclusion, like integration policy before it, is the Trojan horse for assimilation (Branson & Miller, 1989) [in which] children with special educational needs are to be managed in the regular school. Their presence evokes the competing interests of delimiting their disruption to their peers' (Slee 1997 p. 411). Through an exploration of data in Chapter Six I propose that 'performances' of inclusion produce the 'included child' (Allan 2008) subject to surveillance and technical solutions that leave stubborn social inequalities (Leonardo 2009) and routine exclusions uninterrogated.

Chapter Seven is my concluding chapter in which I discuss my key themes and outline what I consider this thesis contributes to the sociology of education. I reflect upon these under broad headings and then bring them together, highlighting the importance of their intersections in my findings and analysis. The first of these broad headings explores the production of a hierarchy of learners and associated persistence of 'fixed' notions of 'ability' in the new millennium. The second, inclusion/exclusion recalls my initial research questions and subsequent findings and the third, education policy, foregrounds methodological issues together with researching the 'good teacher', 'good pupil' and 'good school'. I reflect upon the flaws in this study and limitations of this piece of research before looking outwards to its implications and questions raised for further research.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Set against the apparent paradox between a government agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand (e.g. DFEE 1999a&b) and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other (SEU 1998; DFEE 2000a; DFES 2001a) this PhD study started as a research proposal back in the last century. I sought to enquire into these processes at the primary school level. I wanted to find out how these apparent tensions are negotiated in primary school and what the understandings of inclusive education and school exclusion are by those involved in the school setting, in the context of local and national policy.

This chapter and accompanying 'methodologies' chapter were written prior to fieldwork and subsequent analysis. Coming now to the conclusion of many years' struggle to maintain part-time study in order to complete this project, my dilemma has been whether to start afresh presenting only up-to-date literature and methodology that has transpired to be directly relevant to my findings or whether to retain much of these early essays with their exploration of a range of issues of interest at the outset of my research. Whilst reading back feels at times a little like cringing at ones' fashion choices in old photographs, my decision to retain and work with the original documents is I think, appropriate to the reflexivity underpinning this ethnographic study. Perhaps because I was fairly clueless theoretically and analytically when I set out – and/or whether this enhanced my 'theoretical sensitivity' (Strauss and Corbin 1990), my findings during fieldwork were not as I might have anticipated from the few expectations I did have at the outset of this research process. Returning to edit these documents I see they provided enough of a basis to set off into the field, but with much theoretical work yet to do. As such, there is interaction with and reflection upon literature and ideas throughout the ensuing thesis.

This literature review chapter starts with navel gazing about the task in hand: situating both the literature review as a task as well as the study. There was a moment before I ran away from educational middle management, before I knew anything of the words 'managerialist' or 'performativity' when I found myself writing my then place of work's 'Policy on writing policies' and had a sensation of the

absurd; and there is a touch of that in setting off with a research project: reflecting on reflecting; doing literature searches on doing literature searches. I present the context for this study and my place in that context; and as I subsequently observe, the raising of particular questions is in itself constitutive of one's positioning. The study is evidently concerned with 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' so I explore those here, together with what Youdell carefully words is 'the continued significance of social and biographical identity categories such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability and, more recently, sexuality for educational inequality' (Youdell 2006a p.1). There is also a review of the literature that informed my understandings of education policy.

Situating this literature review, situating this study

At a time of such overwhelming access to information, even reading voraciously as Delamont (1992 p.29) extolled, I realised that my literature review could only ever be a partial (in both senses of the word) presentation of issues and literature pertinent to the proposed study. My subsequent enquiry into methodologies served to support this realisation.

I retain here much of my initial literature review written at the outset of this research project, intentionally a partial presentation of some of the key literature that influenced the thinking of *this* fledgling researcher for *this* particular project. Thinking back to Richardson's (2000 p.937) advice to consider the purpose of writing, asking of the writing process 'Who is your audience? What are your purposes?' I am making explicit my purposes.

I explore further the methodological issues of situating this research project in the accompanying methodology chapter. There, I outline this positioning of the self, reflexivity and notions of 'truths'. Also, the raising of particular questions being in itself constitutive of one's positioning. Research does not, as Clough and Barton (1995 p.2) point out 'merely address or discover the objects of its inquiry, but begins to create them from the first moment of identification of a topic; how we choose to research a subject is itself constitutive of that subject.' Without going into whether there is an 'obdurate world out there' (Denzin 1992 p.158 cited in Gillborn 1998a p.40), Gillborn (1998a p.40) professing himself as having a 'realist conception of the social' and taking on notions of plausibility and credibility from Hammersley (e.g. 1993 p.340) asserts that 'The criteria for plausibility and credibility cannot be

divorced from the assumptions of the individual critic, whose views may reflect particular political, methodological, class-based, gendered and racialized assumptions' (Gillborn 1998a p.41). I am particularly thinking here of Ramazanoglu (1992 p. 208 cited in Gillborn 1998a) questioning any position that fails to problematize the question of 'who has the power to judge what is relevant'. In the processes of fieldwork, analysis, writing and subsequent editing there is a balance between judging what is relevant and not 'leaving things out' (Delamont 1992 p.20).

Having daunted myself into a corner through reading 'doing a literature review/research project' guides (e.g. Hart 1998, Bell 1993) I recalled what Stephen Ball (1994a p.2) described as an 'exercise in applied sociology'. I am referring to what Ball (1994a p.14) describes as 'a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories', especially his description of 'three epistemologies or analytical perspectives' as *fighting* to be heard in his theory-work (Ball 1994a p.1). 'At times' he continues 'they clash and grate against one another' (Ball 1994a p.2). Also pertinent is Sarah Neale's work in which she discusses 'the tension between adopting a traditional feminist (egalitarian, reciprocal) approach and an antiracist (challenging) approach.' (Neale 1998 p.109). Whatever one may think of these approaches or her characterisation of them, what I am getting at is the way in which their work explores issues from these 'diverse concepts and theories'.

At the time of initially writing my literature review I was yet to see whether and in what ways the concepts and theories I would explore might fight, grate or create tensions in the process of my then proposed empirical work. The notion of them doing so, gave me permission, urged me to explore a range of concepts and theories, different perspectives, to inform this project. I was encouraged to take risks. Looking back now at the near-completion of this research project, my data pressed me to engage with 'poststructural theories of power and the subject' (Youdell 2006b p.35). As Youdell summarises,

Foucault's work reconfigures how we understand history, knowledge, the subject, and power. In a Foucauldian frame, history is understood not as the march of progress, but as marked by improvisational borrowing in the face of new and pressing demands. Knowledge is understood not as a reflection and transmitter of external truths, but as contingent and constructed and linked intimately to power. The subject is understood not as pre-existing, self-knowing, and continuous, but as subjectivated through her/his ongoing

constitution in and by discourse. And power is understood not as wielded by the powerful over the powerless, but as at once productive and an effect of discourse (see Foucault, 1990, 1991).

Youdell 2006b p.35

Drawing upon Foucault's (1979) concept of 'dividing practices', I argue in subsequent chapters that small moments of every day classroom experience reveal 'rather simple technical procedures' Rose (1999 p.135) functioning as 'disciplinary power' that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' (Foucault 1977 p.183). Citing Foucault suggests that I am, as Popkewitz & Brennan (1998 p. 4) put it, questioning 'ways in which power works through discursive practices and performances of schooling'. Data throughout my research indicated a need to question taken for granted practices and associated 'technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p. 135) in this school context. The detailed and careful analyses in Deborah Youdell's (e.g. 2000, 2006a 2006b) work, as well as that of Julie Allan (e.g. 2007) and Linda Graham (2006, 2008) build upon the work of Foucault^{xviii} and have provided ways in which to explore the minutiae of these taken for granted practices; the 'dividing practices' and what I term the 'lattice-work' of interlocking interventions; sorting and grouping pupils in a finely graded hierarchy throughout this school setting.

I blanched when I first read that 'it could be argued that all critical theory contains elements of Critical Theory' (Scott & Usher 1999 p.23). Scribbling 'for goodness sake' above that sentence in my copy, this was just the sort of apparent pedantry I was dreading as a teacher entering the realm of research. I was pleased therefore, to find a writer who commented on 'dense writing style' (Carspecken 1996 p.4). Citing an article by Kincheloe & McLaren (1994), Carspecken (1996 p.4) comments that it is 'probably unfortunately, very typical in style to what you will find in the critical and postmodern research literature' but continues 'The dense writing style they use works well with readers like [Carspecken], who have already read many works in the critical and postmodern traditions. Some things are best said through a style like theirs'. He goes on to qualify that it is 'probably unfortunate' that 'virtually all writings in the field are composed in this way. This has made work in the critical tradition basically inaccessible to a large number of people' (Carspecken 1996 p.4). At the outset I saw these as pertinent issues to the ways in which I saw this study being situated. In combination with methodological issues of reflexivity/situating the self, (and as I explore further in my methodology chapter), part of this project is an

attempt to make the research process more 'visible' (Barton 1998 p.30), moving away from what Clough and Barton (1995 p.2) characterised as 'the sterile cleanliness of the [research] instruments we use'. Reading work in the 'dense writing style' of the critical tradition to which Carspecken refers (above) has felt like battling entry to an exclusive club or clique, about which I have been continually uncomfortable. I have sought to explicitly 'write myself in' to analyses and thought processes presented here, endeavouring to interrupt closure. There is an ongoing interaction in the research process between data collection, literature and oneself as 'research instrument' (Janesick 2000 p.386). I see later in the Scott and Usher text (1999 p.35), the assertion that 'critical theorists believe that their role is to encourage and seek rational critique, and to enforce the norms governing rational discourse – and all this in the cause of emancipation'. They go on, 'it is not difficult to see how this position could easily slip into one of mastery and how critical theory can itself so easily become a 'masterful' discourse. This possibility is heightened by the failure to foreground reflexivity'. My interest in critical theory is in examining 'the relationship of reform to existing patterns of social inequality' and 'bringing to bear those concepts and interpretive devices which offer the best possibilities of insight and understanding' (Ball 1994a p.2).

Looking back at my original consideration of Stephen Ball's 'toolbox of diverse concepts and theories' (1994a p.14), subsequent data analysis and related reading (e.g. Reay 2001, 2004, Lareau and Horvat 1999, Ball et al 2004) encouraged me to engage with the work of Bourdieu (e.g. 1986a and b, 1987, Bourdieu and Champagne 1999) in thinking about multiple small moments of inclusion and exclusion. Thinking about analytical perspectives that might clash and grate against one another, I remember at the outset being distinctly unsettled by the adversarial nature of academia when I encountered Hatcher and Troyna's (1994) critique of 'the policy cycle' (e.g. Ball 1987, 1993). I remember one example in which Hatcher and Troyna (1994 p.160) took apart Ball's apparently 'highly selective reading of Althusser' and could not imagine myself entering the fray. As I conclude writing I still can't, but that said, as well as data calling upon Foucauldian understandings of 'power and the subject' this study also draws upon understandings of structural and institutional racism developed in critical race theory (e.g. Harris 1993, Ladson Billings 1998, Taylor 2009, Gillborn 2008).

Returning then to critical theory and Critical Theory as described by Scott and Usher (1999 p.30), 'one sense in which critical theory is 'critical' is that it challenges the

positivist approach to research, as being enmeshed in dominant ideology'. They continue:

The aim of Critical Theory is emancipation, so it is critical in the sense that it does not simply seek to generate knowledge of the world as it is, but to detect and unmask beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice and democracy and to engage in action that brings these about.

Scott and Usher 1999 p.30

For me, this certainly resonated with the issues raised in my research questions. Gillborn hints at this 'unmasking' in stating that critical social research 'tries to dig beneath the surface...It asks how social systems really work, how ideology or history conceals the processes which oppress and control people' (Harvey 1990 p.6 in Gillborn 2000 p.485) Citing Troyna (1995) and echoing the description of critical theory above, Gillborn (2000 p.485) goes on to say that 'critical social theory may take many forms but is not bound by the limits of conventional positivist assumptions about what counts as 'scientific' rigour, since such assumptions may themselves be implicated in the very processes of oppression that are at issue'. Without digging too deeply into epistemological debates, this touches upon the piece of 'dense' writing that Carspecken (1994 p.9) was considering, in which Kincheloe & McLaren (1994 p.139) assert that 'all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations which are socially and historically constituted' and that 'facts can never be isolated from the domain of values'. Carspecken (1996 p.7) cites battles fought over 'what has passed for 'neutral objective science'' which is 'in fact not neutral at all, but subtly biased in favor of privileged groups'. Following on from my experiences in teaching, predominantly with those children excluded from mainstream school^{xix} I had expected this study to interrogate school processes associated with and those children prone to *formal* exclusion. What has been unexpected, were the 'gentle' exclusionary practices (Bourdieu and Champagne 1999 pp. 422-423) via notions of 'ability'; 'fixing' all children both within in an organisational hierarchy of perceived ability and sorting those for remediation to a perceived 'norm'. Unpicking taken for granted assumptions of 'ability' and pervasive 'ability grouping' throughout the data presented, illustrate the sort of 'battles' to which Carspecken refers (1996 p.7). Gilborn and Youdell's (2000) study of secondary schools yielded an assertion (after Bowles and Gintis 1976) of '*the new IQism*, a situation where *hereditarian assumptions (and all the concomitant inequalities of opportunity that they produce*

and legitimate) and coded and enacted through the discourse of 'ability' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000 p. 212 *italics in original*). As they continue,

'The view of 'ability' that currently dominates education, from the heart of government through to individual classrooms, represents a victory for the hereditarian position, without debate and without conscience. At the school level this IQist notion of ability provides an opportunity for teachers (and especially senior management) to identify the winners and losers at the earliest possible stage, allowing continual checks to ensure that those predicted to achieve success 'fulfil' their potential.

Gillborn and Youdell 2000 p.212 (*my emphasis*)

The phrase 'without conscience' stands out here as one that teachers at the school in this study would undoubtedly balk at. As explored in my later chapter around 'inclusion' Viner School was one judged as being excellent by OFSTED, in which teachers worked hard to meet the criteria of success. I explore ways in which 'ability' - functioning as a slippery term reflecting fixed notions of 'intelligence' - is layered into 'good practice'; the daily organisation of children in classrooms. I emphasise '*at the earliest possible stage*' in the quote above, as these judgements were being made about children as young as five years old. Vivian Hill's (2005) exploration of the development of the British Ability Scales is illustrative of the quiet replacement of the contentious 'intelligence' by the less contested 'ability' in British psychologists' work with children, whilst John White's (2006) painstaking study of the historical roots of intelligence testing amply demonstrates the intertwining of intelligence and the traditional school curriculum.

This is not to say that I am 'aiming towards erroneous conclusions which are in line with [my] commitments' (Hammersley & Gomm 1997 *abstract*). I asked questions, and interrogated what has been written. The literature presented here enhanced my understandings, set the scene, the theoretical context in which this study was and is set. When I first wrote this chapter I sought also to demonstrate the relevance of the study; that it intended to build upon current understandings and is important in the current educational climate –to theorists, and policy makers including practitioners in schools. My suggestion, as I near completion of this work is that it contributes to the work of others who have in particular questioned grouping by so-called ability. Gillborn and Youdell (2000), Boaler (1997 a and b), Boaler et al (2000), William and Bartholomew (2001, 2004 Sukhnandan & Lee 1998, Hallam & Toutounji 1996) all

explored setting and grouping in secondary schools. Hallam, Ireson and Davies (2004) explore setting and grouping in the primary school but do not interrogate structural inequality. They skim the surface of possible 'legitimization of differences in ability, [which] in some cases, led to teasing and stigmatization' (Hallam et al 2004 p.526); not overtly challenging 'common-sense models of intelligence and ability' (Youdell 2006a p.1); what Hallam et al (2004 p.526) term at one point, 'the pecking order of ability within [children's] class[es]'. Indeed as Youdell outlines 'Marketisation, high stakes tests, the revival of 'intelligence' and the individualisation of the learner have been subject to extensive scrutiny by critical educationalists who have demonstrated the continued significance of social and biographical identity categories such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability and, more recently, sexuality for educational inequality' (Youdell 2006a p.1). Slee et al's 1998 book title 'School Effectiveness for Whom?' is still an apt question and it is within this context of the problematised 'good school' that this study questions the outcomes of interlocking policy structures and processes that make up 'good practice'.

This study in context

Without a big interrogation into what 'context' might mean (e.g. Popkewitz & Brennan 1998 p.12), I am thinking of relevant legislative frameworks, or government documents that have framed work in schools in the areas of inclusion and exclusion. It is these shifts that engaged me as a practitioner as to the tensions and issues they raised. I understand that work in schools is a more complex process than a top-down model of policy where 'government makes it and its bureaucracies implement it' (Fulcher 1989 p.5). I later explore conceptualisations of policy that move beyond this, to an understanding of how policy is made '*at all levels*' (e.g. Fulcher 1989; Ball 1997; Ozga 2000).

Looking at the Government Circular 10/99 'Social inclusion: Pupil Support' (DfEE 1999a), the cover page states that the document 'explains the law and good practice on: pupil behaviour and discipline; reducing the risk of disaffection; school attendance and registration; detention: proper use of exclusion; and re-integration of excluded pupils'. This is one of two documents (DFEE 1999a&b), that use the word 'inclusion' so prominently in their titles. This seems to set up an expectation as to whom, or to what 'inclusion' might pertain. The language of 'social inclusion' and reduction of 'social exclusion' had been given a high profile by the New Labour government since its election in 1997. Long ago as it seems now, Levitas (1998 p.1)

noted that Tony Blair, then Prime Minister promised 'a Britain renewed...where we build a nation united, with common purpose, shared values, with no-one shut out or excluded'.

The increase of exclusionary measures was linked to the legislative framework introduced by successive Conservative governments firstly in the Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 and given reinforcement by the 1993 Education Act (Gewirtz et al 1995). Collectively known as the 'marketisation' of education (Gillborn 1997a, Parsons 1999), a significant body of research (e.g. Gillborn & Youdell 2000, Gewirtz et al 1995, Parsons 1999, Barton and Slee 1999, Gillborn 1997a, Barton 1997a) illustrated ways in which these different mechanisms served to increase existing divisions and inequalities for pupils and schools. I note the separate section of the National Curriculum (2000) under the heading 'Welcome to Inclusion'. In my later chapter in which I specifically explore 'inclusion' and inclusive education in this school setting, I present and challenge this idea of 'inclusion' as a destination, suggestive as it is of successful arrival and closure.

This literature review and ensuing fieldwork were completed as the revised SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001) and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) were introduced along with the Disability Discrimination Act (2001) and statutory guidance to Local Education Authorities, 'Inclusive Schooling' (DfES 2001). With these policy initiatives there was the suggestion that inclusion into the mainstream of schooling was the intended outcome for the majority. These followed the 1997 consultative Green Paper, 'Excellence for All Children' (DFEE 1997) which had intended to show how the New Labour government aimed to 'improve the achievements of children with special educational needs (SEN) in England over the next five years' (DFEE 1997). These and later documents however maintained existing structures; curriculum, assessment and Statements of Special Educational Need. Whilst the later ten-year Government Strategy (2004) Removing Barriers to Achievement' stated that 'the proportion of children educated in special schools should fall over that time' (DfES 2004 p.37), special schools and Statements of Special Educational Needs together with associated classification and categorising of individual deficit were retained (Norwich 2010).

Inclusion for pupils with SEN is presented as a matter of minor modification to the curriculum, extra support, more efficient organization and increased involvement of parents. Educational success and achievement are presented

in terms of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. No reference is made to social and economic deprivation and disadvantage, cultural diversity, discrimination and oppression and their influences on access to educational entitlement. Inclusion is presented as a simplistic matter of relocation rather than a problematic and controversial concept which is open to a wide range of definitions and about which there is little agreement or shared understanding. The route to providing excellence for all children is simply that schools must become more *effective* and *efficient* at what they are already doing.

Lloyd 2000 p. 136

I initially anticipated my research would be located within formal processes of exclusion in school and as such interrogated policy documents (e.g. SEU 1998, DFEE 1999a&b, The White Paper 'Schools Achieving Success' DFES 2001) in the light of constructions of inclusion and exclusion, the disproportionate numbers of African Caribbean boys excluded from schools and presentation of 'EBD' (Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) as a category. However as I now read back over Lloyd's critique of the 1997 Green Paper (above), it turned out to be this vision of 'inclusion' and 'excellence for all children' that forms the substance of my research findings. Whilst the OFSTED report 'Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught?' (2006) indicated apparent improvements in SEN provision (Norwich 2010), the same report was critical of the aspiration from government for 'good joint working between special and mainstream sectors' which had apparently been 'rarely observed'. However, the school researched here is one with an exemplary OFSTED report, and as such the story relates the outcomes in practice of effectiveness and efficiency.

Inclusive education and Special Educational Needs.

My employment as a teacher and MA studies have been in special education. Mike Oliver, then Professor of Disability Studies at Greenwich University spoke of the 'tide of history' that was 'about to sweep over special education' (Oliver 2000 p.21). Summarising the three types of response he had received to his suggestion that 'special education had no future', he said,

There were what I called 'ostriches'; people who thought they could bury their heads in the sand and let the tide sweep over them. The second were a group

I called the 'rubber ducks' or to borrow Slee's term, the 'linguistic adjusters'; they were a group who thought they could bob around on the tide of history but remain untouched. The third group I called the 'surfers'; they saw the incoming tide as a challenge not just to be faced but to be ridden to a better place while enjoying the buzz that surfing brings.

Oliver 2000 p.21

Special education, he concluded, 'can be part of the struggle to produce a more inclusive world or it can continue to align itself with the forces of exclusion' (Oliver 2000 p.21).

This represents a partial view, but certainly one from which to consider some of the key debates in the field. I even use the term 'field' hesitantly as that in itself has been contested by Catherine Clarke et al (1995) and actually, I did not agree with their particular slant on the issue. Clarke et al (1995 p.165) asked 'whether inclusive education is indeed a genuine field and, if so, what sort of field it is' continuing with examples, 'like effective schooling or special educational needs, for instance, but unlike, say, the sociology of education'. This made my heart sink when I first read it, before I could really articulate why. I never wanted to be one of those people arguing as to whether something is a field or not ('life's too short' is the phrase that springs to mind). The notion of 'field' as in 'discursive field' could be pursued in the light of work by Foucault, 'his studies of the prison and the criminal, the asylum and the insane, the clinical and medical gaze, and bodily desires in the history of sexuality are examples of the constructions of discursive fields.' Popkewitz & Brennan (1998 p.12).

Foucault's work in this area is utilised by many, including writers relevant to this study (e.g. Slee 1995; Allan et al 1998, Allan 1999; Ball 1990a, 1994a). But this is not, I would contest, what Clarke et al (1995) were meaning, and I do have to question their apparent need to assert that 'inclusive education is indeed a coherent field of inquiry' (Clarke et al 1995 p.177). 'Our concern' they state,

is that there may be a growing disengagement between the fields of special needs and inclusive education, and we foresee a real danger that the approaches which currently constitute the field of inclusive education may find it increasingly difficult to engage productively with each other.

Clarke et al 1995 p.175

So there is a concern with 'inclusive education' (whether it is a field or not) and its relationship to special education. They also note 'with particular concern the sorts of divisions within the inclusive education movement in the US which Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) report...' (Clarke et al 1995 p.174). I will mention an article that responds to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) and their 'divisions' presently. Finally, I am interested as I have suggested, in their concern that inclusive education 'lacks the cohesion of, say, the effective schools movement.' Now whether there is a reason for that 'because its [inclusive education's] concerns are complex and wide-ranging, and not, necessarily, because it is intrinsically incoherent' (Clark et al 1995 p. 177) it is still presented as something to aspire to. *Lacking* cohesion suggests that it is missing something. I am registering a need to consider 'the school effectiveness movement'.

In her critique of the 2004 Government Strategy for SEN 'Removing Barriers to Achievement', Christine Lloyd observes the 'failure to recognize the complex and controversial nature of inclusion'. This situation is reminiscent of something that Barry Troyna raised in his discussion of racism and education. 'Wittingly or otherwise, ideological sleights of hand in the presentation of these policies resulted in the obscuring rather than clarifying the nature of racism in education and the specific processes which generate racial inequality' (Troyna 1993 p.36). What Troyna draws upon, is what Edelman (1964 in Troyna p.36) 'typifies as condensation symbols'. Troyna continues,

According to Edelman, condensation symbols have a specific political purpose: to create symbolic stereotypes and metaphors which reassure supporters that their interests have been taken into account. But these symbols have a contradictory meaning so that proposed solutions to perceived problems might also be contradictory, or ambiguously related to the way in which proponents and supporters initially viewed the issue.

Troyna 1993 p.36

Sounds a bit like smoke and mirrors. Things being obscured, reflected back in different ways. Whilst as Edelman points out, reassuring supporters that their interests have been taken into account. In my later chapters I build on this literature and draw in particular upon later work by Graham (2006) and Graham and Slee (2008) to reflect upon understandings and paradoxes in conceptualisations of 'inclusion' in this school setting.

I am also aware of the notion of social exclusion, and social inclusion as 'boundary concepts' (Ball et al 2000 p.43). Citing Halpern's (1998) concern that there 'appears to be little consensus on what is meant by 'social exclusion' I see that Ball et al (2000 p.43) use 'boundary concept' as something that 'disguises any disagreement about what is implicated'. Glossing over differences of interpretation in this way, they continue 'may simply work to manoeuvre sharper edged policies concerned with equalities and social justice into safer linguistic and policy territory' (Millborne 1999 p.1 in Ball et al 2000 p.43). I think back to ways in which these terms have been deployed in policy documents.

This discussion recalls Gillian Fulcher's work, in which she explains different discourses of integration again in the area of special education. In her study of integration policy, Fulcher (1989 p.5) observed that the differing definitions of integration she encountered were not to do with misconceptions or mistakes in its definition, but instead revealing of the 'politics of integration and the nature of the competing discourses.' In the same text, Fulcher (1989 p.50) pointed out (and echoes Foucault 1974) that in constructing an object or problem in a certain way, discourses exclude consideration of other 'objects'. This becomes useful when considering Oliver's 'Rubber Ducks'.

Relevant to entering the field was an understanding of legislation and guidance underpinning special educational needs processes including the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DFES 2001c) and accompanying DfES Guidance *Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs* (DFES 2001d); the title eliding the two issues, inclusive education and 'children with special educational needs'. The Code of Practice was related to other recent legislation, notably the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act ('SENDA') (HMSO 2001) and Education Act 1996.

These documents could be seen as a commitment to reducing barriers to participation in mainstream education for disabled students. My attention was drawn to the stern warnings given on what was termed 'the education caveat – within section 316' (DFES 2001d para. 43). That was the caveat about 'incompatibility with the efficient education of other children'. It 'must not be abused' states the guidance (DFES 2001d para 43), emphasising that 'OFSTED will be monitoring how schools and local education authorities operate the new inclusion framework'. Under the heading 'An inclusive ethos', and referring to the 'Index for Inclusion' document

(CSIE 2000) the same guidance states that 'schools that have adopted this approach have seen standards rise for all pupils' (DFES 2001d para. 8). I wondered, remembering William's (2000) article, standards of what? Reflecting upon standards within 'school effectiveness' debates, Slee (1998b p.110-111 *my emphases*) points out that 'effective schools research augments the league tables of schools' achievements in GCSE results to demonstrate the *aggregate* value-added of *selected student cohorts*...equity is submerged within the rhetorical exhortation of the achievement test scores'.

Also, I notice that whilst the 'government recognises and values the important role special schools play' (DFES 2001d para. 53), there is an emphasis upon 'mainstream education'. The guidance document states that 'trivial and inappropriate reasons should not be used to deny children who should and could benefit from mainstream education from gaining one' (DFES 2001d para. 44). The Code states 'there is a clear expectation within the Education Act 1996 that pupils with statements of special educational needs will be included in mainstream schools' (2001c para.1.35). Putting things more seriously, the guidance states 'the decision to place a child who does not have a statement in a special school should not be taken lightly' (DFES 2001d para 21). So you can imagine my surprise when the same document states that 'A mainstream school is any school that is not a special school or an independent school. Exceptionally, City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for the Technology of the Arts and City Academies all count as mainstream schools as do *Pupil Referral Units*' (DFES 2001d para. 19, *my emphasis*). I say surprised, because Pupil Referral Units are usually segregated settings where pupils are sent if they are excluded, or (I'd say paradoxically) 'at risk of' exclusion from school (DfES 2001c).

The same document reminds us that 'The National Curriculum is not a requirement for Pupil Referral Units or hospital special schools' (DFES 2001c para. 5.17 footnote 23). Like the removal of setting targets for exclusions, whatever one might think of the National Curriculum, it is an entitlement but it is stated that unlike mainstream or special schools, here are two exceptions to that entitlement. And yet Pupil Referral Units are deemed to be 'mainstream schools'. Does one therefore assume that if one is in a Pupil Referral Unit, one is being 'included' in mainstream education? Looking at the disproportionate numbers of African Caribbean students 'excluded' from school, are they not excluded if they are in a Pupil Referral Unit? They are *included*? This reflects Warnock's later argument (2005) for inclusion as

'participation in a common educational project, and not 'under the same roof' (Norwich 2010 p.76). Norwich asserts Warnock's position is therefore to represent 'this educational project more in academic than social outcomes', whilst Slee (2001 p.114) might reiterate 'that in the absence of a stipulative language of inclusive education, inclusive schooling represents a default vocabulary for assimilation' that fails to interrogate the constitution of regular and special education.

Let me press this further to argue that the commonsense of special education represents a set of discursive practices (Foucault, 1974) founded upon unequal power relations that favour professionals pursuing good works for their needy clients.

Slee, 2000, no pagination

As Slee reminds us, 'school has always produced exclusion' (Slee 2001 p. 118). Skrtic (1991a p.153) put it this way 'the institutional practice of special education (and the very notion of student disability) is an artifact of the functionalist quest for rationality, order, and certainty in the field of education'. To underline this further:

'From an organizational perspective, special education is an unintended consequence of the particular kind of schooling that traditional school organizations provide. It is an organizational artifact that emerged to protect the legitimacy of a non-adaptable bureaucratic structure faced with the changing value demands of a dynamic democratic environment'

Skrtic 1991a pp.169-170.

During my MA studies, I found the concepts of 'machine and professional bureaucracy', 'de-coupling' of systems (Skrtic 1991b, Tomlinson 1995) and 'Taylorist' positions as applied to schools systems (Hamilton 1998 p.17, Lingard et al 1998 p.86) a revelation, but useful as they might be to analysis, there is not the space to expand on these further here. What Skrtic (1991a&b) is saying in essence is that schools were not, and indeed are not designed for 'diversity not being a problem to overcome' (CSIE 2001) and that special education did not emerge from a benevolent desire to include all students. Indeed, an education system underscored by dominant 'essentialist' discourses, 'those that understand disability as pathological impairments or deficiencies of individuals' (Slee and Cook 1999 p. 268) have separated these students out in the first place. 'A normalizing quest where schools get on with business as usual' (Slee 1998b p.106).

Slee and Cook (1999 p. 268) assert that the aim for special education is to minimise difference within a policy of *normalisation*. 'In education this discourse translates into...the incremental assimilation of disabled students' (*their italics*). It is being suggested therefore, there are assumptions underpinning special educational needs that are antithetical to conceptualisations of inclusive education. This has been and continues to be bitterly contested (e.g. Allan 2008). Brantlinger (1997) challenged issues raised by critics of 'the inclusive movement' (Fuchs and Fuchs' 1994) whilst Low (1997) questioned whether 'inclusivism' is possible.

I wheel back momentarily to past discussions of 'integration' in Special Educational Needs policy and practice. Ainscow (1999 p.148 italics in original) suggests that the term integration tended 'to be used to describe a process of *assimilation* within which individual children are supported in order that they can participate in the existing (and largely unchanged) programme of the school'. This observation moves us beyond a naming or re-naming exercise.

Slee and Cook (1999) present some of the substantial theoretical frameworks that seek to challenge dominant assumptions of disability that underpin special education. Materialist discourses by writers such as Abberley (1987, 1991) and Oliver (1990, 1996) in which 'Impairment...is historically and culturally specific and is mediated through the organisation of labour and the processes of material production' (Slee and Cook 1999 p. 269). They also recognise postmodernist analyses (e.g. Morris 1992) as providing 'space for other voices and expressions in describing and analysing disability' and cite Corbett (1995) and Fulcher (1989) as examples of writers 'deconstructing the disabling language to reveal the politics of identity and difference'. This work provided a starting point from which to consider and further analyse understandings of 'inclusion' and its intersections with special educational needs processes in this research setting.

The disability movement is therefore not without its differences of perspective. Barton for example (1997 p. 240) refers to Corbett (1997) when stating his worries that 'postmodernism ultimately leads to a political cul-de-sac' and argues for the development of 'an adequate theory of political agency'.

Both Mike Oliver (e.g. 1990, 1996) and Paul Abberley (e.g.1987, 1991) have questioned the different stories of disability or as Abberley (1991) has termed them, 'theories of abnormality'. These authors counter assumptions of disability as a

purely medical matter or issue of individual psychology. Abberley (1991 online document) cites the UPIAS (1976) definition stating that 'disability is caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments'. In this way Abberley is separating out physical impairment from disability, asserting that having an impairment is different from the oppression of disabling processes. From this view, one might have an impairment but not necessarily be *disabled*. Abberley (1991) argues that he thinks it right to speak of disabled people as not being normal. He continues,

This abnormality is something we share with women, black, elderly, gay and lesbian people, in fact the majority of the population. To understand the specific nature of the abnormality experienced by disabled people we need not only to document a failure to provide for needs. We must also investigate how legislation framed in terms of the 'normal' citizen systematically disadvantages us.'

Abberley 1991 no pagination

As Roger Slee observes 'Inclusive education research has not only aligned itself with the interrogation and amelioration of the exclusion of disabled students. Indeed, exclusion, forgive my expression, is far more embracing. Researchers in disability studies and inclusive education have long identified strong links with the experience of other vulnerable student identities' (Slee 2009 p. 184).

Looking to more general work in the area of 'social exclusion', Ruth Levitas (1998 p.7) points to the 'intrinsically problematic' nature of the term social exclusion.

It represents the primary significant division in society as one between an included majority and an excluded minority...attention is drawn away from the inequalities and differences among the included. Notably, the very rich are discursively absorbed into the included majority, their power and privilege slipping out of focus if not wholly out of sight. At the same time, the poverty and disadvantage of the so-called excluded are discursively placed outside society. What results is an overly homogeneous and consensual image of society.

Levitas 1998 p.7

This draws together many of the points across this literature. It is the notion of the majority being 'normal', or homogeneous, rather than heterogeneous. This recalls the issue of 'the other children' (DFES 2001d para. 40 – 44), and the way in which it is suggested that the efficient education of 'the other children' pertains to a homogeneous group.

Sally Tomlinson, back in 1982, provided one of the first substantial explorations into sociology of special education, where she documented aspects of this 'systematic disadvantage' in educational systems. As she outlines 'the social origins and development of special education systems and their parts do not develop out of purely humanitarian motives, but out of prevailing dominant social and economic and professional vested interests' (Tomlinson 1982 p.2). Now nearly three decades since it was first written yet remaining relevant, Tomlinson suggested 'that special education may become very important as a means of removing children who are 'troublesome', in the widest possible sense, from normal education, despite an ideology of 'integration'' (Tomlinson 1982 p.7).

Roger Slee (1998a p.131) observes that 'for many, inclusion connotes a linguistic adjustment...in other words vocabularies and practices undergo changes at the margins to effect a posture of sympathy to the plight of disabled students and their carers and advocates'. At the point of first reading I did not know if these issues would arise in my research, and as it transpires these notions did emerge; of an exclusionary inclusion or an 'inclusion experience,' with significant features of participation but lacking the substance for challenging persistent inequalities.

Exclusion, inequity and racist outcomes: politics of difference

Reporting on her convictions about feminist qualitative research back in 1975, specifically in the area of women's health Virginia Olesen (2000 p.215) was calling for 'incisive scholarship to frame, direct, and harness passion', that 'rage is not enough'. As Christine Sleeter (1999 p. 207) notes in an article about her writing, 'untempered anger usually does not lead to published articles', but also quotes Sue Middleton (1993 in Sleeter 1999 p.201) that 'the genesis of my research questions... lay deep in the tensions and conflicts of my everyday life'. I was put in mind of the intensity of Heidi Safia Mirza's writing (e.g. Mirza 1998 pp. 109 – 110) and when I set out, this is what fuelled my research: challenging inequity, and the exclusion of young children from schools, disproportionately African Caribbean boys, that I had

seen over the past decade as a teacher, and which is borne out by persistent statistics (e.g. Parsons 2008). Because the two things are important, personal experience and analysis: That is, to return to Mike Oliver's work, although on the one hand he evidently draws upon personal experience (e.g. Oliver 1994) as he says in the same key note address cited above (Oliver 2000 p.6), his 'critique of special education has been a *conceptual, analytical and political* one and not one deriving [solely] from some unfortunate personal experiences in special schools' (*my italics*).

At its inception and as things transpired, this research is concerned with exclusionary processes. These are entwined with conceptions of special education but are also concerned with education discourse in the UK which is de-racialised (e.g. Wright 2000 p.7, Gillborn 1998b, Apple 1999). As I said at the outset of this chapter, I have been both informed by more recent writings in Critical Race Theory and engaged with work that might be described as 'densely written' (Carspecken 1996 p.4) and these later writings build on understandings of equity, of 'politics of difference' that moved beyond what Kobena Mercer (1990 p. 33 in Hey et al 1998 p. 129) termed as an earlier inability to 'think through more than one difference at a time'. Discussed in a paper entitled '*The End of Anti-Racism*' Gilroy (1990, reproduced in Bulmer & Solomos 1999 p. 243) states 'The anti-racism I am criticising trivialises the struggle against racism and isolates it from other political antagonisms. It suggests that racism can be eliminated on its own because it is readily extricable from everything else'. He continues,

My view, which locates race in the core of politics, contrasts sharply with what can be called the coat of paint theory of racism. This is not in fact, a single theory but an approach which sees racism on the outside of social and political life – sometimes the unwanted blemish is the neo-fascists, sometimes it is immigration laws, other times it is the absence of equal opportunities – yet racism is always located on the surface of other things...and it follows from this that with the right ideological tools and political elbow grease, racism can be dealt with once and for all leaving the basic structures and relations of British economy and society essentially unchanged.'

Gilroy (1990) reproduced in Bulmer & Solomos 1999 p. 244

I do not wish to simply elide the two issues, but this does recall commentary about inclusion and integration, as discussed by those writing in the area of disability rights. Roger Slee (1996 p.25) observes that 'integration or inclusion, in the absence of an interrogation of the production of disabling educational structures and cultures places different groups of students at risk of exclusion within the mainstream'. The reason I raise it at this point is just to make a link to this idea of the 'coat of paint' theory; with schools remaining essentially unchanged.

Gilroy's work questions conceptions of 'race' from whether it is 'ontologically valid' (1998 in Lentin 2000 p.223) to its 'contingent' nature as a 'discursive construction' (1990 in Bulmer & Solomos 1999 p. 242). Mac an Ghaill (1999 p.7) refers to 'more recent theories in 'new times'' and cites minority ethnic feminist theorists (for example Brah 1996, Bhavnani 1991) who 'suggest the need for a more complex understanding of racial difference and ethnic formation'. Citing Gilroy (e.g. 1993) and others as 'post-colonial cultural theorists, who have suggested that in constructing human identity (we) cannot appeal to any fixed or essential characteristics that exist for all time' (Mac an Ghaill 1999 p.7). Continuing 'furthermore, they argue that we need to move away from theories that suggest that racial and ethnic relations are shaped by a single, overarching factor, that is colour racism' (Mac an Ghaill op cit).

Tony Sewell (1997) in his work concerned with black masculinities recognises (p21) that the 'great collective social identities' of social class, race and gender for example, whilst having not 'disappeared' cannot be thought of in the same 'homogenous form'. Sewell's (1997 pxii) research sees racism then, not as a 'monolithic concept' but one that must be defined 'within particular historical and social contexts'. For Sewell (1997 pxii) 'Race remains a vitally important part of contemporary life and politics, but it is neither separate from other factors (class, gender, sexuality, disability) nor is it the most important characteristic in human experience and action'.

Having highlighted the importance of thinking through more than one thing in issues of equity, and also with an awareness of African Caribbean boys identified as being more vulnerable to exclusion (SEU 1998) I recall the 'boys underachievement' discourse (e.g. Francis 2006, Epstein et al 1998). Whilst reporting on attainment and not 'exclusion' from school in the narrow sense of 'expulsion', I note the findings of Gillborn and Mirza's work (2000 p. 24). They find that girls are more likely to achieve

five higher grade GCSEs than boys of *the same ethnic origin (my emphasis)*, and that 'the inequalities of attainment of Bangladeshi/ Pakistani and Africa Caribbean girls not only mean that they do less well than white and Indian girls, they are also less likely to attain five higher grade GCSEs than white and Indian boys'. As such they maintain that 'race and ethnicity remain key defining factors'. Epstein et al (1998 p.11) point out, 'the 'underachievement' of boys is a strongly classed and racialised phenomenon'.

I agree with Epstein et al (1998 p.4) who find particular interest in Michele Cohen's analysis of the ways in which 'debates about the educational differences between boys and girls have been framed historically.' They continue that whilst boys' educational failures have been generally located as 'extrinsic to themselves' for example in 'failures of pedagogies, methods, texts and/or teachers' their successes have been located as intrinsic 'attributed to their innate brilliance, intellect or natural potential' for girls 'the opposite has been the case' (Cohen in Epstein et al 1998). Analyses in my later chapters draw upon Youdell's work and ways in which she 'draws on the notion of subjectivation to demonstrate how intersecting discourses of ability and conduct are deployed in the constitution of ideal, acceptable, and unacceptable learners (2004 p. 407). Becky Francis' work (e.g. 2006) challenges the moral panic around 'boys' underachievement' critiquing 'the misogynist epistemology' of what she terms 'the 'poor boys' discourse'. This study does engage with, as she exhorts, 'the production of gendered identities in education' (Francis 2006 p.197).

Returning to the thread of thought about 'race', racism and the quote from Mac an Ghail (1999 p.7) about moving on from a singular understanding of 'colour racism' I turn to Gillborn and Youdell (2000) who sought to enquire into education reforms intended to raise standards in schools, but that resulted in growing inequalities based upon gender 'race' and social class. They refer to the work of David Wellman (1979, 1993) when they assert that 'we take the position that racism is best identified through its effects. Any set of practices or beliefs that systematically disadvantage members of one or more minority ethnic groups can be defined as racist' (Gillborn & Youdell 2000 p. 5). Citing Wellman's (1993 p. 11) assertion that 'racism can mean culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages whites have because of the subordinated position of racial minorities' they add that they 'adopt a similar approach as a means of identifying class bias and sexism as complex, sometimes 'hidden', often unintended features of human interaction and institutional procedures' (Gillborn & Youdell p.5).

Again, we are touching upon this notion of thinking through more than one difference at a time, but also something important to this study: The need to reveal the processes that produce the patterns of inequality. As I subsequently explore, drawing upon Bourdieu and Champagne's 'Outcasts on the Inside' (1999 pp. 422-423), who describe processes of streaming and selection of pupils at an ever younger age as 'gentle' exclusionary practices, 'spreading out the process of elimination, the school system turns into a permanent home for potential outcasts'.

School Effectiveness

Gillborn (1998b p.iii) highlighted elements of a 'new phase in education policy' recognising it as 'one that retained a central place for the Tory watchwords of 'standards', 'choice' and 'diversity'. Barton and Slee (1999 p. 3) note 'the contradictory educational policy imperatives of 'competition' and 'selection' on the one hand, and 'inclusive education' on the other.' With this mention of 'standards', 'choice' and 'diversity', 'competition' and 'selection' I return briefly to 'school effectiveness' which I mentioned above and what Slee & Weiner (1998 p.1) term 'its operational branch the school improvement movement [which] has been adopted by policy-makers pursuant to the resolution of ...alleged crises in state education' – citing key writers in the *field* Mortimore 1995, Barber 1995 & 1996, Reynolds & Farrell 1996.

Whilst acknowledging a certain range in the 'school effectiveness research community' (Slee & Weiner 1998 p.1, Lauder et al 1998, Whitty 1997a) as already noted by Youdell (2006a), critical educationalists' work questions the 'common-sense goals' (Slee & Weiner 1998 p.4) and 'claims of classlessness and neutrality' (Gewirtz et al 1995) of school effectiveness and the marketisation of education (e.g. Slee et al 1998, Taylor et al, Whitty 1997a, Whitty et al 1998). The pertinence of these debates to this study are in issues of equity and the competing pressures or influences upon teachers and schools – a process of increased state control and 'self-surveillance', that enable 'steering from a distance' on the part of government (Lingard et al 1998 p.86). Research questions the specificities and outcomes of the 'quasi market' approach to education planning and mechanisms of 'choice' (e.g. Gewirtz et al 1995, Whitty 1997a), standards (e.g. William 2000) and competition (e.g. Gillborn & Youdell 2000). All of which aspects of the policy agenda are what was then termed 'colour-blind' (Gillborn 1999). Stephen Ball (1997 p.265)

conceptualises the range of competing policy requirements as 'policy ensembles' although in musical terms this makes them sound a little too harmonious.

Geoff Whitty cites Lawrence Angus who says:

'the apparent message of some of the work that all children can succeed at school provided teachers have expectations, test them regularly, etc., shifts attention away from the nature of knowledge, the culture of schooling and, most importantly, the question of whom and in whose interests schools are effective'.

Angus p.342 in Whitty 1997b p.156

At the time of first writing this chapter, Morley & Rassool's (1999) work amongst others (e.g. Ozga 2000, Jeffrey and Woods 1998) engaged me in a process of reflection; articulating analyses of struggles familiar from my own recent teaching experiences prior to fieldwork. Looking back subsequently I note the pertinence of the detail in much of this work, for example:

Underpinning the entire movement on standards, standardisation and school effectiveness is the assumption that once a set of educational 'truths' has been established, they hold good for all teachers, schools, children, parents and communities. School Effectiveness can represent an epistemology of closure and certainty. It is both a homogenised and homogenising discourse.

Morley and Rassool (1999 p.13) cited by Perryman (2009 p.615)

'Performing the good school' (Perryman 2009 p. 611) and associated 'closure and certainty' pertaining to 'limited notions of inclusion' (Graham 2006) are relevant to key findings in this study.

Education Policy

Slee (1995 p.165) asserts that 'the nature and processes of policy-making influence policy impacts'. In this sense it is useful to consider processes of policy making and, indeed, some perspectives of what policy is. Ball (1994a p.15) cautions that 'analysts fail to define conceptually what they mean by policy. The meaning of policy is taken for granted and theoretical epistemological dry rot is built into the analytic structures they construct.'

I have already briefly alluded to conceptualisations of policy that move beyond a top-down model of policy in which 'government makes it and its bureaucracies implement it' (Fulcher 1989 p.5), suggesting an understanding in the literature of policy being made '*at all levels*' (e.g. Fulcher 1989, Ball 1987, Ozga 2000).

In 1994, Stephen Ball declared himself as inhabiting 'two very different conceptualizations of policy. For the time being I will call these *policy as text* and *policy as discourse*' (Ball, 1994a p.15 *his italics*). He continues by asserting that policy is 'not one or the other but both' and underlines that 'the question 'what is policy' should not mislead us into unexamined assumptions about policies as 'things'; policies are also processes and outcomes' (Ball 1994a p.15). He later refers to this work. Commenting on a particular speech (by Michael Barber, then Head of Standards and Effectiveness Unit, DfEE) as 'an interpretation and re-inscription of policy...part of a constant process of reorienting, reworking and embedding the meaning of policy. It also works to knit together an ensemble of initiatives, announcements, borrowings and ad hoceries into a 'vision' In this process, Ball reminds us of 'the policy cycle' (Ball 2000 p. 6 referring to Ball 1994a).

Ball (1994a p.16) recognises policy as comprising 'multiple influences and agendas'. As such policy is 'the product of compromises at various stages' and is not necessarily 'clear or closed or complete' (Ball 1994a p.16). Fulcher (1989 p. 8) referred to Macdonald's (1981) distinctions between '*written* policy (reports, statutes, regulations, law, whether these derive from government, schools, Regional Boards etc,) *stated* policy: what we say we do...and *enacted* policy what the teacher does in the classroom (includes or excludes)'. These distinctions and understandings as outlined here did, as I hoped, assist in the collection and subsequent analysis of data.

As I consider these distinctions, and understandings that move away from discrete, compartmentalised or static and closed conceptions of policy, I turn to what Ball (1997 p.265) terms three 'binaries'. The first of these is where 'policy is ignored or theorised 'out of the picture'' treating classrooms, teachers and schools as if they are 'free-standing and self determining, as 'out of context'' Ball (1997 p.265). In this same article Ball refers to 'the policy science/ policy scholarship dichotomy identified by Fay 1975 and used extensively by Grace (1995):

'Policy scholarship resists the tendency of policy science to abstract problems from their relational settings by insisting that the problem can only be understood in the complexity of those relations. In particular, it represents a view that a social-historical approach to research can illuminate the cultural and ideological struggles in which schooling is located... whereas policy science excludes ideological and value conflicts as 'externalities beyond its remit''

Grace 1995 p.3, in Ball 1997 p. 264.

The policy science position, is reminiscent of school effectiveness research which either 'bleaches context from its analytic frame' (Slee & Weiner 1998 p. 5, Angus 1993) or as Geoff Whitty (1997b p.156) points out, alludes to what Grace (1991) terms 'contextual rhetoric' at the beginning of a book or paper and then forgets it. Angus is more direct in stating that,

Family background, social class, any notion of context, are typically regarded as 'noise' – as 'outside' background factors which must be controlled for and then stripped away so that the researcher can concentrate on the important domain of school factors'.

Angus 1993 pp. 341

I am not saying that 'school factors' are not important in the design of this study – but what Angus goes on to highlight is that from this position,

Not only is context understood as something that exists outside or beyond schooling rather than in relation to it, but also it is something that is prior to schooling rather than being historically contiguous. Context has done its work by influencing input. Schools, then, are neutral and impartial institutions that do the best they can, given the 'quality' of their input [citing this unfortunate term from Reynolds and Cuttance 1992 p.16] by implementing the best effectiveness practices'.

Angus (1993) pp. 341 - 342

As I started out, I speculated about the potential for deficit notions in what 'value added' could be taken to mean and ways in which students' backgrounds might be expressed in policy processes. Talking about 'value added' in the context of league tables, Power and Frandji (2010 p.385) discuss 'a new politics of recognition [that]

has emerged which seeks to valorise the performance of disadvantaged schools and which can be seen in the development of alternative and 'value-added' league tables'; asserting that 'setting different criteria of success for different kinds of pupils inscribes their failure as 'normal' and 'natural'. Through 'correcting' schools' unequal attainments in this way, the new politics of recognition introduces a disempowering fatalism into the education system'. Whilst this issue of 'value-added' has not transpired as an explicit key issue in the ensuing data, the interweaving of the telling of students' backgrounds and perceived parenting by staff with grouping by ability and identification for 'treatment' via the many interventions does echo these authors' concerns that to valorise differential attainment as success 'accept[s] rather than contest[s] structural inequalities in education systems' (Power and Frandji 2010 p.393).

This study draws upon analyses that emphasise the contribution of both of macro and micro accounts (e.g. Vidovich 1999, Ball 1997, 2003, Taylor 1997). Taylor (1997 p. 32) advocated the move away from 'the macro/ micro dichotomy' towards the importance of 'exploring the linkages between the various levels of the policy process with an emphasis on highlighting power relations'. Henry (1994 p.103) questions the 'structural patterns' that underlie Ball's observation that 'policies allow 'different people' to do 'different things'', and enquires into the relationship between 'patterns of power and policy production'. Whilst emphasising the need to attend to 'careful regional, local and organisational research', Ball (1997 p. 271 *my italics*) does assert the need to think about 'the *social and collective* identities of our research subjects'. In this same work he recognises the ways in which policy plays 'upon and through the basic social facts of poverty, oppression and inequality'. Indeed in exploring issues in the 'conceptualisation, research design and conduct and interpretation of data' Ball (1997 p. 257) asserts 'there is a basic tension at the heart of education policy research between a commitment to the pursuit of efficiency and to the pursuit of social justice'.

Returning then to the second and third 'binaries' (Ball 1997 p.265), the second sounds familiar, in what Ball (1997 p.265) identifies as 'one of the generative effects of the flood of policy in the 1980s and 1990s' which is 'the flood of single-focus studies which concentrate exclusively on one policy'. With the sheer number of written policies I was required to generate in my previous job particularly in the run up to OFSTED inspections, I can certainly relate to this. The result of this single-focus approach, he continues,

'is typically a reiteration of the 'policy-practice gap' with an implicit or explicit assumption that the gap represents an implementation failure on the part of teachers or schools... schools are presented as not being anti-racist enough or as not taking special needs seriously enough – without any attempt to consider the other things they are expected or required to take seriously and which compete for attention, effort and resources in the complexities of practice'

Ball 1997 p.265.

This indicates a need to think about policy ensembles, other policies 'in circulation' which may 'inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others.' (Ball 1997 p.265). Ball refers to the notion of 'policy trajectory' as 'attending to the ways in which policies evolve, change and decay through time and space and their incoherence' (Ball 1997 p.266).

So finally considering the third of these 'binaries' Ball (1997 p.265), explicitly presents 'a contrast between a conception of policy which treats policies as clear, abstract and fixed as opposed to...awkward, incomplete, incoherent and unstable'. The first position reiterates a fallacious assumption of policies simply being handed down for uniform enactment. The second points to the specificity of each setting in which 'local conditions, resources, histories and commitments will differ and that policy realisation will differ accordingly' (Ball 1997 p. 265). All of this offered a wider lens through which to consider and analyse the smallest of interactions in this research school context, particularly as Ball (2003 p.27) asserts that 'new policies are sedimented into a history of previous policies which may be superseded but are not necessarily expunged'. Data and analyses in this study suggest the intersection of formal policy initiatives such as the National Strategies (DfEE 1998, 1999) with 'booster' type interventions (e.g. DFES 2001h, 2001i) interacting with common sense IQist notions of ability (Gillborn and Youdell p.212) and notions of good practice (Walkerdine 1984).

Revisiting the issues of 'discourse', both Ball (1994a) and Fulcher (1989) highlight the influences of competing discourses upon the formation of policy, or indeed as policy. Policy as text provides for what Ball (1994a p.17) terms 'gaps and spaces for action' in which there are 'interpretations of interpretations' often made by 'key mediators' in an attempt to sort out confusion generated by textual gaps (Rizvi and

Kemmis 1987). Echoing Fulcher's (1989) observation on competing discourses, these mediators are cited as usually being representative of individuals or groups who hold power. Policy as discourse, 'changes the possibilities we have for thinking 'otherwise'' only allowing certain voices to be heard (Ball 1994a p. 23). It is interesting therefore to look as Ball does at 'absences within texts [which] are also worth attention'(Ball 2000 p.8).

The problem of power, its expression and deployment through discourse has been explored from a post-structuralist perspective by researchers, who, whilst not denying broad patterns of domination by certain groups, assert the ways in which power is exercised and understood through its local operations (Kenway and Willis 1997). I found the collection edited by Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) useful for starting to get a handle on things. They state,

'We explore two concepts of power: that of sovereignty/ repression and that of the deployment/ production of power, arguing, with Foucault, certain feminist theories, and a political sociology of knowledge, that issues of power require making connections between self and self, self and other, and institutional discourses.'

Popkewitz and Brennan 1998 p. 5

Thinking about conceptualisations of policy presented here and considerations of 'oppression' these were starting points from which I embarked upon fieldwork and subsequent analysis.

I have presented in this chapter the context for this study and my place in that context. The study is concerned with 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. I have presented an overview of literature that informed my understandings of these, considering intersections with Special Educational Needs and education policy. In the light of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' I have explored literature that interrogates persistent educational inequalities drawing upon post structural theories of power and the subject (Youdell 2006b).

Chapter 2

Methods & Methodologies: Do they ring your bell?

Setting the Scene

In Seattle, where both AERA (American Education Research Association) conference and coincidentally National Poetry Slam^{xx} (performance poetry contest) were held at time of first writing this chapter, (Unterberger 2001 p.199) the contestants at one slam poetry venue had at their disposal a bicycle bell on their microphone stand. There were apparently so many apologies and pleas made by contestants that their work is 'tentative' or 'in progress' that the organisers provided a bell to dispense with the intrusion, as 'shorthand'. If the bell was rung, the audience applauded encouragingly. The stage is set.

Reading for the presentation of this written piece on methodology, I find caveats at the start of some experienced academics' work using phrases such as 'purposely tentative and open-ended' (Ball 1994a p.14) and 'deliberately tentative and inquisitive' (Troyna 1994a p.4). If there were a bell for these statements, it would perhaps signal *intentional* tentativeness. Reading Laurel Richardson's chapter on 'writing as inquiry' (2000 p.923) I consider the potential of writing as a 'method of discovery and analysis' 'a process of discovery' (Richardson 2000 p.937). Together with reading Howard Becker's (1986) 'Writing for Social Scientists', Richardson's paper dislodges, just sufficiently to actually start writing, my paralysis at having to produce this chapter, the first to be submitted as part of my doctoral programme.

Exploring the writing process, Richardson (2000 p.937) asks, 'Who is your audience? What are your purposes?' As she imagines the audiences for her paper, I imagine the key audience for this piece: My supervisors, those examining the thesis. Any further readers beyond that I assume will 'skip to findings' once established that it is to be an ethnographic study in a primary school. My main *purpose* here is to demonstrate that I had a *plan*. To demonstrate some understanding of issues surrounding methodologies and research methods, and how those understandings informed the ways I approached my research project. My second purpose and no less important than the first, could invoke ringing the bell: that the piece is explorative, an intentional process of discovery, a process I hope, that contributes to

my developing understandings. Even on completion of the thesis, methodological processes continue in one's professional life; work in progress.

An unexpected turn in Richardson's piece (2000 p.924) is her 'confession' that she, over 30 years had found much of the qualitative writing she had read 'boring'. She postulates that one reason for this may be that our 'sense of Self is diminished as we are homogenized through professional socialization'. This is as may be. In considering the notion of 'Self' I am aware of Lincoln & Denzin's (2000 p.1060) questioning of 'the fiction of a single, true, authentic self', instead confronting multiple identities 'formed in and around our social locations'. I can relate to this concept in respect to the area of my research. Clearly I would prefer to write, and for that matter read, interesting – not boring – work. It is not my over-riding preoccupation. What *is* pertinent to the presentation of this piece is what Richardson terms 'the postmodernist context'.

To be extremely brief on the subject, Richardson (2000 p.928) reports that 'postmodernism *suspects* all truth claims of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural and political struggles'. She continues, 'a postmodernist position does allow us to know 'something' without claiming to know everything'. Beverley Skeggs (1991) has got a thing or two to say about postmodernism. Listing over a dozen definitions of the term in her review article, Skeggs asserts that postmodernism is a 'vacuous term, which represents a crisis of legitimate masculine authority, and at its best a reappropriation of post-structuralist terms' (1991 pp. 258 & 266). She levels the criticism at one article (Featherstone 1988) as lacking in 'any analysis of power that could account for the organisation of the education system as part of capitalist social relations' taking 'no account of the increasing power and intervention of the state' (Skeggs 1991 p.259). Her article is intended as a cautionary and timely analysis (Skeggs 1991 p.255 cautions against 'educational theorists wasting valuable time and energy').

That said, still linking the two, the introduction of the 'Self' and this notion of having a 'partial, local, historical knowledge', is the post-structuralist concern with language, subjectivity and power. As such post-structuralism suggests,

...two important things to qualitative writers: First, it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific

times; and second, it frees us from trying to write a single text in which we say everything at once to everyone.'

Richardson 2000 p.929

These considerations together with my stated purpose for this piece situate the style in which it is written. From the outset, this piece of writing is inextricably bound up with the theory and perspectives that inform it. The concern with reflexivity, and situating the self overtly in the writing recalls Troyna's work (e.g. 1994a; 1998), in which he fore-grounded the issue of reflexivity and reflection. But in considering the quality of that reflexivity, it is pertinent perhaps, that his former student and colleague Carol Vincent (1997 p.21) in her contribution to a collection honouring his work, starts her piece with some personal reflections. Reflecting on the start to her own essay, she states that Barry 'may well have seen [the manner and style of her reflections] as a piece of indulgence, game-playing, or in his words 'post-modern bollocks''. Thinking of this, and the comments of Beverly Skeggs above (1991), it is a fine line that I do not wish to overstep. Reflexivity will not of itself guarantee a better piece of research (Patai 1994; Halpin & Troyna 1994a; Troyna 1998).

I am also heartened to see the issue of power relations raised by Troyna (1994a p. 9); that whilst agreeing with 'the spirit' of Stephen Ball's argument for reflexive accounts of research (Ball 1990, in Troyna 1994a) he is aware of the potential for this public self-appraisal to 'operate as a policing mechanism' (Troyna 1994a p.10). A balancing act within the differential power relations between postgraduate student, supervisor and research community. Then there is also an awareness of the issues surrounding the power relationships between researcher and researched (e.g. M Foster 1994; Oliver 1992) to which I will return later.

The issue of reflexivity is not without its critics then. Troyna (1994a p.5) observes that reflexivity is 'a diffuse concept which is used by academics in a bewildering number of ways'. I can certainly recognise bewilderment. His scrutiny of reflexivity seeks to ensure that 'the technicalities of research are no longer artificially detached from the political, ethical and social arena' (Troyna 1994a p.6). A part of this project is an attempt to make the research process more 'visible' (Barton 1998 p.30), moving away from what Clough and Barton (1995 pp. 3 - 4) characterised earlier as 'the sterile cleanliness of the [research] instruments we use'. Citing Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p.234 cited in Troyna 1994a p.10) reflexivity requires 'explicit recognition of the fact that the social researcher, and the research act itself, are part

and parcel of the social world under investigation'. However, in the second edition they also write that they 'do not believe that reflexivity implies that research is necessarily political, or that it should be political, in the sense of serving particular political causes or practical ends' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995 p.17). This contradicts Troyna's (1994a) position as stated above, particularly with regard to the 'political', and will be considered later in respect to some of Hammersley's ensuing work.

Already this is all a little ahead of itself. Metz (2000 p.20) describes methods as 'tools in the service of research questions and the theoretical (or practical) bodies of knowledge they seek to expand'. Methodologies then, underlie methods. Halpin and Troyna draw on Burgess and Bulmer's (1981, p.478 cited in Halpin & Troyna 1994 p.ix) definition in which methodology 'denotes the systematic and logical study of the principles guiding enquiry'. What we do, and what guides our decisions.

Asking Questions

My proposed research project is set against the apparent paradox between a government agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand (e.g. DfEE 10/99 and 11/99) and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other (SEU 1998; DfEE 2000). I seek to enquire into these processes at the primary school level. How are these tensions negotiated at the primary school? What understandings of inclusive education and school exclusion are demonstrated by those involved in the school setting, in the context of local and national policy?

As Clough and Barton (1995 p.2) point out, research does not 'merely address or discover the objects of its inquiry, but begins to create them from the first moment of identification of a topic; how we choose to research a subject is itself constitutive of that subject.' As with my outlined area of interest, these questions did not just pop out of nowhere. In the raising of research questions, Hammersley and Atkinson refer to Malinowski's notion of 'foreshadowed problems', (1922 p.8-9 cited in Hammersley & Atkinson 1995 p.25). Even within the inductive paradigm of grounded theory, they cite Strauss's awareness of the importance of clarifying and developing research problems prior to fieldwork (Strauss 1970 cited in Hammersley & Atkinson 1995 p.30). Liz Stanley (2000 p.17) problematises the binary distinctions in methodological debates, for example deductivism versus inductivism. Whilst not

wanting to pursue this argument in any detail – it is useful to consider, as she says, each position as *models*, 'not realistic descriptions of what actually happens when research is carried out'.

I anticipated an inductive process in my research project, starting with a problematic, a starting point, a framework for the systematic collection of data and having the flexibility within the research design to respond to developing understandings, data and its relationship to theory and readings. A process continued in writing. The aim of this study is not to impose control over variables in a quasi-experimental study to investigate isolated cause and effect relationships and is therefore not testing a hypothesis to establish a general finding. In order to allow conceptualisations, the discovery of new relationships and understandings of inclusive education to emerge, the research design has been inductive rather than verifying predetermined hypotheses. This draws upon the processes of grounded theory (e.g. Strauss & Corbin 1990). Describing the contributions of qualitative sociology to research methodology, Metz (2000 p.63) describes (amongst others) a research process in which 'Data and theory are in profound conversation; the final work interprets and reinterprets both data and theory in the light of the other.'

Whilst I did not know what to expect entering a long period of fieldwork, I vaguely anticipated findings that would be located within formal and informal processes of exclusion: routine disciplinary moments and also possibly, the minutiae of special educational needs policies day to day. My initial research questions around how the apparent tensions between 'inclusion' and exclusion were negotiated at the primary school and an exploration of understandings of inclusive education and school exclusion as demonstrated by those involved in the school setting, developed and evolved. Unanticipated directions in data encouraged a questioning of ways in which notions of 'ability' dominated classroom discourse, urging conversations between data and theory as Metz describes (2000 p. 63) to explore further the 'making' of the primary school pupil.

The collection of data from different sources touches upon the issue of 'validity' and the traditional notion of 'triangulation', the latter economically described by Robert Stake (2000 p.443) as 'a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation'. The questioning of research validity in this respect has been illustrated by the public exchanges between David Gillborn (e.g. 1998a) and Paul Foster in which Foster (1993 p.548)

asserted Gillborn's analysis 'rested on only one example'. Without entering into the whole debate, Gillborn (1995, 1998a) countered this criticism with evidence of a range of data, both qualitative and quantitative. And importantly, he also raised the issue of the unintended racist consequences of the 'methodological purists' project (Gillborn 1998a p.43) by its tendency to 'bolster the status quo and to frustrate attempts to address racism in schools' (Connolly 2001 p.164).

Aside from this example in which a researcher's data collection and analysis was so publicly called into question, traditional understandings of both reliability and validity have been questioned by researchers in a variety of contexts (e.g. Lather 1995; Gitlin & Russell 1994; Lincoln & Denzin 2000). In terms of 'triangulation' Richardson provides a useful notion of 'crystalization' which, questioning the 'fixed point' from which the term triangulation was initially drawn (see Brown & Dowling 1998 p.9) recognises there are 'far more than three sides to view the world'. Whilst she is applying this to 'mixed genre texts', I have seen this as underscoring the need for a range of data to be collected to tease out meanings from different perspectives.

Bearing in mind the editing and partial nature of any story, my research questions have partly been generated from experience as a teacher. Working as a probationary teacher in inner London in the late eighties, I worked in the context of the introduction of the new National Curriculum, Primary Language Record (Barrs 1988), Primary Learning Record (Hester 1993) and following the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), the new London Boroughs. I went to work in segregated 'special' settings^{xxi} and a specialist support team to find out more about 'it' (whatever I thought it was) to get 'better' as a teacher. These experiences and later, following 'DfEE Circular 11/94, as Teacher in Charge of setting up a new Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for pupils labelled as having 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' I wondered about issues of 'appropriate placement', integration; reintegration and the psychology of education for pupils labelled as having 'special educational needs'. I even completed a Masters' degree in it. My dissertation focussed upon my previous work teaching in another setting, following a local reorganisation, and the creation of a new unit for students labelled as having Moderate Learning Difficulties attached to a mainstream school. I worked in classes deemed 'special' and 'mainstream'.

When 'inclusion' started to be talked about I wondered what was being meant. I could also see the increase in numbers of students being excluded. An officer in the

LEA said that he was surprised by the numbers of referrals to the Pupil Referral Unit. There had never been those numbers at the special school class it had replaced, he said. We were to report the ethnicity of the students at the unit. It was reported that the figures showed an over-representation of students from African Caribbean backgrounds. The LEA officer reporting this said that even so, it was better than in many places. This approach to the figures concerned me. Some head teachers said to me that they were pleased when their students got in to the unit. Difficult as exclusion might be, they said, the student was in a better place. The Registered Inspector who conducted our OFSTED inspection at the Pupil Referral Unit said it had been the best inspection and subsequent report of some forty she had previously conducted. I commented that it was slightly odd, since it was OFSTED inspections in schools that were being cited by many teachers as being the reason why they were excluding their students and referring them to the PRU in the first place. Two teachers at that unit who went on to train as child psychotherapists and had over fifty years of teaching experience between them said in the light of their subsequent studies that they really thought we had 'done it well'. That might have been encouraging, but I still wondered if we were 'a better place' for those students, and better than what? I wanted to explore the issues of inclusion and exclusion further.

Turning to the literature I read about 'inclusion', exclusion and education policy research, this study brings together a framing of my experience and my reading. A review of literature forms its own chapter, although in many ways it cannot be separated from the methodology and methods underpinning this study. The research questions guiding this proposed study are concomitant with qualitative, and specifically ethnographic methodologies. Janesick (2000 p.382) characterises the qualitative researcher as studying 'a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in the participants' own terms.' Referring back to the problematic, and guiding questions, I entered this research project to gain an insight into education policy in the areas of inclusive education and school exclusion in the primary school setting.

Concerned then, with education policy, this study is framed around understandings of policy that are influenced by policy as a *process*, 'involving negotiation, contestation or struggle between different groups' (Ozga 2000 p.2). As Ball (1994 p.15) emphasises, 'the question 'what is policy' should not mislead us into unexamined assumptions about policies as 'things'; policies are also processes and

outcomes'. Aware of the contested nature of policy, including definitions of what it is (e.g. Ball 1994a) and how it is to be interrogated (eg. Grace 1995 p.3 cited in Ball 1997 p.264) this study is bound up with the theoretical underpinnings outlined in the literature review.

Gillian Fulcher (1989 p.5) provides a conceptualisation of (educational) policy which moves beyond 'a top-down model of policy (government makes it and its bureaucracies implement it)' to an understanding of how policy is made '*at all levels*'. She uses Macdonald's distinctions between '*written* policy (reports, statutes, regulations, law, whether these derive from government, schools, Regional Boards etc.) *stated* policy: what we say we do...and *enacted* policy what the teacher does in the classroom' (Fulcher 1989 p.8 citing Macdonald 1981). Recognising the 'messiness' of the policy 'trajectory' (Ball 1994a), and understanding the arguments that move an understanding beyond this typology (eg. Clough 1995 p.131) in which it is argued that what teachers do in classrooms 'is policy' it is these artificially imposed distinctions, of written, stated and enacted policy that have been used to inform the structure of data collection.

Metz (2000 p.64) summarises the main characteristics of work she considers should be 'properly termed 'ethnography'', raising the concern that when referred to as *any* research that uses non-quantitative methods it 'loses its meaning'. As such she outlines that researchers doing such work should

'1) make a concerted effort to understand participants' perspectives in their own terms; 2) participate with the people they study on a prolonged basis, collecting multiple kinds of data from multiple sources and triangulating them; and 3) analyze with a lens that locates every study in a broader analytic and theoretical framework.'

Metz 2000 p.64

Looking at the theoretical understandings of education policy briefly outlined above that are informing this study, these ethnographic principles are in keeping with answering the research questions that are being asked. Investigating education policy in the areas of inclusive education and school exclusion in the primary school setting.

I can see that the case study research design has 'strength' which may well be as Yin (1991 p.20) says 'unique' in being able to deal systematically with a variety of evidence: documents, interviews and observations in order to gain insights into processes and understandings in context. Brown and Dowling (1998 p.167) question the notion of the 'case study' and rightly point out the need to describe one's 'sampling procedures'; for research to 'impose selective and organizational principles upon its object site'. My 'sampling parameter' (Robson 1993 p.156) was a 'setting' and that setting is a primary school. I am using what Miles and Huberman (1994 p.27) would term 'opportunity' and 'purposive' sampling.

Access and Anonymity

My criteria for a school was a 'regular' or 'ordinary' local inner city school: A mainstream primary school within reasonable travelling distance. On completion of this thesis these two words 'regular' and 'ordinary' have additional significance. 'Regular' in relation to Slee's 'irregular' school: The title of his pertinent book (Slee 2010a) in which he argues that continuing to think in terms of the regular school or the special school obstructs progress towards inclusive education. In the sixth chapter of this thesis I explore inclusive practice in this school setting, and the emergence in data of this delineation between being a regular or 'mainstream' school rather than 'special'; illuminating the boundaries of 'inclusion'. The additional relevance of the term 'ordinary' is highlighted by Maguire et al (2011 p.2) who explore 'the complexities and contradictions involved in the search for and the identification of the 'ordinary' school'. They continue that 'while experienced educationalists could easily identify schools that fulfilled our criteria of 'ordinariness', when we started to explore the ways in which the nominated schools were representing themselves, many of these schools were eschewing any sense of being ordinary and were constructing themselves as distinctive and, if not outstanding, well on the way to becoming so'. Again in my sixth chapter I explore the labelling and construction of this school as not 'ordinary' but 'very good'^{xxii}

I initially contacted many schools by telephone and letter without success; they either did not answer, wish to have a researcher in school or in one instance following a visit, a head teacher defined the research project she would like me to pursue in her school! My breakthrough came via my work as a teacher; the head teacher of one school I contacted knew of me from my work as Teacher in Charge of the Pupil Referral Unit in a nearby local authority. Whilst she said that she could

not offer me access in *her* school, she suggested by name a head teacher and school in a different local authority. Contacting this head teacher directly by telephone I was able to mention by name the head teacher that had made the recommendation, and I credit this link with facilitating my initial research access. As I record in my sixth chapter, I confess to a feeling that I had 'lucked out' following my very first discussion with the head teacher in order to commence research, given that I did not initiate mention of 'inclusion' but that this theme emerged, immediately echoing my research interests. The head teacher fore-grounded a description of the school as 'inclusive' from my first meeting with her, also mentioning arrangements by which a number of children who would usually go to segregated special school were taught alongside their mainstream peers in this school setting. As such, whilst at the outset I may have been guilty of the accusation that 'researchers settle for research sites to which they can easily gain convenient and ready access rather than thinking through the implications of particular choices (Walford 2001b p. 151) I finish this project with the same sentiment I had after that first meeting: that I 'lucked out' with gaining research access to this school^{xiii}.

Walford (2002 p. 99) asserts that 'promising anonymity is probably most often initially used as a means of fostering access'. My means of access as described above is a familiar one. Walford (2008 p. 21) describes 'Selling your way to access' in which a letter leads to a telephone call and on to an 'appointment' leading to that first interview (Denny 1997 in Walford 2008 pp. 23 - 24). Walker describes the process of access, 'to gain access to the school you need to first approach the Head; to gain access to the pupils you need to approach the staff. Each fieldwork contact is thus sponsored by someone in authority over those you wish to study, and relationships between 'sponsors' and researchers cannot be broken if the research is to continue' (Walker 1993 p. 183). I agree with Walker (1974 in Adelman 1984) who asserts that 'For the case study worker confidentiality represents a continuous rather than an intermittent concern' (Walker 1974 in Adelman, p.3 1984) emphasising confidentiality as 'not simply a mechanical procedure but a continuous methodological concern' during the conduct of fieldwork as well as the subsequent storage, analysis and reporting of data. As such, I disagree with Walford who suggests that 'Perhaps the idea of anonymity allows researchers to write their books and articles with less concern for absolute accuracy and to base their arguments on evidence which may not be as strong as desirable' (Walford 2002 p. 100). I suggest that anonymity and confidentiality form a part of the research relationships that Walker (1993 p, 183) describes as taking so long to create in ethnographic study.

I would describe Viner School from my teaching experience across different local authorities in the city as a recognisably regular primary school (Infant and Junior, age range 3 – 11years) located in an inner-city location that OFSTED described as 'socially and culturally mixed'. Without compromising anonymity with statistics precise to a decimal point, local housing included state 'council' housing, temporary accommodation as well as privately owned flats and houses, with those privately owned property prices starting at least ten times and regularly over twenty times the average national wage. Whilst employment in the local area was recorded in the 2001 census as slightly higher than the national average, approximately half of the children at the school were known to be eligible for Free School Meals; a figure described by OFSTED as well above the national average. Housed in a Victorian three-storey building familiar to anyone working or attending local schools in the city, the school was a two-form entry school with just under 450 children. This seemed a 'normal' school from my teaching experience, but the OFSTED report declared this to be 'twice the size of the average primary school'. 2001 Census information of the local area reports the largest ethnic groups as white British (55%), Other white (16%) taken together with white Irish (6%) this forms 77% of the local population. Black African (7%) forms the largest Black Minority Ethnic (BME) group, with mixed ethnicity (4%). Bangladeshi (2%), Black Caribbean (2%), Indian (2%), other Ethnic group (2%) together with Chinese, other Black, other Asian, Pakistani (all 1% respectively) comprising the local population. OFSTED described the percentage of children speaking English as an additional language as 'very high' numbering more than a third of the school with over forty languages recorded as being spoken by children. The number of children identified as having special educational needs was recorded as more than one third of the school and was again stated as above the national average.

Sampling within the school involved 'people, settings, events and processes' (Robson 1993 p. 156). My period of fieldwork was from the second half of Autumn Term October of one academic year to the end of October the following year: therefore half an Autumn term October - December, two full school terms: Spring: January – March and Summer: April to July and half an Autumn Term: September - October. As such I missed the early days and weeks in the first academic year, but the research benefitted from being informed by observations of 'hand over meetings' between class teachers in late Summer Term and subsequently seeing classes transfer to their new teachers and classrooms at the start of the new academic year

the following September. I was in school during forty-one weeks of the academic year and visited on fifty-nine days.

During the first term of fieldwork I visited once a week. On starting my fieldwork I was initially given access by the head teacher to morning staff meetings, the staff room, playground, lunch room and one Key Stage 1 class whose teacher was part of the senior management team as well as class teacher and (I discovered over time) a long-standing colleague and friend of the head teacher. After three visits over three weeks and perhaps because I 'passed muster' with this teacher I was subsequently allowed to visit other classes and visited one other class in the fourth week of that first half term. In the Spring and Summer terms I went into school between one and two days per week: thirty-four visits over the twenty-three weeks I went in. I was allowed to visit classes across the school and other activities including staff meetings, classes, out of classroom areas and activities. I observed in all twelve of the classes NC Years 1 - 6 during this period, choosing not to observe in the nursery/early years room. I maintained regular contact with the first class I had visited and added two other classes totalling three classes with which I had regular contact and made repeated visits: the Key Stage 1 class I first visited and two Key Stage two classes. I followed those classes through 'hand over' to their new teachers and into their new classes. During the final half term I interviewed all of the staff whom I had observed across the year; twenty-two in total. Having spoken with many of the children in the three focus classes on numerous occasions as well as other children in various school activities, I also conducted short interviews (between 10 – 20 minutes) with twenty-seven of the children from the two Key Stage 2 classes. I used a semi-structured interview schedule for these interviews. If there were issues arising in data, for example children observed going out of their classroom to be taught in small groups, seating and grouping arrangements in class, curriculum planning and Special Educational Needs meetings, school council, breakfast club, a class trip to the science museum, playtimes etc. etc. I highlighted these both at the time and subsequently in my notes and followed up with observations: by visiting those events and/or other classes; as such this could be termed 'snowball' sampling. I collected school policy documents, examples of teachers' planning sheets, samples of pupil reports, spreadsheets related to 'interventions': a key research theme, class lists including FSM and ethnicity codes and special educational needs information, samples from the detention book, within class table grouping lists. Some of these documents were easy to collect systematically: for example the policy documents, others depended in a large part

on opportunity; what might call being in the right place at the right time (lists being handed out at relevant meetings for example, being in school at the exact time when reports were being collated) and pursuing documentation relevant to themes arising in observational data collection. Sources were carefully anonymised.

The choice of a primary school reflects the context in which I set this study: conceptualisations of inclusion and exclusion, increases in exclusions as cited above together with my experiences as a teacher. Previous studies illuminated issues pertinent to this study (e.g. Hayden 1996, Connolly 1998 Parsons 1994, Wright 1992) but none had the particularities of this research project, thinking about understandings of inclusive education and those pupil groups vulnerable to exclusion. I had certainly not anticipated encountering the prevalence of seating by perceived ability in classrooms across the school and a latticework of interlocking 'interventions' in which a finely graded hierarchy of learners were discursively produced.

Emancipatory Research?

Picking up some of the issues touched upon thus far that will be 'considered later' I have realised these issues are not simply my minor preoccupations. They reflect some of the doubts and internal wrangles that have arisen for me, giving rise to some tense and protracted discussions. They tap into some large questions about research. About the research process, about procedure, about what it is for.

Recalling Richardson's (2000) question as to the purpose of a piece of writing above – I find myself asking that question as to the purpose of this proposed research project, and as Len Barton (1998 p.32) also asks, the proposed outcomes. One of the most striking readings during the course of my Masters degree in 1994/95 was Mike Oliver's (1992) paper on the development of an emancipatory research paradigm in the context of research on disability. I see now that I am not the only person who found it influential (e.g. Barton 1998 p.31). I am put in mind of a quote in the paper reflecting upon the outcomes of research on rural poverty,

'Much of the material remains unprocessed, or if processed, unanalyzed, or if analyzed, not written up, or if written up, not read, or if read, not remembered, or if remembered, not used or acted upon...'

Chambers (1983 p.53 in Oliver 1992 p.105)

I remembered from back then when I first read it till now, the apparently dire warnings cited in the paper by other writers. Telling women for example, (Finch 1986 in Oliver 1992 p.105) to protect themselves from researchers and likewise Jenkins (1971 in Oliver 1992 p.105) apparently going the whole hog and advising black people to tell researchers to 'fuck off'. This, I reflected, was not casting access and research participation in its best light, but I could see the point being made. In another article, Michele Foster cites an episode in a novel by Gloria Naylor (1988 pp.7-8 in Foster 1994 p1.29) in which 'a well-educated young man known only as 'Reema's Boy' returns home from across the river where he had gone to be educated to conduct research among his own people...' Questioning relatives and neighbours about a commonly known phrase, the narrator, a member of that home community gives a withering report of his findings,

'...we were so damned dumb that we turned the whole [phrase] around. Not that he called it being dumb mind you, called it 'asserting our cultural identity,' 'inverting hostile social and political parameters.' Cause, see, being we was brought here as slaves, we had no choice but to look at everything upside-down. And then being that we was isolated off here on this island, everybody else in the country went on learning good English and calling things what they really was... while we kept calling things ass-backwards.'

Gloria Naylor (1988 pp.7-8 in Foster 1994 p.129)

I understand citing the two articles might appear to be conflating different issues in the researcher/ researched situation. Mike Oliver is reporting on a different aspect of power relations perhaps, on what he terms 'the social relations of research production' (Oliver 1992 p.101) to that of Michele Foster, who is reflecting here on what she sees as a 'cautionary tale' around the issues of researcher and researched being 'members of the same cultural and speech community'. Issues of being insider and outsider were relevant for her as a Black, female researcher researching the lives and practices of Black teachers (Foster 1994 pp.131-132).

Reading around policy research, a section in Stephen Ball's paper stood out for me 'Critical researchers, apparently safely ensconced in the moral high ground, nonetheless make a livelihood trading in the artefacts of misery and broken dreams of practitioners'.
Ball (1997 p.258)

Reflecting upon a piece of his own research in the light of his paper above, Oliver (1997) asked 'who gained?'

Having situated myself in the research process as 'research instrument' (Janesick 2000 p.386), and keeping in mind Lincoln & Denzin's (2000 p.1060) awareness of multiple identities, I am painfully aware of one aspect of my shifting identity, of that between of teacher and researcher. I do not intend to flood the research text with 'ruminations' of my 'subjectivities' (Lal 1996 in Fine et al 2000). But here I am having to overtly consider the relationship between researcher – myself – and subject (Fine 1994; Fine et al 2000). Having moved away, in the course of reading for this project, from the 'lie' as Clough and Barton (1995 p.3) term it, of methodology as 'the distance between us and our work' I have felt confused and at times depleted by what it means to engage in research.

Reading Jenny Ozga's (2000) book, I can see many of my concerns put into both a historical and conceptual context. Her analyses of the interactions between teachers; conceptualisations of policy – which she recognises as 'contested terrain' (Ozga 2000 p.1) and research, unravels amongst other things, my 'gut reaction' to want to carry out a piece of research independently of current government professional development schemes (e.g. DfES 2000; 2001). I would like my research to be of some use, and struggle with what 'use' might mean.

I am aware of the policy and teacher training agenda in which the context informing practice are removed (Ozga p.27). The emphasis upon the 'relevance and practical value of educational research' (Hillage et al 1998: 3 cited in Ozga 2000 p.29) in this restricted model, imply a 'straightforward and technical definition of both policy and research, and their relationship' (Ozga 2000 p.32). I am clearer then, that I intended my research project to be situated in a 'contextualised model' that contributes to understandings of 'the relationships between social structures and educational outcomes, and their complex interconnections' (Ozga 2000 p.27). I am interested also, to see Brown & Dowling's assertion (1998 p.162) that 'educational practitioners need to move outside of their professional practice and into the distinct activity of educational research' which they consider essential 'if they [educational practitioners] are to generate the dialogue between research and practice that is a necessary condition for their mutual development'. Both of these texts, Jenny Ozga's and Brown & Dowling's enabled me to begin to negotiate the relationship

between myself as researcher and as practitioner (teacher) in the context of this particular project.

Mike Oliver (1992 p.103) emphasises that despite his criticisms of research he still believes that 'social research has much to contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone in late capitalist society'. Virginia Olesen (2000 p.215) reporting on her convictions about feminist qualitative research back in 1975, specifically in the area of women's health asserted that 'rage is not enough' and called for 'incisive scholarship to frame, direct, and harness passion in the interests of redressing grievous problems in many areas of women's health'. I am passionate about my area of enquiry.

I see in Thomas A. Schwandt's (2000 p.202) paper that 'many qualitative inquirers locate the project squarely within an emancipatory and transformative agenda'. Citing Howe (1998 in Schwandt 2000 p.202) that 'Some neopragmatists, critical theorists, and feminists are committed to the task of interpretation for purposes of criticizing and dismantling unjust and undemocratic educational and social practices and transforming them'. Schwandt (2000 p.202) goes on to assert 'other neopragmatists', 'and some defenders of philosophical hermeneutics share this general Enlightenment belief in the power of critical reflection to improve our lot, but connect the interpretive project less directly to political transformation and more closely to dialogue, conversation, and education understood as interpretational interchange that is self transformative.'

I have thought long and hard about this. Not just the above quote, but about the issue of locating my research. I don't mean just giving it a long name, locating its label. I do not wish to get caught up here in exploring what Troyna (1994b p.20) calls a 'debate about the role of the 'intellectual' in the micro-context of the research enterprise and, more generally, in relation to wider political struggles'. Although I have been looking for a spot to briefly revisit Martyn Hammersley's assertions, mentioned above, in which he argues the 'fundamental error.... that it is possible to pursue both knowledge and practical political goals simultaneously' (e.g. Hammersley 1998 p32, 1994, 1995, 2001, Hammersley & Gomm 1997). As Connolly (2001 p.165) states, Hammersley as one of the 'methodological purists' refuses to accept 'that politics has any influence over what they do'. What I *can* state then, is that along with many others (e.g. Gillborn 1998, 2008, Connolly 2001, Oliver 2001, Humphries 1998) I am committed to research that engages with politics (and

not the narrow definition of politics that is 'irretrievably biased and closed to evidence' Gillborn 1998 p.49). Something therefore, which is not antithetical to producing research evidence that can be regarded as valid and reliable. Putting it another way, I have not subjected myself to the insecurities and discomforts of a PhD programme for an outcome I could have thought up in an afternoon from my preconceived convictions. I did not anticipate the research outcomes to the questions I posed.

One of my major stumbling blocks was considering the notion of emancipatory research (e.g. Oliver 1992, 1997; Barnes & Mercer 1997; Lather 1991; Humphries 1997, 1998; Troyna 1994b). Summarised (a little crudely) by Gergen & Gergen (2000 p.1034-5) as the researcher offering 'his or her skills and resources in order to assist groups in developing projects of mutual interest'. Cutting to the chase, I decided that one central decision to be made was the framing of the research questions and subsequent processes of involvement with the 'researched'. The 'complex dynamics' as Humphries (1997 3.6) terms it, between researcher and researched.

Two aspects of Troyna's (1994b pp.12-13) paper stand out in respect to interrogating 'empowerment': the 'contingent nature of identities' and in the light of those 'who, for one reason or another, are eligible for 'empowerment''. I am aware of the school exclusions statistics. The Social Exclusion Unit Report (1998: 2.4) states that 'a number of groups are disproportionately likely to be excluded: children with special needs are six times more likely than others to be excluded; African Caribbean children are more than six times more likely'. I could state that I am seeking to 'empower' these students, right then and there, in the process of the research but again I return to my questions. How are the apparent tensions between inclusive education and school exclusions resolved at the primary school? What understandings of inclusive education and school exclusion are demonstrated by those involved in the school setting, in the context of local and national policy?

As I have already stated, these questions were framed from my understandings and experiences, both as a teacher and in reading research. I could, I speculate, have asked different questions that could give rise to an 'emancipatory' research design (e.g. Oliver 1992). As stated in Mary Haywood Metz' paper above, I have made 'a concerted effort to understand participants' perspectives in their own terms', which as I see it, does not involve actions on my part to alter those conditions directly at

the time of the fieldwork. I have not met Lather's (1991 p.71) definition of a 'reciprocally educative encounter' in the context of my researched school.

Stephen Ball (1983 p.98) suggests, in his reflections upon data analysis and presentation that data is 'translated into the conceptual language and classifications of the social scientist' making the data 'accessible to peers within the research community' which serves to 'remove the data from the comprehension of the researched'. This is what put me in mind of the quote from 'Reema's boy' cited from Foster (1994 p.130) above. David Gillborn (1998 p.35) describes his and Mac an Ghail's work as consciously addressing the issue of 'racism', going 'beyond individualistic analyses of personal 'prejudice' to examine how racism operates as a complex and multifaceted aspect of school life; one that links the wider structures of power in society with the minutiae of classroom experience and control'. In exploring the 'minutiae of classroom experience and control' I have intended to 'deconstruct[ing] the obvious' (Hall 1980 p.6 in Troyna 1994b p.20).

As I have stated in regard to conceptualisations of 'policy' above, this study is bound up with the theoretical underpinnings outlined in the literature review, and this includes an exploration of notions of both 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. Having touched upon the racialised pattern of schools exclusions above (SEU 1998), this study *does* seek to challenge taken for granted assumptions that reproduce wider inequalities in the structuring of educational opportunities. In the context of disability research, Len Barton (1998 p.32) puts forward a view of 'relevant research' that 'needs to be concerned with struggle for change and thus a critical engagement with, for example, material and ideological barriers to participation'. Not about 'tips for living' but about 'institutional discrimination, exclusion'.

Returning then to Michele Foster's (1994) paper above, I originally sought to read it in order to reflect further upon the piece of her research she was describing and also to reflect upon my own ethnic identities in the light of engaging in research. I realised later, that the piece had also been useful in considering my insider/ outsider status with regard to being a teacher. I have in two decades of teaching, and will continue, to unintentionally act as Gillborn (1998 p.35) puts it, in ways that 'perpetuate existing inequalities of opportunity and achievement'. The quote by Stephen Ball (1997 p.258) cited above springs to my mind, as I wrestle with research, benefiting on the backs of practitioners. In these times of teacher surveillance and the monitoring of teacher performance (e.g. Ozga 2000 p.24) I am

aware that things are difficult enough in schools without a researcher swanning in like 'Reema's Boy' with smart worded critiques that do not speak to those involved.

However much I agree with the *critiques* of Peter Foster (et al's) (e.g. Foster 1990, 1992, 1993; Gomm 1993; Hammersley 1998, 2000; Hammersley & Gomm 1997) deployment of 'a particular discourse of methodological purity' (Gillborn 1998 p.46; Connolly 1992; Troyna 1993, 1995; Delamont, Oliver & Connolly 2001) I was still struck by this criticism:

What we appear to get here are the observations not of an academic entering an unfamiliar world and largely influenced by a critical perspective, but those of a teacher on secondment still inherently sympathetic to the views of teachers.

Hannan 1993 p.96 cited in Gillborn 1995 p.50

Is it just me or does this make 'a teacher on secondment' and 'inherently sympathetic to teachers' sound like an insult? The way in which I have begun to resolve these tensions is to accept the position outlined by Gillborn (1998 p.42) that 'to portray critical research as 'victimization' risks constructing a dangerous dichotomy either *for* or *against* teachers' and that 'such a position leaves little room for progress and assumes that teachers constitute a homogenous group – a view that is contradicted by most qualitative research on teachers'.

Methods

Moving on to methods, which, as we remember were described by Metz (2000 p20) as 'tools in the service of research questions and the theoretical (or practical) bodies of knowledge they seek to expand', and that methodologies *underlie* methods, I thought having gone some way in tilling the ground of 'methodology', that 'methods' might be the easy bit. How naïve. Given the proliferation of issues that have arisen out of reading around methods, I have again chosen to focus my discussion upon issues which, given my current understandings, appeared relevant to my at least *making a start* in 'the field'. I considered participant observation and the technicalities of recording information (both 'field notes' and audio). I gave thought to coding, to texts and therefore the beginnings of 'analysis'. I was warned from all sides to be aware of what I was going to do with the data, *before* collection, not *after* amassing what Miles and Huberman (1994 p56) term an 'alpine collection of

information' – although in retrospect I think that is rather like exhorting some to imagine parenthood before the birth of a child; a state of some preparedness with no clue of the enormity of what is to follow.

Practicalities. I am pleased – in some ways - that I write at a time when the research process is overtly unravelled (Delamont 1992, Atkinson et al 2001, Denzin & Lincoln 2000). I see that Sara Delamont (1992 p. 29) openly recognises that one 'common impediment to good fieldwork' is 'not finishing the process'. That 'one reason people do not finish projects is that they want them to be perfect' or that 'they believe their work is so bad no one else will want to see it'. This has been a vivid practicality. I entered into this first chapter as an apprenticeship for what was to follow in terms of writing, what Delamont (1992 p. 30) terms delivering the goods. Despite hopes I did not get any quicker at it.

I saw something of the potential downside to all this unravelling of the research process. I wondered, for example, how anyone could produce *fifteen* tightly written pages on the issue of 'field notes' alone (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2001). Reading the article, I reflected upon the relationship between participant observation and field notes, the 'written accounts and descriptions', the observer and observed (Emerson et al 2001 p.352). As a teacher I have observed and been observed for what I would have said were a range of purposes. It may have all been dressed up as a *range* of purposes, but actually, it seems to me on closer consideration, amounts to two. The pervasive surveillance and inspection requirements accompanying educational legislation over the past twelve years (e.g. Rea & Weiner 1998) and assessment practices based upon continuing notions of individual deficit that underpin arrangements for students labelled as having 'special educational needs' (Slee 1995, Tomlinson 1992).

Perhaps it is having worked in this climate of surveillance for so long, that I confess it would not have *occurred* to me to 'conceal the act of making jottings' (Emerson et al 2001 p.357). I consider that I have used tact and developed positive working relationships as a teacher observing in others' classrooms, what Emerson et al (p.357) term 'interactional skills and tact to manage open jottings'. I was going to write that it is interesting to open up the minutiae of processes I had not previously given much thought. But I *have* previously given 'observation' in school classrooms a good deal of thought. I have for many years been employed centrally by Local Education Authorities as one of the teachers (termed 'specialist') who are

despatched to observe in classrooms where one or many pupils' behaviour is deemed problematic (note the emphasis of that 'gaze'), and offer solutions. I developed an observation schedule as one of my Masters' degree projects.

More accurately then, it has been surprising to open up the minutiae of processes I *had* given much thought and to reveal all sorts of assumptions rooted in the contexts in which I have worked. So I am mindful about when and what I might be noting down, being more aware of the possible impacts of taking notes, 'reactive effects' as Emerson et al (2001 pp.357 and 365) put it, recognising my own part in the action. I considered variation 'not only in content but in style, voice, focus and point of view' inherent in these 'unruly, in-process writings' (Emerson et al 2001). Acknowledging that being in 'the field' is not meant to be all immediately polished insights and sparkling clarity settled the nerves a little, fractionally reducing that sense of isolation and cluelessness in this role as researcher. A role totally different to the 'solutions' expected of the specialist teacher. Having said field notes are 'unruly' in some senses, I also developed structures for taking notes and subsequent transcription that allowed for later thoughts, reflections and analyses to be added.

Without going into too much detail about audio recording and transcription and 'representing dialogue' (Emerson et al 2001 p.360) if 'jottings' are thought to challenge trust and generate possible 'reactive effects', using a mini disk required negotiation and judgement. Staying with recording, discussions of 'overlapping talk' 'verbal stresses' 'precise lengths of pauses' and other aspects of conversation (Silverman 2001 p.164) remind me of my early musical training (my first degree was in music) and the skills of listening, interpretation and notation. I am not saying an audio recording or the technical skills of note taking can provide a complete, definitive record of events (Silverman 2001 p.162). Remembering back to the assertion that the way in which a research subject is chosen is in itself 'constitutive of that subject' (Clough & Barton's 1995 p2). I am aware of the notion of the 'ethnographer's gaze', of the 'constant choices' involved in the processes of observation and field notes, 'not only in what to look at and take note of, but also in how to write down these matters' (Emerson et al 2001 p.365).

Having laid out my stall as regards to methodology, I am comfortable with field notes reflecting particular purposes and 'commitments' and that it involves 'active processes of interpretation and sense-making' whilst minimising 'explicit analysis and extensive interpretation' ' (Emerson et al p.365). I found it useful to

conceptualise a process contrasting the 'initial insights' of 'in-process analytic writing' with the 'more systematic, analytic procedures of coding and memoing' (Emerson et al 1995 p.105).

I have hinted at needing to conceptualise 'participant observation'. At the outset I was looking for ways of thinking about participant observation that gave me enough of a working understanding to enter the field. If participant observation is 'establishing a place in some natural setting on a relatively long-term basis in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting' (Emerson et al 2001 p. 352), I did not want to ruin the start of a 'relatively long-term' involvement in a particular setting.

My anxiety, I reflected, was the change of role, more than the setting. I thought that a quick romp through Gold's (1958 cited in Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p. 677) 'typology of roles' (complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer) and settling, as Stephen Ball (1985 p. 26) did on 'observer-as-participant' would really sew up this discussion. I don't know if I would go as far as Behar (1996 cited in Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p. 684) that 'the very term *participant observation* is an 'oxymoron'', but the tensions between the role of 'member and observer' are worth considering. Having done my methodology ground-tilling as mentioned above, and without wanting to just quote an entire article as my position, (despite the ensuing long quote, the entire article is not actually my position. Were it that simple) the following section really encapsulates the key issues for me as began to grapple with my (re)conceptualisation of observation

Contemporary social research may be characterized by (a) the increasing willingness of ethnographers to affirm or develop a 'membership' role in the communities they study, (b) the recognition of the possibility that it may be neither feasible nor possible to harmonize observer and 'insider' perspectives so as to achieve a consensus about 'ethnographic truth', and (c) the transformation of the erstwhile 'subjects' of research into ethnographers' collaborative partners. The traditional concern with process and method has therefore been supplemented with (but by no means supplanted by) an interest in the ways ethnographic observers interact with or enter into a dialogic relationship with members of the group being studied.

Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p.678

In terms of developing a 'membership' role I must say, I squirm at the whole idea of 'passing' (as reported by researchers cited in Ball 1985). I am probably doing it an injustice, but as I see it twenty-something researchers masquerading as teenagers; blurring the lines of what 'friendship' means in the research context. Either way, not applicable to the primary school setting. I am no prude, but I was quite taken aback at the open discussion of sexual relationships in the field and the advice by Killick (1995 cited in Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p. 682) that researchers should keep quiet if their sexual behaviour has been either 'uninteresting or reprehensible'. This apparent throw back to the colonialist bias of traditional anthropology raises the issues of power, and what I think is being considered in the above quote as 'the transformation of the erstwhile 'subjects' of research into ethnographers' collaborative partner'.

Citing Woods (1994 p. 301) Walford asserts that 'the most prominent features of an ethnographic approach is 'long-term engagement in the situation as things actually happen and observing things first-hand' (Walford 2008 p.9). Walford continues, 'as the researcher becomes a more familiar presence; participants are less likely to behave uncharacteristically...the success of an ethnography depends on the researcher developing and maintaining a positive personal involvement with participants (Walford 2008 p.9). Acknowledging that there is no 'clearly defined and finite' ethnographer's identity in the field, I am aware that in 'negotiating a situational identity' that 'ethnographers and their collaborators so not step into fixed and fully defined positions'. I endeavoured to have a 'meaningful function' (Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p.679) in the school, one that the staff and pupils could be comfortable with, but this was clearly not always the situation with some teachers.

This thing about it being 'neither feasible nor possible to harmonize observer and 'insider' perspectives', about 'ethnographic truths' (Angrosino & Mays de Perez 2000 p.678 as cited above), again I have visited some of these themes already. There are practicalities about checking with people as to their understandings to try and represent insider perspectives as well as one can. It also touches upon notions of 'voice'. Whilst recognising the debates around voice and empowerment, and the power relationship inherent in having the control over what and how to report direct speech extracts (eg. Bhavani 1988, Troyna 1994b, Griffiths 1998) as I see it, one needs to have worked as hard as one can to have as good an understanding as possible and as good a record as possible of those events in the first place, in order to even enter the arena of reporting and its attendant debates.

It was useful to consider some of the tricky situations Ball (1985 pp. 38 & 45) raised prior to fieldwork; examples of students talking openly about their problems with staff or other adults, whether one is in a disciplinary capacity, how one might respond in the face of behaviour that 'breaks rules' or how to handle potentially 'damaging' information about taboo behaviour (such as stealing). As I have touched upon in my introduction, 'in addition to those ethical issues that can be foreseen and averted, there are also those dilemmas that develop unexpectedly and spontaneously (Goodwin et al 2003 p. 567). Having worked as a teacher, I had a clear understanding of issues that would trigger the need for reporting to staff with responsibilities for child protection procedures and confidentiality.

I explored issues of 'coding' and 'texts' as aspects of the qualitative research process in order to conceptualise my project. I both anticipated and subsequently proceeded with interrogating processes of 'identifying key themes and patterns' further, of expanding, transforming, reconceptualising, reducing data (Coffey & Atkinson 1996). Texts were situated in the context of the setting: From documents internal to the school to national legislation and codes of practice, part of what Ball (1997 p.266) terms the policy trajectory - across and between levels of policy. Also 'policy ensembles' (1997 p.263), recognising the way in which the enactment of one policy may 'inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others' (Ball 1997 p.265). Again this is linked to themes in the literature review.

Reflecting upon definitions cited: methods as 'tools in the service of research questions and the theoretical (or practical) bodies of knowledge they seek to expand' (Metz 2000 p.20), methodology denoting 'the systematic and logical study of the principles guiding enquiry' (Burgess and Bulmer 1981, p.478 cited in Halpin & Troyna 1994 p.ix), what I have sought to present in this chapter is an outline of 'systematic interactions between data and ideas as well as the emergent properties of research design and data analysis, which are in constant dialogue' (Atkinson and Delamont 2008 p.301).

Looking back over this chapter and forward to the ensuing chapters, the sentence that still stands out for me is the one in Clough and Barton (1995 pp. 3 -4) that 'The biggest lie that a so-called 'methodology' tells is of the distance between us and our work; hence we elaborate the clinical nature, the sterile cleanliness of the instruments we use'. Revisiting and revising this chapter I returned to this issue in my reading, knowing that as this research project has progressed, I have written

myself in to ensuing chapters endeavouring to engage the reader in a reciprocal process; 'thinking out loud' if that is possible on the written page. I did this to disrupt this notion of 'sterile cleanliness'; attempting to illuminate processes, dilemmas, analyses. This took me back into reading about auto-ethnography (Holman Jones 2008), even performing ethnography (Holman Jones 2008, Denzin 2003) and critiques (Atkinson 2004), questioning this balance of self in research. Along with Mike Apple (1994) - and therefore in good company - I have valued returning to the debate between Fine (1994a) and Patai (1994) showing 'the very real tensions that arise once the connections between power and method are taken as seriously as they deserve' (Apple 1994 p. x). Whilst wishing to explicitly position myself in this research, I agree both with Patai (1994 p. 67) in her critique of the 'pretense that the world's ills are set right by mere acknowledgement of one's own position [of privilege]' and also with Atkinson (p. 2004 p. 110) that 'as a social scientist, I am convinced that I am not the most interesting or important topic for inquiry'.

What I *have* found to be the most interesting and important topic for inquiry is challenging structural inequalities in school, specifically the production of school pupils in a finely graded hierarchy of perceived 'ability'.

In exploring these issues during fieldwork, analysis and writing up I hope that I have communicated a 'research readiness'. In Sara Delamont's (1992 p.30) spirit of delivering the goods and the bell ringing's spirit of work in progress, this summary reflects both my understandings prior to fieldwork and continuing work in progress both in this research project and my ongoing work in schools.

Chapter 3:

Pupil Grouping

In this chapter I outline processes through which educational inequalities are being made and re-made in the apparently unanticipated and unquestioned outcomes of pupil grouping, specifically grouping by 'ability' across the classes I visited in my research school. Presenting data and considering relevant literature, I begin to open up themes emerging from interlocking policy processes and imperatives in this inner city primary school that will be explored in ensuing chapters. Responses from staff and pupils suggest that in the push for ever increasing SATS results to meet government targets and measures of 'success', a hierarchy of educational winners and losers is being created in the very practices that are assumed to be a model of good practice from the start of schooling. Relevant research (e.g. Kutnick et al 2002; MacIntyre & Ireson 2002 Hallam et al 2004) has questioned aspects of prevalent pupil grouping processes but explicit exploration of issues of equity have not been addressed.

Patrice: Some are good at learnin' and some ain't

'Hexagons and pentagons you're going to be doing the same work today. Squares will be doing some work of their own and then triangles and circles you're going to be doing some sums as well on the board'

Class teacher, introducing work tasks for 'numeracy hour' to a Year 4 class
(8/9 year olds).

I cite this instruction by a class teacher to her class as an example of a moment familiar in my research school, an ordinary everyday occurrence. Having collected data in this school for over a year, it represents a moment familiar and as such almost 'unremarkable' in this school context. Informed by my initial research questions around 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and a concern with issues of equity on the other hand, this moment is situated here within conceptual understandings and analyses offered by the sociology of education and its 'abiding concern with differential educational experiences and outcomes' (Youdell 2004 p. 408).

From my initial research interests, whilst I did not know what to expect entering a long period of fieldwork, I vaguely anticipated findings that would be located within

formal and informal processes of exclusion: routine disciplinary moments and also possibly, the minutiae of special educational needs policies day to day. What I did not expect is what I start to present here; the latticework of organisational processes by which children were sorted into a finely graded hierarchy by perceived 'ability' in every class from year 1 throughout the school. In this chapter I present a brief overview of the research and policy context in which grouping by perceived ability has more overtly re-emerged in the primary school setting. I present data from children and teachers about the organisational processes within their classrooms. Alexander (2004) uses the words pragmatism and compliance in his exploration of the Primary Strategy (DfES 2003a). What I propose in this chapter is that in the drive for 'standards', pragmatism and compliance proceed to expedience in teachers' organisation of children in their classrooms where 'effective' teaching and learning is thought possible only in pupil groupings ordered and sorted by perceived ability. For children, ranked and ordered seating becomes an embodiment of the ability it represents, with placement in the hierarchy persisting into 'mixed ability' arrangements. Many children conclude, like Patrice (quoted above), that 'some are good at learnin' and some ain't'.

Research and policy context

The 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Hargreaves 1967; Jackson 1964; Lacey 1970) saw a period of research in into 'differentiation and polarization and the development of 'pro' and 'anti' school sub-cultures' (Youdell 2004 p.408), and what William and Bartholomew (2004 p. 281) termed 'the problems of disaffection from school experienced by students in lower streams in secondary schools'. The 1990s saw a return to concerns of 'ability grouping'^{xxiv} setting and streaming as outcomes of the 'quasi market' approach to education planning (le Grand 1993, Ball 2008) with the associated mechanisms of 'choice', standards and competition (Gewirtz et al 1995, Reay 1998a; Whitty 1997, Whitty et al 1998; William 2000; Gillborn & Youdell 2000, Askew et al 2001).

An OFSTED report (1998) considering the benefits of 'setting in primary school' in terms of the standards agenda, appeared at around the same time as reviews of research on effects of ability grouping that found little evidence of between-class ability grouping raising overall attainment (Hallam & Toutounji 1996; Harlen & Malcolm 1997; Sukhnandan & Lee 1998). This OFSTED report made a distinction between 'setting' which 'was defined as the formation of teaching groups for a

particular subject based on the pupil's prior attainment in that subject' and 'the formation of ability groups, taught by the same teacher, within mixed ability classes' (OFSTED 1998 p. 1). Referring as it does then to what is being termed '*between-class* ability grouping' (my italics) in the research cited here, work by William & Bartholomew (2001) questions the efficacy of 'between-class ability grouping' for the attainment of those allocated to 'top' groups as well as established research findings (e.g. Hoffer 1992; Linchevski & Kutscher 1998; William & Bartholomew 2004) that between-class ability grouping 'increases the achievement of the highest attainers, at the expense of lower attainers, particularly in mathematics'.

Boaler (1997a & b) and Boaler et al (2000) found that girls in top sets were disadvantaged by the pedagogical outcomes of setting arrangements, in which 'high pressure, anxiety and speed all militate against understanding' (Boaler 1997b p.180). Jo Boaler and her colleagues found that 'teachers employed a more restricted range of teaching approaches with 'homogeneous' groups than with mixed-ability groups' (Boaler et al 2000 p. 631) with students in top sets 'required to learn at a pace which was, for many students, incompatible with understanding' and 'restriction of opportunity to learn' (Boaler et al p. 631) for students in lower sets. Indeed, research (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Reay, 1998a & b; Boaler e.g. 1997a) presents findings reflecting those persistent in research of previous decades cited above; that setting and grouping by ability is advantageous for some social groups, and continues to create the conditions of unfair disadvantage for those from black minority ethnic groups, those from working class backgrounds and for girls. Whilst published before some of the citations above, the OFSTED report (1998 p.1) left unacknowledged the existing body of research around setting and 'between-class' ability grouping stating that 'little systematic evaluation of setting in primary schools in England has been undertaken, despite the growing interest in its use' (OFSTED 1998 p.1), suggesting either that research conducted in secondary school contexts would yield completely different outcomes to those in primary schools, or more tellingly perhaps, that 'systematic evaluation' is something different to published educational research. This latter point may have something to do with the 'uninformed professional judgement' and 'uninformed prescription' (Barber 2002) which Barber (formerly director of the DfES Standards and Effectiveness Unit) declared there to have been prior to the New Labour Government, signalling the apparent shift to 'informed professional judgement' via what he termed 'informed prescription' (Barber 2002) during the first New Labour term in government.

Put more directly, Alexander (2004 p. 28) describes the literacy and numeracy strategies (DfEE 1998, 1999) within the government's ensuing 'Primary Strategy' (2003) as manifesting 'a studied ignorance about the state of education before 1997, and a crude instrumentalism of purpose'. Situating his article in the context of Brian Simon's 1981 paper, 'Why no pedagogy', Alexander (2004 p. 28) asserts that the Primary Strategy (2003) presents a 'pseudo-pedagogy, 'ignoring 'the cumulative body of scholarship and evidence about children, learning, teaching and culture' he argues is evident since Brian Simon's initial critique and 'the collective experience of the teachers it [the Primary Strategy] claims to respect'. Looking in detail at the National Numeracy Strategy (1999), Askew et al (2001 p. 5) consider the 'models of entitlement that are being encouraged through the implementation of the English National Numeracy Strategy in relation to models presented in earlier policy documents'. They argue that 'in practice models of entitlement that were differentiated as a result of perceived differences in pupils have not been replaced with models of entitlement to outcomes, but merely that later models have overlaid earlier ones' (Askew et al 2001 p. 5). Observing the 'mixed messages' that schools and teachers are exposed to in relation to the National Numeracy Strategy, Askew et al (2001 p.5) suggest 'this places teachers in a situation of tension: on the one hand trying to ensure all pupils reach a standard level of attainment and on the other still trying to differentiate the curriculum to meet perceived individual needs'.

Recalling Ball's (2003a p.27) assertion that 'new policies are sedimented into a history of previous policies which may be superseded but are not necessarily expunged' I propose that the context described provides the conditions for the persistence of discourses reaching back over a century, constituting 'student identities within the terms of enduring and predictable categorisations' (Youdell 2006 p. 177). Alexander (2004 p.9) observes that since coming into government in 1997, New Labour ministers and DfES 'elevated the quintessentially pragmatic mantra 'what works' to the status of ultimate criterion for judging whether a practice is educationally sound; and the word 'compliance'—not to mention sanctions such as 'special measures' feature prominently in the procedural vocabulary of DfES, Ofsted and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA)'. He continues, 'for 'informed professional judgement', then, read 'political compliance'. I will explore further teachers' decision-making, performativity and surveillance (Ball 2003b) in my next chapter.

Having cited Robin Alexander (2004), I note he was one of the so called 'three wise men' of the DES publication (Alexander et al 1992) that enquired into Curriculum

Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools and as such caused such a rumpus in the early nineties (e.g. Bates 92; Alexander 1992; Dadds 1992; Hammersley & Scarth 1993; McNamara & Waugh 1993; Barber et al 1992). Thinking of classroom practice, the five table names in the above instruction (hexagons, pentagons, squares, triangles, circles), reflects the predominant organisation in all of the classrooms visited in Years 1 to 6, in that classrooms were usually organised with five main tables, each of which seated four to six children, with the allocation of different work to different groups. I see, looking back, that Galton et al (1980 p.59) observed similar classroom organisation over two decades previously 'The children, typically about thirty, are seated in groups around flat-topped tables or desks drawn together to form working surfaces; some of them are talking intermittently to each other as they get on with their work, whatever its nature.' Indeed, they draw attention to 'the typical layout of the primary classroom' having 'hardly altered in twenty years' when revisiting this study (Galton et al 1999 p.52). It is in this same volume, under the heading 'A conservative culture?' that Galton et al (1999 p.52) cite Alexander (1997) as having argued that 'the grouping principle has such a 'powerful doctrinal status' for primary teachers that they refuse, or are unable, to consider any other arrangement'.

The phrase 'unable to consider any other arrangement' is revealing. Drawing upon the work of Foucault (1979, 1980) Walkerdine (1984 p.154-5) in her study of 'developmental psychology and the child-centred pedagogy' states that 'Particular disciplines, regimes of truth, bodies of knowledge, make possible both *what can be said* and *what can be done*'. Group seating, with children seated around tables as described by Galton et al (1980, 1999) has been associated with the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education 1967; Hastings & Chantrey-Wood 2000, 2002) and observed to have replaced by the mid-1970s (Bealing 1972) 'the pre-war image of the primary school classroom as a place where children sat behind serried rows of desks' (Galton et al 1999 p.39) mostly placed, as found in Jackson's 1964 survey, in some form of ability streams or groups by the time they were seven years old. Like the Plowden Report, the Alexander, Rose & Woodhead document (Alexander et al 1992:87, Hastings & Chantrey Wood 2002) also conceptualised teaching in terms of individual, group and whole-class activities. Whilst 'group work' and its meanings have occupied those involved in the contested terrain of primary education over decades, as Hastings & Chantrey Wood (2002 p.12) point out, neither the Plowden Report or Alexander et al's (1992) 'discussion document' make 'explicit mention of seating arrangements'.

Checking the 'powerful doctrinal status' citation from Alexander (1997 p.74), in the original text it is the second of 'two interpretations' of data that 'pointed up a mismatch between predominantly individualised learning tasks and the collaborative setting in which children were expected to undertake them' (Alexander 1997 p.73). In their citation above, Galton et al (1999 p. 52) leave out Alexander's (1997 p. 74) first 'interpretation' 'that grouping is the ideal organisational arrangement in that it gives the teacher the flexibility to move freely between individual, group and whole class activities in a way which the traditional arrangement of desks in rows does not'. Whether or not Alexander wrote this as meaning it was or was not likely in his view to be 'the ideal organisational arrangement' I have no idea. I see that Alexander's (1997) book 'Policy and practice in primary education' is a 'second edition' and revisits earlier work in Leeds (Alexander 1991) in which 'the classroom context' was explored. I also see that Alexander's work in Leeds contributed to the discussion paper with the Three Wise Men Report 'sobriquet' (Alexander et al 1992 in 1997 p.230/1).

Whilst the Plowden Report may not have made 'explicit mention of seating arrangements', Walkerdine's (1984 pp. 156 – 7) paper reproduces illustrations from 'The Nuffield Foundation (1967) Nuffield Mathematics Project 'I do, I understand' showing classrooms transformed from the 'serried rows' labelled 'A conventional junior classroom' to the now familiar table group arrangement labelled 'The same classroom rearranged to make better provision for active learning'. Walkerdine's (1984) interrogation of the transformation and utilization of Piaget's work within education provides an insight into the take-up of now taken-for-granted arrangements of table grouping together with the persistence of normalizing practices rooted in fixed notions of intelligence. Remembering primary school teachers' apparent 'inability' to consider any other seating arrangement, (Alexander 1997 in Galton et al (1999 p.52), Walkerdine argues that,

Piaget's radical intentions and the rectitude of his object do not matter. What matters is that the way the work is taken up within educational practices could not be otherwise and this selective take-up is, itself, inserted into a particular pedagogy as a central component. The pedagogy is not Piagetian: what is being charted is the incorporation of a set of apparatuses related to, and in some respects derived from, Piaget's work alongside a whole network of other practices and discourses'

Walkerdine 1984 p. 170

Asserting the need for Piaget's work to be considered in its historical context, Walkerdine (1984 p. 170) observes that 'Certain fundamental issues and concerns provided some of the conditions of possibility for the emergence of Piaget's theory and empirical work in the form it took. These are the issue of heredity and environment, the 'naturalness of the development of rationality and the concern for a solution to the problems of social order'. Considering the beginnings of 'the child study movement' two decades before Piaget began to study children, Walkerdine (1984 p. 170-1) observes that 'children as a category were being singled out for scientific study for the first time and the discourses which produced children were drawn from biology and topography, and every day-life common sense.' As Walkerdine (1984 p. 172) asserts, while Piaget's theories were set up 'in opposition to a view of inherited or pre-given intelligence, the general project within which his work is sited and the terms of its construction do not fall outside those'. She continues 'the new notion of an individualized pedagogy depended absolutely on the possibility of the *observation and classification of normal development*' (Walkerdine 1984 p. 177 *my emphasis*). What Walkerdine explores are the conditions of possibility, the regimes of truth (Foucault 1977) which 'surrounded the take-up and sedimentation of those practices we now take to be common sense' (Walkerdine 1984 p. 177).

The Three Wise Men document (Alexander et al 1992) may well now be 'part of history' (Alexander 1997 p.266) its effects and preface to the ensuing decade of reforms have also become sedimented as a part of today's policy context. Without wishing to 'keep alive the primitive polarities of traditional/ progressive' as Alexander (1997 p.90) observes Chris Woodhead as doing, I cite this moment as one that looks back to the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education 1967) and towards the 'standards agenda' of the ensuing decade; the establishment of OFSTED, league tables and the drive for schools to meet increasing targets in national standardised testing for pupils at age seven and eleven. In all the heat generated by these debates, I was struck by one paragraph in Alexander's (1997) text, acknowledging the subsequent influence of this work on the 'Three Wise Men' document and beyond it seems particularly apposite.

The prevailing model of 'good practice' was in certain respects incomplete. In focusing on the physical and organisational features of the 'quality learning environment' it neglected the necessary questions about the purposes and

content of primary education on which decisions about layout, organisation, grouping and so on should be contingent.

Alexander 1997 p.94

In the classroom

The instructing of the 'hexagons and pentagons', 'the squares', 'the triangles and the circles' in the quote on page 80 raises some of the aspects of pupil grouping to be explored in this chapter, notably the organisation of children^{xxv} in all of the classes I visited, who were allocated to specified tables, which were named by the class teacher. I ask one of the teachers, Ms Nolan, (who had been teaching for over a decade) about this arrangement:

CR Have you changed the way you've organised your classroom over the years? 'Cause I can see that everyone's got their tables laid out...

N I always had groups.

CR You always had groups.

N Yeah I've always had groups because I just think children generally not, not individual children don't necessarily, but I think *on the whole*, I think it's better for them to be grouped because they talk to each other, they help each other out, they watch each other, they *learn* from each other and I just think it's that interaction is so important,

CR [I cut in] And has it always been...

N Every time I separate the tables into twos they say 'oh wow can we have it like this all the time!' You just think, No! No! [she laughs]

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Having said this, I did not observe tables being 'separated into twos' during any of my research visits. This teacher's explanation provides a rationale that would appear to counter the 'mismatch' asserted by Alexander (1992 p.83; 1997 p.74) 'between predominantly individualised learning tasks and the collaborative setting'. It appeared to me this teacher valued the possibilities for interaction offered by this 'grouped' seating, even during 'individualised working tasks', although I recognise there are debates around whether children's conversation in this context is or is not related to 'work' (e.g. Hastings et al 1996) and in questioning what 'work' is, or whether children interacting is of value we're back to Alexander's quote above (1997 p. 94) about the purposes and content of primary education and the multiple ways in which 'learning'

is understood. Whilst I and others might have questions around what counts as 'success' (e.g. Benjamin 2003, 2002) or for example school 'effectiveness' (e.g. Slee 1998), and would therefore perhaps query the apparently straight-forward notion of 'learning more', as in 'whether children *learn more* in one seating arrangement than another' (Hastings et al 1996 p. 33), it would appear to me from the emphasis upon targets of attainment in national testing that national government has a more singular definition of 'successful' educational outcomes.

Thinking about 'behaviour', what might be called 'disruption rate' (Wheldall and Lam 1987), what Ms Nolan meant by 'not, not *individual* children don't necessarily' in her description, she and I don't pursue further in this conversation. This idea of an 'individual table' comes up in the organisation of other classrooms visited. Class teacher Ms George explains,

- CR So how many tables have we got, one,
G Five main tables and one little time out table for
CR OK.
G those who can't work by themselves or who need some more space
or just need to calm down.
...
CR So you've got quite a big space for the carpet area?
G Yes.
CR Although it's all carpeted and there's five tables in pretty well every
classroom.
G Yeah.
CR Is that for a reason?
G Five days in a week? Um dunno. Five groups of six make thirty?

Ms George, class teacher

As a teacher I recognise the apparently innocuous 'space' for a child to 'calm down', a small act of separation. Even if not overtly described as a punishment, indeed framed as it is here as of benefit to the child who 'need[s] some more space', it crosses my mind that such a move to the 'little time out table' could function as 'spectacle' (Foucault 1977 p.113): a warning to the other children as well perhaps. Looking again at this sentence, in this more removed situation I also see the apparent contradiction of 'one little time out table for those who can't work by themselves': seating a child who apparently cannot work 'by themselves', well, by

themselves. I speculate that what the teacher might be suggesting is 'who can't work by themselves' in proximity to other children.

The speculation around 'five days in a week' and 'Um dunno' in response to why there are five main tables at which children are seated during lessons was also reflected by another teacher who said in a 'guessing' tone of voice that there were five days in a week. Both of these teachers who speculated that five tables might be linked to 'five days in a week' outlined their perception of the expectation for them to work with a different group each day during or as part of the literacy hour session (DfEE 1998). Ms George refers to this in the course of describing her 'routines' and organization,

CR I wonder if you can tell me some of your main routines in your class, main ways in which things are organised?

G Um. I have a timetable that I follow and it's up in the classroom so all the children know what we do and it basically goes, changes depending on assembly. We have register, we have handwriting, maths or literacy and assembly if there is one. I try and do fruit before play, five minutes where we have shared story and fruit.

CR That's before play so you got...

G Do it before play I can go straight into my lesson after, so I was doing it after play and it dragged on,

CR Because assembly goes straight into play? [I'm trying to get my head round what she's saying to me]

G So if there's assembly I try and have fruit before assembly.

CR Right. OK.

G Um and then after play maths or literacy and then if I can, because I do fruit before play it's freed up a little bit of time? So I try and do some show and tell for 10 minutes before lunch.

CR I can see your show and tell names on the board.

G I have a massive list and I work my way through it. Just so I don't want children you know waiting too long, so I'm aware of who's, who really wants to. So today I actually rubbed out all the names and those are all new names.

CR OK.

- G Yeah and then after lunch we have register again and we have quiet reading when I do guided reading with a group and they change their books,
- CR After lunch.
- G After lunch yeah. And then we do a lesson, humanities or science.
- CR So how [I am about to proceed to a question that echoes 'doing a lesson after lunch' but my mind has just registered 'guided reading with a group' so I backtrack and instead repeat] you, guided reading?
- G Well you have to do it every day and you can do it in the literacy hour or outside so we're focussing on guided writing in the literacy hour um, so you have a group of books that are levelled to be sort of quite, slightly challenging for the children, more challenging than what they'd take home. And you have an objective for the lesson, what you want them to be doing that lesson, or learning um, and you explain that. And you go through the different strategies for reading and you go through anything that might give them trouble in the book so they can really focus on that one thing.
- CR So is that per group, you do a group?
- G Group each day yeah. And then they read they all read at their own pace at the same time: cacophony, and you just listen in and see what they're doing and how they're reading and make notes on that and then you can give them some sort of focussed pointers based on your objective. Um, and at the beginning of the book it's nice to ask a question, you know 'what happens at the end' or 'I want you to tell me how this' something like that so they're focussing. At the end they can tell you that, and you can comment on anything particularly good someone was doing, um, anything particularly good somebody was doing, um, and talk about that and then sort of have a little activity afterwards.

Talking with Ms George, class teacher

I put all of this in, as it not only draws attention to the 'group each day' but the inextricable link with time pressures: pace and compliance, of 'having to' do things: 'you have to do it [guided reading] every day'. In another discussion with first teacher cited above, Ms Nolan describes this process:

N You're supposed to be there teaching, teaching, teaching. If you're not, you know, if you're not direct teaching the whole class, you're teaching at a table or teaching guided reading group or taking a guided writing group or something, so you do feel like by the end of morning sometimes you're a bit sort of all taught out for the day you know?

Ms Nolan, class teacher

And describing the morning sessions, she outlines:

N Mornings tend to be a little bit more formal because you're trying to cover literacy and numeracy stuff, you've got the structured hours which you have to kind of fit in to the certain amount of time: There's introduction a certain amount of time, the independent activity and the plenary and that sort of thing.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

These teachers are describing, in the run of what has become their ordinary day, what Moss (2004 p.129) has observed as 'the fast pace of teacher-controlled activities' that form a part of the centrally controlled and monitored structure of the National Literacy Strategy, a structure that I argue has consequential impacts on the organisation of children in their classrooms.

Talking to Ms Saunders, (who has been teaching for less than five years and therefore only *since* the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies) about the organisation of groups in her class, she comments that she 'can't think of another way to do it':

CR So tell me about the organisation of um your groups. Have you always done it like that?

S Yeah.

CR Or is that something in this school?

S No. I've

CR Something you came with or?

S Well. It's quite difficult when you're in another, er, like when I was on my practice it was difficult to, you can't just arrange the class, 'cause it's the teacher's you know. Um, in the afternoons they sit in mixed groups so although I mean, I can't think of another way to do it apart from that. Because numeracy although sometimes you need to be in mixed groups, on the whole they're in ability groups. Um, so that's why in the morning I've got morning groups and afternoon groups and I

generally keep them the same for literacy and numeracy depending if there's a real difference 'cause otherwise it's just chaos swapping about you know. Just make I know, I know, what work to give them basically. Some of them have extensions you know and so forth, whereas others wouldn't.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

Ms Saunders perceives that the existing classroom organisation is not to be altered. Her comment that she 'can't think of another way to do it' reflects discourse as practice: arrangements that cannot be thought otherwise. In these arrangements abilities become fixed by organisational convenience; the perception being that other possibilities represent possible chaos. This suggests something different to 'the development of a teaching force which reflects in a critical manner on taken-for-granted assumptions' Troyna and Sikes (1989 p.25). I wonder if Ms Saunders' consideration of whether there might be 'another way to do it' was raised by my question and that the organisation of children and tables may otherwise have been unquestioned through training, teaching practice and subsequent teaching. This can only be speculated. Taken together with data to be presented in my later chapters around 'interventions', it points to a technicist model of teaching; 'the reduction of teaching to a narrowly defined concern with instrumental techniques, skills, and objectives' (Giroux 1992 p. 98), defined by the imperatives of the standards agenda and the logics of organisational convenience, in spite of research that has questioned outcomes of grouping by ability.

Ms Saunders says that she 'generally keep[s] them the same for literacy and numeracy depending if there's a real difference'. I am not sure what a 'real difference' means here, and I am not quick enough in my interviewing to echo 'a real difference?' in an enquiring tone to probe further. The obvious speculation might be, a 'real difference' between children's attainments in 'literacy' and 'numeracy'. This suggests an assumption of something otherwise the same: fixed across task contexts in literacy *and* numeracy respectively. The statistics across all four classes do indeed show that the 'bottom' group is the most static, meaning that if a child is on the 'bottom' table for literacy they are almost certain to be on the 'bottom' table for numeracy as well; only two out of six children on the 'bottom' literacy table in one class were seated at a different table for numeracy. The other three classes had the same children on tables for literacy and numeracy. This was followed by the 'top' group – meaning the children on the 'top' table were almost always on the 'top' table

for both literacy and numeracy with a little, but not much more movement in the middle groups. Numbers in the sample are small, but this data taken together with the qualitative data is certainly suggestive of the tendency for children to be located in one area for most of their day each day: on a 'top' 'middle' or 'bottom' table^{xxvi}. The exception to this was children from the top table being split up across the class and seated on other tables during 'mixed ability'/'afternoon' groups.

Thinking about the pressures to 'teach teach teach' as Ms Nolan put it, the 'pace' expected in the National Strategy 'hours' and an *awareness* of the possibly negative outcomes of grouping by ability, Ms Nolan who had taught for over a decade, follows on from the quote above, where she has said she 'always had groups' she continued,

N Um, I didn't always ability group them. But I just find it easier to organise that way, and to get the resources ready.

CR <I echo and pause> It's easier to organise the resources.

N It's for the teacher if anything. I think sometimes for literacy and numeracy it's better for them in a mixed ability group 'cause the more able ones model for the less able ones. But, in order to give out the resources to all the tables we're doing maths now this group's doing this, this group's doing this. Rather than say 'oh so and so and so and so and so you're doing this one'. You know, it's so I think it's more for the teacher's convenience sometimes, more than the children. But they do have their mixed ability group as well. So I kind of try and balance it, you know.

Ms Nolan, class teacher (May)

The organisational expedience is evident in Ms Nolan's reflections with the co-location of child, ability and seat. The 'teacher's convenience' with 'the resources' suggests a coping tactic. Whilst even 'mixed ability' appears to be a group of fixed abilities: the 'more able ones model for the less able one'. This 'ideal' pupil (Gillborn 1990 in Youdell 2000 p.201) is subsequently reflected in the children's understandings of those seated on different tables.

Ms Nolan explains on a later occasion:

N You've got your work differentiated at three levels and you've got the children sitting at three levels and it's so easy to go right, 'this is the book you're doing, this is the book you're doing', or 'this is the work

you're doing, this is the game you're playing, you're working with me today'. It's just an organisational way of doing it in, doing it like that you're reinforcing in the children's minds, it's that self fulfilling prophesy because obviously if you put the child in the bottom group they're not going to strive to be in the middle group, they're going to be plodding along in the bottom group.

CR But have you found that's the case?

N I think it's true, I think it depends on the child's personality, I think that has a lot to do with, it, <pause> There are some children who are much more self motivated than others there are kids in the class who are, who've got a lazy streak in them. You either let them be lazy and not achieve as much as they could or you give them a push by putting them in a group where they've got to work a bit harder.

CR And do you do that? Do you sort of?

N At the risk of shattering their confidence, so it's, it's a complete dynamic with knowing the children. You've got to know the children really, I think that's the key to everything if you know the children well enough if you get to know them as well as you possibly can as an adult, getting to know a child as a teacher, in the teacher situation gets to know a child. The quicker you build some kind of relationship where you start to get to know them, what their personalities are like even talking to the parents, like the first parents' evening. You can kind of get a measure of their child as they know them as well and how they respond to a push, whether they're the sort of child that goes, 'no, I'm not going to be pushed into this' or if they're the sort of child that needs a push 'cause they achieve so much more if somebody's behind them giving them a nudge all the time and you've just got to try and gauge it really.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Again, Ms Nolan repeats the organisational, expedient rationale for this pupil grouping structure, together with the potential hazards for those 'plodding along in the bottom group'. Given the high correlation between those in receipt of Free School Meals in 'bottom groups' and the high likelihood of those in 'bottom' groups to be in that group for both literacy and numeracy, this raises questions as to understandings and discourses of 'ability'; whether it is considered to be a fixed

attribute; whether the structure of 'ability grouping' is acknowledged to be detrimental to those seated on 'bottom' tables.

These numbers are very small, graphs and tables (see appendices) are based on a sample of 108 children. As Gillborn highlights,

It is well known that, on average, students from economically advantaged backgrounds tend to achieve higher results than their peers from less advantaged homes. This is one of the clearest and longest established findings in the sociology of education: although specialists differ in how they define and measure 'social class' there is agreement that economic background is a hugely significant variable when trying to understand young people's educational experiences and achievements.

Gillborn 2008 p.51

He also reminds us that Free School Meals (FSM) is 'a common, but very crude, proxy for family poverty' (Gillborn 2008 p.51). As such, whilst these findings are in the predicted direction, they can only be suggestive.

When I ask about the 'self fulfilling prophesy' of the bottom groups that Ms Nolan has mentioned, the 'reinforcing in children's minds' that might lead them not to 'strive' Ms Nolan turns to an internal personality deficit in the child: 'depends on the child's personality' together with motivation and 'laziness' apparently detached from the organisationally constructed disadvantage. Thinking about the 'work differentiated at three levels' Askew et al. (2001 p.22) also observe the 'three-group' interpretation of differentiation described [by one respondent] (as opposed to the strategy model of the majority of the class working at one level with a few children at either end of the attainment range being provided with different work), illustrates...teachers trying to make sense of an innovation by fitting it into current practices of grouping and differentiation'.

There is a sense that by Ms Nolan 'knowing' the children, she might ameliorate the possible damage of this grouping system, and that movement (down and back up it seems from this description) can act as a 'push' to motivate children:

N There are some kids that sometimes work hard at different times than others and some of them suddenly come on a bit, some of them sometimes just need to go down a group just for a little reminder of like come on you need to work a bit harder.

Ms Nolan refers more explicitly to the specificities of the literacy hour and pedagogical structure:

N You *can't* just give them all the same work, you know, you have to have levels of ability. You *have* to have them somehow sorted out and it's difficult to do it in your head and for *every single day* of the literacy hour to have work ready for those children without actually sitting them physically in places where you can say 'right that group are doing that, that group are doing, that group', you know, it's just not possible get your head round it, you know, in your mind what they are like. And they'll know by what work they're doing whether you sit them in groups or not whether they're doing the easy work, the middle work, or the hard work so you know.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Again 'you have to have levels of ability' reflects compliance, available discourses or both, with the organisational imperatives of the literacy hour dominating. Saying that children will 'know by what work they're doing' suggests on the one hand that whatever it is that children will 'know', (their 'position' in class?) it is as definable by the 'work', i.e. 'easy...middle...hard'. I wonder firstly what children would 'know' if seated in different configurations, particularly if they move through the different tasks and have contact with different peers. This also seems to reflect a curriculum and pedagogy that apparently comprises entirely individual, closed, sequenced, ranked tasks – the pacing and sequencing 'strategies' of a 'visible pedagogy' (Bernstein 1990). Even given these restrictions on the organisation and 'delivery' of curriculum content, I do also speculate as to whether it *would* be so likely that the same children would always receive the same 'level' of task according to these labels (easy, middle, hard) if seated differently.

Ms Nolan re-emphasises the three-group differentiation in her class:

N Yeah for literacy and numeracy it's differentiated three ways.

CR Oh three not five?

N Well, no. I, I some, it may be for an extreme like these two [meaning the two girls who are sitting outside the class where we're seated] or for the very able, children have an extra thing or an extension, or an adaptation but on the whole it's three groups. And I have my, my very bottom group, there's only three children. Then my middle group this

year is actually the two next groups. And my top group are the two higher groups. 'Cause it's meant to be quite a high ability class. So the top twelve children all do the higher ability work. Whereas some classes, last year for example my top group was only the 6 children in the very, very top group, my middle group were the next two down and the lower ability groups were the next two

CR I see.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Morning all day

'Morning groups' i.e. assignment to a seat at a table in a hierarchy of perceived ability, are not confined to the mornings. A 'literacy' activity might also take place in the afternoon, and in this case the literacy 'morning' groups will apply. Children on one of the hexagon tables (defined as high ability) identified 'science' and 'geography' as two lessons in which 'afternoon groups' would apply:

Hattie It's just mixed groups and we learn how to work together in different groups. Not so that we just learn how to work in this group, we need to learn to work with everyone else.

Y4 (child seated on top table)

Noticing the sentence 'work with everyone *else*' and continuing this discussion about 'afternoon groups' Hattie halts her sentence as she speaks,

CR Oh I see, right. So each of you gets split up to go on the other tables.

H Yeah because they need, because they think that we need, so none of us sit together.

Hattie refers to 'they', 'we' and 'us'. She hesitates in the sentence in which she says 'they need...we need'. In the moment I thought she was referring back to the notion of 'being really good at explaining things', which she'd said only seconds earlier, which might have meant they need 'help' but she didn't actually finish what 'they' or indeed 'we' need. It is interesting to me that 'they need' whilst 'they *think* that we need'. We're still none the wiser what it is 'they think we need', but whatever it is, there is an implied scepticism. Hattie was not in Ms Nolan's class, but is suggesting something of a difference in what 'they' or 'we' need (or provide perhaps) as implied by Ms Nolan when she explained that 'the more able ones model for the less able'. When I looked again at the table lists for Hattie's class, I observed that a member of

the 'morning' hexagon table is listed at the top of each 'afternoon' group split as Hattie says 'so none of *us* sit together' [*my emphasis*]. Hattie's mention of 'just' mixed groups and the persistence of 'us' [the hexagons] into the mixed groups suggests both the children embodying their morning table grouping as well as having echoes of Alexander's (2004 p. 23) observation of the persistence of the Victorian curriculum into the twenty-first century: 'the basics and the rest'. The basics representing the 3Rs Curriculum I: a high status, heavily assessed and protected curriculum, and 'the rest': the low-priority, un-assessed and even dispensable Curriculum II. As such, the hierarchical group assignments from the morning high-status curriculum sustain into the 'mixed ability' groupings of the lower status afternoon curriculum.

In an interview with Ms Bradley, it is a child on the 'morning' hexagon table who is specifically commented upon:

B Um, afternoons. The afternoons work really well actually in the mixed groups, I think it gives a chance,

CR How've you worked out who goes where then?

B Um, just basically on watching who gets along with who and after talking to [N] the previous teacher,

CR Oh yes.

B But it means that people like Robin who are going to be in the top groups, gives him a chance to get away from those children as well and mix with kids that they wouldn't normally be working with and so they can, they can support each other.

Ms Bradley, class teacher

Giving the example of '*people like Robin who are always* going to be in the top groups', (my italics) Ms Bradley emphasises the fixed nature of the groups to the point where 'mixed groups [give] him a chance to get away from those children', i.e. those children on the 'top' table. Without leaping yet into data that looks more closely at teachers' decision making processes, including their descriptions of children in their classes, Ms Bradley's identification of 'people like Robin' is reminiscent of Ms Saunders description of Asena, one of the three girls on the 'hexagon' table in her class:

S Asena. She's lovely. Again she's very, very mature um, she gets on with the girls you know, the Lucys and the Hatties um and very, very

willing, you know. She does so much work at home, extra work at home. Just fantastic really. Good girl.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

Clearly articulating the ideal educational subject, Ms Saunders doesn't mention specific girls, or specific friends, she mentions the other two girls on the 'top' table in the plural 'the Lucys and the Hatties'. Thinking back to the class teacher's instruction at the start of this chapter, she indicated that some tables would be doing 'the same work': hexagons and pentagons, also triangles and circles. Looking again, one might notice that although there is only one of each table, shape names are referred to in the plural. This suggests it is the *children themselves* who are in fact hexagons, pentagons, squares, triangles or circles, depending upon the table to which they are allocated.

Hexagons are top table: Children talk about classroom organization.

Whilst I have presented some of the teachers' comments first, my attention was drawn to grouping in classrooms by children talking about where they sat and the classroom organisation.

Dominique (seated on 'squares' table) finished the 'squares' work, and moves onto the 'pentagons and hexagons' work,

Having completed the 'squares work', Dominique is instructed by the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in the classroom to do 'the hexagon work'. 'Noooo!' she cries in mock horror, visibly delighted. I then notice that the LSA's word is not enough – Dominique goes through the second 'check' of asking the teacher. Following this exchange, I ask Dominique 'what happened?' (i.e. about doing the hexagon work). She replies that she is doing the 'hexagons' work' [There is a lot of background noise, making her difficult to hear at the time, and subsequently on the minidisk recording]. I ask, 'You're doing the highest work why aren't you on their table?' she replies, 'You've got to do hard work in literacy too'

Fieldnotes, supplemented by minidisk recording

Dominique's response suggests that to be a 'proper' hexagon, 'you've got to do hard work in literacy too', and when I look at the groupings in this class, whilst there are differences for some children seated on squares, triangles and circles tables in either

literacy and numeracy (for example Dominique is on 'squares' table for 'numeracy seats' as they're called, but 'triangles' table for 'literacy seats') both pentagons and hexagons tables are stable: the same children are seated on pentagons table or hexagons table respectively for both literacy *and* numeracy. In this sense, Ms Nolan's earlier assertion that the children will know their positioning by 'the work' they do, regardless of their table placement seems to be undermined. In this formulation, if you do the hexagons work but are allocated to sitting at the squares table in the morning group hierarchy, you are 'a square', *not* 'a hexagon'.

Hattie, in the same Year 4 class, sitting on 'hexagons' table explains:

CR How do people come and sit on your table then? What do people have to do to get to hexagon table?

H Well. It's really when they're really good at something. Say if they're really good at maths. And they're really good, I mean really, *really* good. Then they'll sit on this table for maths. But we're, but we're, but we're on this table for everything because we're good at everything. And we'll do English here, but if people are really good at like explaining things in English and things like that.

Here Hattie perceives a fixed requirement to be 'good at everything', and that 'hexagon' status is reserved for those on the top table, not for those 'doing hexagons work'. Before exploring this further, let me go back a step with children and teacher's explanations of the grouping arrangements.

In more than one of the classes I visited the table groups were given 'shape' names, as in the quote at the start of this chapter. In one class there were colour names as well as shapes, one class I visited had only colour names and in another class they used names related to 'outer space'. In one class, the teacher explained that the 'afternoon groups' had been named by the children themselves. Regardless of the names, children (and in subsequent conversations, staff) repeatedly highlighted the *hierarchy* of table groupings.

Paul, a child in Year 5 explains:

CR Can you tell me what the different tables in here are called?

P They're afternoon seats.

- CR This is afternoon seats and what are the morning seats called?
- P When we do maths we have maths seats when we do literacy, literacy seats and when, the afternoon after lunch playtime we get afternoon seats.
- CR OK. What tables are you on?
- P *[He points across the room to a table over by the computer area – over the other side to where we are sitting currently]* I'm on um that group for maths, the highest group.
- CR What is it called?
- P It's called the purple group.
- CR Purple group.
- P And then hexagons.
- CR Right.
- P Which is, that's the highest group and this one is the highest group for afternoon groups.
- CR I see. So what are the different, is this your table? *[I am sitting in a child's seat and he's returned]*. Sorry. Go on take a seat *[I move to let him sit down]*. So what are the different tables called there's purple?
- P OK. Er. In maths it's hexagons, rectangles, squares, triangles, circles and then in literacy it's purple *[slight pause he can't recall the other table colour names. It seems to me at the time that the shape names are designed to be memorable in rank order]* Oh. Er *[he points to the wall – where the seating plan is]*
- CR Up there. OK. I'll have a look. What does it mean if you sit on circles?
- P Er. It's high ability to low ability. Highest up there, lowest over here. And afternoon seats it's just muddled up.

Paul, child in Year 5 (9 – 10 years of age):

Paul reflects the language of 'ability'. I do go on to ask Paul what 'ability' means, and I will explore this later, considering differing notions of 'ability', and the ways in it was used and deployed in various situations in this school setting. The organisational structure is described similarly by both children and staff:

- N They have three different sets of seats. They have um, literacy seats, numeracy seats and afternoon seats, although afternoon seats isn't necessarily the afternoons. It might be,
- CR Oh OK I see a generic name.

N Yeah mixed ability group is the afternoon group. And the maths and English groups are um, both um ability groups.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

CR I wondered what your main routines were and the ways in which you organise things?

B Well they come straight in in the morning to their literacy seats, so they're ability grouped... and then after break when they come in they sit in numeracy seats which again are ability grouped um, and may or may not be different, and then in the afternoons we have mixed ability groups.

Ms Bradley, class teacher

In a class without the 'shape' names, Hema and Sarah, both seated on 'meteorites' table explain what 'meteorites' are. I have seen the table names on the board, but I have not talked to them about table grouping. They do not, for example say, 'it's our table' or (for example) 'a piece of rock that has fallen to earth from outer space, and the name of the table we're sitting on'. They say:

CR So what are meteorites?

H They're the top table.

CR What about asteroids?

H Um. They're the second.

S The second.

CR What about Stars?

Both Stars are, they are the ummm, the second last.

CR What about planets?

H And the planets are the lowest.

CR What about the comets?

H The comets are the third.

S The third.

CR Uh? Third?

H They're top [*I've evidently misheard this*]

CR They're the top table? But meteorites are top.

H No *third* top.

CR Oh third top I see.

H So that means they're in between both. So they're three away from the bottom.

Hema & Sarah, Year 4 class

Hema and Sarah's description reflects the children's stated awareness and clear grasp of the hierarchy and the fine grading, not 'top, middle, bottom', but the rank order.

I ask Dominique and those seated with her on 'squares' table to explain:

CR Why did they choose you for squares? [Dominique looks at me, I repeat] Why did they choose you for squares? [she shrugs]

CR: [I say] Don't know. (So the shrug is 'recorded') Why did they choose them for pentagons?

D: Um, because they're um, they've got um, like a lot of maths and um, they're not as good as hexagons.

CR: Ah.

D: So they've been put on that table.

CR: Oh. (pause) So, they're not as good as hexagons? [Questioning tone. I repeat what's just been said].

D: No, they're just about almost, but hexagons is the top table.

CR: Ah.

Pupil: Circles is the um, um (hesitates)

2nd child: Bottom group.

D: Yeah, not very good.

CR: Oh. And what's squares then?

2nd pupil We're the third.

D: Medium

Dominique, Year 4

Thinking about the 'top' and 'bottom' tables and children's perceptions here, remembering back to the initial instruction, it was the 'hexagons and pentagons' who were to doing 'the same work, 'squares' were doing 'some work of their own' and 'triangles and squares' were doing 'sums as well on the board'. But just as Ms Bradley finely grades middle and middle-low, the children finely grade hexagons as 'good' and pentagons as 'just about almost': one notch down. As Bourdieu suggests (1986a) the skills of distinction are learned and acquired; children in this finely graded hierarchy learning theirs and others' places. Again, in the words of the

children it is rarely if ever the 'hexagon' or 'circle' table: It is the hexagons, pentagons, circles: plural. There is one table but several children, or it is *their* table perhaps, with an apostrophe; shorthand for hexagons' table.

So whilst 'hexagons' and 'pentagons' could have been seen in certain situations as the top *groups*, plural, this was not evident in conversations with children or with teachers in most situations, evident, for example, in descriptions of individual children in their classes. Whilst the numbers are small, and can only be suggestive of patterns for further investigation, it was striking that there were no children of Black and Caribbean Heritage on any of the top 'hexagon' tables in the four classes from which detailed information was gathered.

Verity, another child in Year 5, who sat on 'triangle' table for literacy and numeracy explains her understanding of the shape names:

- CR What does squares mean?
V It's just a group.
CR It's just a group.
V Yeah.
CR What does hexagons mean?
V How complicated the shape is the more complicated the group is.
CR The more complicated the shape is the more complicated the group is. OK. So what does complicated mean?
V Er, like hard.
CR Hard? So what does circles mean?
V It's easy group cause circle's easy [motions drawing a circle in the air]
CR If um, hexagons are really complicated and circles are really easy what are squares and triangles then?
V Medium [*in a kind of 'duh' tone of voice, as if stating something very obvious*]

Verity, Year 5

Verity's use of the word 'complicated' suggests the work or tasks the children are given, but is also suggestive of the complexity of the children themselves. Ruth, also in this class and seated on 'hexagons' for both literacy and numeracy articulates a similar understanding of the shape ranking (you can see I am a bit taken aback by her opening statement, as I reply 'the circles what?')

- R The circle has no sides so that's the lowest.
- CR The circles what?
- R Has no like, straight, has the less, the less sides.
- CR Less sides?
- R And the triangle has three sides and that table has four and squares have four, rectangle has four and hexagon has six.
- CR OK, so what does that mean then?
- R Each time you go up there's more sides.
- CR Each time you go up, you get more sides on your table?
- R Yeah. The highest is hexagons and the lowest is circles.
- CR I see. When you say the lowest what does that mean?
- R Not that good at maths.
- CR Not that good at maths. What are they good at?
- R <shrugs>
- CR You don't know? How will they get better at their maths?
- R Practising at home.

Ruth, Year 5

It is noticeable that Ruth cannot say what 'the lowest' are good at, and I suggest this is because the association with morning group ability permeates regardless of activity or subject area. It is also significant that her perception is that they might get better at their maths by 'practising at home', suggestive of ability as something one comes to school with, not something that is altered at school.

The words 'top' and 'lowest', to describe children's tables and associated ability was used by many children in describing theirs and others' groups. Returning to Paul's quote above, when trying to remember the names of the groups with 'colour' names he turns to look at the class seating plan: three A4 sheets attached to the door indicating 'literacy seats' 'numeracy seats' and 'afternoon seats' respectively, with these headings on the top of each sheet. Seating plans on A4 sheets of paper were seen to be present in a prominent place on a wall or door in all of the focus classrooms visited, apart from one. In Paul's classroom the sheets took the form of a sketch of the children's work tables with the children's names written on the chair where they should sit. You may have noticed in the exchange with Paul that I was sitting in a child's seat who returned whilst we were talking. The child did not take a different seat at the table, it was clear as he stood patiently next to me that I was in his seat, and it was me who needed to move. Lists in other classrooms took the

form of a list rather than a sketch, with the name of each table group at the top, and a list underneath of the children who should be seated at that table. One such seating plan format additionally asked (in bold letters at the top of each page) 'Are you at the correct table?'. A question one could speculate might be answered in more than one way. Are the children indeed sitting where their teacher has allocated them to sit, or perhaps, has their teacher allocated them to the 'correct' table, if one is indeed accepting the notion of a 'correct' table.

Considering the one class without the seating plan sheets up on the wall, Ms Bradley was the other teacher, also teaching for over a decade who expressed reservations about 'ability' grouping.

CR Um, I can't see literacy and numeracy groups.

B I haven't got them up, they're in my file mainly because I've still been changing them around.

CR Right OK.

B And I don't like always having, well I do usually have them on show up there but <pause>

CR You tend not to.

B I hate, kind of rub, making it really clear who's in which group and [she fades slightly, her tone of voice drops slightly] They obviously know who's higher and lower but [she clears her throat] I try not to draw massive attention to it.

Ms Bradley, class teacher

Saying she's been 'changing them around' Ms Bradley elaborates:

B I've made some slight changes and it was really because of the boys? It was just, the boys are really difficult to organise in a way that they're not disrupting each other, so I've had to move a couple of them recently so the groups are slightly off balance ability-wise. It's more in the middle 'cause there's a couple that I've had to move.

CR What do you mean more in the middle?

B Well the top groups have stayed the same.

CR Oh I see.

B And the bottom groups have stayed the same, there's that middle group and that middle low group.

Ms Bradley, class teacher

As well as the tendency for the 'top' and 'bottom' groups to remain the same, this touches upon teachers' decision making around which children sit where and the bases of these decisions. As with other studies (e.g. Ball 1981, Gillborn and Youdell 2000) teachers' decisions around perceived ability are inflected with perceptions of behaviour. This will be discussed further in my next chapter. Ms Bradley's description of 'middle' and 'middle-low' also reflect the fine grading of the hierarchy. Without wishing to get convoluted, the word 'correct' as in 'correct place' in the seating plans above, is reminiscent of Chapter 2, 'The means of correct training' in Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish' (1979). What Foucault terms 'the art of punishing' (1977 p.12) is not something to which I imagine teachers in this setting would say they aspired. The 'regime of disciplinary power' he continues,

'measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals...The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions *compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes*' (my italics)

Foucault 1977 p.183

and all of a sudden this is very familiar in the small moments, placements and lists of the every day in this chapter. Indeed, in outlining 'disciplinary power' (1977 p.170) Foucault refers to '*minor procedures*' (my italics), that 'discipline 'makes' individuals' (1977 p. 170) by these 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p.135). Citing Foucault suggests then that I am, as Popkewitz & Brennan (1998 p. 4) put it, questioning 'ways in which power works through discursive practices and performances of schooling'. Voices throughout my research indicate a need to question taken for granted practices of pupil grouping and associated 'technical procedures' (Rose 1999) in this school context.

Taking pupils' 'self concept' as a focus of their study into 'ability grouping', Macintyre & Ireson (2002), consider 'correct placement' within the structure of ability grouping.

'The interviews revealed that children whose self-concept scores were consonant with their ability group thought that they had been correctly placed, but those with discrepant scores were less happy'

Macintyre & Ireson 2002 p. 249

Citing Barker Lunn (1970) these authors apparently share his concern regarding 'misplacement' in the context of streaming and that this 'may also be a problem in schools and classes where within-class ability grouping is currently used' (Macintyre & Ireson 2002 p.262). Thinking about teachers' decision making processes, touched upon by Ms Bradley in the quote above, Cicourel & Kitsuse's study dating back to 1963 investigated the apparently 'objective' processes by which students were 'differentiated, labeled, and processed' (1963 p.11) exploring the legitimization of 'personal and social factors for the interpretation of the 'objective' measures of the students' ability'. Meaning that in their study, even when students did make their way through tests, tests which in themselves could be questioned in terms of validity and reliability, students' attainments were differentially interpreted through the lens of psychologized judgements and clinical terminology via the organisational incorporation of school counsellors. I will turn to children's placement in interlocking 'interventions' in later chapters and the psychologised understandings of children via special educational needs processes.

Looking back at 'a context which produced the necessity for some hierarchical differentiation of the pupils' (Sharp and Green 1975 p. 116) and processes through which teachers 'know' the children in their class, data presented here suggests persistent social stratification evident in classrooms across three decades.

Before returning to issues raised by children in the classrooms described, looking briefly back at the study by Macintyre & Ireson (2002); whatever the technicalities of research into self concept, I do wonder about 'happiness' as a measure of pedagogical practice. Of course no-one would want to write *against* children's 'happiness' as an outcome, but reflecting upon the tendency to individualised, psychologised descriptions of pupils in both of the studies cited above (Cicourel and Kitsuse 1963; Sharp and Green 1975) a turn to an individual emotional response as a support or critique of a practice could be to go down the same line. As Gillborn and Youdell (2000 p. 198) state in their study of student grouping in the context of secondary school GCSE sets 'The gross inequalities that arise from these processes are shielded from scrutiny by a perspective that stresses an *individualized* approach'. If outcomes can be judged on happiness (and as I say, you'd have to be curmudgeonly not to want to) then as Furedi (2004 p.24) observes in a chapter titled 'the culture of emotionalism', the tendency can as easily be to recast 'social problems as emotional ones': a patterning of inequalities and outcomes as *individual* merits and deficits, individual emotional responses rather than a concern with equity of

outcomes in terms of 'the equitable distribution of the benefits of schooling' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000 p. 3).

Circles is the lowest: 'we're the dumbest table'

Brian, in Year 4 seated on 'circle' table is a little more direct:

CR So you've already finished, you've worked really quickly haven't you?
So which table is this table?

All children on the table say in unison 'Circles'.

B: Circles.

CR Why do you sit on circle table?

B Because we're the dumbest table.

CR Oh no. You can't mean that, surely.

B The highest one is that over there.

CR Is it? [trying to collect myself]

B That's the second highest (points to pentagons), third highest is squares and then second lowest is that table (points to triangles)

Brian, Year 4

Taking a look briefly at one of the arenas for decision making; a meeting for each class teacher to meet with senior staff and staff from 'outside agencies' (for example Educational Psychologist and 'specialist' staff from the Local Education Authority) Brian was one of the children his teacher discussed. Ms Wolvek, senior teacher and Ms Saunders discuss Brian:

W That's fine, they came to me today. But um, you need to get him reading things he's interested in. Short novels. Non-fiction type stuff, boys'-own kind of stuff.

S Trying to get him to work I try and get him out of the group 'cause he's in circles, which is the lower ability group. The problem with Brian in that group,

W He's smarter than them.

S Well he is really, I mean he's not but he is because he knows what's going on and verbally he's great, but then when it comes to doing any written work, you know. So it's nice to,

W Well being in the top group when you do things like science.

S Science is just mixed ability anyway so he, he sits with who does he sit with? Asena [one of the girls in 'hexagon' group] someone like that. Which he gets on fine.

Teachers at 'multi-agency meeting'

Intriguing here is 'because he knows what's going on'. We have to speculate as to what he knows is going on, and why this is 'a problem'. Is it perhaps that he knows what is going on in lessons, and this is in contrast to the others on 'circle' table? Why would it be a problem that 'he's smarter than them'? Does this suggest something detrimental about being on 'circles' table? Is it that he knows what is going on in terms of being 'in circles, which is the lower ability group'?

As Ms Saunders stated, and statistics from the four class sample showed, there was a tendency for those on the 'bottom' tables to be seated there for literacy and numeracy. Ivan, in Year 4, tells me that he sits on circle table for 'English, maths, science and afternoon groups',

C What's that table called?

I Triangles.

C And what are you at this table for?

I Um, circles.

C What are you on circles for?

I English, maths, science and afternoon groups.

C English, maths, science and afternoon groups you're on circles.

I Yeah.

C Oh right. Why are you on circles table?

I Don't know.

C Don't know? Why are they on um hexagon table?

I 'cause they're clever

C Oh. Why are they pentagon table?

I They're not that clever.

C Not that clever. And what about triangles?

I Huh?

C What about triangles?

I *[Says something about circles – I can't hear what]*

C Pardon?

I They get some easy work, a bit hard and a bit easy.

C Some easy work a bit hard and a bit easy. And what about tri, about circles then?

I The same.

Ivan, Year 4

Reading this back it is difficult to consider that if pentagons are 'not that clever' what does that make circles (where he sits for all of his lessons)? This interview section reads harshly and is just the sort dilemma I wrote about in my introduction where I discussed not wanting to make things 'worse' by re-inscribing negative or hierarchised positioning, but at the same time wanting to record the daily lived experience for the children. And for those on the 'bottom' tables, the 'clever' children were reported by them as being 'over there'. In this quote above, Ivan has elided (as Ms Nolan also noted) work tasks with 'clever' and 'not that clever'. Asking Ivan about circles and triangles table again a little later (mainly because on so many occasions throughout my research, my little minidisk recorder fails to record) Ivan again mentions a hierarchy of work:

CR I forgot what you said about circles and triangles tables. What did you say about those?

I Circles get a bit easier work than triangles.

C Oh, OK.

I Hexagons and pentagons.

C What were you saying about hexagons?

I They get they get a lot. They get really hard work.

C They get really hard work?

At which point other children on the table steer the conversation in a completely different direction.

Returning to my discussions with Ivan. I clipped the quote above at 'The same', but see how it went on from this:

C Some easy work a bit hard and a bit easy. And what about tri, about circles then?

I The same.

C The same? <pause> How are you going to get to the other tables?

<Pause>

I By working really hard

C By working really hard? You work really hard don't you?

Ivan, Year 4

The quote shows that I do a couple of things in this conversation. Firstly, and without thinking, I adopt the same slippage in terminology as the class teacher in the opening quote where she is allocating work, referring to 'circles' in the plural, again suggestive of the children '*being*' the shape rather than sitting at a table called 'circle'. I also make the assumption in my questioning that 'circles' or perhaps 'circleness' is to be escaped from, that one is aiming at getting to the other tables and thereby falling into assumptions about 'circleness' constituting a particular kind of educational subject. This echoes the children's descriptions, such as the quote from Dominique and her peers on 'squares' table above:

Pupil: Circles is the um um (hesitates)

2nd child: Bottom group.

D: Yeah, not very good.

Dominique and children seated with her in Year 4

Initially talking about why they perceive Panos to have been seated at their table, Louis and Devon, both seated on 'triangles' table in the same Year 4 class use similar language to Brian:

L We should have lower tables as well.

CR What d'you mean?

D Lower tables like this (Devon points to the floor, pulling a face and making a joke with the double meaning of 'lower' meaning height. I laugh and to capture what he's just said on tape say,)

CR Devon's just pointed right down to the floor. What lower right down there? What do you mean lower tables?

D Like er, dumb.

L They're the dumbest.

CR Uh?

D Dumbest, the not very smart.

Louise and Devon, Year 4

There is more than a suggestion here that table grouping is associated with intrinsically fixed identities than the task one is completing in a particular lesson.

Also ranking 'low' and 'lowest' in a similar way to the way in which Devon confirms 'dumbest' above, Jose, in Year 5 explains :

- J For literacy I sit there.
- CR Which one which table's that called?
- J Er, it's called the, for literacy it's called green.
- CR Yeah,
- J For maths it's called triangles.
- CR OK and why, why do you sit on triangles?
- J 'Cause it's um, the it's that kind of it's about all your maths. How you know your maths
- CR *How you know your maths?*
- J Circles is the lowest yeah? And then Arif's in the circles and,
- CR Sorry? (I'm sure I've misheard two pieces of information here, firstly I haven't quite caught 'lowest' and also miss the child's name).
- J Like Arif's in the circles yeah.
- CR Who is?
- J Arif. Arif's in the circles. Arif is the um, circles yeah, is the lowest maths group *and* the lowest literacy group.
- CR The lowest maths group and the lowest literacy group [*I haven't realised who Arif is, and am about to realise he is the child sitting next to Jose*].
- A Not quite the lowest but,
- J Not yeah, but.
- CR It's low?
- J It's the *lowest*. Then it's that, then it's that [points at the tables round in a semi circle. The tables are placed circles round to hexagons]. That's the high table up there.
- CR That's the highest table up there. What's that called?
- A [cuts in] but I'm in group 2 for spellings
- CR But you're in group 2 for spellings. (I acknowledge what he's said). <pause> What's that table over there?
- J That's called um, the hexagons in maths and purple for literacy
- CR I see.

In my field notes at the time I note 'I read this as Arif saying 'I'm not the lowest'. As in, I'm not completely the lowest of the low. I didn't perceive any intention of malice

on Jose's part saying it's the lowest one, or to argue. His tone of voice suggested stating it as it is.'

Fieldnotes

I will touch upon 'group 2 for spellings' when I explore data related to the multitude of groupings, (referred to as 'interventions' in the school) including groupings under the title of special educational needs, that variously intersected with the five main group seating structure. The exchange above between Jose and Arif, whom I took to be friends in the way in which they spoke, was the only time I encountered a child verbally resisting being 'the lowest' or on 'circles'. Children on 'middle' tables, appear from the data to describe their position as 'middle' or 'medium' rather than using the language high or low, clever or dumb, although they did use terms such as 'highest' 'clever' 'best' for the hexagon table.

Molly, seated on 'square' table in Year 4 seemed to view her position as a glass half full:

CR Why are you on squares table?

M Um, 'cause I'm good at maths

CR Right.

M So I've been put on the third best table for maths.

Molly, Year 4

As Patrice stated, and quoted at the start of this chapter, the message more often reflected back by both staff and children in relation to the organisation of pupils in 'ability' groups in this school setting was that *'some are good at learnin' and some ain't'*.

In this chapter I have introduced the main themes for this thesis; the production of educational subjectivities in a finely graded hierarchy through routine organisational processes of grouping by perceived ability. I have outlined a policy context in which teachers work to meet the demands of unexamined and sedimented notions of 'good practice' and 'what works'. I have outlined practices based upon the logics of organisational convenience and evidence of children acquiring the discourse of differentiation used by teachers to see themselves as educational subjects within this hierarchy.

I will turn next to groupings termed 'interventions' alluded to in this chapter together with teachers' decision-making processes.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I explore teachers' decision-making processes underpinning a school environment in which 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1979) such as grouping by 'ability' pervade children's daily classroom experiences. Considered through understandings of education policy that situate localised actions within their wider context (e.g. Ball 1994a, 1997, Ozga 2000), school staff work to enact the current plethora of 'initiatives' and directives issued from central government agencies. Small moments of every day classroom experience reveal 'rather simple technical procedures' Rose (1999 p.135) functioning as 'disciplinary power' that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' (Foucault 1977). Through the same normative processes that serve an over-riding drive to 'fix' or repair children in order to meet the normative demands of the 'standards' agenda' expressed most visibly in high stakes testing, nationally set targets and associated 'league tables', children as school pupils are increasingly 'fixed' as educational subjects in a finely graded hierarchy.

CR (I look at the planning sheets) Are these particular students these 'LA' and 'HA'?

Class teacher: Yeah, low ability, middle ability and high ability it's how we um,

CR Oh I see.

CT differentiate the three groups.

CR OK.

CT Otherwise known as spanners, cogs and spark plugs <laughs> but we don't write that down. You know: what are the spanners going to do, what are the cogs going to do and what are the spark plugs going to do?

Conversation with class teacher whilst looking at her planning sheets

Said and received as a light-hearted remark, this comment nevertheless stands out in the context of not-so-light hearted Foucauldian understandings of 'disciplinary power', particularly the language of a 'natural mechanics' (Foucault 1977 p.104) and the 'making' of individuals through minor procedures that 'separate, analyse, differentiate' (Foucault 1977 p. 170). Indicating this remark as 'light hearted', this is precisely the sort of comment that reflects the ethical dilemmas I touch upon in my

introductory chapter (e.g. Benjamin 2002 p. 27) and my positioning as teacher and researcher, 'insider' and 'outsider'. Choosing the informal 'short hand' terminology in this quote as representative and illustrative of hierarchized educational subjects within every day planning and decision-making processes to be explored in this chapter, it might be too easy to perpetuate a 'discourse of derision' (Kenway 1990 p.201), or 'discourse of failure' (Rose 1995 in Slee & Weiner 1998 p.1): tut tutting at teachers embroiled in reproducing inequalities, labelling the children 'spanners'. I like Stephen Ball's stated proclivity to 'chip away at the social' through his ethnographic work (2006 p. 2), citing Foucault's purpose (1980 p.145) 'to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power' As such, countering decontextualised or sweeping deficit judgement necessitates making explicit the context in which teachers themselves work and the disciplinary power in which they are enmeshed; policy 'technologies' (Ball 2003b) that facilitate 'steering from a distance' (Lingard et al 1998 p. 86, Apple 2004 p.176) by government agencies together with an exploration of 'mundane' moments (Youdell p. 2006a p. 13) 'to focus upon unintended and overlooked consequences, so as to render our practice critically problematic' (Ball 1995 p. 262).

Introduction

Before we set off then, I am flicking a few switches on the conceptual dashboard. Processes and practices threaded throughout the school day have led me to an engagement with well-trodden sociological concerns around 'social reproduction'; the persistent production and maintenance of inequalities, alongside post-structural readings that move us beyond deterministic assumptions and analytic closure (e.g. Gewirtz & Cribb 2003). In my previous chapter I introduced the main themes for this thesis; the production of educational subjectivities in a finely graded hierarchy through routine organisational processes, outlining a policy context in which teachers worked to meet the demands of perceived 'good practice'. I explored small moments evidencing practices based upon the logics of organisational convenience and examples of children acquiring the discourse of differentiation used by teachers to see themselves as educational subjects within this hierarchy.

This chapter explores further these concepts and ideas. This is a 'joined-up' analysis, drawing upon Foucault's concept of governmentality (1991) with an interest here in 'the interplay between processes of subjectivation and power mechanisms, political rationalities and government technologies' (Peters 2009 p.

xxxv). As such, the chapter does not divide into neat sections but addresses the interlocking of processes, constantly moving within and between the inter-related processes of classroom life and the production of performances and identities. 'Foucault defines government as conduct, or more precisely, as 'the conduct of conduct' and thus as a term which ranges from 'governing the self' to 'governing others' (Foucault 2000a pp. 340 – 342 in Lemke 2009 p. 36).

In this and ensuing chapters, I endeavour to make some analytic sense out of children 'becoming' the 'squares' or 'hexagons' of their table-seat allocation presented in the previous chapter. I am interested in the contexts in which every day decisions are made –small moments, routine procedures. Stephen Ball observed that 'Education reform is spreading across the globe, as in Levin's (1998) terms, like 'a policy epidemic' (Ball 2003b p. 215). He continues, 'The novelty of this epidemic of reform is that it does not simply change what people, as educators, scholars and researchers do, it changes who they are' (Ball 2003b p. 215). Linked to 'subjectivity', Ball (2003b p. 227) cites De Lauretis (1986 p. 5) in providing a working definition of subjectivity as 'patterns by which experimental and emotional contexts, feelings, images and memories are organized to form one's self image, one's sense of self and others, and our possibilities of existence'. This definition resonates with findings presented in the previous chapter with children 'being' a square [as in a child in the middle of the perceived 'ability' order, allocated to the table called 'square table' for literacy or numeracy lessons] regardless of doing 'hexagons work' or children stating that the 'clever' children are 'over there'.

Thinking about teachers' decision-making in the context of Foucault's conceptualisations, I am making connections with 'policies as processes and outcomes', as explored in my literature review; 'policy as text and policy as discourse' (Ball, 1994a p.15 his italics). Observing that 'Foucault's 'genealogy of governmentality' is 'more of a fragmentary sketch than an elaborated theory' Lemke (2009 p. 36) goes on to explain that '...the concept of governmentality demonstrates Foucault's working hypothesis concerning the reciprocal constitution of power techniques and forms of knowledge and of regimes of representation and modes of intervention'. Getting into the rather deep waters of 'state theory' (Lemke 2009 p. 39), the relevance here is 'the constitution of the modern state [which] was closely connected with the rise of the human sciences and the production of knowledge about the population and individuals' (Lemke 2009 p. 39).

Thinking about this 'production of knowledge...about individuals', this chapter explores interactions between teachers' taken for granted understandings of 'ability' and their decision-making around curriculum planning and classroom organisation; ways in which teachers 'know' their pupils and allocate tasks, groupings and interventions. Gillborn and Youdell (2000) found in their study of secondary schools within what they termed 'an A-C economy', that 'the ascription of particular 'abilities' in year 7 acts to sustain and re-inscribe the dominant (though often explicit) notion of 'ability' as both general and fixed' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000 p. 56) and that 'the dominant perspective among Clough [school's] teachers contains clear judgements not only about the attainment of their pupils in the past, but also about future possibilities. This discourse acts to fix 'ability' and possible attainment within tightly constrained parameters' (Gillborn and Youdell p. 48 – 49). This phrase 'possible attainment within tightly constrained parameters' is particularly apt to findings here, from the pervasive production of children as 'top, middle or bottom ability' pupils, to the multitude of procedures and calculations allocating children to the complex interlocking latticework of interventions. Peters (2009 p.xxx) elaborates, 'By the term 'governmentality' Foucault (1991 pp. 102 – 3) meant three things: [the first of which being] 'The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections; the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power'.

Given this school's OFSTED report found 'the *good* teaching, and the unique way the school *includes all pupils* ensure that everything is directed to giving the pupils a *very good quality* of education', it is striking that the residue of 'fixed' notions of ability based 'on the psychology of the last century' (Hill 2005 p. 88) – the 'psy-sciences' as Rose terms them (1999) is still present in the ways in which children are organized, talked about and taught into the new millennium. I suggest it is these understandings of pupils' ability that underpin what is judged to be 'good teaching' and 'a very good quality of education.'

Remembering that by 'government', 'Foucault meant something like...a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or effect the conduct of some person or persons' (Peters 1991 p. 2 in Marshall 2009 p. 142), Lemke observes that 'an analytics of government is particularly interested in examining governmental technologies as a way of accounting for state transformations and state policies' (2009 p. 40). He continues 'By focussing on diverse and distinct technologies, an analytics of government avoids the pre-analytical distinction between micro- and macro-level,

individual and state. It conceives of both processes of individualization and practices of institutionalization as technologies of government. This approach makes it possible to ask questions about the relationships between different governmental technologies. For example, one can investigate how technologies of the self and political government are articulated with each other' (Lemke 2009 p. 41). I am making connections here between small moments of classroom life, policy technologies and the making of educational subjectivities.

Thinking about what I term the production of performances and identities in this chapter, Lemke observes that in Foucault's work;

'an analytics of government operates with a concept of technology that includes not only material but also symbolic devices. It follows that discourses, narratives and regimes of representation are not reduced to pure semiotic propositions; instead they are regarded as *performative practices*. Governmental technologies denote a complex of practical mechanisms, procedures, instruments, and calculations through which authorities seek to guide and shape the conduct and decisions of others in order to achieve specific objectives.'

Lemke 2009 p. 41 *my emphasis*

Bringing things back to educational policy technologies in particular, Ball asserts:

Policy technologies involve the calculated deployment of techniques and artefacts to organize human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power. Various disparate elements are inter-related within these technologies; involving architectural forms, functional tests and procedures.

Ball 2001 p. 216

In exploring teachers' decision making processes and interrelated 'policy technologies' of managerialism and performativity (Ball 2001), the 'profound changes' in the 'act of teaching and the subjectivity of the teacher' (Ball 2001 p. 219) presented in this chapter has been last to really seep into my understandings. Perhaps this is a process of disillusionment, as a teacher, that I have endeavoured to resist. When I say the chapter does not divide into neat sections, it follows key themes and concepts raised in this introduction. Subtitled sections using phrases from data corral these themes:

'*A certain amount of freedom*' considers curriculum requirements and 'interventions': the current plethora of 'initiatives' and directives issued from central government agencies. '*Playing to their tune*' explores performativity and managerial panopticism evident in teachers' daily lives. '*You hardly don't do SATS*' is as it says: the impacts of SATS tests upon classroom life. In '*Setting three levels of ability work-wise*' and '*easy work for the thick ones, hard work for the bright ones*' barely concealed slippage between innate intelligence and common sense understandings of 'ability' are explored in routine processes together with consideration of 'The British Ability Scales' (Hill 2005). '*Amaze me*' returns to Gillborn and Youdell's observation of 'possible attainment within tightly constrained parameters' (2000 p. 48) inherent in a classroom game called 'Hot Seat'.

A certain amount of freedom

Nikolas Rose observes in reflecting upon Foucault's understandings of power, 'power works most powerfully, works most effectively if it works by shaping the way in which individuals enact their freedom' (Rose 2003 p. 30). Ms Nolan makes explicit reference to '*a certain amount of freedom*' in her description of the planning process:

CR I wondered what, how you decide what you're teaching and a little bit about that process?

N Um, well we follow QCA schemes of work for almost every subject. I think sometimes they've been slightly jiggled around in where they come, but most of the units of work we actually cover er, except we made the decision I think with the history and geography, we thinned it out a little bit because we found it a bit too heavy content-wise. We follow the numeracy strategy and the literacy strategy as they're set, but then we take those and we, we take those sort of over-all plans and turn them into shorter term plans and then weekly plans and we've got a *certain* amount of freedom as to how we cover it and where we, we cover it and whether we need to take things out or whether the children need to do things again. So it isn't rigidly stuck to and as long as we can justify why we've done something, then we, we're fine. We then take a unit for a particular subject and we'll look at it and we'll decide how we want to teach it; what resources we've got in the school, what's worked before. Um, and we can end up repeating the same thing because it worked well last year; we

enjoyed it, the kids enjoyed it and it was fine, or we can end up totally changing it around and you know and we can even make the decision if we want, to just to move one whole unit. For example this year we've ended up in RE, we're doing er, Christianity and in art we're doing Islamic patterns, but next term we're doing um, Islam so what we've said is that next year it would be much more sensible to do Islam alongside the Islamic patterns and then do Christianity next year so it's things like that, we can move whole units around. We've got the freedom to do that as long as we justify it and we cover what we're supposed to cover and with the numeracy and literacy strategies we follow them *but*, because of our children we might find that we need to refer back to an earlier year group to go over something they haven't covered, or for children who've got English as a second language, something might not be appropriate so the flexibility is there to plan according to your class.

Ms Nolan, Class teacher

The sentence 'We then take a unit for a particular subject and we'll look at it and we'll decide how we want to teach it' gives an impression of a pedagogic decision-making process, whilst the subsequent example of 'freedom' is described as being able to 'move whole units around' because 'it would be much more sensible to do Islam alongside the Islamic patterns' but not until *next year* and only 'as long as we justify it and we cover what we're supposed to cover'. Is it just me? How did 'Islam' become separated from 'Islamic patterns' in the first place!? I see looking back at the National Curriculum document for Religious Education in Key Stage 2, the carving up of 'at least two other [than Christianity] religions' (Breadth of Study 3b) from - for example- 'symbols of religious expression' (3i) if one is looking at a tick list of what Ms Nolan terms 'what we're supposed to cover'. It is the surveillance of 'what we are supposed to cover' from the scrutiny of planning sheets to in-class 'monitoring' observations by senior staff that shapes the ways in which this 'certain amount of freedom' is enacted; a new kind of technical or mechanical professionalism. The separation of 'Islam' here from 'Islamic patterns' reminds me of Stephen Ball's phrase 'knowledge gobbets' (2009 p. 212) and David Robertson's phrase cited in the same article, 'a cut and paste HE curriculum' (2000 in Ball 2009 p. 213). Writing in the context of 'lifelong learning', Stephen Ball observes that 'new forms of 'delivery' and consumption of education are being created which can result in learning becoming increasingly fragmented. The curriculum is reorganised as a

sequence of knowledge gobbets...which can be transferred as 'credits' and combined in novel ways with no guarantee of internal coherence' (Ball 2009 p. 213). A similar fragmentation appears to be evident here, with perhaps 'coverage' replacing 'credits' in this example.

Referring to Bernstein's work, Ms Nolan's description suggests something of the 'construction and maintenance of boundaries between curriculum contents' (Bernstein 1971). Not that I am seeking to attempt a Bernsteinian analysis here, but where Ms Nolan mentions 'QCA schemes of work for almost every subject, 'numeracy, 'literacy' for example, these represent the 'well insulated subjects with strong boundaries; subjects arranged in a well-accepted hierarchy of importance and value' (Bernstein 1971 in Ross 2000 p. 99). Citing Whitty et al (1994), Bernstein describes the National Curriculum as 'a collection of singulars (subjects) where commonalities are not effective in practice' (1996 p. 75). He continues 'State monitoring of this curriculum through national testing and the structures of public examinations support this collection code' (Bernstein 1996 p. 75). What I take from this is to question taken-for-granted ways in which things are done: curriculum organisation and teachers' processes. As Maton observes, 'Bernstein showed how structuring of intellectual and educational knowledge specialize actors and discourses in ways that shape social relations, institutional organization, disciplinary and curricular change, identity, consciousness and habitus' (Maton 2009 p. 87). In Ms Nolan's description we can see the pacing and sequencing 'strategies' of a 'visible pedagogy' (Bernstein 1990). There are the repair strategies 'to cope with the children who have failed to meet the sequencing requirements' (Bernstein 1990 p. 74) suggested in the sentence '*because of our children* we might find that we need to refer back to an earlier year group'. Also in this quote, the 'thinning out' of history and geography suggests another strategy, the maintenance of 'the pacing and sequencing rules' but a reduction in either 'the quantity or the quality of the contents to be acquired or both' (Bernstein 1990 p. 74).

I emphasise '*because of our children*' in the quotation above: Ms Nolan qualifies this by giving the examples 'to go over something they haven't covered, or for children who've got English as a second language'. It is perhaps a small point, but the way in which it is phrased '*because of our children*' rather than '*because of this curriculum organisation*' places an emphasis on the children [and implied deficits] in the equation. This becomes more evident in 'repair strategies' evidenced in 'interventions' which I explore in more detail in my next chapter as well as the

section 'You hardly *don't* do SATS 'below. As Bernstein goes on to predict in 1996 (p. 75), 'the emphasis on the performance of students and the steps taken to increase and maintain performance, for the survival of the institution, is likely to facilitate a state-promoted instrumentality'. As Ball observes (2006 p. 120), 'the creation of dispersed market conditions has been accompanied by greater centralisation of control over education and a distinct rise in the scope and number of interventions'. Under New Labour, these 'interventions' tended to be 'highly technocratic, based on a[n]...input/output approach to educational planning. The inputs take various forms, most obviously and pertinently such things as...*'the new literacy hour'*, and a *'dedicated numeracy hour'*. There is also the 'strong focus on effective teaching in literacy and numeracy' in improved teacher training'. In the course of this chapter I argue that the 'emphasis on regulation, performance evaluation, target-setting and direct specification' (Ball 2006 p. 120) come together to define and produce the 'good teaching', 'good quality of education' and even the 'pupils' who are 'all included' as valorised in the school's OFSTED report.

Thinking about 'repair strategies', Ms Wolvek, senior teacher refers to 'interventions', a term used by teachers across the school:

W ...we also don't want to remain static, you know, we want to be innovative and find ways of um of helping the children to achieve. Um, the basic philosophy in this school and the ethos is that we include everybody and respect everybody. But it's no, there's no point in paying lip service to that, it has to actually happen in practice which is quite a different thing, um, and to that end we have, you know, sixty or seventy different interventions which we carry out with different children.

Interview with Ms Wolvek, senior teacher.

I describe the groupings, 'interventions' and curriculum decision-making as a 'latticework' because data collected over the period of the fieldwork reveal 'interlaced' or interlocking processes and procedures in which children were sorted, fine graded and allotted to different treatments, groups, staff, curricula, places. Asked to give an example of some of the 'sixty or seventy different interventions' that are 'illustrative', Ms Wolvek refers to 'things that the government has imposed'

- W Well many of the things are based on the children's learning and many of the um, the interventions are things that the government has um, imposed in some ways.
- CR So what sorts of things is that...?
- W Those are things like the 15 minutes a day, spelling, the additional literacy stuff, the ALS, ELS, FLS, all of that is sort of stuff, um, but it requires training, it requires finding out which children should access it. It requires finding resources for it; it requires finding a space in the curriculum for it; space full stop. To do it in. And um you know you have to make a decision if you're going to take a learning support assistant out of a classroom, that that's a useful use of their time, um, rather than in the classroom and supporting the teacher. Um, with all of these things the decision has to be made as to whether this is a better thing to do than having either the child or the learning support assistant in class.'

Ms George, in a different interview, unpicks some of the terminology:

- G ELS ALS and FLS are government, um, initiatives [*nice slip for initiatives I'm guessing*] so ELS is Early Literacy Support and it happens in Year One. ALS is *Additional* Literacy Support and that's in Year 3 and FLS is Further Literacy Support, I think it's in Year 5 maybe or Year 6 I'm not sure. Um, and last year I taught Year One and we did ELS and it's a twelve week course that the LSA [*learning support assistant*] delivers twenty minutes every day and there's a folder and it says it has a script for each twenty minute session. It has phonics five, text ten, um you just, has these little activities in it, lots of games in the ELS. Anyway it's for the group who are sort of just below the average, push them on so that when they're in Year Two they can get their level twos.

Interview with Ms George

Reflected in Ms Wolvek's quote and subsequent descriptions is perhaps something of the contradiction (Brehony 2005) in New Labour education policy. Whilst Ms Wolvek states 'the basic philosophy in this school and the ethos is that we include everybody and respect everybody', subsequent descriptions of key 'interventions' appear to reflect the operation and 'delivery' ('a twelve week course that the LSA

delivers twenty minutes every day') of pre-packaged programmes in the service of meeting required targets in SATS tests. Brehony observes that 'New Labour's policies on education, as in other fields, have combined an extension of neo-liberal measures inherited from Conservatives with social democratic policies of a more traditional Labour variety' (2005, p.29) and later concludes that 'while the social democratic strand with its attachment to notions of social justice after a first term of stagnation has produced more money for education and a number of targeted initiatives intended to counteract the effects of poverty and social disadvantage, the New Labourist embrace of standards and testing in the primary school is at variance with it' (Brehony 2005 p.41)^{xxvii}. Ms George's description mentions 'phonics five [minutes], text ten [minutes]...little activities...lots of games' that amount to outputs and performances (Ball 2003b p.222): 'push them on so...they can get their Level Twos [in National Curriculum SATS tests]. 'Good teacher' and 'good pupil' are associated with *performance* in what Ball (2003b p.226) observes changes 'what academic work and learning are'. Citing Lyotard (1984 p.4) the commodification of knowledge involves 'not simply a different evaluation of knowledge, but fundamental changes in the relationships between the learner, learning and knowledge, resulting in a thorough exteriorization of knowledge' (Ball 2003b p. 226).

Looking again at Ms Wolvek's quote about the interventions, I picked up on 'things the government has imposed' as this was reflected in much of the data from teachers and children across the different classes. Looking back in detail, what Ms Wolvek actually said was, 'Well many of the things are based on the children's learning and many of the um, the interventions are things that the government has um, imposed in some ways'. Although my mind was racing to keep up during most of my interviews, what I tried to pick up on was the word 'things' to elicit more information and as we see she predominantly focuses on examples from the latter, 'the additional literacy stuff, the ALS, ELS, FLS, all of that is sort of stuff'. But what I can see now is the apparent separation, 'many of the things are based on the children's learning and [separately] many of the um, the interventions are things that the government has um, imposed in some ways'. I have no way of knowing whether Ms Wolvek intended this distinction.

The suggested separation between children's learning and 'the interventions...the government has imposed' recalls the acknowledged shift to teaching over learning (Askew et al 2001 p. 23, Brehony 2005) in both the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In their detailed article, Mike Askew and colleagues (Askew et al 2001)

explore tensions in the National Numeracy Strategy, outlining three different models of entitlement in mathematics,

- equality of access to an appropriate curriculum,
- equality of teaching experienced,
- equality of learning outcome.

which they link to 'three possible interpretations of equality' as described by Foster, Gomm and Hammersley (1996): equality of opportunity, equality of treatment, equality of outcome'

Askew et al 2001 p. 6

Suggesting that 'The 1989 National Curriculum in mathematics followed earlier initiatives in assuming the first model of entitlement' they suggest that 'the advice for teachers from the NNS is close to the second model of entitlement: identical teaching' and that 'the strategy and associated initiatives such as booster classes' are however 'clearly intended to achieve the Secretary of State for Education's vision of future generations of primary school pupils all reaching a uniform level of attainment' (Askew et al 2001 p. 6). I found the idea that the National Numeracy Strategy was intended as an 'acme' of equality genuinely intriguing. Tracing a chronological review as they term it, from 'the position at the introduction of the National Curriculum for mathematics' through to the National Numeracy Strategy, I am interested to see comments by the then Chief Inspector Chris Woodhead who at the launch of the National Numeracy Project 'spoke of the need to pay more attention to 'instruction' and for a decreased emphasis on differentiation' with 'the requirement of 'interactive whole-class teaching' *implying* (my emphasis) 'equality of teaching' (Askew et al 2001 p.14). Askew et al go on to state that 'The combined effect on schools of the 'Three Wise Men Report', growing OFSTED hostility to individualization, and knowledge of the return to whole-class teaching espoused by the National Numeracy and Literacy Projects, was considerable'. They continue 'teachers were therefore having to turn their attention to dealing more with the whole class, although most were still also working within a strong paradigm of meeting the needs of individuals' (Askew et al 2001 p.15). Put in mind of Stephen Ball's 'policy trajectory', as 'attending to the ways in which policies evolve, change and decay through time and space and their incoherence' (Ball 1997 p.266) I am interested here in these tensions and the apparent residue of previous (policy) discourse. Whilst there may have been 'growing OFSTED hostility to individualization', operation of the National Strategies and prescribed interventions produces '*groupification*', with children increasingly fixed in the classroom hierarchy by the

ways in which the guidance documents and curricular performances render children as recognisable learners by themselves and their teachers.

On the National [literacy and numeracy] Strategies website, ALS, ELS and FLS referred to Additional, Early and Further Literacy Support respectively, termed 'intervention programmes' at 'Wave 2', described as:

Small-group intervention (for example, Booster classes; LA or school-based programmes; NLS and NNS intervention programmes) for children who can be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention.

National Strategies Website

My attention is drawn to 'which children *should* access it' (as Ms Wolvek termed it) something of which is revealed during a 'hand over' meeting between Ms Jones, an established senior teacher at the school and Ms George, who was new to the school and taking over Ms Jones' class. The two teachers are going through the class list, discussing each child in turn:

J He's not one of the more able children, he's in the ELS group. And so is Augusto.

G How did you decide who's doing?

J Well we looked at the, we followed the instructions and we only chose, you see we chose them and then didn't get the,

G Some schools chose it, the children not *right* at the bottom but just above, but we chose the ones right at the bottom.

J Well you're not meant to choose the ones right at the bottom.

G But most schools did.

J No 'cause you're not supposed to. They actually have to have achieved a certain level before they can do it. Mm, I mean it would be more helpful for the ones at the bottom I think, but it's not, it's the ones just below the middle.

G Really?

J Yeah. It's to move them up so they'll get a level two. The ones who might not achieve level two in Year two.

G I thought it was to make the bottom,

J No, no,

G Maybe it's just a difference in how [the Local Authority],

J Mm, but that's the instructions in the book. Mm,

Ms Jones and Ms George: Hand over meeting.

The phrase 'we followed the instructions' stands out, as we see here the way in which the 'mechanics' animate the tiny specificities of classroom life. Again as in the previous chapter, there is the delineation, the 'fine grading' between 'the ones right at the bottom' and 'the ones just below the middle'. There is the unequivocal statement, 'I mean it would be more helpful for the ones at the bottom I think, but it's not, it's the ones just below the middle'. Just as Ms Nolan and Ms Bradley expressed their awareness that 'ability grouping' was not of benefit to those on the 'bottom' tables, so here too there appears to be overt recognition that the benefits are not for those 'right at the bottom'. Mindful on the one hand that 'attributing meaning to discursive acts is not neutral since all aspects of meaning-making are acts of construction' (Hall et al 2004 p.803) and without getting all 'Blankety Blank'^{xxviii} on the other, we are left to wonder from Ms George's unfinished sentence, 'it was to make the bottom'...*what?* Ms Jones has assumed something in cutting in 'no no'. Was it make the bottom 'better' perhaps? But better than or at what? The definition of 'Wave 2 interventions' states these are 'for children who can be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention'. If this 'catching up' is for those 'just below middle' what proportion of the class are considered the 'peers', going at the pace deemed the desired norm? Is 'the middle' a median? Are as many as half of the children below this 'norm' to be caught up with? In the previous chapter, Ms Nolan described these proportions in her class for the current and previous year,

And I have my, my very bottom group, there's only three children. Then my middle group this year is actually the two next groups. And my top group are the two higher groups. 'Cause it's meant to be quite a high ability class. So the top twelve children all do the higher ability work. Whereas some classes, last year for example my top group was only the 6 children in the very, very top group, my middle group were the next two down and the lower ability groups were the next two.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

What proportion 'can be expected to catch up' as the Standards Website terms it? Is the assumption the maintenance of a hierarchy? Or is it perhaps the 'flattening' of the hierarchy? Might it be to make all the children attain 'the same'? Ms Jones states that 'it's to move them [the ones who might not achieve level two in year two]

up so they'll get a level two' in which case the reply 'No, no.' suggests this cannot be expected of those '*right* at the bottom'. We return to 'possible attainment within tightly constrained parameters' (Gillborn and Youdell 2000), and with these routine decisions marking cut off points, which if missed may prove certain routes, attainments, possibilities inaccessible. It echoes Gillborn's (2008 p. 65) discussion of 'Gap Talk' and inequalities that are 'locked in' to the system, rather than gaps being 'closed'. The technicist imperatives 'we followed the instructions... the instructions in the book' and the demands of getting those who are deemed *reparable* 'a Level Two in Year Two' over-ride any further hesitations in the decision-making process.

Drawing upon her ESRC-funded research of the National Literacy Strategy, Gemma Moss (2004) also refers to similar issues. She cites David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State for Education, who in his introduction to the Framework document, which set out the content of the National Literacy Strategy stated:

All our children deserve to leave school equipped to enter a fulfilling adult life. But if children do not master the basic skills of literacy and numeracy while they are at primary school, they will be seriously disadvantaged later.

As such Moss observes:

The NLS therefore differs from earlier rounds of curriculum reform by making an explicit and direct link between the introduction of a particular pedagogic programme and expected gains in pupil performance. The political justification for this linkage is the need for greater social equity.

Moss 2004 p.126

However, as Moss (2004 pp.129-130) subsequently finds, 'The lesson plan becomes a way of demonstrating that the teacher has covered the relevant topics within the relevant time period. The question of what children will have learnt as a result ends up taking second place. I explore more of Ms Nolan's planning below,

Pursuing the fairly open question, asking teachers 'how they decide what they're teaching'^{xxix}, class teacher Ms George refers to 'the National Curriculum' and also to 'the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies'.

CR I was wondering how you decide what you're teaching?

G Well you have to teach all the subjects and you have to, you have to teach the National Curriculum. You have to and it's law. And then the government introduced the Literacy And Numeracy Strategies which you don't have to do <she laughs slightly> but it's strongly recommended as a way of achieving the um, objectives in the National Curriculum. So basically all schools do them, but they do them in their own way and a lot of teachers and schools have adapted particularly the literacy strategy. They've moved things round, they've changed grouping um, so you basically do an hour of literacy, an hour, a little bit less of numeracy every day and then for both of them there are objectives that you follow for each term, you just work your way through them really.

Interview with Ms George

Echoing Ms Nolan's description, there is another apparent contrast here between the 'freedom' of 'all schools...do[ing] them their own way' alongside the delineation of that freedom, 'mov[ing] things round...chang[ing] grouping' these are again suggestive of the functional decisions of a technical professionalism. Finally settling on the enactment of 'just work[ing] your way through them really'. It surprises me, looking back at these quotes that the teachers have such an impression of their professional 'freedoms' and it reminds me of Ball's observation of 'the appearance of freedom in a 'devolved environment' (Ball 2003b p. 216); teachers as 'enterprising subjects' who 'strive for excellence' in this 'self-regulating regulation' (Ball 2003b p. 217).

Ms Saunders also refers to 'following' the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and 'QCA documents':

CR I remember a couple of times, I remember you planning and I've spoken to the pupils but I haven't *seen* what goes on behind the scenes that much and I wondered how you decide what you're teaching?

S Um,

CR What that process is?

S Er, basically we plan together me and [Ms Keswick] planned together last year. Um, we, we used to look at the um, termly plans for literacy which are drawn up by [the Local Authority] and the numeracy ones which were also drawn up by the Numeracy Strategy. So we used to

follow those and then for foundation subjects we'd follow the QCA documents.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

A 'certain amount of freedom' as Ms Nolan termed it, does not appear to extend to changing or challenging content if thought to be irrelevant and involves an acceptance of the language, premises and concepts embedded in these plans and strategies.

I am looking at Ms Nolan's planning sheets:

N Unstressed vowels. That's the spelling for next week, which basically means words where you don't actually stress the vowel sound. It's there but you don't stress it. With kids like these [there are two girls sitting at a table doing tasks outside of the main classroom, neither speak fluent English] completely irrelevant. I don't think it's relevant for anyone ever, actually...*[she changes to a voice as if talking to herself in an 'inner monologue']* Why am I teaching you this? *[she switches to a 'public' voice as if addressing a class of children]*. 'You've gotta learn this kids!'

Discussion with Ms Nolan outside her classroom, in the hall.

This quote echoes the 'values schizophrenia' as described by Ball, particularly drawing upon the book 'Testing Teachers' by Jeffrey and Woods (1998), that 'is experienced by individual teachers where commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance. Here there is a potential 'splitting' between the teachers' own judgements about 'good practice' and students 'needs' and the rigours of performance' (Ball 2003b p. 221).

During the same discussion Ms Nolan also comments,

N You literally do know from the work plan, they tell you because [the LEA] have got their own literacy strategy, into term and half terms and weeks. You know every day what you're teaching and every minute of every day what you're teaching. You just wish someone would bring something in and you could go 'Oh wow! Look at this, let's, you know', what spontaneity.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Both quotes are again suggestive - in Bernstein's terms (1996) – of the return to 'strong framing', of State (via teacher) control of content, sequence and pacing. Ms Nolan's latter quote appears to reach back to a time in primary education when a child might 'bring something in' as Ms Nolan puts it, alluding to a different/previous and perhaps more authentic world of teaching. Although she cuts off before outlining what 'let's, you know' might entail, I take 'you know' in this context to mean, have a discussion or share whatever has been brought in with the class, use it as an opportunity for learning. Referring back to prescribed curriculum coverage, Moss observes that time spent on an activity is not the same as making a judgement as to what has been learnt and this informing what and how to teach: 'planning driven by the [Literacy] Framework document allows little space for this kind of reflection and adaptation' (Moss 2004 p. 30). She continues that,

'with a local accountability culture [that] stresses compliance with the central direction of the Strategy...the policy levers designed to standardise curriculum delivery and monitor performance can get in the way of thinking through how things need to adapt in the light of the specific requirements of this school, this teacher and these children'.

Moss 2004 p. 130

Ms Nolan's comment would appear to emphasise that firstly 'someone' (presumably a child in class) would *not*, these days, 'bring something in', whether an object or experience from their lives, to stimulate, even lead, the curriculum and production of knowledge in this way. And that furthermore if they *did*, it would not now be possible to go 'Oh wow! Look at this...' and pursue what a child 'brings in' to class with them. This quote recalls the 'curriculum of transmission' (Ball 1994a p. 40) of the then relatively new National Curriculum described as 'the curriculum of the dead' (p. 46), a curriculum 'intended to put 'real' knowledge back into school and to discipline teachers' (p. 33).

There was reference in one interview to a 'show and tell' type system. Remembering the quote from the previous chapter, around the 'pace' of a day, Ms George mentioned 'trying' to 'do some show and tell for 10 minutes before lunch'.

G Um and then after play, maths or literacy and then if I can, because I do fruit *before* play it's freed up a little bit of time? So I try and do some show and tell for 10 minutes before lunch.

CR I can see your show and tell names on the board.

G I have a massive list and I work my way through it. Just, so I don't want children, you know, waiting too long, so I'm aware of who's, who really wants to. So today I actually rubbed out all the names and those are all new names.

Interview with Ms George

Even here, there is a divide between those who the teacher is 'aware...*really* wants to [show something]' and the rest. 'Show and tell' or 'bringing something in' is not an area pursued further in any detail, as much reflecting its absence as its presence, but the descriptions here, together with observations in classes suggest that the content, structure and pace of the curriculum is very much led by the teacher, not the children, and via externally imposed sources. 'Show and tell for 10 minutes before lunch' does not suggest links between the 'show and tell' items and the rest of the school day.

Having considered in this section the technical professionalism inherent in the prescriptive demands of the various curriculum documents and associated 'interventions', I turn to 'the rigours of performance' (Ball 2003b p. 221), the processes ensuring teachers' self-regulation. I remember back to Ms Saunders, in my previous chapter talking about the organisation of groups in her class, and that she couldn't think of another way to do it:

Um, in the afternoons they sit in mixed groups so although I mean, I can't think of another way to do it apart from that. Because numeracy, although sometimes you need to be in mixed groups, on the whole they're in ability groups. Um, so that's why in the morning I've got morning groups and afternoon groups and I generally keep them the same for literacy and numeracy depending if there's a real difference 'cause otherwise it's just chaos swapping about you know. Just make I know, I know, what work to give them basically. Some of them have extensions you know and so forth, whereas others wouldn't.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

I see that Stephen Ball refers above to the '*potential*' splitting between teacher's own judgements about good practice and students' needs (Ball 2003b p.221). In the quote from Ms Saunders in my previous chapter, it would appear that there is not a

split, but that having taken the class and its organisation over from a more experienced colleague, this was the way to do things. This reminds me of the 'deprofessionaliz[ing]' and 'reprofessionaliz[ing]' (Seddon 1997 in Ball 2003b p. 218) of teachers, who become 'outstanding', 'successful', 'above the average' (Ball 2003b p. 219) via the discourse of OFSTED.

In a conversation with a teacher (trained, like Ms Saunders since 1998) while we both watched a PE lesson, she told me in a careful, explanatory tone of voice, indicative of something that she thought would be new to me, that the following year the school was going to be introducing something called 'topics'. She did not use the term 'cross curricular' but using the example topic 'Holidays' described this apparently novel idea of teaching different subjects at the same time. To readers not versed in the recent history of primary education, hearing this information as a teacher from the 1980s felt roughly the equivalent to having 'records' carefully explained, as plastic grooved disks that hold music and are operated on decks - by a current teenager returning from a night out at a club. Switching to a tone that suggested something really surprising and strange, the young teacher added that as part of this innovation, they might even be teaching 'PE in the morning' <pause for impact of this strange new practice> and 'maybe literacy in the afternoon'. It had not occurred to me that implementation of the Literacy And Numeracy strategies and the prescription to teach them in the morning would have made a suggestion to teach even the same prescribed content at a different time of day seem *transgressive*.

I turn in the next section to 'performativity' and the managerial panopticism evident in teachers' daily lives.

Playing to their tune

- CR Wow that's a whole week' [I say 'wow' because it is so tightly written: tiny words cover an A4 sheet of paper]
- N And then because it's OFSTED we have to develop each one into a daily plan into a lesson plan although we don't normally.

Embedded in this quote are both the rigours of self-regulation: the tiny words covering an A4 sheet made available for managers, and fabrication for OFSTED: 'we don't normally'. 'Fabrications are versions of an organization (or person) which does not exist - they are not 'outside the truth' but neither do they render simply true

or direct accounts - they are produced purposefully in order 'to be accountable' (Ball 2003b p.224). These fabrications occur within the 'performative accountability culture of education in the first decade of the twenty-first century' (Perryman 2009 p.618). By performativity, I have drawn upon Stephen Ball's meaning,

Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement. The issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial.

Ball 2003b p.216

It relies 'on teachers and schools instituting self-disciplinary measures' (Jeffrey 2002 p. 531). Teachers' quotes in this chapter ('...you have to teach the National Curriculum. You have to and it's law.' 'You've gotta learn this kids!') provide examples of links being made by teachers of 'who controls the field of judgement' (Ball 2003b p. 216). '*You have to play to their tune*', refers to a comment by Ms Nolan when talking about her planning, referring to OFSTED.

Asked about the recent inspection, Ms Nolan commented,

N It was fine. It was so well planned it was almost boring. I planned it to the second to the question, to the everything. It was like an out of body experience watching myself teaching.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

This idea of 'an out of body experience' seems to me to encapsulate perfectly the 'inauthenticity' of impression and performance (Ball 2003b p. 221); an alienation and fetishisation of teaching that turns social relations into things to be measured. Here Ms Nolan describing the experience of doing what 'they' [the inspectors] want to see, and watching herself doing it; reflecting findings in Jeffrey and Woods' (1998) study of primary school teachers and school inspections.

Echoing the 'absence presence' of school inspectors in Troman's (1997) findings, the surveillance and panopticism of performativity as a 'policy technology'

permeates practice far more than – in the words of theatre – ‘for one week only’: the week of an OFSTED inspection. Asked about ‘major developments’ or ‘a particular focus’ of work in the school during the year of my fieldwork, senior manager Ms Daisley mentions:

- D Updated loads of policies ‘cause of OFSTED <she laughs> um, broadening out on the role of the coordinator we’ve done a lot of work on that.

I take the laugh as being because she has overtly admitted the updating is ‘because of OFSTED’.

Asked to explain further she continues:

- D Things like you might, you know, you do steadily, move your practice on. So for example the assessment, the assessment policy or the planning policy, you know, as you meet the, you know, the demands of the new curriculum or the literacy hour, you know, we changed the planning sheet umpteen times for the numeracy. We changed that so you have to keep updating everything to sort of um we’ve <pause> with the role of the, the role of the coordinator, we did a lot of work on developing people, making people, making it really explicit what expectations we have of curriculum coordinators um and trying to you know, make that easier. So we set up, I set up all the folders for the files for them and um I think that’s an assessment one <she reaches over and brings down a large ring binder from the shelf> but it follows the same plan for everybody.

- CR Right. It’s a monster file.

- D So yep, everybody had that and I gave everybody them already set up, so that when OFSTED came in it was exactly the same across the board.

Ms Daisley, senior teacher

Looking back at this quote, I am interested to see the shift in the middle ‘we did a lot of work on developing people, making people, making it really explicit what expectations we have of curriculum coordinators’. There is a shift from ‘developing people’ towards enforcement ‘*making* people’, as well as in my mind hinting at the ‘making of people’, changing what it means to be a teacher (Ball 2003b) inherent in

the colonizing of teachers' lives, before finally resting on 'making it really explicit what expectations we have of curriculum coordinators'. The devolved regulation and 'improved productivity' are again evident (Ball 2003b).

Thinking back to Ms Nolan's tightly-written planning sheets, Ms Daisley continues:

- D So that we're all doing the same and making sure people were aware of what people needed to do, that they needed to be doing monitoring of planning, but that they also needed to be doing monitoring of teaching and learning. You know, what sort of monitoring, what resources were used da di da di da.

I ask Ms Daisley to explain 'monitoring'. Evident in her explanation is the notion of 'steering from a distance' through layers of surveillance and self-surveillance, with 'OFSTED judgements' permeating practice when inspectors are not physically present in the school. When accustomed, one could almost say *desensitised* to this language and these processes in my work as a teacher, I am still taken aback by the raw comparison to the 'factory' and the panopticism.

- CR What does that mean in practice? What sorts of things do they do, practitioners, when they're monitoring?
- D It's kind of quality control. You know, if this were a factory it would be quality control with a clipboard, time and motion study. It's about ensuring that the standards we *think* we are providing are actually being, being provided. So we would be looking using the OFSTED criteria when judging teaching and that um, all senior managers have been OFSTED trained, not as inspectors. It's a three-day OFSTED er, course. And then we've worked alongside for example [Ms A] the numeracy coordinator and done observations with her so we're ensuring that we're doing, we're making the same kinds of judgements. And she's also done work alongside [the LA's] numeracy adviser as well um so yeah, we're looking at the *quality* of the education we're providing in the school. So that would be through lesson observation. It's looking at, you'll have heard [senior teacher] asking to look at children's work samples, so she collects those in, so she's looking at books. When she and I are in class providing CDT [*Craft, Design, Technology*] we're also looking around the classroom

seeing what the environment is like. Um you know, so this is, stuff, you know, this is stuff, there's monitoring on a you know, on more formal level or on a more informal level. Um, monitoring teacher's records, I collect the planning in every week so there's that, um yeah, and then you know it's trying to *delegate* some of that to the coordinators 'cause coordinators need to have a handle on how good is my subject being taught?

Interview with Ms Daisley, senior teacher

With this quote, we return to the themes in my introduction, the 'micro-physics of power' Foucault (1977 p. 26) that is conceived of 'not as a property, but as a strategy... dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations.' Foucault (1977 p. 26)

We see in this description 'disciplinary power',

...the chief function of which is to 'train'...it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units'.

Foucault 1977 p. 26

In these processes we see each manager, subject coordinator and teacher enmeshed in the normalizing judgements of monitoring and observation: 'The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination' (Foucault 1977 p. 170).

The quality of the education, judgement of teaching and classroom environment are judged through the narrow lens of 'OFSTED criteria' (Slee 1998, Fielding 2001) in a circular process of criteria and judgement. These are the 'profound changes' in the 'act of teaching and the subjectivity of the teacher' (Ball 2001 p. 219), as Foucault asserts,

'...discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise'.

Foucault 1977 p. 170

Inherent here in 'the production of knowledge about the population and individuals' (Lemke 2009 p. 39) are the judgements of teachers about themselves and the associated production of pupil subjectivities in what counts as, 'technologies of the self and political government ...articulated with each other' (Lemke 2009 p. 41).

Achievement levels of children: 'You hardly *don't* do SATS'

Returning then to the children, and as Reay (1999 p. 343) observed 'the extent to which children's perceptions of the tests contribute to their understandings of themselves as learners', it was certainly true that children in this school knew about 'achievement levels' as related to the results in high stakes tests. In April, I found myself in a conversation with children in Year 2, (therefore aged six to seven years of age) in the playground. The national 'SATS' tests took place at the end of May. I had another similar conversation with older children on a school trip, not recorded on minidisk. This recorded incident is illustrative of children's awareness of their positioning, and I am minded of Diane Reay's work around perceptions of tests and grading:

The tension between agency and structure becomes apparent in children's differential dispositions to view the testing process as a definitive statement about the sort of learner they are. Although children's responses are varied, what most share is a sense of an event which reveals something intrinsic about them as individuals.

Reay 1999 p. 343

In this next conversation with a child in Year 2 I am in the playground, near one of the short walls where the teaching assistants stand. The teaching assistant on playground duty has just moved away to go and speak to some children. There is a child from a year 2 class, Jerry, sitting on the wall.

J Are you new?

CR Am I new?

J Yeah.

CR I sort of visit. I'm not that new but I don't know the school very well do you?

J Yeah.

CR Oh right. How come you're sitting on the wall?

J Uh?

- CR How come you're sitting on the wall?
- J Bit bored.
- CR Are you a bit bored? Oh no. Where are your friends?
- J Mm. I'm just a bit bored.
- CR What does that mean?
- J Bored with play.
- CR Uh. What are you bored with?
- J Uh. Just bored. I just want to get back into class.
- CR Oh. You just want to get back into class. Which class are you in?
- J [year 2 class]
- CR You know, that's a real coincidence. I was going to ask your teacher if I can come and visit. Have you been doing lots of tests recently? *[this came up in a recent conversation with other children and I have been wanting to follow it up]*
- J SATS
- CR SATS. What tests have you been doing? Do you do them every day?
- J Um. Not every day. But hardly. Hardly every day. But you do it a lot.
- CR You do it a lot.
- J You hardly *don't* do SATS.

It draws towards 'lining up time', i.e. the end of play time when the children line-up in their respective class groups and wait for their class teacher to walk with them up the stairs to their classroom. Jerry and I walk across the playground towards his class 'line'.

J It's lining up time.

[Phillip, another boy in this same year 2 class who I have spoken to before comes over to talk to me].

P You've got that microphone again haven't you?

CR I've got my little microphone again. I did a little interview about SATS. It almost made you go shy didn't it? *[I say to Jerry, who is standing by Phillip. He shakes his head]* No?

[Another four children from the same class stand around and join in. I don't take their names as time is pressing and I worry that it will affect the flow of the conversation].

A I got level 3 in my, I got level 3 in my er, maths.

B I've only got one I've only got first grade and the others are second.

C And I got all the highest.

CR All the highest?
A Yeah in my practice.
CR In your practice? Oh. *[More children come round]* I'm asking about SATS and what they mean. What are they about?
D They're about exams. And if you get a high grade you learn, learn,
CR *[The mic has become impossibly muffled for some reason I repeat what's just been said, sensing the wind or that the mic has become covered]* If you get a high grade it means you've learnt a lot? Ah.
[Someone says they got a three]
CR *[Again I repeat]* A three? <pause> What happens if you get a one?
A One? That's the worst.
CR That's the worst. Who gets ones?
A Only one person's got it so far.
CR Oh. Who gets threes?
J Phillip and me.
CR Phillip and you?

Jerry and Phillip then initiate telling me about levels and points. I have not come across 'points' before.

P On my first SATS I got the low three. Not one wrong.
CR Oh. Not one wrong. Ah.
A On the first SATS I got a 2a
CR You got a 2a what does that mean?
A That's the second best.
CR It's the second best? Do all the people on the same tables get the same marks?
J No.
P No. You get different marks
CR You get different marks
J *[he says something about points, I have probably looked blank]*
Anyway we're on the same table and he got three and I got 2a.
CR OK
P And then he got a three once.
J Yeah. And that was higher than his.
P No. Yeah that was just the points.
J The points.
CR That was higher than his?

- P Yeah I got 26 and level 3.
- J Yeah and I got 28 and level 3.
- CR You got a level 3 as well. Oh. The points were higher. You get points as well. Right and what are the,
- J Score.
- CR Points for the score? Is that for maths or spelling?
- P Maths
- J And both. Both and spelling.
- [They have to get into line and go inside]*

Here the children, as young as six or seven years of age are doing the work of division, what Foucault (1977 p. 181) terms a 'micro-economy':

'...by the play of this quantification, this circulation of awards and debits, thanks to the continuous calculation of plus and minus points, the disciplinary apparatuses hierarchized the 'good' and the 'bad' subjects in relation to one another. Through this micro-economy of a perpetual penalty operates a differentiation that is not one of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, their potentialities, their level or value. By assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals 'in truth'; the penalty that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge of individuals.'

Foucault 1977 p. 181

Following my visit to the Year 2 class, Ms Davis (Jerry's class teacher) explains to me what I observed during a visit to Jerry's Year 2 class, a few days after my conversation with him and his peers in the playground. The children in the Year 2 class had all gone out to play/ lunch break and it had been my first observation of a 'SATS test' albeit a 'practice'. One thing that struck me was that seven children, a *quarter of those in the class* were sent out with a different teacher at the outset, and do not do the test. I ask the class teacher, Ms Davis:

- CR How do you decide how it's all organised who's going to go out, so who goes out?
- D They're um, the ones who are not able enough for this. There's quite a lot of them this year, they're a level 1.
- CR It is. *[meaning, it is 'quite a lot']*
- D I know.

- CR Is it seven? 25% of the
- D They can't read. They just can't read [*she says, in a despairing voice*].
- CR OK.
- D They just haven't, haven't picked it up. And sometimes I think well they might have a go and I sit them through it and it's just pointless. Absolutely pointless.

This is the most striking of the examples, echoing an earlier conversation with Ms Saunders that first raised my awareness of children described not picking things up or not getting it. I continue the conversation:

- CR So you decide, you have to decide before hand at this point?
- D No, what actually happens is they will do um like a running record reading test.
- CR Which you'll do with them individually?
- D Which I'll do individually and the ones who don't get a level 2 on that officially do not enter for their SATS.
- CR Right.
- D And I could tell you now it'll be the ones who've [*been*] sent out.
- CR Yeah.
- D If by any chance in the reading record any of them *amaze* me they can by all means be entered for this.
- CR Yeah, yeah.
- D But there's no point week after week in their practice I mean if there's a chance they might scrape it on the day then that's fine.
- CR Yeah, Yep
- D But there's no point week after week them sitting through staring at a blank staring blankly at a load of words on the page.

I find this entire conversation dispiriting. I don't really know where to start. 'Week after week in their practice' certainly supports Jerry's observation (above) that they 'hardly *don't* do SATS'. I have been struck by the limited opportunities for children to 'amaze' or 'surprise' their teachers, once caught into the increasingly defined positioning within the classrooms, 'fixing' and dividing children from the very start of Year One. The children's and teachers comments are evocative of the work of normalization (Foucault 1979) – what is normal, and therefore what is abnormal (Ball 1990b, p.2). I have only touched upon the 'hand over meeting' thus far and its

role in (as the name suggests) handing over 'ability groups' and 'pupil descriptors' from one teacher to the next.

From the conversation here with Ms Davis I am reminded of the pupils' experiences and perspectives in Gillborn and Youdell's (2000 p.179) study, 'the pain and hurt' caused by 'tiering and related grade predictions'. I am sorry to say that I did not have, or perhaps, *take* the opportunity to follow up these 'seven children' from the Year Two class above. There were so many strands and directions to my questions at that stage in the fieldwork and this was not one of the classes I was following more closely. The comments above by James, Phillip and their peers from this class suggest however, that the children considered attaining Level One was 'the worst'. Continuing to speak to Ms Davis she emphasises:

D ...Quite appalled by the quality of reading from some of them just, they just, they just, some of them have just not, just *haven't* picked it up.

CR Someone else was saying that.

D Yeah our results this year, which is a shame because I've got an awful lot as well of level threes, there's a lot of very, very bright readers in this class, really bright. But results will be really hampered, just got so many Ws I think in reading.

Discussion with Ms Davis after observation in class

'Ws' refer to 'Working towards Level One' in effect meaning an 'ungraded' mark below Level One. Ms Davis does not, following her comment 'absolutely pointless' seem to be questioning the *validity of the test* that has a quarter of the children reportedly 'staring blankly', or concerned at the effects of sending them out, some of them, if they attain 'W' deemed less than Level One (or 'the worst' as their peers considered it). Reflecting back to the quote from Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish', above, 'Through this micro-economy of a perpetual penalty operates a differentiation that is not one of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, their potentialities, their level or value' (Foucault 1977 p. 181) we see the turn to 'their [the children's] nature, their potentialities'. Ms Davis's judgements are framed by the Standards agenda, and as such she is concerned at these children 'hampering' the results this year. I am also struck by the apparent impotence that this shift towards teaching has apparently brought, if the teachers have done it (literally) by the book and the children have not 'picked it up'. The examinations and

associated remediations here appear to have defined and produced educational failure, begging the question, what happens when 'What works': the certainties of the Standards Agenda, do not work? Mel Ainscow (1999 p8) comments that those who do not respond to existing schooling arrangements should be regarded as 'hidden voices']' who, under certain conditions, can encourage the improvement of schools. My speculation is that shifting from more a dialogic relationship between teaching and learning, teacher and learner, towards transmission of tightly pre-packaged content does not tend to yield the sort of conditions to which Ainscow is referring.

Setting three levels of ability work-wise

The ideal plan would perhaps comprise a 'treble-track' system – a series of backward classes for slow children, a series of advanced classes for quick children, both parallel to the ordinary series of standards for children of ordinary average ability'

Cyril Burt/ Board of Education 1929 p. 422 cited in White 2006, p. 9

Recalling the 'educational triage and the D-C conversion' related to the league table measure of five GCSE examination 'A – C' grades identified by Gillborn and Youdell (2000) in their secondary school study, 'repair strategies' associated with the pedagogical structure in this research setting also had a focus on the conversion of those just below the target SATS levels measured in published league tables, specifically those children who would directly affect the percentage of children attaining Level four at age eleven, and Level two at age seven.

Ms Nolan explains one of the multitude of 'interventions':

N Booster is, well, here are the lower ability ones [*she points at the groups listed on paper*] This is sort of lower middle, these kids are the ones that might not get level four in the SATS if they don't get the boost now? So it's targeted towards those children to get those children through the SATS to boost the SATS results, because the SATS results are level four and above and *these* children don't necessarily have the chance of getting that anyway so they prefer to target the money towards these children who've got a chance of getting through level four and therefore having an effect on the SATS results. The booster groups *are* to get the results up. Because

they've set themselves these targets and now they've got to do something about achieving these targets! <laughs> so that's why the money's come in. Ms Nolan, class teacher

In the quotes above relating to 'booster' and 'who goes out' (of class), my eye is drawn, again, to 'ability': 'the lower ability ones', 'the ones who are not able enough', 'not one of the more able children' in quotes above. In the previous chapter I said that I went on to ask Paul, a child in Year 5, what 'ability' means: Paul described the meaning of sitting on particular tables as, 'high ability to low ability. Highest up there, lowest over here. And afternoon seats it's just muddled up', his answer was:

CR OK. What does it mean higher ability and lower ability?

P Smarter and [*sort of shakes his head or hand to indicate 'you know'. I wonder if he's going to use the word 'dumb' as others have. I repeat the start of his sentence:*]

CR Smarter and...

P Just doesn't know as much.

Paul's explanation of 'just not knowing as much' suggests the possibility of fluidity, that we might think of it akin to attainment or experience; doesn't know as much yet, perhaps. In the OFSTED report on setting in primary schools (OFSTED 1998) attainment and ability are both terms used. In paragraph 3 we are told that:

'...for the purposes of this survey, setting was defined as the formation of teaching groups for a particular subject based on the pupil's prior attainment in that subject'

and that:

'Setting is different, therefore, from the formation of ability groups, taught by the same class teacher, within mixed ability classes. Setting is also different from streaming, where pupils of similar ability are taught together for all subjects'.

In paragraph 5 the document refers to 'pupils' abilities [plural] in certain subjects' and then in paragraph 6 the terminology or concept appears to be questioned by referring to '*so-called* mixed-ability classes, where the range of pupils' attainments is wide' (OFSTED 1998, *my emphasis*). As such in this document the term remains suggestive but vague, alluding to apparently shared assumptions in familiar phrases such as 'ability groups', 'mixed ability classes', but not clearly defined.

Describing the layout of her classroom, Ms Nolan reflects aspects of policy in which *assumptions* and *interpretations* as much as specific policy texts inform 'a general expectation' and 'what you're supposed to do':

N ...and then the tables with groups in the middle and there are five groups of six children.

CR Right, right.

N The reason I've done that is that basically, because the literacy and numeracy hour is so much to do with grouping children, setting three levels of ability work-wise and um, working with groups of children for guided reading and guided writing and supporting particular groups, um,

CR Does that say in the documents about the three different levels?

N It's a general expectation.

CR I asked about this before,

N I think it's from OFSTED

CR Oh OK.

N But um, obviously what you're supposed to do is plan the general level of the class but then differentiate according to the lower ability children and the higher ability so that basically equates to the three levels, um, they do expect differentiation.

Interview with Ms Nolan

An assumption of what 'you're supposed to do' and here more specifically what you're '*obviously*' supposed to do is expressed by all of the teachers interviewed in detail when asked about the organisation of their classrooms, and their planning. Links are made here between 'the literacy and numeracy hour', 'grouping children', 'setting three levels of ability work-wise' and a speculation as to planning 'the general level' and then 'lower' and 'higher' being an OFSTED expectation.

It is a small point, but I am slightly intrigued by the phrase 'setting three levels of ability work-wise' as to me it hints at this process of children and their 'abilities' being *made* in this process. Setting three levels of ability work-wise describes to me this process that starts with the 'work' or 'objectives' as defined by the National Strategy documents, then 'sets' three levels of ability into which children, with their erstwhile heterogeneity are allocated to homogenous organisational groupings. Thinking about a liquid solidifying, or 'setting' provides for me an image of the ways in which

children in this schooling context appeared to become set or fixed in and by their allocated 'ability' and its co-location.

Echoing findings in Gillborn and Youdell's (2000) study of secondary schools, the notion of 'ability' is also hugely important in this primary school, and its meanings similarly assumed rather than interrogated. Whilst planning and organisational practices described by teachers as being 'expected' and 'obvious' coalesce around assumptions of children's 'ability', it has also been observed how scrutiny and surveillance of these practices align with assumptions of the 'good teacher'.

As I said in my literature review chapter, Ball (2003 p.27) asserts that 'new policies are sedimented into a history of previous policies which may be superseded but are not necessarily expunged'. Data and analyses in this study suggest the intersection of formal policy initiatives such as the National Strategies (DfEE 1998, 1999) with 'booster' type interventions (e.g. DFES 2001h, i, j) interacting with common sense IQist notions of ability (Gillborn and Youdell p.212) and notions of good practice (Walkerdine 1984). I turn now to the sedimenting of 'ability' into current and from previous policies and understandings.

'Easy work for the thick ones and hard work for the bright ones'

Reflecting on 'three levels' and differentiation, Askew et al (2001 p. 22) speculate that 'the 'three-group' interpretation of differentiation [also seen in their data] as opposed to the strategy model of the majority of the class working at one level with a few children at either end of the attainment range being provided with different work, illustrates...teachers trying to make sense of an innovation by fitting it into current practices of grouping and differentiation' Askew et al (2001 p. 22). Ms Nolan's description of the grouping in her class does not suggest 'the majority of the class working at one level' but a 'normal curve' distribution suggestive of the 'natural' and 'fair' patterns of a bell curve and 'the new IQism' – 'an approach that affirms traditional notions of IQ' (Gillborn and Youdell p.15):

N Yeah, for literacy and numeracy it's differentiated three ways.

CR Oh three not five?

N Well, no. I, I some, it may be for an extreme like these two [meaning the two girls who are sitting outside the class where we're seated] or for the very able children have an extra thing or an extension, or an

adaptation but on the whole it's three groups. And I have my, my very bottom group, there's only three children. Then my middle group this year is actually the two next groups. And my top group are the two higher groups. 'Cause it's meant to be quite a high ability class. So the top twelve children all do the higher ability work. Whereas some classes, last year for example my top group was only the 6 children in the very, very top group, my middle group were the next two down and the lower ability groups were the next two

CR I see.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Thinking about the apparent layering of new policy imperatives onto existing understandings and practices, I was minded of Ms Nolan's explanation of 'differentiation':

CR Have you always taught like that with that organisation?

N Not always. On and off. I mean I've always, you always have the spread of abilities in classes, so you've always had to differentiate. I can remember the word differentiating being invented <we laugh> 'cause it wasn't called that, it was just called, you know, easy work for the thick ones and hard work for the bright ones, or extension work or something.

Ms Nolan, interview

I am conscious of our shared laugh here, creating or confirming a shared recognition as 'teachers', rather similarly to the quote referring to the spanners and spark plugs at the beginning of this chapter. I say that I am conscious, because it is in this unguarded context in which the words 'thick' and 'bright' are subsequently used. Unfortunate as the terminology is, what stands out for me is the process of re-naming and I recall Roger Slee's observation, that 'what is particularly problematic about essentialist discourse is its appropriation of the language of inclusion' (Slee 1999 p.269).

Thinking more about the 'making' of abilities, Ms Nolan also explains

N The difficulty with that class was that you had so many cause you had a *huge* gap between the most able children and the least able children. The biggest I've ever come across. I had a child in the class

Ruth, who was doing GCSE maths and I had the other extreme I had Lila, who hadn't got number conservation yet, and if you took ten cubes, put them on a table, split them into two groups, she had to count them again to tell you there were ten cubes there. She didn't understand there were still ten 'cause you hadn't taken any away or added any....You had those two complete extremes in one classroom, you *can't* just give them all the same work, you know, you have to have levels of ability, you *have* to have them somehow sorted out, and it's difficult to do it in your head and for *every single day* of the literacy hour to have work ready for those children without actually sitting them physically in places where you can say, 'right that group are doing that, that group are doing, that group' you know. It's just not possible get your head round it. You know in your mind what they are like, and they'll know by what work they're doing whether you sit them in groups or not, whether they're doing the easy work, the middle work or the hard work so you know.

Ms Nolan, class teacher

Highlighting the value of 'hesitation and closer interrogation of utterances of conventional wisdom', Slee (2011 p. 13) continues 'Schools are governed by conventional wisdom, by the sequential assemblage of habits, traditions, beliefs, practices and organizational preferences'.

It is these traditions, taken for granted practices and organisational conventions that I am interested to interrogate. In his careful exploration of intelligence and curriculum John White (2006) seeks to question the 'ideological roots' of conventional educational perspectives. He explores 'various resemblances between ideas associated with Galtonian^{xxx} intelligence and intelligence on the one hand, and puritan thinking on the other' (White 2006 p.53). I am fascinated by 'parallels' and 'echoes across the centuries' (White 2006 Chapter 2 and p. 53 respectively) that are so familiar to me as a teacher and in this data, moments that teachers emphasised to me here as taken-for-granted. This small moment, with what Ms Nolan has termed 'the *huge* gap' as illustrated by tasks and attainments, echoes the particular interest by hereditarian psychologists Burt and Galton in 'the far ends' of their IQ range, 'the extreme classes, the best and the worst' (Galton cited in White 2006 p. 39); and its links with the 'division in puritan thinking between the saved and the damned'. Clearly there is no *overt* link here between 'the saved and the damned' in

puritan terms, only a teacher's worry about the polarity and the apparently helpless cases of those on 'the very bottom tables'. But I will return to this notion of salvation and damnation, success and failure in the sub-section 'delineating ab/normal' in Chapter 5 below.

Describing the three-group process, Ms Saunders describes the *work* as more 'able' and then the *children* in the bottom groups as 'less able'

Now generally, um, I mean I'm sure you know this, but the three levels, differentiated work basically, so the top group and the next group down will get like the more able work and then you'll have a middle group then you'll have some work for the less able and kind of lower middle.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

It is a tiny example, perhaps too picky a point, with the children in 'the top and the next group down' getting the 'more able *work*' and the subtle difference from the externally located 'work' to the internally located deficit suggested in the term 'the less able'. But as I have outlined, as well as taking an interest in who are constructed as being 'the less able' on 'the bottom tables', comments by different teachers also seemed at best, paradoxical. My awareness was firstly raised by Ms Saunders herself, in a passing comment about one of the children on the 'bottom table' 'not getting it' in reference to some number work. It was a small moment in a passing conversation that I didn't record on disk, after a lesson. I was struck by the contrast between the apparently proactive language of 'intervention', 'targets' and 'inclusion' and the apparent silence around *questioning* the interventions, rather than an apparent assumption that the interventions and scripts are fine, but it is the *child* that 'doesn't get it', the child is somehow faulty.

A short conversation with Ms Keswick and another moment in the 'hand over meeting' between Ms Jones and Ms George also reflect this apparent gap between prescribed 'repair strategy' and apparent outcome, again the norm.

I visited Ms Keswick's Year 4 class, but it was not one of the classes I focussed on in detail. We have a brief conversation after the lesson:

CR I hardly know your class. So these have changed [*I look at the class list with some names crossed out*]

- K No they're just the ones, as I've done the IEP [*Individual Education Plan, for children identified as having 'Special Educational Needs'*] just I've crossed them out.
- CR You cross it out.
- K It makes me feel good to see their name disappear.
- C <I laugh> [*I know the feeling getting reports etc. done*]
- K Those are the ones without an IEP [*it's hardly any children*]
- CR Without? [*I say incredulously, because it is so few children in the class*] Wow. And most of them are just 'School Action'? [*a term used on the class list and related to the Special Educational Needs 'Code of Practice^{xxx1}'*]
- K Yes
- CR These two. Predominantly those two groups: ALS One and Two? [*I read 'ALS one and two from the sheet*]
- K Mm. Because they should be able to write in sentences by the time they get to Year Four.
- CR Mm.
- K But their um, writing samples. The middle's moved up but the bottom hasn't. <I look quizzical> The writing samples that we do every term.
- CR Oh the middle lot has,
- K Have moved up but the bottom haven't.
- C And. [*again referring to the sheet*] All of that bottom group are in ALS One?
- K Or ALS Two.

Recalling Ms Wolvek stating which children 'should' access these interventions, perhaps one could speculate that on reflection these children should not access it, either way it looks as though they did not access the intervention, and I wonder again whether this is 'including all children'. Perhaps, in the words of the Standards Website, ALS is 'for children who can be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention.' (National Strategies Website) As such these children could *not* be expected to 'catch up with their peers'; the mechanics positioning them beyond intervention –systematic processes constructing 'acceptable' learners and different possible futures.

Ms Jones describes Fawzia, a girl in her class during the 'hand over meeting' to Ms George:

- J Fawzia. Why she isn't 'Statemented'^{xxxii} I don't know. She's had every support known to man: She's in handwriting group, she's in the speech and language group, she's in the focus group.
- G So she's um, school
- J action plus. Actually she's school action because nobody from outside the school is coming in.
- G Alright.
- J Mm. Um, but the thing about Fawzia which is, which makes her a *joy* to have in the class is that she is constantly optimistic, she wants to do well, she never messes around. She will come from a group and sit down and *get on* with it. She has no desire to mess around she actually wants to achieve. The fact that it is bloody well not happening is *really* frustrating.

I explore 'special educational needs', its relationships with 'inclusion' and practice in this school setting in my following chapters. Looking at this quote, there is a suggestion here that if Fawzia was *not* 'constantly optimistic' despite the apparent failings of 'every support known to man', she may well not be 'a joy to have in the class'. If Fawzia '*actually wants*' [*my emphasis*] to achieve, are there other *five or six year olds* in this class deemed as *not* wanting to achieve, a further division? When the technologies do not work, this seems to solidify assumptions around the children's ability, 'their nature, their potentialities' (Foucault 1977 p. 181)

Returning to Ms Saunders' comments and planning for the whole class, she says at a different point in this same interview,

You generally plan for the middle and then extend and then make it easier for the less able.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

Looking back at the data around this process, all three of the teachers interviewed in more detail make some reference to this being 'obvious' and to me 'knowing this'; above where Ms Saunders says 'I mean I'm sure you know this' and also Ms Bradley, referring to the mechanics of the planning process:

- B ...obviously you have to look at the objective and think right, well yes a majority of my children need to do this *but* I've got this group of

children that need to go either, do the step before so when you're planning the activities it's always on at least three levels. You know this anyway don't you?

Ms Bradley, class teacher

This is to do with teachers knowing that I am also a primary school teacher, but that would be the case for much of the information they share with me across the year and yet it is particularly here in the data around planning that there is a preponderance of saying this is 'obvious' and that I would 'know this'. In this sense I take this planning for 'three levels' and dividing work between the five tables ('top, middle, bottom') as a taken for granted process almost beyond mentioning. Going back to Ms Nolan's quote above where she says '*they* expect differentiation'. I am guessing from the context of this and other conversations '*they*' are OFSTED inspectors. Speculating about OFSTED as one of the perpetuating sources of the three levels, I am minded of my first day in this school – described in my introductory chapter - and the first staff meeting I attended in which 'lower, middle, higher ability' work was requested from class teachers by the head teacher, meaning the trays containing previous and current work books for three children in each class across the school: one deemed 'lower', one 'middle' and one 'higher'. The constant reiteration, re-inscription, ritual acting out and distribution of 'groups' and their 'contents'

Amongst the opening comments in my first notebook is jotted:

*Request for work 'lower, middle, higher ability' – Have names from last year
– with their targets.

Fieldnotes

I have looked through DFES and OFSTED documents and websites to find written reference to this procedure, but have not found precise reference to it. I see in the 'Inspection Evidence' section of the Handbook for Inspecting Nursery and Primary Schools (OFSTED 2003), a reference to 'examination of pupils' work' and that 'Sampling of the work must be representative'. 'Have names from last year' suggests the same children would be considered to be representative of 'lower, middle and higher' from one year to the next, potentially supporting the fixity of position and possibly of 'ability'.

In the section of their chronological review titled 'The Position at the Introduction of the National Curriculum for Mathematics in 1989', Askew et al (DES/WO 1985, para. 45 in Askew et al 2001 p. 8) recall the importance placed on 'match':

There should be careful differentiation: what is taught and how it is taught need to be matched to pupils' abilities and aptitudes.

(DES/WO 1985, para. 45 in Askew et al 2001 p. 8)

A 'match' that does echo teachers' assumptions in the data here. Citing the work of Bennett et al (1984 in Askew et al p.9), they note that 'even when teachers themselves noted an element of mismatch, they did not try to find reasons in terms of children's understandings but focussed instead on the products of the children's work'. I take this to mean judgements based on the outcomes of children's work rather than understandings revealed during the process of learning, relying on observations and interactions. A few things occur to me. One is the word 'how'; what and *how* it is taught in the quote above. In a later DES document, a National Curriculum consultation document that 'Teachers were to be:

'Free to determine the detail of what should be taught in order to ensure that pupils achieve appropriate levels of attainment. How teaching is organized and teaching approaches used will also be for schools to determine.'

(DES/WO1987: 11 in Askew et al 2001 p.10),

It seems to me to be possible that having now had such a high level of prescription of *what and how* to teach, often down to scripts and exact lesson outlines, that if children have been in receipt of these prescriptions without demonstrating the narrow parameters of defined measures of success, there is 'nowhere else to go' in terms of teaching. If there was an overemphasis in the past on 'the products of the children's work' I am speculating that this can only have hardened with the ultimate outcome being down to a SAT result that is as specific as (for example) 2a, b or c (as the Year 2 children told me). The thing here is, that if it is only or predominantly the outcome that counts, and ultimately the outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy as measured in SATS, I cannot see an imperative to engage in a teaching and learning process that valorises anything other than outputs. Without any *measurable* emphasis on the *processes* of learning, these are subjugated to test outcomes and associated positioning in the class hierarchy. Whatever the inclusive language, ethos or aspiration, the hierarchy of what and therefore who counts is abundantly clear to pupils and staff, with its implications for identities, esteem and subjectivities.

The apparent persistence of the top-middle-bottom hierarchy and understandings of 'ability' as fixed across different learning contexts pressed me to explore ability and its connection with understandings of intelligence. Only one teacher used the word 'intelligence' to me or in my presence talking to others during my fieldwork and this was the Special Needs Coordinator explaining assessments in the context of 'special educational needs'. Mentioning above the remnants of previous policies and understandings in the practices of differentiation, pupil grouping and 'three levels of ability work-wise', I found parallels between the uses of the term 'ability' in this research setting and issues raised in an article reviewing the British Ability Scales (Hill 2005).

Vivian Hill seeks to review 'the British Ability Scales, Second Edition (BAS II) for applied psychologists. I am drawn to this 'official' use of the word 'ability' and read on. I see that 'The desire to define and measure the nebulous concept of intelligence has long preoccupied the disciplines of psychology and philosophy' (Hill 2005 p. 87). Considering the damning verdict on the misuses of IQ testing as 'an instrument of oppression' (Kamin 1974 pp. 15 – 16, Gillborn and Youdell 2000) one might call this a polite way of putting it. 'The debate, however, is frustratingly circular, as it appears that some assessment tools claim to measure 'intelligence', a concept that cannot, in fact, be reliably or consistently defined' (Hill 2005 p. 87). Hill continues, 'In 1921, the Journal of Educational Psychology sought a definition of 'intelligence' from leading experts in the field. The responses were so disparate that Boring (1923) concluded: 'intelligence is what intelligence tests test'" (Hill 2005 p. 87). The constructive process, 'setting three levels of ability work-wise' (meaning work-wise in literacy and numeracy hours) becomes more vivid in the context of this definition of intelligence.

In Hill's 'brief history of psychometry' in this same paper, she touches upon the 'shameful links between the IQ test and the eugenics movement, and the resulting compulsory sterilisation of thousands of people within the United States, with those from different cultural and linguistic groups significantly over represented'. Stating:

'The erroneous belief that these tests measures innate and biologically determined intelligence meant that reasonable concerns about cultural specificity and consequent test bias were largely ignored, despite the strong challenge of environmental hypothesis advocates like Walter Lipmann' (Hill 2005 p. 88).

Hill cites Chorover (1979 pp. 33 – 34) who states,

‘The power to measure is merely an extension of the power to define. The point is worth pondering because throughout its history the measurement of human diversity has been linked to claims of human superiority and inferiority and therefore used to justify prevailing patterns of behaviour control’.

Acknowledging the small numbers in my sample (108 children), I am nevertheless conscious again of the prevalence of those in receipt of free school meals on the ‘bottom’ tables, those referred to as ‘low ability’.

Wheeling forward through the article I see in ‘the origins of the British Ability Scales’ that ‘as long ago as 1965, the British Psychological Society (BPS) commissioned the development of a contemporary British psychometric assessment, the British Intelligence Scales (BIS)’ (Hill 2005 p.89). Apparently ‘practitioners were expressing great dissatisfaction about the suitability and relevance of these tests and their inherent ethnic, cultural and social bias’. Hill goes on to trace work on the BIS, in which:

‘The project team worked to two guiding principles: first that there should be a test battery that would provide a meaningful profile of specific cognitive abilities based on freestanding subtest scores rather than a summative IQ score. Second, the belief that : ‘psychometric assessment has much to offer the practitioner: psychometric tests...have well established qualities of reliability, validity, time efficiency, objectivity and lack of bias, but often give us information which is critical to our understanding of a child’s learning styles and other characteristics’ (Elliot, Smith and McCulloch, 1997 p.7)’

Hill 2005 p.89.

Irritating a statement as this might be, I see that:

‘The scales were greeted with enthusiasm in Britain and America: ‘The BAS is an individual intelligence test with greater scope and psychometric sophistication than the American individual tests. The test development procedures and norms are laudatory’ (Embretson 1985 p. 232).

Hill 2005 p.89.

Looking back at that quote, it is 'BAS' that is referred to not BIS, as despite being praised as an individual *intelligence* test... Vivian Hill notes (2005 p. 89) that 'the word 'intelligence' was dropped from the title and the scales became known as the British Ability Scales'. Hill later notes that 'Elliot et al' (1997, authors of Technical Manual British Ability Scales II),

'have sensibly side stepped the controversy of the intelligence debate by acknowledging the reification of the term and the diverse and disparate interpretations of its meaning. In rejecting the terms IQ and intelligence and instead developing a psychometric assessment that yields a score of general conceptual ability (GCA), Elliot is acknowledging that there is not consensus about any model or theory of human ability' (Hill 2005 p. 92)

Having referred earlier in this chapter to 're-naming' when thinking about Ms Nolan's reference to 'differentiation' as being 'easy work for the thick ones and hard work for the bright ones', I am struck by the parallels between the operation of the word 'ability' in this research context and earlier conceptualizations of 'intelligence'. As Gillborn and Youdell assert,

The view of 'ability' that currently dominates policy and practice is especially dangerous. The assumption that 'ability' is a fixed, generalized and measurable potential paves the way for the operationalization of deeply racist and class-based stereotypes. The new IQism – an approach that affirms traditional notions of IQ, without conscious deliberation of the consequences, and even masquerades as part of an inclusive project concerned with social justice and equity.

Gillborn and Youdell (2000) p. 15

Whether or not the teams designing these later instruments were working to challenge the 'inherent ethnic, cultural and social bias' of earlier intelligence tests, it would appear that the residue of those earlier meanings and practices, based (as Hill points out, 2005 p. 88) 'on the psychology of the last century' is still present in the ways in which children are organized, talked about and taught into the new millennium.

Looking at the small moments in which these common sense understandings of 'ability' operate, Foucault asks 'how power installs itself and produces real material effects' (McHoul and Grace 2002 p.21),

'Let us not... ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their over-all strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes... how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively really and materially constituted...'

Foucault 1980 p. 97 (Power/Knowledge)

Amaze me

In considering the context for teachers' decision-making, I have touched upon the delineations of the 'freedom' of what and how to teach. I have discussed ways in which practices aimed at 'fixing' or repairing children in order to meet the normative demands of the 'standards' agenda' expressed most visibly in high stakes testing, nationally set targets and associated 'league tables', are increasingly 'fixing' children as educational subjects in a finely graded hierarchy. I said earlier that there were limited opportunities for children to 'amaze' or 'surprise' their teachers, once caught into the increasingly defined positioning within their classrooms.

I first encountered the game 'Hot Seat' when a support teacher, i.e. a teacher other than the main class teacher was teaching one of the Year 4 classes. It was an event that she built up to, introducing it ahead of time as something that the children would be looking forward to. The game consisted of the children sitting in their places on the carpet, with a chair at the front, deemed the 'hot seat'. The game involved the teacher firing questions at the person in the 'hot seat' who was competing with a nominated child on the carpet. Whoever answered the question first would sit in the hot seat. The object was to stay for as long as possible 'undefeated' in the 'hot seat' at the front, i.e. answering the quick fire questions correctly and faster than the nominated challenger who stood up in their place on the carpet. In this excerpt, the class teacher Ms Saunders is running the game with children in her own class (Oguz, Kalik, Helen as indicated) chosen to take part:

Ms S Hot seat. Would you like to stand up please? <she says this in a slightly mock-posh voice as if running a game show> Right. Questions today are going to be on subtraction. *[I note in my observation notes 'Mental arithmetic is everywhere. It seems to sign*

- post proper education']* Ok, I'm going to give you some different subtraction sums and you'll work them out. Well done, Kaliq. Er Oguz, 63 take away 32
- O Um, 34! Nah, 30, 32, 33?
- Ms S No. You can just keep guessing [*why not? I wonder in my notes*]
- O What was the question?
- Ms S 63 take away 32. You can't guess 'cause you're not on there. <said to other children with their hands up> No.
- K Is it, is it 28?
- S No.
- O 41
- Ms S No! Can you put your hands down you know that's not the game! 63 take away 32. Kids this is awful.
- K Um
- O Er. Thirty -one
- S Yes. Swap. That was appalling. Absolutely appalling. How could they have done that quickly? Azi? [Azi, a boy who sits hexagon table answers] Yeah. Right. Let's see. Ok. Um. Alright. Helen <slightly resigned voice> let's give you a go. Brian and Omar are you ready to come back to the carpet? What do you say?
- B&O Sorry Ms Saunders.
- Ms S Right. Don't want to see it again, Ok? Come and sit down and join in. Put your hands down, remember when you get a go. Helen and Oguz [the latter sits on hexagon table]. First question is: 50 subtract 25
- H 25
- Ms S Wo! Oguz. Come and sit down. Helen. <amazed tone> [Helen goes up to take the 'hot seat']. Very impressed .
- <A child gasps> 'He's on hexagon table'
- Ms S Very, very, very impressed. I think we need to practise our subtraction. 'Cause you do know it. I know you. Right. 80 er, Salim. 80 subtract 42.
- H Thirty-eight
- Ms S This girl is good! <again surprised tone>. Helen I'm very impressed. Go up a group I think. Well done. Right Michael, stand up. See if we can knock her off the hot seat. Ok. 55 subtract because I have to think of it before hand because have to know the answer's right (laughs) 55 subtract 22.

M 31
H Twent, 23
Ms S <Sucks in air>
M 24?
Ms S 55 subtract what did I say?
Child 33
Ms S 55 subtract 33
Few children: 22 you said 22 23. Yeah you said 22.
Ms S Right. I'm gonna start writing them on the board, 'cause I can't remember and this is driving me up the wall. Right, start again. I don't want any noise from anybody here. You're quiet right? Sit down. (Writes sum on board)
H 30, 33
Ms S Well done! Giver her a clap! (applause). Helen! Have you been practising?
H No.
Ms S Gosh I'm very impressed. Right Ok. Next one (writes on board)
L 36
Ms S 36. Just got you. Just got you well done. 36. Ledley well done. Give Helen a big clap. <They applaud.>

On the face of it, this game involves anyone being able to 'give it a go'. The unexpected instance of Helen (a girl who sits on triangle and square tables) beating Oguz (always seated at hexagons) is evident in one child's gasp, 'He's on hexagon table' and also in the teacher's constant amazement. It looked and sounded to me as if Ms Saunders was both amazed that Helen answered accurately at such speed, *and also* that she beat Oguz, a recognised 'top boy'. Described by Ms Saunders during interview:

Oguz, um he's funny, he's lovely. Um, he's got lots of potential, he's a good boy. He kind of, he's up there with [she names another boy seated on hexagon table described in this same interview as 'very very bright'] , you know they get on quite well together. Um, he, he's making good progress basically. Nice boy.

Then Helen also beating Salim, a boy seated at pentagon table. On the one hand this could be seen as positive feedback, praise for doing well (e.g. 'this girl is good!')

and 'Helen I'm very impressed') but this surprise has another message, which is that Helen is not known *or expected* to perform better than these boys. I take Helen's quick reply of 'No' to 'have you been practising?' as meaning 'No, I can always do this'. The most troubling aspect of this incident for me, and I might be wrong, but it seemed obvious to me from the tone of voice and way it was said, was that whilst Ms Saunders said 'Go up a group I think!' with a theatrical tone of voice, I did not take this to mean 'I will actually move you up a group'. Nor did I see Helen subsequently moving up a group. The sentence came across as a rhetorical phrase.

Separated in a similar way from 'proper' learning and consequential tests as the classroom games observed by Varenne and McDermott (1999), this episode also underscores for me the myth of whole-class teaching *implying* (as I stated earlier) 'equality of teaching'. Laura Black's study of 'Teacher-pupil talk in Whole-class Discussions and Processes of Positioning within the Primary School Classroom' also finds instances that echo teachers' differential expectations and interactions with children (Black 2004, see particularly page 355). So in this incident, whilst Helen had the opportunity to demonstrate her competence to her teacher, as Dominique had done in the previous chapter by 'doing the hexagons work', this did not occur in contexts valued as meaning they would have the consequence of moving up the established class hierarchy. And certainly not meaning that these girls seated on middle to lower tables would be moved up to top tables. It is notable that Helen ('white other' and in receipt of free school meals) and Dominique (of African Caribbean heritage and in receipt of free school meals) were more likely within the sample of 108 children, to be placed on lower tables. In this class (and the numbers are very small) five out of six children on the 'bottom' table were in receipt of free school meals, whilst only one out of six of the top table were^{xxxiii}.

In this chapter I have made connections between small moments of classroom life, policy technologies and the making of educational subjectivities, both pupils and teachers. I have explored teachers' decision-making processes underpinning a school environment in which 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1977) such as grouping by 'ability' pervade children's daily classroom experiences and interrelated 'policy technologies' of managerialism and performativity (Ball 2001) producing not only what teachers do, but who teachers and children are, in terms of 'the good teacher' and her pupils; 'the spanners, cogs and spark plugs' of the introductory quote.

Having touched upon 'interventions' here and made mention of 'Special Educational Needs', I turn in my next chapter to both of these in more detail.

Chapter 5

In this chapter I further explore the latticework of what staff in this research setting refer to as interventions, particularly those that take place outside the classroom. I explore 'arenas' (Fulcher 1989) or 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p.135), where children are discursively produced in classroom hierarchies. Data suggest that 'special educational needs' meetings and staff discussions around out of classroom interventions combine with curricula pressures to produce children in terms of worry and concern. Problems, or the absence of problems, are individualised via understandings of internal deficits and causation, particularly focused on issues of ability and parenting.

'The basic philosophy in this school and the ethos is that we include everybody'

'We have you know, sixty or seventy different interventions which we carry out with different children'.

Ms Wolvek, senior teacher

Introduction

As with films in production, these chapters have had 'working titles' as I write: my first chapter was 'giving it a go' for example and then 'next chapter' endeavouring to positively emphasise progress. Within those working titles are the titles of subsequent edits; 'threading' - piecing and re-piecing paragraphs together like sections of a quilt or 'end bits' - which says as it is. This chapter was known as 'penultimate 1' - giving hope to both writer and now reader. But before that, during the processes of data analysis and organisation and without meaning to sound like an episode of 'Friends'^{xxxiv} this chapter was referred to as 'the SEN one', 'SEN' meaning 'Special Educational Needs'. Thinking back to my initial research questions around 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and reading at the outset of my research, this was an area I imagined I might either start with, or end up, or both during this research project. Remembering that my initial research questions were around the apparent paradox between a government agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand (e.g. DFEE 1999a and b) and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other (SEU 1998; DFEE 2000a; DFES 2001a). I say this because of the particular associations, contestations and struggles between understandings of exclusion, inclusive education and special education (e.g. Slee 2006, Barton 1998, Ainscow 1999, Oliver 1992, Norwich 2008, Allan and Slee 2008).

Building upon the theoretical work in this thesis, I continue to deploy Foucault's work in considering the normalizing and dividing practices in which (drawing upon Popkewitz, 2004 p. 190) the primary school child is 'fabricated'. Foucault (1977 p. 139) refers to 'stone-cutting' to illustrate the minute detail of disciplinary power: The meticulousness of the regulations, the fussiness of the inspections, the supervision of the smallest fragment of life (Foucault 1977 p. 140). By 'stone-cutting' he is citing an eighteenth century text that refers to the importance of stone-cutting in understanding the foundations upon which any building is constructed. 'It is not enough to have a liking for architecture. One must also know stone cutting (Saxe in Foucault 1977 p. 139). In this vein, this chapter continues to explore the detail of teachers' decisions and the 'micro-physics' of interventions. Drawing upon work by Dawnene Hammerberg (2004) I also use Foucault's (1988) concept of technologies of the self to reflect upon the self-regulation required in these table-grouped, 'routinized' classrooms; turning later in the chapter to children's feelings and their teachers' concerns around emotional conduct in the light of the Special Educational Needs category 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) (DFES 2008b). As Nicolas Rose puts it 'Thoughts feelings and actions may appear as the very fabric and constitution of the intimate self, but they are socially organized and managed in minute particulars' (Rose 1989 cited in Hammerberg 2004 p. 360).

Special Educational Needs: In whose best interests?

The data I explore in this chapter reveals further the technician nature of teachers' and teaching assistants' work, in which they operate prefabricated interventions. Suggestive of the corporate slogan 'Just do it', staff's comments around delivering these interventions recall the reductionism of 'quick slick responses' (Barton 2008 in Allan 2010 p. 614) and the limitations of new professionalism (Ball 2001 p.223, Hanlon 1998 p.54). Reflecting on data from special educational needs meetings demonstrates individualising processes that produce children in terms of deficit and intelligence; normal and abnormal. I am not sure if I like the phrase 'two sides of the same coin', but thinking about 'normalising discourses' (Foucault in Graham and Slee 2008) I also begin to explore what Graham and Slee term 'the conjoined nature of inclusion/ exclusion' (Graham and Slee 2008 p.280) and the constitutive force of hierarchical binaries; the normative 'Same' as against the aberrant 'Other' (Youdell 2011 p. 37) inherent in Special Educational Needs practices. Data here brings together studies and critiques of Special Education(al Needs) that remember its development from the Warnock Report (DES 1978). Specifically, the role of

professionals (Tomlinson 1982, 1985, Skrtic 1991b) and their practices as unquestionably 'good' for children and ways in which Special Education functions to leave mainstream classrooms 'unscathed' (Barton 1986, Skrtic 1995).

I turn to Roger Slee who articulates the sociological concerns succinctly:

Simply put, few writers in the tradition of special education problematise school failure beyond defective individual pathologies in need of special provision to support their own specific educational needs and delimit the disruption such children cause to their own academic and social progress and that of their 'non-defective' peers (e.g. Ashman & Elkins, 1990; Cole, 1991). Highly complex sets of political relations articulated through the forms of educational provision are reduced to a 'spurious biology' or set of 'biological metaphors' (Bernstein, 1996; p. 11). Theorising special education is thus not an academic indulgence, a retreat from pressing 'real world' problems of responding to difficulties in the everyday life of schools and classrooms-of teachers and pupils, it represents a chance to throw into sharp relief the anti-democratic politics of special education (Skrtic, 1991c) submerged in normalising discourses and dividing practices which produce hierarchies of 'scholastic identities' (Ball, 1990).

Slee 1997 p. 408

Referring to the sustained sociological analysis of special education by Len Barton and colleagues, Roger Slee summarises the 'dominant assumptions' under scrutiny:

- That special education policy, provision and practice were unquestionably good for both the pupils involved and the actual system as a whole.
- That the predominant perspectives about within-the-child factors were a sufficient explanation for understanding the significant issues involved in terms of disabled pupils and children's experiences and opportunities.
- That professional decision-making was overwhelmingly in the best interests of those for whom the decisions were claimed to be made.

Barton 2003, p. 3 in Slee 2010b p. 567

As my earlier chapters have outlined, data collected during my fieldwork in this school setting presented a very different emphasis to that which I might have

predicted (foreshadowed one might say) at the outset of my research. I could not have predicted the latticework of 'interlacing' or interlocking processes and procedures in which children in each class and throughout the school were sorted, fine graded and allotted to different groups, treatments, staff, curricula and places via current government directives underpinned by increasingly fixed and 'fixing' understandings of 'ability'. What staff termed 'interventions' and their attendant links with processes and practices around 'special educational needs' emerged more gradually during fieldwork as comings and goings in and from classrooms (children going out or adults coming into class).

Following the instructions: Operating interventions

'People just frequently appear at the door saying, 'can I have so and so', [and I reply] 'yeah, off you go' and most of the time I don't honestly know who they are. [The learning support assistant in class] looks and she nods, and off they go'.

New class teacher, third week of new academic year

Following on from children going off out of class, new teachers starting at the school at the beginning of the academic year in September revealed the technicist emphasis of various interventions. As in the example quoted in the previous chapter referring to Early Literacy Support:

- J He's not one of the more able children he's in the ELS group. And so is Augusto.
- G How did you decide who's doing?
- J Well we looked at the, we followed the instructions and we only chose, you see we chose them and then didn't get the,
- G Some schools chose it, the children not *right* at the bottom but just above, but we chose the ones right at the bottom.
- J Well you're not meant to choose the ones right at the bottom.
- G But most schools did.
- J No 'cause you're not supposed to. They actually have to have achieved a certain level before they can do it. Mm, I mean it would be more helpful for the ones at the bottom I think, but it's not, it's the ones just below the middle.

Ms Jones (current class teacher) and Ms George (new class teacher): Hand over meeting

Discussions around how interventions should be operated, rather than underpinning learning processes or pedagogy became evident. After virtually half a term with her new class, Ms George (one of the new teachers) 'discovered' the manual for one of the interventions called '15 minutes a day'. She showed it to me (CR) and two other teachers sitting in the staff room; Ms Scott (S), another new teacher and Mr Parsons (P) an established teacher at the school:

G I've finally found out what it actually is! [holding up the '15 minutes a day' handbook]

CR Wow, where d'you get that from?

G [names one of the teaching assistants]

S What is it?

G 15 minutes

P We don't need to know! As long as we do it! <laughs>

G These kids are running out [of the classroom]. I'm going to write an IEP^{xxxv} based on it as well.

P Oh are you? It's only um,

CR I'm intrigued, I've been watching kids galloping out [of class] for '15 minutes' for a year now.

G I'm fascinated <she opens the book>

Discussion: Ms George, Mr Parsons, Ms Scott and myself in the staff room

Mr Parsons' comment that 'we don't need to know' [what it is] 'as long as we do it' is said with a laugh, but the comment also came across at the time as him meaning what he has said. The comment recalls for me conceptualisations of policy, particularly policies as 'processes and outcomes' (Ball 1994a p.15) and of policy being made 'at all levels' (e.g. Fulcher 1989, Ball 1987, Ozga 2000). By this I mean that if we move beyond assumptions of policy as the (good) intention of 'single focus' written documents (Ball 1997 p.265), to an understanding of policy as being about processes and outcomes and made at all levels, 'we don't need to know' [what it is] 'as long as we do it' presents to me as policy; underscored by multiple documents and interventions to be 'done'. It echoes teachers' decision-making processes and interrelated 'policy technologies' of managerialism and performativity (Ball 2001) and the 'profound changes' in the 'act of teaching and the subjectivity of the teacher' (Ball 2001 p. 219) introduced in my previous chapter.

Before returning to the discussion about the '15 minutes' intervention above, I am reminded of an interview with Judy, one of the teaching assistants:

CR OK this thing [the minidisk recorder] looks like it's working now. [*I'm returning to a couple of things Judy has mentioned so far*] So you mentioned about individual support, oh yeah and targets and then, um, I wondered with the ALS [Additional Literacy Support] how they're chosen, who you, who you have and,

L They have to fall into a sort of a category, where they know, the teacher chooses and it's, um. They can't be the least able and they, they're sort of one above that. They have to have a certain amount of phonetics [sic] and um, but, but, that's not my job to choose them. It's to teach it. And then, er, there's six of them, six kids and I record whether they understood the lesson or not .

CR And it was ELS [that I observed] and it's different to ALS is that right?

L Yes ELS is Early Literacy Support which was really, it was quite hard actually because,

CR Now you're not the first person to say that, what was hard about it?

L It was so *scripted*, down to what the, you know, everything. What the puppet says, what we say, what the children er, might say. Yeah, you know, it's just so scripted and there is so much prompts er, not prompts I'm thinking of. So much um, preparation and in, when I did it in Year 1 I used to do it on a Friday or on a Monday for a whole week's worth and it used to take ages, hours to get all the, everything done. All the laminating, all the finding, you know different objects in the class beginning with 'ck', beginning with 'd'. So you're hunting round for all sorts of things and um, you just feel daft with a puppet on your hand

CR You mean it's literally written out for you?

L Yeah. Totally scripted

CR OK the puppet. Do, do tell me.

L Oh my god. Ours was 'Squeak' because it was a little mouse, but of course when you're reading the script for that day it was constantly said 'Pip'.

CR Oh right.

L Right. So if it said 'Puppet', it would say 'Pip' and in the script it would say, um, 'Now, ask Pip what you want to say,' so all, it would say, 'Children: What is, Pip what is, Pip what word are we learning today?'

or whatever. And I would say 'Pip' and I kept saying 'Pip' but really I should be saying 'Squeak' and it was just a nightmare.

Interview with Judy, teaching assistant.

Despite myself having produced the reams of detailed paperwork for OFSTED and local authority inspections several times as a teacher, I remember – and my field notes record – *still* being slightly stunned by the detail of teachers' weekly planning sheets in this setting: tightly handwritten in tiny print on A4 paper and based on the detailed pacing and sequencing of the literacy and numeracy strategy documents. This realisation first occurred during a discussion with Ms Nolan during which she explained that 'you literally do know from the work plan, they tell you because [the Local Education Authority] have got their own literacy strategy, into term and half terms and weeks [so] you know every day what you're teaching and every minute of every day what you're teaching'. I say I was stunned because this level of detail would seem to leave little if any space for meaningful interaction between how the children learn or respond and what is then taught and little if any space for teachers' invention. But I did not realise before the discussion with Judy, that the Early Literacy Support document actually scripted every detail of the sessions. When Judy says 'what the children er, might say' I can see that my baffled facial expression at this information has prompted her to emphasise 'yeah'. To clarify what I have heard, I then ask 'You mean it's literally written out for you?'. Judy's description of who gets chosen echoes the conversation recorded above between Ms Jones and Ms George. I wonder if Judy would have this apparently fixed understanding of 'the least able' and conceptualisation of a category based hierarchy were it not for its articulation in policy. When she says 'They can't be the least able and they, they're sort of one above that', I wonder now one what above that? Level? If so, level of what? 'Knowing' a certain number of 'phonetics' [sic] is suggestive of children's knowledge and understandings at this age as being static or fixed. It was not evident by which process children were judged to meet this requirement. Might it mean one table above? Again, on the face of it seeming matter of fact, these small arbitrary moments contributed to children becoming fixed into their positioning in class. I also notice the way in which Judy says that it is not her job to choose 'them' [the children] but to teach 'it' [the programme]. Thinking of a policy of 'not needing to know as long as we do it', Judy does not say, teach them [the children]: She is teaching [delivering?] 'it'; the script.

Returning then to the '15 minutes a day' intervention, further discussion reveals that Mr Parsons has hazarded a guess at what this intervention is, linking it to 'the old PAT system' which refers to a programme called 'Phonological Awareness Training'^{xxxvi} (Wilson 1993).

P Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's exactly what I thought it probably was!
<laughs>

G Well I've kind picked up what it is but I thought if I'm going to write an IEP [Individual Education Plan] if I could just copy it from this [the handbook]

P It's like PAT, when we did the old PAT system you know.

CR Mmm, exactly.

P That's all it is really. It's just games isn't it? With word sounds.

CR True.

G Reading recovery as well, it's all that kind of daily input reading.

P Mmm.

Discussion: Ms George, Mr Parsons, Ms Scott and myself in the staff room

I have only a passing acquaintance with 'P.A.T' (Wilson 1993) and had no idea what '15 minutes' was, so was in no position to pass the comment 'true' in the quote above, except to join in the conversation and underscore the sentiment that after over a decade of teaching, many of these 'new initiatives' were recognisably recycled previous 'new initiatives'^{xxxvii}.

Ms George is almost self-deprecating in saying that she wants to know about this intervention ('I'm a bit of a control freak'). She also communicates this situation in which the intervention defines the learners ('that kind of ability', 'Level One') reflecting a depthlessness, rather than teachers formulating the teaching/intervention from their pedagogical understandings of children's learning. The 'kind of ability' and 'beginning of Year 1 standard' in the quote below suggest something self evident and fixed,

G So I know why those children are doing it. I'll just pick someone in that kind of ability, I wanna know what it is. I'm a bit of a control freak. You see, that's just very simple [*looking at a page in the handbook*], because that tells me straight away Level One, so basically they've got to be at a beginning of Year 1 standard.

- CR You haven't picked the kids so far have you?
- G No, because I wanted this [the handbook]. Because I'm scared of making decisions by myself!
- CR <I laugh>
- G Also I'm a bit of a control freak and I feel much more in control now.

Discussion: Ms George, and myself in the staff room

The term 'control' in the twice-used phrase 'control freak', refers to knowing the rules to follow. Again perhaps said partly in jest but also meaning what she says, Ms George states that she is 'scared of making decisions by [her]self' i.e. making judgements without 'the handbook'. Feeling 'much more in control' and wanting to do things well seems here to suggest the correct operation of a mechanism ('intervention'). Whilst Ms George says she wants to know 'why those children are doing it', knowing 'why' means which National Curriculum level or 'standard' the children have attained or not attained. Recalling 'the terrors of performativity' (Ball 2003b) this moment again echoes the outcomes of 'changing what it means to be a teacher' (Ball 2003b p. 217) and at the same time the limits of 'new professionalism' (Ball 1998 p.195). Reflecting the 'ontological insecurity' of continuous accountability within ever changing demands and indicators (Ball 2003b p.220), Ms George wants to do the right thing without a secure underpinning for what that is. I am sure someone might suggest glaringly obvious or common sense intentions or general aims such as improving literacy or 'raising standards', but these are not specified in regard to this intervention, nor is there any recognition of possible tensions with other competing demands: for example whatever the content of the lesson the children are missing during this '15 minutes a day', the apparent obsession with testable sub-skills in reading, whether this intervention is 'inclusive' (as the school purports to be), whether the intervention works or what it 'working' means. The brief discussion between Ms George and Ms Jones above, about which children are chosen for Early Literacy Support indicates a doubt as to which children may or may not benefit from an intervention, thereby interrupting any apparently untroubled link between intention, children, intervention and outcomes.

Fitting children into interventions: the interlocking hierarchy

Remembering back to Ms Wolvek's description of interventions and 'which children should access it':

Ms Wolvek Many of the um the interventions are things that the government has um, imposed in some ways.

CR So what sorts of thing is that?

W Those are things like the 15 minutes a day, spelling; the additional literacy stuff, the ALS, ELS, FLS all of that is sort of [LEA] stuff. Um, but it requires training it requires finding out which children should access it.

Interview with Ms Wolvek, senior teacher

Interventions and their associated criteria contribute to the production of pupils (Youdell 2006), including their positioning in the within-class hierarchy; again fixing as in repairing children and/or perceived deficits in their learning, contributing to the fixing or solidifying of the type of pupil each child is recognised as being. In this hand over meeting discussion, another intervention ('focus group') is described as *meaning* 'the least able children' and again a stated amount of time 'twenty minutes with the LSA', but not the content or substance of the intervention:

J He'll be in a focus group I think, Richard, for literacy.

G What does that mean?

J The least able children will be targeted, and I didn't tell you who they were Fawzia, er John may not still be in it, but Richard will still be in it, Kalim. Fawzia, Richard, Kalim and Geordano.

<Ms George writes the names>

J Mm, I think John is being booted out I'm not sure.

G And what does focus group mean?

J It means twice a week sort of twenty minutes with the LSA [learning support assistant] starting in October starting after half term where they're given, now we have a new SENCO [Special Needs Coordinator] and I believe she does not believe in group IEPsⁱⁱ in which case she'll have to write them

herself, because they'll all get the same target to achieve in a focus group, because that's how the focus group works.

Ms Jones (current class teacher) and Ms George (new class teacher): Hand over meeting

Relationships between interventions and in-class table groups were not immediately evident but patterns emerged, with principal interventions attaching to specific in-class groups; 'Gifted and Talented' to the one top table (usually called the hexagon table), 'booster' groups to the 'middle' (square table), Additional and Early Literacy support to 'just below the middle' (triangle table) and what were termed 'focus groups' to bottom table(s) (usually circle table). Key arenas for decision-making and maintenance of these allocations to the hierarchy were special educational needs meetings and towards the end of the academic year, a 'hand over meeting' in which the current class teacher talked about each child in turn and handed over table groupings to the new class teacher who would be taking the class the following year. Recalling the term 'governmentality' (Foucault 1991 pp. 102 – 3, from my previous chapter): The 'conduct of conduct' from governing the self to governing others, (Foucault 2000a pp. 340 – 342 in Lemke 2009 2009 p. 36), and its meaning as 'The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections; the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power' Peters (2009 p. xxx), what is brought together here is the subjectivity of the 'good' teacher: striving for excellence (Ball 2003b). A part of which 'goodness' is to enact interventions that are sewn into the fabric of National Strategies and Special Educational Needs 'good practice'; interventions that reflect what Foucault terms 'a 'descending' individualization:

...as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference.

Foucault 1979 p. 193

Reflecting here upon the writing of the individual and group 'IEP', as the fitting of children into the interlocking hierarchy of interventions and attendant group category, Foucault (1979 p. 192) observes 'This turning of real lives into writing is no

longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as procedure of objectivation and subjection'.

'The little grey cells': Individualising children, diagnosis and 'gentle' exclusions.

Class teacher She's absolutely the mildest most easy-going child. But unfortunately she is, I think her problem is, she doesn't have the little grey cells.

Others in the room: Mm, mm.

Class teacher Really I don't think that you know, she's not got the brains to you know, this isn't somebody who necessarily is going to make huge progress.

SEN (Special Educational Needs) meeting

I would find this dispiriting being said about any child, but particularly so being said about a little girl as young as Year 1 (6 years of age), whom I see from pupil monitoring data is registered as African heritage: Somali and in receipt of Free School Meals. Thinking about the making of the middle class child and attendant advantages in the school system (Vincent and Ball 2006), the latter suggest to me the possibilities that English is not this child's first or only language spoken, that *perhaps* her parent(s) do not have experience of the English school system, that there could well be financial pressures limiting access to some experiences that would be enhancing other children's access to and progress in the school curriculum. I wonder as well about *a curriculum and classroom contexts* that are apparently predicted to neither provide nor yield 'huge progress' for this child. Finally, recourse to an individualised and internal deficit (not having 'the brains') with the prediction, during this meeting held half way through the second term of year one (probably meaning a year in school since the previous January as a Summer-born child), 'this isn't somebody who necessarily is going to make huge progress'.

Sally Tomlinson (1995 p.123) reminds us of the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) who,

'have argued that educational advancement or exclusion is controlled by ostensibly fair, meritocratic testing, but that the education system demands a cultural competence during test procedures, which it does not itself provide. An advantage is thus given to families who possess 'cultural capital' and can

pass it on to their children. Social class and cultural reproduction thus become linked, as test 'failures' are assigned to lower social groups, who are persuaded that the failure 'was their own fault', without any further need for coercion'.

In an article titled 'Outcasts on the Inside', Bourdieu and Champagne (1999 pp. 422-423) describe processes of streaming and selection of pupils at an ever younger age as 'gentle' exclusionary practices, 'spreading out the process of elimination, the school system turns into a permanent home for potential outcasts'. Hardly a cheery outlook, but then neither is 'this isn't somebody who necessarily is going to make huge progress'. As Youdell (2011 p. 37) reminds, 'normalizing judgement' (Foucault 1979) 'corrects the correctible and excludes the irredeemable'.

The technologies of 'fixing' require a constant gaze which articulates the children pre-eminently in terms of 'moments' of perceived ability. At another Special Educational Needs meeting, a specialist member of staff (Susie, a Speech and Language Therapist) offers her opinion to the teachers present on a different child, Ledley, this time in Year 4, under discussion:

- S My gut wouldn't be, because, I mean I can't diagnose dyslexia.
- D No.
- S My gut feeling would be that probably it's more general slowness rather than specific dyslexia, because he doesn't have that big mismatch does he? Between recording and what he says.
- Special needs meeting, Susie (speech & language therapist) comments to the attendant group: class teacher, senior teacher (Ms Daisley), myself and learning mentor.

Perhaps practitioners would 'make sense' of this speculation by Susie. This example appears to reflect observations by Lindsay et al (2006 pp. 16 -17) in their DFES Research Report – which in seeking to explore 'Special Educational Needs and Ethnicity' recalls near-on thirty year old debates and 'conceptual tensions' in the definition of Special Educational Needs and implementation of SEN legislation around 'within-child' and environmental factors going back to the Warnock Report (DES 1978).

'Returning to the legal definition of SEN, it is apparent that a 'difficulty in learning' could be attributed to either a within child factor alone, or an environmental factor (e.g. poor teaching) alone or an interaction between the two. It is intended that SEN is always conceptualised within a context and is not a specific category or diagnosis. In practice, however, 'learning difficulty' is often seen as a 'within child' factor, and this has been reinforced by the increased use of diagnostic categories since the Warnock Report, especially in recent years. E.g. Dyslexia, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), ironically in contradiction to the Warnock Committee's arguments'.

Lindsey et al 2006 p. 17

I find the word 'ironically' a strange word in that last sentence as in, '*ironically* in contradiction to the Warnock Committee's arguments'. As Norwich (1990 p. 9) observed in reflecting upon the Warnock Report (DES 1978),

To argue that a category like educationally subnormal is imprecise and then to substitute for it an even less clearly defined concept of 'moderate learning difficulties' is a strange form of reasoning. This is not abandoning categorisation but changing labels for the categories'.

Norwich (1990 p. 9)

Continuing on, Norwich comments that

'A more significant issue which arises from an analysis of the Warnock approach is the confusion between categories of educational provision and categories of child difficulty and disorder'.

Norwich (1990 p. 9)

Looking at what Lindsey et al (2006) say about 'learning difficulty' often being seen as 'a 'within child' factor' reinforced by 'increased use of *diagnostic* categories since the Warnock Report' (*my emphasis*) I am taken back to the reading for my MA studies well over a decade ago^{xxxviii}. Back in 1985 Sally Tomlinson (p.164) wrote:

'The whole concept of special needs is ambiguous and tautological. It has become part of a rhetoric that serves little educational purpose. While it does mainly focus on negative psychogenic properties of individual pupils – their difficulty, disability, incapacity or lack of intelligence, it does not provide any mechanism for deciding who has these properties. The current desperate search for improved assessment procedures is an indication that the concept

of special needs is no actual help in deciding who the clients of special education should be'

Tomlinson (1985 p.164)

One of my preoccupations as I endeavoured to write were some rather dodgy electrics and gas pipe work that were cobbled together when I first moved into the flat where I now live. There were reasons for the electrics and pipe work being variously done, patched up and left as they were, but over five years later I am faced with peeling back those solutions. Whilst working to a fashion, the previous work has caused and is causing recurrent problems. Being a late Victorian building, and with alterations reaching across the decades (not least some crumbling bay windows apparently put in as a result of war damage and a badly supported flat conversion dug into the basement below about twenty years ago), the electrical and gas work reveals structures reaching back across a hundred years. There is a reason for me venting my bourgeois travails: This is how it feels visiting and revisiting issues underpinning 'special educational needs'. Whether the 1981 Act (following the Warnock report) resembles the updating and patching onto existing flawed structures - with reasons for the retention of features (such as categories and a dependence upon professionals); or a badly structured 1980s flat conversion - created for the vested interests of some - depends on one's positioning and perhaps who one reads (e.g. Tomlinson 1982). Ball (2008 p. 195) observes that 'it is still possible to see the contemporary traces, and current re-emergence of social patterns and organisational forms and preoccupations within education policy that have been inherent in the English education system since its beginnings in the 19th century'. Susie's recourse to 'general slowness' when describing Ledley in Y4 (aged 9) and the class teacher's description of Fawzia (aged 5) 'not having the little grey cells' recall the report of the Spens Committee on secondary education in 1938, reflecting, as White (2006 p. 9) observes, Cyril Burt's submission to it (Spens Committee 1938, quoted in Simon 1974 pp. 249 – 250),

Intellectual development during childhood appears to progress as if it were governed by a single central factor, usually known as 'general intelligence', which may be broadly described as innate all round intellectual ability. It appears to enter into everything which the child attempts to think, to say, or to do, and seems on the whole to be the most important factor in determining his work in the classroom. Our psychological witnesses assured us that it can be measured approximately by means of intelligence tests. We were

informed that, with a few exceptions, it is possible at a very early age to predict with some degree of accuracy the ultimate level of a child's intellectual powers.

Spens Committee 1938, quoted in Simon 1974 pp. 249 - 250

Reading Stephen Ball's (2003a p.27) characterisation of policy as 'almost always, to some extent, messy, incoherent and ad hoc, as the state responds to different sorts of problems and contradictions and interests and...new policies are sedimented into a history of previous policies which may be superseded but not expunged' this could have been written specifically to describe the layers and juxtaposing of variously termed 'interventions', 'initiatives', 'programmes', 'Codes of Practice' and 'Strategies'. The stone-cutting (Foucault 1977 p. 139) of Special Educational Needs. As Armstrong and Barton (2007 p.9) observe, 'the history of the notion of 'special educational needs' is a fine example of the complexities and contradictions involved in imposing new discourses on deeply rooted traditions and practices'.

Thinking about the 'super-category' Special Educational Needs or 'SEN', that continued to be concerned with 'a limited number of children - those who could not 'fit in' to existing structures' rather than abolishing 'categories of handicap' post-Warnock (Armstrong and Barton 2007 p.5), Sally Tomlinson continues, 'At the same time the concept [special education], with its humanitarian overtones, precludes discussion of the needs and interests *actually* being served by the expansion of special education' (Tomlinson 1985 *my emphasis*). Looking at schools as organisations, Skrtic (1995, 1991a p.166) describes an organisational process of 'decoupling' in which the separate special education practices and processes make 'any substantive reorganization of activity unnecessary...buffering the organization from the need to actually change'. This recalls a key debate as to whether inclusive education is a development or extension of special education or an 'alternative to special education knowledge and practices' (Ballard 1999 p1). There is a questioning of the difference between 'integration' and 'inclusion' (e.g., Ainscow 1999, Slee and Cook 1999, Barton 1997b p. 232, Booth 1995, Udvari-Solner and Thousand 1995), with Slee and Cook (1999 p269) cautioning against special educational needs theory that 'dons the cloak of 'inclusive education''.

Ainscow (1999 p148 italics in original) has suggested that the term integration tended 'to be used to describe a process of assimilation within which individual children are supported in order that they can participate in the existing (and largely

unchanged) programme of the school'. With data and subsequent reflection suggestive of elements of the 'decoupling' of special education programmes (Skrtic 1991a) and of 'gentle' exclusionary practices producing 'outcasts on the inside' (Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999), Slee summarises a situation in which:

Integration or inclusion, in the absence of an interrogation of the production of disabling educational structures and cultures places different groups of students at risk of exclusion within the mainstream.

Slee (1996 p25)

Graham and Slee (2008 p.277) observe that it is generally accepted that the slippery concepts of 'inclusion' and inclusive education, 'derived or evolved from the practices of mainstreaming or integrating students with disabilities into regular schools'. Graham (2006, p.20 cited in Graham and Slee 2008 p.278) also argues that 'there is an implicit centred-ness to the term inclusion, for it discursively privileges notions of the pre-existing by seeking to include the Other into a prefabricated, naturalised space'. I am conscious that I have decided to present data related to these concepts later and in the next chapter but in anticipation, it would be useful to have a theoretical pit stop here as it pulls some thoughts together.

Citing Slee and Allan (2001 p.180), Slee and Graham (2008 p. 279) ask 'Perhaps it is not so much how do we move *towards* inclusion', but what do we do to disrupt the construction of centre from which exclusion derives?' Recalling normalizing judgement (Foucault 1979) based on what is normal and thus what is abnormal (Ball 1990b p.2), Graham and Slee (2008) interrogate what they term 'the conjoined nature of inclusion/exclusion'. Exploring 'Foucault's premise that there is nothing outside of power', Slee and Graham (2008 p. 281) remind us in Foucault's work that 'everything is within the realm of disciplinary power. Even those at the centre are shaped through subjectivation and positioned; their tenuous presence held in check by normative prescriptions of what is right or what is normal'. Citing Macherey (1992, p.177) they suggest these discourses 'can be drawn as two poles of division. On one side...normative discourses comprised of valorising and affirming statements of the desirable and normal subject. On the other, we have statements of deficit, conceptualisations of the other than normal; discourses that demarcate the abnormal object'. They continue 'As a result of the constitutive pressure of these two discursive poles denoting consistent subject and object of error, we can visualise a discursive centre and conceptualise a place representative of normative action and

anonymous expressions of disciplinary power' (Graham and Slee 2008 p.282). Discussing post-structural interrogations of hierarchical binaries; Youdell (2011 p.37) explains:

The principal argument forwarded by these analyses is that meaning is ordered and reproduced in terms of hierarchical binaries: *the Same and the Other*. The pairs that make these hierarchical binaries give each other meaning through their opposition of each other: man/woman. And they are products of and productive of relations of power; one side of the binary is privileged and/or normative while the other side of the binary is subjugated and/or aberrant: White/Black. The terms of these binaries are interdependent - the normative Same is defined against the aberrant Other as *what it is not*.

Recalling the conversation above between Ms George, Mr Parsons, Ms Scott and myself about '15 minutes a day', on reflection what at the time felt like constant discomfort foregrounds a disruption of my 'professional socialization' (Skrtic 1995 p.17). Through data presented here, what I am bringing together are these understandings of disciplinary power, with Skrtic's questioning of 'professional knowledge' (1995) and Tomlinson's (1982, 1985) questions around the vested interests of educationalists, psychologists and medical practitioners in expanding the numbers of pupils in special education; the latter rooted in 'the entry of the individual into the field of knowledge' (Foucault 1979 p. 191),

...it is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality; and it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded.

Foucault 1979 p. 191

Returning to the discussion above about Ledley in Year 4, I am struck by the turn to 'gut feeling' and (whilst apparently not 'diagnosing' dyslexia) a diagnosis of 'general slowness rather than specific dyslexia'. What does general slowness mean? If there is (in this quote) specific dyslexia, is there perhaps *specific* slowness in contrast to general slowness? Is this slow to complete tasks? Slow to move around? Slow to speak? Slow to pick up new concepts, if so in what situations? Or if it is general, is that slow at everything? In which case, slow as constituted by or compared to what or whom?

There is a haunting echo of Cyril Burt's *The Backward Child*, (1937) which summarising (p. 13) the introduction states:

Although, then, the problem of the 'difficult pupil' confronts the teacher in a bewildering variety of guises, nevertheless, as his experience increases, he begins to discern resemblances, and to recognize recurring identities among the different individuals. The same cases seem to present themselves time after time, like supernumeraries at a provincial theatre who cross behind the scenes and come round again and again in an apparently interminable procession. Some of them he soon learns to identify almost at a glance; to others he will tentatively allot some classifying nickname of his own.'

[The spanners, cogs and spark plugs mentioned at the start of Chapter 4?]

Burt goes on to suggest a classification 'for most practical purposes', firstly stating that 'what I have called intellectual subnormality can generally be distinguished from moral or temperamental subnormality' he continues,

Those whose subnormality is mainly or primarily intellectual may be conveniently divided into four provisional groups: (1) the 'defective', whose disability is innate and general, and at the same time extreme; (2), the 'dull,' whose disability is also innate and general, but far less severe; (3) the educationally retarded or 'merely backward,' whose disabilities are not innate but acquired [which he has earlier stated *merely* backward implying by this phrase that the child is backward in school work only and not in natural development], and (4) the rarer cases of 'specific disability,' whose defect is not general but limited.

Burt 1937 p. 13

Earlier stating the distinction between *general and specific abilities* [my emphasis], Burt (1937 p. 9) asserts 'The hypothesis of general ability is one of the most fruitful that has emanated from recent psychological research. To a greater or a less extent, all intellectual abilities appear to be correlated one with another.'

Pulling back into the twenty-first century, and thinking about slowness in the context of the structure and pace the 'Literacy Hour' lesson Moss (2004 p.129) observes, this structure,

'gives great urgency to the control over pace and sequence which teachers must exercise to enable pupils to 'get through.' The practical demands made

on teachers as they orchestrate the different aspects of the Hour and their sequence over the week can all too easily turn into a struggle simply to account for curriculum coverage. The lesson plan becomes a way of demonstrating that the teacher has covered the relevant topics within the relevant time period. The question of what children will have learnt as a result ends up taking second place.

This relates directly to the tightly written A4 planning sheets discussed with Ms Nolan above pp.110 and 141).

Ledley's 'slowness' is not queried in the meeting, nor is the classroom environment or what might be termed removing contextual 'barriers to learning' (Booth and Ainscow 2002). Indeed the class teacher (Ms Saunders) goes straight on to ask if they should move onto discussing the next child, before adding as something of a coda – again almost echoing Burt's 'moral and temperamental subnormality' tick-list,

Ms S He hasn't got any behaviour problems or anything like that and I want him to just make you know, some, some progress.

Roger Slee (1997 p. 407) asserts that,

Special education has reinvented itself to stake its claim in this so-called era of inclusion. The linguistic adjustments that have been effected to describe and legitimate the expansion of special educational interest and practice do not constitute a comprehensive 'retheorising' of special education. Rather, they demonstrate professional resilience in blending dominant disabling discourses into a language of inclusion. The language however remains discordant, a thin veneer stretched over conceptual reductions and contradiction.

It certainly looks as though this and Fawzia's reported lack of 'grey cells' reflect persisting notions of 'innate intelligence', the amount of 'innate general cognitive ability' deemed to be easily measurable and increasingly produced by post-war intelligence testing regimes in English schools (Simon 1981, Gillborn and Youdell 2000). Before the diagnosis of 'general slowness' in the quote above, there has been what amounts to a list of individual failings on this child's part. 'He's very slow, never gets work finished, his handwriting has not made any progress at all' and

succinctly: 'Spelling. Poor.' His class teacher also says 'he doesn't always speak in sort of full sentences if you get my drift, he doesn't always'. I could emphasise this latter point by quoting a longer section of this discussion in which the adults *don't always speak in sort of full sentences*, but I will refrain from doing so.

Referring to 'conceptual slippage and reductionism' Slee (1996 p. 23) asserts that 'integration or inclusion, in the absence of an interrogation of the production of disabling educational structures and cultures, places different groups of students at risk of exclusion within the mainstream' (Slee 1996 p. 25). Indeed, recalling the interdependence of the hierarchical binaries described by Youdell (2011 p. 37) – 'the normative Same is defined against the aberrant Other as *what it is not*', 'Special Educational Needs' processes in this setting delineated normal and abnormal.

Ledley has had everything under the sun and David wears glasses, but he manages that very well: Delineating ab/normal

Instead of the prescribed interventions working to enhance or repair these perceived failings, both Ledley and Fawzia are children described as having 'had everything' and having made 'no progress'.

Ms D I think with Ledley he's had everything under the sun.

Ms S I just don't think he's making any progress.

Remembering the seven children being taken out of the year 2 class signalling to teachers that those *children* were deficient rather than disturbing the validity of the test, a narrow range of prescribed interventions or repair strategies signal to staff here that these *children* must be beyond repair, rather than questioning pedagogical approaches that are perpetuating or creating failure. Recalling Burt's (1937 p. 11) observations on general ability 'This general intellectual factor, central and all-pervading, shows a further characteristic, also disclosed by testing and statistics. It appears to be inherited, or at least inborn. *Neither knowledge nor practice, neither interest nor industry, will avail to increase it.*' [my emphasis]

Indeed, looking at the descriptors of children across three meetings for the year 1 class, only children seated on the top two tables are free of 'concerns'. Children on all of the other tables are of *concern* in some way or other. One wonders therefore, what constitutes 'no probs' (no problems)? By current measures and processes the *majority of children* are in some way faulty. This recalls for me John White's (2006)

carefully analysed parallels between puritan thinking and intelligence theorists' preoccupations first mentioned in the sub-section 'Easy work for the thick ones, hard work for the bright ones' of Chapter 4 above. Specifically, parallels between salvation and success, and between damnation and failure (White 2006 p. 39). White observes:

Many young people in our own societies are oriented towards 'success'. They work hard at school in order to get into good universities in order to get 'good jobs' in order to lead a successful life. Some are driven onwards by the thought of the shame and diminished life-chances in store for them should at any point they fail.

White 2006 p. 39

There is the risk of failure and damnation associated with 'idleness and moral looseness' (White 2006 p. 53) and success, associated with 'giftedness' (and the Calvinist notion of predestination) together with the attendant virtues of the work ethic. Apart from the elect few, it seems that the majority of the class are vulnerable, *at risk* of failure.

'He wears glasses but he manages that very well'.

Class teacher describing David (on 'top table') at 'SEN' meeting

The small numbers of children involved, even across four classes in the school, make analysis and comment a tentative process. This comment, that David wears glasses but 'manages that very well' represents, for me, the almost comical – were it not so profoundly disheartening – level at which SEN meetings functioned to produce children in terms of individualised deficit whilst also producing the 'normal subject'. I say comical because one wonders how *not* managing to wear glasses well might look^{xxxix}: Askew? With insufficient style or panache? I do understand, as a teacher, that some children mislay or refuse to wear their glasses, so I assumed the 'managing well' in this context to mean something along these lines: uninterrupted wear, although it was not discussed further. It is also a telling single statement about David, I think, because this potential deficit (wearing glasses) is turned into a further underscoring of his 'top table' positioning: he wears glasses but (even this) he manages *very* well. Looking then at the four children out of twenty eight in Year 1 (David included) deemed 'No probs' [no problems], they are described without reservation as having 'wonderful' 'nice' and 'lovely' parents/families. The parents of the one child of African heritage in this four are specifically referred to during the

hand over meeting from year 1 to year 2 teacher as 'educated'. I speculate that the term 'educated' is also suggestive of social class, but this is left unsaid.

- Ms Jones Nassandra. Gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous.
Ms George She did seem,
J Gorgeous.
G Lovely.
J Lovely parents. Lovely family. I mean they're educated
 parents they're just. She's from Ghana.
G Good.
J Um, she's very able.

Ms Jones (current class teacher) and Ms George (new
class teacher): Hand over meeting

I am not sure what they are 'just', perhaps Ms Jones has stopped herself from repeating 'lovely'. I do not know whether Ms George is saying 'good' to the entire description of loveliness, or whether this is specific to them being 'from Ghana' as in, pleased to have black minority ethnic students on the top table. I do not have any further evidence for the latter. I use this example as illustrative of the unreservedly positive descriptors for the four children seated on the top two tables who are described as 'no probs'. A further four children on the two 'top tables' deemed as 'very bright' or 'no worries' appeared to have a more fragile constitution – and I use the word to suggest discursive production and physical health. With the only two children on top tables [not the singular top table] in receipt of free school meals as well as one Somali child and two children of African Caribbean heritage respectively included in this four, they were described as 'very bright' or 'no worries' *but* with concerns. In three out of four, the concerns are apparent illness and associated absence. However, in only one of these cases is the illness described together with acceptable parents/parenting.

- G What can we do about it though?
J Nothing.
G Nothing we can do.
J No. 'cause I mean she's having medical intervention, as much as
 possible. Her mother is *very*, *very* concerned. She's a very conscious
 mother.
B Yes.

- J I mean she comes in and I mean, she *wants* the child to be there, she doesn't want her to be at home. Bless her.
- G So it's just really monitoring that she's continuing to progress in her work.
- J Because if she doesn't it *is* having a serious impact on her.
- L What a shame, because she could,
- J She's very bright.
- L accomplish so much. And she's so eager to learn.
- J Oh she is.
- L She gets really excited about it.
- J Yeah. She does.

Ms Gold: SENCO, Ms Jones: class teacher, Judy and Barbara: teaching assistants, SEN meeting

I wonder if Ms Jones means to say conscientious rather than conscious mother, but either way included here are constitutions of both acceptable parent together with acceptable pupil. It is reminiscent, to me, of the persistent 'traditional division of the working classes into rough/respectable' (Vincent et al 2008 p. 64), with the re-emergence of associated 'fecklessness' below. Not, as I have outlined, that I had time to formally explore parents' classed identities. There is the specific reference to individual surveillance, or 'monitoring', and I am interested in the sentence 'Because if she doesn't [progress in her work] it *is* having a serious impact on her'. I am sure I would feel exasperated if someone pulled apart my words at one of the dozens of meetings I attend as a teacher. However, this sentence suggests that this illness and associated absence has a potentially unstoppable, apparently helpless effect upon 'progress in her work'. My mind flickers across possibilities for interrupting this inevitability, wondering about possibilities of sending activities home and in this setting, the work of the home school liaison officer. Neither are mentioned. At the same time in this sentence, this *progress in her work* is suggested as being the key indicator of the 'impact' of this illness ('...if she doesn't [progress] it [her illness/absence] *is* having a serious impact on her'). I suppose I am at the same time surprised, that with 'sixty or seventy interventions' and the high profile of children who are 'included' in this school, many of whom have reported periods of absence through time in hospital, that illness and associated absence is apparently considered a 'private trouble' (Wright-Mills 1959) and not within the realm of 'intervention' (however construed) rather than uninteruptible as suggested here. It is almost as if all the indications of the 'normal' (brightness, acceptable mother,

'wanting to be here') place her outside of being a subject for intervention in this way, for 'inclusion' (Graham and Slee 2008).

The two further examples of absence from these children on top tables are described in combination with *unacceptable* parenting. In the first, Ms Jones talks about Sonia:

J Loads of absences she's, with a smallest thing she is wrapped in cotton wool....I don't know, he's [her father] quite difficult. He's a governor at school. I don't know, he's a, very funny. They come from Georgia, in Russia, well former Russia. Um, she's a very sweet child, it's not her fault.

Ms Jones: class teacher, hand over meeting

Here Ms Jones (class teacher) talks about Merle with Barbara (teaching assistant) and Ms Gold, Special Educational Needs Coordinator:

B Mum is incredibly lazy. Incredibly. You know that's what happened with [older sibling] he got no school because she couldn't be bothered,

J I know, to get up and bring him.

...

B I mean we've had to say to mum, d'you remember you got me to phone? 'We think she may have hay fever'? Because she had this irritation with her eye, she was blocked up all the time.

G Shall I ask because I don't know if I did it last time, [the school nurse] about it?

All Yes.

J Because the mum can hardly complain about that considering that we have asked her and asked her and asked her.

B Mum said 'she probably has, because [a family member] got it', but didn't do anything with it. You know? And dad is so good.

J But we don't see him really. Mmm.

B That's what happened with the older sister, the older was like, had a baby at fifteen.

Barbara: teaching assistant in class; Ms Jones: class teacher and Ms Gold: SENCO, SEN meeting

These discussions might be seen to reflect concern about these children's social well being, but the words 'difficult', 'lazy' and phrases 'not her fault', 'couldn't be bothered' together with invoking a teenage pregnancy in the latter's family echo something more of Sally Tomlinson's accounts of the foundations of 'special education' (and its attendant super category 'special educational needs') and 'the social problem' class that worried Cyril Burt^{xl} (e.g. Tomlinson 1985 p. 159). There is no unpicking of what this father being 'difficult' means. Might it mean critical? Direct in his comments? Maybe committed but seen as interfering, if this father is a school governor? Or even whether it suggests differences in communication styles between someone from Georgia and staff in this school. In the first instance Sonia is considered to be 'wrapped in cotton wool' suggesting that there is an over-zealous approach to illness and absence, whilst in the second Merle is suggested as being both ill *and* absent from school but that her mother is lazy and the two (absence and illness) are in some way not connected by acceptable parenting.

There is no tangible evidence offered for this judgement of Merle's mother's 'laziness' other than this child's non attendance, apparently her brother's non-attendance and a sister's early pregnancy. I am not saying that there should be an absence of concern or discussion about children's wellbeing. It is the ways in which these issues are spoken and produced that I am reflecting upon here. Mindful that both Sonia and Merle are the only two on the top tables in receipt of free school meals, there is no consideration, for example, of the potential pressures posed by financial hardship for this mother deemed 'lazy'. Without directly equating Free School Meals with social class, but being aware of the financial and associated pressures that might be evident, I am reminded in Carol Vincent et al's study of the 'Precariousness and fragility [that] defines even those 'managing to cope'. 'Struggle' was a term frequently used by respondents to describe their social situation. In contrast, the middle class families had financial security, credentials and qualifications, insurance policies and home ownership' (Vincent et al 2008 p. 74). The fragile constitution of these children's 'top table' membership and identities stand out in contrast to 'the Hatties and the Lucys' in Year 4 ('good at everything'), or '*people like* Robin who are *always* going to be in the top groups' (Year 6). It is only suggestive, but reminds me of Mike Savage's discussion of 'a kind of new class paradigm' (Savage 2003 in Reay 2006) in which,

'the middle class...has become the 'particular-universal' class...it has become the class around which an increasing range of practices are

regarded as universally 'normal', 'good' and 'appropriate'...Socially recognised class conflict dissipates into individualised identities in which those who live up to middle class norms see themselves as 'normal' people while those who do not see themselves (and are seen by the powerful) as individual failures.

Savage 2003 p. 536

Indeed recalling the parallels between common sense notions of intelligence with 'puritan roots' cited earlier (White 2006), I am reminded in the declaration here, of Merle's mother's idleness and sister's loose morals, of the 2011 book title 'Chavs: the *demonization* of the working class' (Jones 2011 *my emphasis*).

I am particularly baffled as to why Merle, specifically described as 'brightest child in the class' and 'very very capable' is not on *the* top table. She is arguably on one of the top *two* tables, but as we have seen in data from children talking about 'hexagon' table in older classes, it is clear to the children that top table means the one top table, and that the next table is not quite top. When handing on from one teacher to the other, the top table (whilst not being called hexagon in this classroom) was clearly placed at the top of a vertically written list with an arrow down the side indicating top to bottom. I say this, and again mindful of small numbers, because there are no children of African Caribbean heritage on any of the top tables in the classes I observed, and this girl is both of African Caribbean heritage and declared 'brightest in the class'. With this, and the weight of research around racist outcomes of education in mind (e.g. Gillborn 1999, 2008, Gillborn and Mirza 2000, Gillborn and Gipps 1996, Rollock 2007, Youdell 2003) the conversation around Callum also stands out in discussions between Ms Jones, Ms Gold and Barbara:

- J Callum's the next one. He's on Early Warning^{xli} for behaviour.
- G Last time we wrote, 'made good progress before Christmas, since then poor attitude. Lacks concentration. Academically able'.
- J Yes, well, academically able um, he has, he's fitful in his motivation he still will hesitate before doing things. He still needs an awful lot of encouragement. He dissolves in tears at the slightest set back which I think is very, it's symptomatic in a way. He never shuts up, I mean that's his big problem.
- B Got too much to say.

- J Yeah. Consequently he's more interested in what he's got to say than in getting on with what he's supposed to be doing. I mean he's a very difficult child and one of the problems is the parents will not see this. I think he is very difficult. He's incredibly articulate, he's above average, way above average in his use of language and his knowledge and vocabulary is way above average, but um, his sense of appropriateness is always, you know.
- G So what can we do about it?
- J Well, I mean it's very tempting to be crushing and that of course is not what you do. You just have to keep reminding him, I mean I don't think there's that much we can do.
- B We've been praising haven't we?
- J Yes when he's done the right things.
- B I mean the last two weeks have been um, a major improvement.
- J Although today I didn't think was great, but. No today, I mean he got on with things but he's just got so much to contribute you know. <she breathes heavily> Like this all the time. He's shouting out at the same time.
- B I've been doing the visual thing with Callum, you know, when I see him doing a good thing.
- J Well it pays off because he does respond to praise.

Ms Gold: SENCO, Ms Jones: class teacher,
Barbara: teaching assistant, SEN meeting

In an earlier meeting Callum is referred to as a 'totally favoured adored son' and without further explanation that whilst 'He knows a lot of very big words.' he 'knows more than he ought really'. I look at the words 'attitude' and 'behaviour' and phrases around never shutting up, whilst this child is 'incredibly articulate' and well, am tempted to be crushing. What stand out to me are both the persistence of recognised issues militating against black boys' success: whether this boy really does talk or call out more than his peers, whether he '*never* shuts up' and again what this means, what 'attitude' means. I am mindful of the scrutinized context of 'good practice' in which these are being perpetuated and maintained: For example, a classroom context in which being interested in talk or spoken language is not what children are 'supposed to be doing'. Looking also at the sentence around this child needing ('an awful lot of') encouragement, 'hesitating' (thinking?) before doing things and 'dissolving' in tears, I am reminded of my time observing in this classroom particularly during literacy sessions. It seems to me without specifically focussing upon this curricular area, that the uniform structure of 'Literacy Hour' sessions

requires *quick* responses from children, with little space either in time or content, for exploration outside of tightly and externally regulated required outcomes (I see that my data are not alone in suggesting limited opportunity for extended or sustained interactions e.g. English et al 2002).

There was an occasion where children were required to write sentences about what they had enjoyed on a trip they had been on, with some key words provided on a board. It stood out to me that rather than writing sentences that they generated, more than one child asked what was written on the board and instead of risking a sentence with 'wrongly'^{xliii} spelt words or phrases outside of those provided, they wrote that their favourite thing was something on the board, regardless of whether it was their favourite thing or not:

Kaled comes & shows me work. He wants to write pizza, copied 'Easter eggs' because it's on the board. Another kid comes up [to me, I ask] 'What did you like?' [he replies] 'What it says' [I say] 'Never mind what it says, what did you like?' (Leon told to go to the table and not be rude again). 'I like painting' says [another child] to me. 'But I couldn't write painting so I wrote this. What did I say?'

Field notes

Reminiscent of the 'independent learning' in Hammerberg's (2004 p. 366) study in the context of Early Literacy Instruction, the expectation here is that each child will write a sentence in the manner demanded by the lesson outline, in this case, copying key words from the small board. The format of the lesson in which pace is at a premium with tightly defined 'learning outcomes' have been stated and read out by the teacher at the outset, follows a routine 'learned through training' (Hammerberg 2004 p. 366). Each section of the lesson 'construct[s] a subject whose every tiny action is anticipated, regulated, and made normal' (Hammerberg 2004 p.366). Remembering back to the 'carpet time' in my introductory chapter in which Year 1 children were trained not to 'call out', literacy hour lessons followed a routine which 'only work[ed] if students made the training 'their own'...the routines learned through training becom[ing] technologies of the self that allow individuals to act on themselves...in ways that appear 'independent' or 'productive' (Hammerberg 2004 p.366).

Leon got into trouble and was disciplined (again) for not completing his work, because he would not adopt this solution (copying from the board regardless of whether or not he could read it back) to the problem. He spent a considerable amount of time not wanting to incorrectly spell and therefore asking for the phrase that he wanted to write. Although it was actually on the board, having been told to go to 'the table' he could not then see the board or locate the phrase he was after from the words written on there. The focus on correct spelling underscored by weekly tests suggested to me a situation in which children were acutely aware of right and wrong during written tasks (which may, I speculate, be more likely to produce tears at 'set backs' as for Callum above) rather than spelling as a developing competency *in the service of* communication, ideas and therefore content. I cite this example of 'Literacy Hour' to illustrate contexts in which concerns that are subsequently expressed as individual deficits at Special Educational Needs meetings might be pedagogically created.

'That's just been revolutionary to my thinking since I found out about this!': Social and medical models in action.

Thinking about curricular or classroom contextual production of difficulty, there are so many concerns expressed about children's handwriting during these meetings that it has been difficult to decide whether to choose several examples demonstrating quantity or a more detailed example representing issues raised. I am going with the latter as it highlights several aspects of the 'Special Educational Needs' processes.

G OK, Augusto.

J Well Augusto, I am quite worried about. Um, Evelyn did a test for his handwriting, she said she thought that his problem was laziness. Today, I was looking at him. He cannot write! He can't write! And he's crying because he can't get it on the line. I actually think he has got a co-ordination problem. He is bright. He is often away. And he's not happy.

G I'll ask [the occupational therapist] to do a formal

B He's a very sad child.

J He's a sad child.

G I'll ask [OT] to look at him informally.

- J Would you? Because I actually feel you know there is something wrong! Might not be that, but there is something wrong.
- G So is it only fine motor skill, not gross motor skill?
- J No he seems alright otherwise. It's emotional I think. But I have brought that up with the parents .
- L He's daydreaming.
- J I know. He's got no focus.
- L In ELS I'm like, Augusto <she clicks her finger> come back.
- J He's bright. He is a bright kid, but he's
- B Think what he was like those two times he came in and we met you know, this new child, we thought
- J Wow
- B this incredibly bright child, but he's regressed dreadfully.
- J Mm.

Ms Gold: SENCO, Ms Jones: class teacher,
Evelyn, Barbara & Judy: teaching assistants.
SEN meeting

My first surprise here is the turn to Evelyn, a teaching assistant, who 'did a test'. I have every respect for teaching assistants, whose work and responsibilities reach into *teaching* the children deemed most challenging within schools without the training structures, pay or conditions afforded to teachers. Teaching assistants running 'ELS' [early literacy support] and 'ALS' [additional literacy support] mentioned training received in delivering those specific interventions. It just so happened that in conversation with Nina, the teaching assistant who ran the out of class sessions described as being for 'speech and language' we discovered that we both have a parent with speech impairment through stroke. Because of this connection, (rather than a direct discussion about work in school) Nina spoke more about a 'conversation partner group' that she attended and mentioned the 'three days training' she had received there^{xliii}. Nina, who worked with small groups within the school but outside of the mainstream classrooms, was the only member of staff who specifically referred to 'society' and altering what she termed 'circumstances' or 'provision' to enable participation; what would be termed the 'social model' of disability.

- N ...what we've done is, part of the training was an *awareness* that some people see disability as being *in the person*, in actual fact it's

not, it's in their circumstances and if you change the circumstances around them, they're suddenly able to participate.

And later in the conversation:

I've really enjoyed doing these courses I've done, finding out about speech and language therapy, because there is this really interesting idea about how we look at it, this idea that you look at the person as being disabled or it's society that disables them by not having provision to enable them to participate where everybody else does. That way, that's just been revolutionary to my thinking since I found out about this!

Nina, teaching assistant

As well as the striking illustration that the social model of disability (e.g. Oliver 1992) has not been a fundamental principle or a part of training or discussion for this member of staff at school, it also highlighted to me the fact that as a teaching assistant, this 'revolutionary' way of thinking is unlikely to permeate out from Nina and be taken on board by others. It is noticeable only that Nina speaks positively in SEN meetings about children in her groups, giving specific examples of work they have undertaken. It is a small point, but for example in the conversation about John in one of the SEN meetings, whilst Nina uses the word 'able' (which does not surprise me given its prevalence by teaching staff) she describes him as able 'compared to what's going on' in her group, naming the context rather than ability in comparison to the other children:

G John.

J *<makes an odd noise, like a fear type noise>*

G For some reason I haven't got a sheet from last time.

J There's another mother who's, she won't have it *<says sharply, reporting what his mother said>* 'He's very bright! It's Mrs J, she won't de de de de de'

N In terms of him being in my group I don't think he should be there, 'cause he's so able compared to what's going on in my group.

B Oh god! *<laughs>*

Ms Gold: SENCO, Ms Jones: class teacher, Barbara & Nina: teaching assistants.
SEN meeting

And Nina goes on to demonstrate what she means with examples of tasks:

N He does all the memory things, he's very good at it, he can, he'll try reading and he'll read some of these and sound them out and have a go at reading it. And in fact can read some of them and then he matches things, he cuts out, he colours. He's very good attention skills, concentration.

J Oh that's quite interesting

N Turn taking.

J In a small group then,

N Sharing, everything he's very good at.

Ms Jones: class teacher & Nina: teaching assistants. SEN meeting

Unlike David, whose glasses reinforced his top table positioning, for John (another of the children in receipt of Free School Meals on the bottom table) doing well in this 'small group' is taken as evidence ('in a small group then') of him *not* being able to do these things in the large group, and despite Nina specifically saying 'in terms of my group I don't think he should be there', that he needs to stay in a small group. One could remonstrate that I am contradicting myself: David can do these things in the context of a small group, therefore remove the 'barriers to learning' of the large group (i.e. the whole class) and let him learn in a small group. I am not saying the small group is necessarily a bad thing, nor that he should either stop or continue going, but it does seem to me that rather than the specificities of whatever is happening in the small group being discussed and brought into the mainstream classroom, going to the small group seems to underscore David's deficits, his bottom table positioning. Len Barton (1986 in 1997 p.154) notes, citing Galloway (1985), 'common elements in these approaches [he has cited 'withdrawal groups for remedial help, specific curriculum for less able pupils'] do not give mainstream teachers opportunity or encouragement to consider how the school contributes to the pupil's difficulties in the first place'. Processes outlined throughout my chapters here, for example the tightly regulated curriculum, special educational needs meetings framed around 'concerns' and bolt on interventions, have only served to harden this situation over the ensuing decades.

In response to 'everything he's good at' above, Ms Jones continues about John:

J Well then I think he should go into the focus group because I really do feel with John that it, it, it's the concentration, he comes out, actually that's improved a little bit, the coming out with *completely* inappropriate things in the middle of a carpet session for the literacy hour. He'll suddenly<*she*

shouts, mimicking something he's said> 'MY BROTHER CAN DO!!' you know.

Recalling (in the previous chapter) Ms Nolan wishing 'someone would bring something in and you could go 'Oh wow! Look at this, let's, you know', what spontaneity', I am mindful here that 'bringing in' talk outside of that which is teacher and lesson led (the 'interactive whole-class teaching' that is a central component of the Literacy Strategy, Coles 2005) is deemed inappropriate and indicative of poor concentration. Hammerberg observes that

Under psychological notions of learning, the individual is made and defined in the context of the environment: responsible, motivated, reliable or efficient instead of lazy...troubled or distracted. Any of these traits, among others, become combined into personal descriptors that reach into hearts and souls, impressing upon the future well-beings of individual selves, transforming lives, feelings, hopes, and desires.

Hammerberg 2004 p. 372

Nina's reflections on disablement have been happened upon by chance, not through structures or understandings in school. Returning to Augusto and his handwriting, however much on the job supervision Evelyn has received, I would question the bases upon which teaching assistants are being used for the diagnosis of children's apparent individual deficits. I do not know what the test entailed, but recalling the speech and language therapist's diagnosis of 'general slowness' above, Evelyn's diagnosis here is 'laziness'. This is not Evelyn's first diagnosis of 'laziness' as I see in an earlier meeting she is reported as thinking that Luca is 'deeply lazy, she thinks he is bone idle'. I see that Luca is May born, so at this point, when he is five years old and has possibly been using pencils for a year or less, he is declared to be 'deeply lazy' and 'bone idle' because of his performance in out of class remedial handwriting group. The description of Augusto above quickly turns to a raft of apparent worries; 'it's emotional', 'he's day dreaming', 'he's got no focus' and has apparently 'regressed dreadfully'. If this was one child amongst an entire class eliciting such concern one would perhaps think hard about Augusto, although even then I would query what 'day dreaming' 'emotional' and 'focus' mean here. But twenty-four out of twenty eight children are described in terms of deficit, worry, concern, unhappiness: in short, negative terms.

Happy Child, Sad Child: Children's feelings, technologies of the self and the construction of the 'appropriate learner'

The Special Educational Needs meeting format, as 'examination', 'makes each individual a 'case' (Foucault 1979 p.191). With its framing of children in terms of individual 'concerns' (deficits) and accompanying tendency to diagnosis via special educational needs 'professionals' facilitate a situation in which at this juncture, in only the second term of Year 1, nearly a third of children in the class (eight out of twenty-eight) are being steered towards diagnosis, medicalised speculation and *remediation* for handwriting.

Descriptions of 'sadness', 'emotion' and 'tears', are interesting to me in the light of Behavioural Emotional Social Difficulties (DfES 2008) as a Special Educational Needs category particularly associated with school exclusions (DFES 2004). The handwriting sessions/intervention was actually (ironically?) called 'handwriting without tears'. I have mentioned 'happiness' previously (in reference to Macintyre & Ireson 2002); in terms of my reservations about apparent pupil happiness as an educational measure. 'Sadness' or 'emotion' is something in this Year One class that staff link to the home: something that children come in to school with. Descriptions such as 'emotional, sulks', 'Dad says he's not happy', 'horrible mess, emotional state, dreadful, depressed', 'very sad child', 'quite tearful if you criticise' (all of these examples of different children, not the same child) are reported without a sense that it is schooling that might be *precipitating* these responses. As Hammerberg (2004 p. 375) observes 'The techniques used to govern oneself in the learning environment are internalized in such a way that they are described as a part of a private self, as opposed to a part of the system...when they are more accurately descriptors of what it means to be an 'appropriate learner' in a fabricated learning environment'. A year two teacher expressed an interest to me, in my research, in finding out whether children in her class/ at school are happy.

I'm sure CT [class teacher] is convinced I'm looking for 'happy' children. She makes a point of saying that's what she wants.

Note to self, research notebook

This teacher spoke of happiness being a concern of hers:

Augusto, he's a strange boy. Very cute but he's not happy at school. And his mum said to me that he's not really happy. He doesn't enjoy school, which is quite frustrating as a teacher. He is quite able. He's in the booster group, to push him up, for SATS I think. Or maybe he's not.

Ms George class teacher talking to me about children in her class.

As an aside, when Ms George says 'or maybe he's not', I am not sure whether she does not know here whether Augusto is in the 'booster group' or that he is in the booster group but she does not know if it is 'to push him up for SATS', I am interested here in her 'frustration as a teacher' that 'he doesn't enjoy school'.

Looking back at my discussions with Ms George, happiness appears to be associated with 'calm' (a Foucauldian might say 'docility'). Asking Ms George about her 'new' class (i.e. in Autumn Term) she mentions their happiness in the context of routines:

They're really nice. They're um <pause> We're really getting into routines at the moment. Um, it took a while for me to get the hang of new routines, you know different play times, um, you know things that we have to do every day like handwriting and yeah they, they, they respond really well to praise like all children. Um and they seem quite happy and beginning to relax a bit with them now. You know in a way I've got stricter about routines, but I've relaxed in other ways, I can smile with them. But then they know when I stop smiling they have to get serious as well and that's another routine that we've established.

As well as in the context of 'calm' at the 'time out table':

And sometimes when we're doing something where I say pick any table children go a sit there because there's a bit more space and I let that go so far because so long as it keeps them calm and happy.

And finally in describing the school as 'wonderful' she continues:

I'd say that it is a very well resourced multicultural school with a very positive child centred ethos, well managed um, with a very nice playground, lots of polite happy children. Um, that's what I'd say.

By which I assume a link between politeness and happiness.

While we are at the intersection between classroom practices and 'emotion' and exclusion, I return to a special educational needs meeting and a description of Jirek:

G Jirek?

J Well, I think Jirek should be moved up to Early Warning because he's having, difficulty well he's manipulating

L He won't come to school.

J He won't come to school and

A He's fine when he's here.

J Absolutely fine.

L But he just

J His father said to me on Tuesday I thought Jirek had a tummy upset yesterday but he told me he didn't want to come to school because he couldn't sit next to David who is very able, and Jirek is not. And I said to him, but your child is not going to tell me where he sits. He'll come to school, he can sit next to David on the carpet, he's perfectly happy when he's in school and he's really manipulating you here. You know he thinks he can get round you by telling you something like this, and I'm quite confident in saying to you that he's perfectly alright when he's here. And the dad you know, they'll sit in the hall waiting for half an hour while the child is trying to settle, it's, it, it's the parents who are being, I think. But he is a *lazy* child, he's very lazy and doesn't want to do anything or make an effort to do anything. On the other hand when he *does* make an effort he's always *pleased* with himself, so.

G So academically no concerns.

J Well he he's not very able.

G But he's making progress.

J Yes he's making progress.

G Making reasonable progress.

J Yes, he's making reasonable progress. I mean he's not, he's not making *great* progress.

G So action?

J Well I suppose we're keeping an eye on him.

G Mention it to [the head teacher]? Do her,

J Oh right got to put that in.

G Well I mean, has he missed a lot?

J Um, he's missed a reasonable amount, usually the parent has always had a response for it, but I think he now thinks that Jirek doesn't want to come to school, so he might actually not pay attention to him being ill, I dunno.

G So will you mention it to [the head teacher]? Or?

J Yeah.

G OK.

J Mm

Ms Jones class teacher, Ms Gold SENCO, Judy Teaching assistant, SEN meeting

There is no escaping my 'emotion' at this discussion. Starting with meals: 44% of children in this class were in receipt of free school meals: two out of eight children on the top tables (25%) and five out of eight on the bottom table (62.5%). Jirek, is one of those on the bottom table, and it is clear from this discussion that he will not be mixing with David (on the top table) during class time. I am actually surprised at the suggestion that Jirek can sit with David 'on the carpet' as my observations in class revealed children to also be positioned in table based rows on the carpet. Jirek 'is not going to tell [Ms Jones] where he sits'. Here, despite apparent evidence to the contrary (that school is *creating* or contributing to a situation in which a child is so unhappy that he does not want to attend), his happiness is asserted by Ms Jones and unhappiness reframed as 'manipulation'. Jirek is also May-born so here he is 'manipulating' at the age of five. Again I am put in mind of Mel Ainscow's 'hidden voices' (1999 p8), that those who do not respond to existing schooling arrangements can encourage the improvement of schools. I would have thought a five year old's reported refusal to come to school is far from a 'hidden' voice.

Potential outcasts: Expanding SEN

I would suggest that from my data in this school setting, the *fuel* for the production of children in terms of normality and deficit during these meetings was a combustible combination of curriculum context, (specifically here the National Literacy Strategy) with its attendant pressures for children to perform in Key Stage 1 SATS, together with the very resources (or 'experts') in terms of SEN professionals provided to the school for 'inclusion'. Indeed, if any evidence of Tomlinson's (1982, 1985) assertions about the expansion of Special Education were needed, I see what I term 'slight disbelief', in this example:

- CR Is that mostly because the um, resource base is here, do the other children benefit from the fact that the resource base is here? [loaded question from me, with assumptions]
- S Yeah. Yes definitely. I don't know off hand exactly how many children I see at the moment, forty children?
- CR Forty? [*slight disbelief – what % of school is that? 40 out of about 400? = 10%?*]
- S On review or whatever, of which what, six or seven are resource base children?
- CR So all those other children get the knock on effect.
- S Yep.
- CR From the resource base here. Is that what you expected? Have things evolved or?
- S I've only been in post for a year.
- CR Oh not long.
- S So previously there were other therapists.
- [we enter the meeting room – general talk setting up]
- Discussion between CR and Susie (speech and language therapist) on the way into a special educational needs meeting.

My 'notes to self' in square brackets during initial transcription say everything here really. I comment to myself that it is a 'loaded question' because I have asked if 'other' children 'benefit' from the resource base^{xiv}. But the main comment is trying to capture my slightly incredulous tone of voice and quick mental calculation where I ask 'forty?'. I had a particularly positive experience many years ago of a speech and language therapist visiting my classroom each week during our class discussion times. She would observe our discussions and comment to me later about how useful these conversations were for the children from her perspective as a speech and language therapist; the children using language: speaking and being listened to. I suppose in retrospect she contributed to my understandings of classroom 'speech' and 'talk' not as a technical matter (this was in a class for children labelled as 'having' learning difficulties) but located within meaningful conversations. That is another story really, only to say that as a teacher I might have thought in the past (and indeed this is revealed in my use of the word 'benefit') that 'access' to speech and language therapy for such a large proportion of the school population would be a 'good' thing. What is revealed in special educational needs meetings however,

rather than the 'revolutionary' [social model] perspective expressed by Nina above, is the turn to speech and language therapy in legitimising individual deficit.

Discussing another child, Yousuf, (again Summer born, again Somali, again in receipt of Free School Meals) in the Year 1 SEN meeting:

J I've got a concern for him because he I don't understand anything he says. And I spoke to his mother about this. She didn't think it was a problem, but / still think it's a problem because I can't understand him.

Others in room: mm, mm

J and I don't know *why* this is and it's not because he has any kind of accent it's because he doesn't open <she makes an indecipherable sound> and you can't,

B Yeah I've noticed.

J Have you noticed it?

B Yeah I have.

J Thank *goodness* it's not just me.

B No, because I think I was in there once and I sort and I had to ask somebody.

J Yes and he does this a lot as well < puts her hand over her mouth and speaks> and he takes his hand away like that and you still can't understand him! <laughs>

N Is that a speech and language thing then?

J Probably Nina! [said in a sort of sarcastic tone of voice meaning this is stating the obvious] <laughs> I think it should be referred to you! <laughs> I think he does need something which will help him because he's *fearfully* shy.

L Yeah.

J And he gets embarrassed terribly easily, but he's, overcomes that by, because he wants to contribute so much. I mean he's absolutely thrilled with his learning.

G He hasn't been referred for speech and language before,

J No but I mentioned it the last time didn't I about speech?

G Speech difficult to understand.

J Yeah.

Ms Gold: SENCO, Ms Jones: class teacher, Judy and Barbara: teaching assistants

I find the comments that 'his mother didn't think it was a problem' and 'thank goodness it's not just me' revealing. Recalling Mike Oliver's 'alternative questions' to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys survey (Oliver 1992 pp. 7-8, citing Martin et al 1988), I remember the revelatory impact of these questions when I first read them. I am put in mind of 'Are your difficulties in understanding people mainly due to a hearing problem?' turned around into 'Are your difficulties in understanding people mainly due to their inabilities to communicate with you?' as relevant to this example in which a mother can evidently understand her child, but a teacher cannot. The subsequent reassurance that it's not 'just her' (who does not understand him, or does not *communicate* with him) deflecting the location of the problem back to the child.

When what works, doesn't work.

Reflecting on the operation of curriculum and associated interventions by teachers in this setting, put me in mind of Richard Sennett's bakers. In *The Corrosion of Character*, Sennett (1998) describes revisiting bakers, or rather the bakery, where he had interviewed bakers twenty-five years previously. Sennett describes the bakery and the work of the bakers as it had been previously, with the struggle of physically demanding work at night.

'...the bakery was filled with noise; the smell of yeast mingled with human sweat in the hot rooms; the bakers' hands were constantly plunged into flour and water; the men used their noses as well as their eyes to judge when the bread was done. Craft pride was strong, but the men said they didn't enjoy their work and I believed them.'

Sennett 1998 p. 66

Returning a quarter century later, he says that he was 'amazed at how much had changed' (Sennett 1998 p.67). The bakery was now a 'high tech, flexible workplace' in which 'the bakers [none of whom are the same bakers he previously visited] make no physical contact with the materials or the loaves of bread'. He continues,

'Working in this way, the bakers now no longer actually know how to bake bread. Automated bread is no marvel of technological perfection; the machines frequently tell the wrong story about the loaves rising within...The workers can fool with the screen to correct somewhat for these defects; what

they can't do is fix the machines, or more important, actually bake bread by manual control...The work is no longer legible to them, in the sense of understanding what they are doing.

Sennett 1998 p. 68.

This is the situation that put me in mind of what teachers said about the curriculum and interventions they were now operating. Sennett observed that in the computerized bakery, it was easier for workers to throw out loaves than attempt to rectify the workings of machinery which was 'user-friendly' until for whatever reason, it did not work as it was meant to. 'Though simple to use, the dough-kneading machine was complex in design; its computer system was opaque, as industrial designers say, rather than transparent...there was no way anyone on the shop floor could get into the opaque systems architecture to understand, much less solve, the problem' (Sennett 1998 p.72). Recalling the children being sent out rather than sit the (SAT) test, the children who had 'had everything' but 'made no progress', the teacher finding the manual for '15 minutes a day', a curriculum with unstressed vowels that are thought 'not relevant for anyone ever' signals to me a situation in which curriculum and pedagogy have become opaque and teacher subjectivities shifted towards the technocratic. Referring back to Skrtic's (1995) 'decoupling' of special education in order that the organization remains unchanged there is a turn to the *children* as faulty, as 'cause for concern' when curricula and interventions, when *school* rather like the dough-kneading machine, does not work. These 'inclusive' practices, judged very successful by OFSTED during the academic year of my research, are deemed representative of good primary practice thought to be working well. However it is these same practices, in Foucauldian terms, underpinned by technologies of disciplinary power that produce individuals to be documented as cases, opening each up - staff and pupils - to normalizing judgement, 'the student, teacher and school are each subject to the gaze of the next, and all are subject to the gaze of the state' (Youdell 2011 p. 37).

Individuals who learn to align themselves with the conventions of the classroom attain a certain state of happiness, purity, or wisdom (in terms of Foucault's 1988 definition of technologies of the self p. 18). They do not get in trouble; they learn what they're supposed to learn; they're likely to get nice feedback, and most importantly they show themselves in positive lights that shine into their futures. But individuals who resist the conventions of the classroom appear as having further 'needs' to be met. In this way, if the

individual is not using the ...classroom in the intended ways, it is not a problem of the classroom, not a problem of the pedagogy, not a problem of the curriculum content, not a problem of the training, not a problem of the meaningfulness of the task, but a problem of the individual.

Popkewitz 1998 p. 65 cited in Hammerberg 2004 p. 373

In this chapter I have explored what were termed 'interventions' in this school setting, and their intersections with special educational needs processes. I have questioned whose interests are served by Special Educational Needs processes and continued to deploy Foucault's (1979) work in considering the normalizing and dividing practices in which the primary school child is produced as normal or 'Other'.

Using Foucault's (1988) concept of technologies of the self to reflect upon the self-regulation required in these table-grouped, routinized classrooms I have reflected upon children's feelings and their teachers' concerns with emotional conduct in the light of the Special Educational Needs category 'Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) (DFES 2008).

Across the period of my research, from the earliest discussions to more formal interviews over a year later, staff described this school as being 'inclusive'. I have to confess to an inevitable feeling that I'd 'lucked out' following my very first discussion with the head teacher in order to commence research, given that I did not initiate mention of 'inclusion' but that this theme emerged strongly, echoing my research interests. The persistent theme of 'inclusion' when staff were asked to characterise the school provides an opportunity to reflect upon understandings of inclusion and its interaction with the themes raised in chapters so far. However, to do so requires the space and structure of another chapter, meaning this was not the penultimate one after all.

Chapter 6

In this chapter I finally - given my original research questions - get around to focusing upon 'inclusive education' and inclusion in this school; a school that is judged and spoken by staff and OFSTED as being 'very inclusive' and including 'all pupils'. Because of a commitment to meeting the requirements of being 'a good school' within current policy imperatives; inclusion is constructed within the traditional framework of special educational needs (Armstrong 2005) involving, as Slee (2001 p. 117 in Armstrong 2005 p. 136) describes, 'a deep epistemological attachment to the view that special educational needs are produced by the impaired pathology of the child'. Performances of inclusion produce the 'included child' (Allan 2008) subject to surveillance and technical solutions that leave stubborn social inequalities (Leonardo 2009) and routine exclusions uninterrogated.

'...if it doesn't work here then I don't think it's going to work anywhere for them and then an inclusive school isn't the place for them.'

Ms Bradley, class teacher

Across the period of my fieldwork, from the earliest discussions to more formal interviews over a year later, staff described this school as being 'inclusive'. This chapter could have been my first, exploring, as I hazarded in my very first thoughts for a research proposal, 'understandings of inclusion and exclusion'. However, it is within the processes revealed through the data of the previous chapters, specifically interlocking 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1979) that 'including everybody' in this 'very inclusive school' occurs and can be more fully understood.

Looking back at my literature review, my proposed research project was set against the apparent *paradox* between a government agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand (e.g. DFEE 1999a&b) and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other (SEU 1998; DFEE 2000a; DFES 2001a). I have arrived back, via data, discussions and reading at what Slee (2009) has referred to as 'the inclusion paradox'. In this same essay, Slee (2009 p. 178) states that he 'aims to affirm inclusive education as a critical social project committed to the identification and dismantling of educational and social exclusion'. He continues that 'whilst some researchers and activists maintain that inclusive education should concentrate on issues pursuant to disability and education', others suggest 'that inclusive education provides a necessary platform

for collaboration across a range of constituencies who are marginalized by, or excluded from, education' (Slee 2009 p. 178).

This chapter comes towards the end of a thesis exploring processes by which children, as school pupils, are increasingly 'fixed' as educational subjects in a finely graded hierarchy via policy imperatives and common sense IQist notions of ability (Gillborn and Youdell 2000 p. 212). I thought at the outset of my research that it would be located within the boundaries of Special Educational Needs processes and practices, but found, recalling Bourdieu and Champagne (1999, pp. 422 – 423) 'gentle' exclusionary practices, 'spreading out the process of elimination, the school system turn[ed] into a permanent home for potential outcasts'. As such whilst my thesis has sought to illuminate structural inequalities, across what might be termed 'a range of constituencies', this chapter explores inclusive education and inclusion through understandings within this school. Whilst this locates an exploration of what is termed 'inclusion' within the parameters of those labelled as 'having' Special Educational Needs, I intend to challenge these limitations, agreeing with Slee (2001 p. 116) that 'inclusive education is not about special educational needs, it is about all students'.

This chapter firstly considers the telling of this school as 'very inclusive', exploring processes and routines – through teachers' descriptions, but also through experiences of children described as being 'included' and their allocated teaching assistants. Illustrative of the assimilative nature of 'inclusion' in this 'very inclusive' school, I conclude by pursuing the experiences of Roda, a ten year old girl with cerebral palsy, in more detail. Specifically, I suggest the 'inclusion experience' in this school setting is a performance, recreating features recognisable as 'inclusion' within current managerialist understandings of 'the good school' and Special Educational Needs frameworks; an experience that leaves challenges to persistent inequalities unexplored. As Slee cautions, 'The generalization of the term [inclusion] without the stipulation of meaning...instils a dangerous element within inclusion for disabled people and undermines or subverts the original reformist intent'. (Slee 2006 p. 113)

'How good the school is'

The heading 'How good the school is', peculiar to the OFSTED school report format^{xlv} defines this school during the year of fieldwork as 'a very good school'. It continues that the school,

'allows all pupils of whatever academic and physical ability to achieve to their highest potential. The outstanding high quality of leadership and management, the good teaching, and the unique way the school includes all pupils ensure that everything is directed to giving the pupils a very good quality of education. As a result it provides very good value for money'.

OFSTED Inspection report

The impacts upon teachers' daily work required to receive the OFSTED comment above cannot be underestimated (e.g. Jeffrey and Woods 1998, Perryman 2006, Avis 2005). The staff are not just showing up every day with a half-baked approach to the task in hand^{xlvi}. The number of hours dedicated to 'getting it right' and attention to the minutiae of surveillance is immense. Data across previous chapters suggest that the rigours of OFSTED inspection together with interlocking policy processes and underpinning discourses enforce what is deemed 'right', 'good', 'outstanding', and limit those practices and processes that are not so valorised. Before proceeding I think back to Stephen Ball's observation 'Critical researchers, apparently safely ensconced in the moral high ground, nonetheless mak[ing] a livelihood trading in the artefacts of misery and broken dreams of practitioners' (1997 p.258). With this chapter in particular recalling for me initial thoughts I had at the outset of my research, I remember challenging myself with the expectation of finding 'solutions'. I neither have nor would now seek to make a better *prescription* for practice^{xlvii}. My frustration is that practitioners are and have been expending enormous amounts of effort and time in meeting demands that are at best contradictory, if not actively producing and maintaining educational inequalities (Parsons 2009, Slee 1998, Benjamin 2002, Lloyd 2006, Gillborn 2008).

By contradictory I mean stated intentions, for example in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for 'greater social equity' (Moss 2004) and 'equality', (Askew et al 2001) respectively. Whilst emphases on performance, compliance and content coverage inherent in these same programmes, produce the sorts of organizational settlements detailed in my previous chapters. Gemma Moss provides an example familiar in

primary classrooms in which these aspects of performance, coverage and compliance are foregrounded,

Watch children during the [Literacy] Hour over the course of a week and it is clear that they [the children] orientate very sharply to the choreography of the routines associated with particular segments of the Hour. They know how to join in with the rhythm of social interaction within each segment, when to chant together, when to stop, when to talk with a partner and when to pull back to the whole class setting. It is far less clear whether and how they sort out the ways in which the conceptual content covered in such moments relates to their own work. This is a different question from knowing what the lesson objective is in the abstract.

Moss 2004 p. 131

Citing Saltmarsh and Youdell (2004 p.357) in considering the 'constitutive force of ...discursive practices', Graham (2006, p.5) describes 'an interpretive analysis that seeks to understand what might be the incidental effects of practices conceived in the interplay between disciplinary technologies derived from complex power relations and discourses that effectively 'construct what it is possible to think' (Fendler 2003,p. 21)'. In considering, like Carol Schick (2000 p.83) the construction of 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) I share Linda Graham's (2006, p.5) interest, who, also citing Foucault (in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982 p.187) asks 'not simply what teachers or institutions *intend* to do but 'what they do does' and how these effects come about' [*my italics*]. A bit of a long winded way of getting there, but for me the multiple processes and interactions captured over these previous chapters, in which largely untroubled (Gillborn 2005) notions of 'special educational need' and 'ability' contribute directly to what it is possible to 'see'/think and therefore what the 'inclusive' in 'very inclusive school' might mean and for whom. Wrapped up with these concepts in *this* school is the telling of 'how good the school is'.

Had I read a contention as apparently hair-splitting as Graham and Slee's (2008 p.278) that 'to include is not necessarily to be inclusive' at the outset of my research, even without the article's florid title 'An illusiory interiority' I am pretty certain I would have become exasperated. However both are pertinent to the OFSTED judgement of the school cited above. I want to consider 'the unique way the school includes all pupils' observing the force of this statement surrounded by superlatives throughout the sentence 'The *outstanding high quality* of leadership *and* management, the *good*

teaching, and the unique way the school includes *all* pupils ensure that *everything* is directed to *giving* the pupils a *very good quality* of education' [my emphases].

Referring back to Chapter 5, and the 'conjoined nature of inclusion/exclusion' (Graham and Slee 2008 p.280) in the constitution of 'normal' and 'other,

[Linda Graham] argues that the term inclusion 'implies a *bringing in*'; in that it presupposes a whole into which something (or someone) can be incorporated. It would be reasonable to argue that there is an implicit centred-ness to the term *inclusion*, for it discursively privileges notions of the pre-existing by seeking to include the Other into a prefabricated, naturalised space.

(Graham 2006 p.20 cited in Graham and Slee 2008 p.278)

It is the closure inherent in the OFSTED judgement 'includes *all* pupils' that for me echoes the concern that inclusion as a concept has been 'tamed' (Edward Said in Slee 2005 p.181). Slee continues 'as theories...are 'picked up' and popularized, inside and outside the Academy, they attract respectability and prestige. Subsequently, there arises a clamour for orthodoxy and dogma. Where established authority and professional interest are at play, appropriation is not surprising. The recent and widespread acceptance of inclusive education as a research and policy imperative might well prove to be its greatest obstacle' (Slee 2009 p.181).

'a very inclusive school' Ms Saunders

'...we do try to be a really inclusive school' Ms Bradley

'an inclusive environment' Ms Daisley

This reduplicated insistence (Foucault 1979 p. 180) on being 'inclusive' when staff were asked to describe the school provides an opportunity to reflect upon understandings of inclusive education within which small decisions about children, the 'rather simple technical procedures' Rose (1999 p.135) of everyday schooling occurred. The interplay between special educational needs, associated 'interventions' and seeking to be inclusive, contributed to the context in which ongoing and insistent processes of defining the children took place.

Looking at Ms Saunders' response to describing the school more closely, her answer encapsulates many aspects of this 'interplay',

CR I'm asking everyone if they were to describe the school to an outsider how would they describe it, sort of key aspects of the school.

S OK. Um. I would say that the school has high standards of education, the teachers have high expectations of the children, um, I think that the school is a very inclusive school, um, for children with physical, um and academic, you know, if they've got learning difficulties, whether they're um, physical um, difficulties as well. The school just basically always finds a way and that really still to this day, wow, you know, I don't know a school like it. And the fact that everyone just gets on with it, really kind of supportive of each other and of the kids and that's where the relationship comes from I think, you know, um. But yeah, I'd say, you know, a really, a school with high expectations, very inclusive, warm atmosphere and supportive staff.

Ms Saunders, class teacher

At the outset what's not to like? 'High standards', 'high expectations', 'very inclusive, warm atmosphere and supportive staff'. And having spent a good deal of time in Ms Saunders' classroom, I do not think these are platitudes on her part. Pursuing the idea of being 'very' inclusive, as opposed to just plain old 'inclusive' I ask Ms Saunders to elaborate:

S OK. For example Soraya next door, she has cerebral palsy. She basically does everything that the rest of the class do now because she, she has a support teacher for a start who works with her and secondly the teachers are, we're trained now to adjust tasks to suit the needs of children such as Soraya with cerebral palsy. Um, not just for children with lower, um, with special, special needs for example, but you know like for example DT [design technology], she might find it hard to use a pair of scissors. She's got a special pair of scissors so she just carries on with the activity? Um, you've got Barry in Year 6, you've met Vincent and Barry and they're just, it's just they aren't separate. You know, although work is tailored for them, they aren't separate from the rest of the school.

CR Yeah. So you were saying about Vincent,

S Yeah, you know Vincent um, you know he's been in a wheelchair, he's been encouraged. I think it's just the encouragement? And the

fact that staff just y'know, people that've had Vincent don't just think he can't walk and that's it. You're just constantly battling and making these children believe they can do things. I haven't taught Vincent but from what I've seen, you know, the staff that have worked with him, the teaching assistants have battled to make him believe he can do things and now he can. So that he's starting to really, you know, move forward.

CR D'you think that applied to your class last year? That you were thinking about.

S Yeah I mean especially with Brian I really felt that I needed to, I suppose I gave myself too much of a difficult challenge. But I like to think I got half way there, into making him um, you know, strategies for controlling his anger, things that I never thought I'd be able to cope with, you know. Him running away on a school trip, him running out of school that kind of thing. Trying to make him, you just have to think to yourself, 'right, OK, I can't', <pause> you see the problem is you can't deal with him in the same way that you deal with another child for running out of school. Not by giving them special treatment but [she trails off]

Ms Saunders, class teacher

The 'very' in 'very inclusive' appears to apply to children who fall within particular categories of difference, who might otherwise have been placed in 'special' segregated provision. In the earlier quote Ms Saunders qualifies that it is a very inclusive school for children with difficulties. Again, reading this back, who would not want a school to be 'very inclusive'? My concern is that discourses of 'inclusive education' intertwined with diagnoses of difference and labels of 'special education need' repeatedly and insistently maintain and produce what is 'normal' and what is not. Armstrong (2005 p. 136) asserts that "the New Labour vision of inclusion is one that reconstructs inclusion within the traditional framework of special education and in so doing reinforces its traditional purposes. This involves a conceptualisation characterised by what Slee (2001 p. 117) has described as 'a deep epistemological attachment to the view that special educational needs are produced by the impaired pathology of the child'

Hovering over 'physical, um and academic, you know' in the earlier part of Ms Saunders' description, this is the second time I have experienced Ms Saunders

hesitating over terms and terminology. I hear echoes of the children's hesitations when describing their peers on 'bottom tables' so as not to use derogatory language when the organisational processes and attendant labelling are suggestive of negative or stigmatising language. On a different occasion earlier in the year, when I was trying to work out who a particular child was in class and she was trying to describe him, Ms Saunders described Ledley's height, then hesitating and umming before saying he was a 'dark' child. I offered 'a black kid?' to which she quickly said 'yes'. She is a young teacher who did her teacher training teaching practice and 'QTS' year here before continuing on in this school as a qualified teacher and these moments of hesitation suggest to me that basic terms and terminology and importantly, their political and social meanings, are not in this teacher's lexicon. This is not, drawing upon Len Barton's work, an inclusion that foregrounds the nature of discrimination in its many complex and contradictory forms (Slee with Barton 2010 p. 564) and suggests being some way from engaging staff in understanding education in the context of 'unequal relations of power in the larger society' (Apple 2010, 2000).

Graham and Slee (2008 p.277) observe that 'Originally, inclusive education was offered as a protest, a call for radical change to the fabric of schooling. Increasingly it is being used as a means for explaining and protecting the status quo'. With more than a nod to Foucault (1979, 1980) and Mike Apple (1993, 2000) Slee summarises 'Official knowledges proscribed the normative boundaries of ability and disability, morality and deviance, sanity and madness. The ultimate achievement of the modernist knowledge project was to have people situate themselves within the *regimes of truth* and self-submit to liturgies of treatment' (2009 p. 180). With 'inclusive education' subsumed, tamed or domesticated within official knowledges, a basic vocabulary for understanding and challenging educational inequalities and an awareness of 'the status quo' does not just happen (e.g. Sleeter 1993, Schick 2000).

Looking further at the example of Vincent whom Ms Saunders mentions, I cannot help but laugh at what I am sure is the unintended literal meaning underlying 'he's starting to really, you know, move forward' after mentioning the staff 'don't just think he can't walk and that's it'. I say this because I saw on more than one occasion Vincent reach the top of the stairs having struggled, 'battled' one might say (echoing what Ms Saunders says the staff are doing), to get there. In apparently good humour he (and accompanying teaching assistant) would be puffed out, as virtually

everyone was when reaching the top floor of the large Victorian building via the stairs. Despite intentions, and thinking back to Ms Saunders' surprise at Helen's success at 'Hot Seat'^{xlviii}, is this – to quote Ms Saunders - making 'these children believe they can do things', or is there more a need for staff to believe 'these children can do things', outside of the re-inscribed hierarchy? There were lessons in which I observed Vincent as part the class group, taking an active part with his peers. I also encountered Vincent on numerous occasions around the school,

[I see Vincent as the children are going out to play]

CR Hello Vincent.

Vi I did so much writing!

CR Did you?

Vi Yes! [he says excitedly]

CR This morning?

Vi I'm going to finish it after lunch!

CR Oh fantastic!

Vi With [the SENCO]. [She's] going to take me down.

Discussion in passing with Vincent, child in Year 6.

I assume from the last sentence 'she's going to take me down' that this work was done out of class. It raises more questions than it answers. Is the SENCO (to whom he refers by her first name) making Vincent 'believe he can do things' here? He certainly appears to be saying that he is pleased with writing, unless perhaps this is an example of Vincent telling me, making *me* believe that he can do things. Again, I am not suggesting there is any one absolute truth. Having observed sessions in Year 5, particularly in drama, but also at other times with Vincent taking an active part in the classroom, I found the sight of him sat increasingly, repeatedly outside of the classroom in Year 6 away from peers, doing tasks alone with Freda 'his' allocated teaching assistant, difficult to view positively. Speaking to Freda she told me that he was out of class with her in the mornings because the 'gap's bigger' between the work he and the other children were doing. As Benjamin argues, 'For students who are not going to succeed in dominant terms, the standards agenda is instrumental in constructing barriers to their participation. Herein lies one of the most fundamental contradictions at the heart of New Labour's educational policy' (2002 p. 56).

On a different occasion when I spoke to Freda she talked about the difficulties of fitting in the different aspects of her job, one to run out-of-class groups (principally

reading groups and the Additional Literacy Support intervention, with groups of four or five children out of class) and the other to 'support' Vincent.

F The reading time, really 'cause then I've got to get back in class and I've got to be with Vincent. So everything we're trying to do at a running pace.

OTA [Other Teaching Assistant] You meet yourself coming backwards don't you?

[I laugh]

F It's true

Freda continues to describe her apparent dilemma.

F Well it's not an ideal, do I slow the group down for him, but then you're losing them. So I don't know. And is it any benefit to him if he's just sitting there?

CR Yeah?

F I don't think he's really aware.

CR He's not really aware?

F I don't think he's aware of the difference in what he's doing to what they're doing.

Interview with Freda, teaching assistant allocated to Vincent

I do not know whether or not Vincent is 'aware of the difference in what he's doing to what they're doing', but I am certain he notices whether he is in class with his peers or sat outside the classroom without direct access to his peers, classroom and teacher every morning. I take meeting 'yourself coming backwards' to mean rushing. But in the context of data around Vincent I feel I am meeting myself 'coming backwards' in terms of encountering the same debates and apparent dilemmas around the individualising and segregation of children. In 1999 Ainscow observed that 'whilst the idea of individual programmes of objectives may be seen as a strategy for encouraging integration of pupils, it tends, in practice, to encourage segregation' (Ainscow 1999 p.21). The same fundamental structures are still being maintained by the removal or assimilation of a child or children to sustain the unchanged classroom (Barton 1997b, Skrtic 1991), retaining 'institutional equilibrium' (Slee 2009 p. 180).

I cannot help but put my head in my hands at a teaching assistant being left to wonder if Vincent's participation with, if education with his peers is 'just sitting there'.

The OFSTED report declares with certainty that he, along with 'all pupils' are 'included'. 'A policy promoting inclusive education that remains constrained by the goal of assimilating those with impairments into mainstream schools without addressing the exclusionary character of a disabling society is doomed to reinforce the very exclusionary process that it seeks to overcome' (Armstrong 2005 p.143).

Remembering teaching assistant Judy's descriptions of Early Literacy Support (ELS) in my previous chapter, these also suggest less certainty about technical interventions in which she is involved, as well as the inherent categorisation.^{xlix}

...it sounded really great when I went on the course, she said ELS [Early Literacy Support] was going to work, but in practice it was different. Um, but ALS [Additional Literacy Support] like, see, you don't know whether it really and truly works because why are those children that [names another teaching assistant] is still working with <she looks across the hall> still not up to average? You know? That's where you get, like, disheartened and you think, you know, maybe not every programme is for every child. But you think they had that injection, they've had that support, you know, and at the end of it you test them and they know all these new words. They know all these different ways of writing different sounds and yet they still fall behind. So you actually think does this actually work?

Judy, teaching assistant

The use of the medical 'injection' stands out for me here, as well as the use of 'average' which I take here to mean 'normal'. Also, Judy's doubts did not encroach upon her statement about the school as being inclusive and 'really good' making me speculate again about the closure inherent in the OFSTED judgement above, and whether being 'really good' as a school was conflated with efficient compliance with the many policy initiatives. This is not surprising given the pervasive surveillance and the circuits of feedback involved in special educational needs processes.

Ms Daisley, a senior teacher with responsibilities as Special Needs Coordinator ('SENCO') describes these processes further:

D There is a high number of children on the [Special Educational Needs] Code of Practice and a particularly high number of children with Statements um <pause>. In practical terms, it means the management of LSAs [Learning Support Assistants]. A major part of

management of LSAs is quite a large part of the job because we have twenty-one LSAs, so it's not, so the SENCO role is not just around managing special needs provision in terms of what the children are getting in their classroom but it's more, it's managing that group of staff, which is pretty much half the staff. Um, so monitoring their work, monitoring their records um, ensuring that people are, that the children are getting the correct number of hours of support, liaising with a lot of external agencies; that takes a lot of time for SENCOs, whether it's the speech and language or occupational therapy, [also names psychotherapy centre].

Ms Daisley, senior teacher

Following these threads from the data we have a set of relations between 'inclusivity' and disabled students, 'interventions' and 'Statements of Special Educational Needs'. Looking at the assertion by senior teacher Ms Wolvek that 'there's no point in paying lip service to that [including everybody], it has to actually happen in practice' and 'the finite number of Statements that can be run' I encounter this apparent dilemma between what might be taken as an entitlement to 'support' (one presumes for equality of access/participation): 'ensuring that people are, that the children are getting the correct number of hours of support,' and whether this entire approach bolts Special Educational Needs remediation and its attendant individualised conceptualisations of deficit on to a largely untroubled (Gillborn 2005) classroom pedagogy.

I ask Ms Daisley further about 'management of LSAs' [Learning Support Assistants] and what she termed 'monitoring':

CR What sort of um, what form does monitoring take? What does that mean in that situation?

D Of LSAs?

CR Yeah

D Um, well for example this term and it happens twice a year, I will take in their records and [...] the other SENCO um, we audit their records and feed back to them the strengths and what they need to develop, um and <pause>

CR So when you're auditing what questions are you asking?

- D I've um created a sort of check list of criteria I think all records should meet. So they should have the Individual Education Plan, they should be making comments on progress towards those specific targets on that plan. Um, they should be including examples of work, they should try to be recording what barriers they have noticed. Are there barriers to learning, what strategies they've adopted to overcome those and you know, make the learning more possible. Um, so I would expect to see that they're given that list, they know that's what they're working towards and in a format that is accessible to other people that might need to use them.

Interview with Ms Daisley, senior teacher

The language of the Index for Inclusion (Booth 2000)¹ – and subsequent policy rhetoric (e.g. DfES 2004) - is spoken here in 'barriers to learning' coalescing alongside the special education language of 'specific targets' on 'the Individual Education Plan'; also echoing policy discourse (e.g. The Code of Practice, DfES 2001) in what Ball might term the 'policy ensembles' (1997 p.265) of the time. The processes described are so familiar to me as a teacher, it has taken a long time for me to step back, but in so doing I see that because these children are 'different' there is an extra layer of surveillance: 'auditing' and 'monitoring', perhaps with the intention of ensuring 'inclusion' happens.

Reflecting upon surveillance (Foucault 1979) as 'a disciplinary technique for ensuring individuals were sorted, regulated, normalised and made to behave in particular ways' (Allan 2008 p.86) Julie Allan cites her own research, (Allan 1999) in observing that 'The child with special needs, the disaffected, and even the included child are easily understood as having been constructed through a whole hierarchy of power and knowledge, with needs identified through a complex process of assessment which is aimed at distinguishing the abnormal from the normal; and perpetually kept under surveillance through a whole network of supervision'. Caught up in discourses of protection/entitlement (benevolent humanitarianism: Tomlinson 1982, Armstrong 2005) and accountability (school effectiveness: Slee and Weiner 1998), the 'included child' is 'understood' as a subject within familiar discourses: who it is possible to be. Allan continues 'It is not just the child him or herself who is subject to this intense scrutiny; parents and all the professionals providing support are all caught in the web of surveillance' (Allan 2008 p.87).

I look back at Ms Saunders saying 'It's just, they aren't separate' and certainly, the *locational* barriers of segregated special schooling or even the 'classroom within mainstream school' model in which children are taught in a separate classroom within a mainstream school setting^{li} are not present here. Ainscow et al (2012 p.13) assert that 'New Labour governments took legislative action [making it] more difficult for schools to discriminate wilfully' against 'children with special educational needs and disabilities in regular schools.' As Ms Bradley says, 'I suppose just the fact that the disabled children are here is quite unusual for a start'. But then I turn back to Graham and Slee's (2008 p.278) assertion that 'to include is not necessarily to be inclusive' and as they continue 'To shift students around on the educational chessboard is not in or of itself inclusive.'

Sally Tomlinson asserted nearly thirty years ago that,

Special education is permeated by an ideology of benevolent humanitarianism, which provides a moral framework within which professionals and practitioners work. But it is important to recognise that the recognition, classification, provision for, or treatment of, children who have been at various times defined as defective, handicapped or as having special needs, may very well be enlightened and advanced, but it is also a social categorisation of weaker social groups...The notion that a variety of professional groups are solely engaged in 'doing good' to the children they refer, assess, place and teach in special education is something of rationalisation.'

Tomlinson 1982 p.5

Bringing these together, I am suggesting that in the absence of question[ing] and thus bring[ing] a sense of crisis to the unquestioned assumptions that ground the professional practices and discourses of the field of special education' (Skrtic, 1991c, p. 29), 'inclusion' cannot be robust in challenging exclusionary pressures.

Unrolling Ms Bradley's whole answer to my question,

CR Give me an example of how I'd see it, what sorts of things would represent inclusive being inclusive here. If I was to see something.

B Well I suppose just the fact that the disabled children are here is quite unusual for a start. Um, I think it's more the way that we try and do

everything to make it work for each child, so children like Devon who really, if you really went through every behaviour rule and motion and did everything that we're supposed, we say we're going to do, then he'd have been out years ago. But because we try to do so much to support him, counselling, talking, parents, give him LSA [learning support assistant] time, setting up special lunchtime clubs for these kids. If we didn't do all that, they wouldn't be here and for some it works and for others, if it doesn't work here then I don't think it's going to work anywhere for them and then an inclusive school isn't the place for them.

Ms Bradley, class teacher

Acknowledging here conversations during my research supervisionⁱⁱⁱ, this paradox, an 'exclusionary inclusion' one might say; recall Foucault, that,

'For modern thought, no morality is possible. Thought had already 'left' itself in its own being as early as the nineteenth century; it is no longer theoretical. *As soon as it functions it offends or reconciles, attracts or repels, breaks, dissociates, unites or reunites; it cannot help but liberate and enslave.*'

Foucault, 1970 p.328 *my italics*.

What I take from this connects with policy as process. Reaching back to my initial literature review; 'the question 'what is policy' should not mislead us into unexamined assumptions about policies as 'things'; policies are also processes and outcomes' (Ball 1994a p.15). Processes and outcomes here that in 'accepting the existing constitution of schooling' (Slee 2001) recreate inequalities in countless small moments.

Looking at Brantlinger's (2006 p.199) turn to Gramsci in asking 'Who benefits from special education?' I presume it could be argued that Vincent (sat outside his classroom, above) is benefiting from 1:1 skills based education when he works out of his classroom with the teaching assistant or Special Educational Needs Coordinator so 'everyone benefits', but I remain skeptical as to the formulation of what education is, and whether it is Vincent who benefits, if these arrangements reflect success. Christine Lloyd (2006 p.228) appears to share my skepticism,

The barriers to participation [for those groups identified as having SEN, and indeed many other groups, the deviant] are chiefly seen as these groups' lack of skill or ability to meet a set of norm related standards, or indeed to conform to certain predetermined norms of behaviour...all concerned with compensatory and deficit approaches geared towards the normalization and indeed standardization, of groups and individuals rather than contributing to the denormalization of the institutions, systems and rules which comprise education and schooling. Lloyd 2006 p.228

I suggest that not only does this 'good practice' compound Vincent's exclusion from the mainstream classroom as 'Other' thereby legitimising his segregation, but that the superlative OFSTED declaration of this school as successful within the wider current policy context, militates against a critical (one might say 'Critical', Scott & Usher 1999 p.23^{liii}) questioning of practice.

Given the policy ensembles (Ball 1997 p.265) within which teachers and staff are working and attendant 'ability labels and ability-led practices' Hart et al (2004 p.244) arrangements described here are concordant practices. As Hart et al (2004 p.245) find in the process of their work 'Setting aside the ability template does not just mean setting aside a particular explanation for differences and replacing it with a more adequate and empowering one. It means adopting a radically different mind-set, a different way of making sense of what happens in classrooms'.

Ms Saunders' second example above, of Brian, challenges processes of assimilation into 'the existing (and largely unchanged) programme of the school' (Slee 1996 p. 25). I am looking again at the sentence,

'Trying to make him, you just have to think to yourself, 'right, OK, I can't' <pause> you see the problem is you can't deal with him in the same way that you deal with another child for running out of school. Not by giving them special treatment but' [she trails off]

Ms Saunders, class teacher

Most teachers would probably blanch at the idea of a child 'running out of school' but my teaching experience and indeed Ms Saunders' suggestion of 'another child' doing it, is that it is something that happens. 'You can't deal with him in the same way', stands out and taken together with 'things that I never thought I'd be able to

cope with, you know' reminds me of Mel Ainscow's (1999 p. 8) assertion that those who do not respond to existing schooling arrangements should be regarded as 'hidden voices' who can encourage the 'improvement of schools'. I quote Ainscow's text with his use of the word 'improvement' as one I would use with caution, being a word that now has a residue from the school effectiveness movement (Slee and Weiner 1998). I am sure Ms Saunders would be somewhat amused by Brian - nothing if not a vocal member of class - being a 'hidden' voice.

Exploring the constitution of 'student identities within the terms of enduring and predictable categorisations' (Youdell 2006b p. 177), and returning to Judy, the teaching assistant describing the school above as 'really good', the whole section in which she describes the school starts with a general question:

CR If you were to describe this school to an outsider what ways would you describe it?

L Multicultural um. A a, er, very adaptable, very, um, very, um. Speaking as an LSA [Learning Support Assistant] as a teaching assistant, we're very supportive of each other. We're like a team you know um, describe it to someone. Big. Um. Just very um, accepting of every, every disability, every ethnic origin you know, completely non-judgemental, non, you know.

CR In what ways would you see that, you know, sort of day to day. If you were to give me an example of that? In what ways would I see it?

L Just by standing at the front gates and you see every walk of life coming in through the door whether they're walking or they're in a wheelchair or they can speak English or they can't or they um, whether they have speech impediments and this, this school provides so much. Like, like what school d'you know if you have a disability do they take you horse-back riding?

CR Right, OK.

L Horseback riding and hydrotherapy and all these great OT [occupational therapy] people who come in you know? My daughter's school does volunteer fund and they don't have half this stuff, you know. And I think that people are really, really lucky. You know, they just chuck their kids into school and there's all these things that us, that we try and do for their children, you know, really, you know.

There's so much opportunity here to succeed, there really is, you know. I think, I think it's a really good school.

This 'goodness' and 'acceptance' appear to crystallise processes of othering. The 'goodness' of the school somehow illuminates not only the 'luck' of disabled children, but that 'they' – one presumes children's parents - 'just *chuck* their kids into school'. As such the very 'goodness' of the school seems to suggest a proportionate ingratitude or possible fecklessness on the part of children's parents. There is a hint of privilege suggested here in the provision of 'horse-back riding'. I did not explore further the provision of horse riding at the school, although it is familiar to me as an activity found on offer at segregated special schools^{liv} and with this, senior teacher Ms Wolvek's comments about perceptions of the school come to mind:

I think um, the school has a reputation in [the LEA] for doing well with Special Needs pupils. Now we don't do anything particularly different than any other school does, but for some reason there is this reputation and part of it is because we've gained a lot of expertise from the people who work here because of the resource base. There's also been a sort of misunderstanding or a misinterpretation I think of what the school is, you know, you get parents, you know, I've been told by, usually by some of these experts actually, 'this is a really good school for special needs children, we've moved in the area' you know. So it's a kind of self fulfilling thing and is something that, that has worried me because the school is not a special needs school, it's a mainstream school. Um, and we want to maintain you know, the mix, we don't want it to go over to be all special needs er, but we also want to be inclusive. I've spoken to [the LEA] about this as well because we were getting lots and lots of Statements coming by, you know, [the school] being named as you know, and I said, you know we can't actually maintain, you know, loads and loads and loads of Statements. We don't have the capacity to do it and I actually think there is a, there is a finite number of Statements that actually can be run in a primary school this size before it becomes you know, too much.

Ms Wolvek, Senior Teacher

The existing structures and arrangements for 'including' children within this school and in this school within this Local Education Authority here delineate children as 'normal' and 'other' via the general term 'Special Needs' and further via Statements

of Special Educational Needs which are described as needing to be 'maintained'. The assimilative nature of this inclusivity is underscored here by the school being 'a mainstream school', not 'a special school', with a 'finite number of Statements that can be run in a primary school this size'. The idea of 'a mainstream school' rather than 'a special school' also suggests a (clear) boundary and perhaps what is perceived as possible, desirable - or not - in those two delineated settings. I took this latter sentence 'a finite number of Statements that can be run in a primary school this size' to mean that rather like a saturated solution, there can only be a certain number of Statements as a percentage of the whole school population ('this size' meaning a limited school population 'size') rather than the practicalities for students accessing a school building that was arranged over three main and two mezzanine floors (meaning a large/unwieldy issues-of-access building 'size') although there could be elements of both.

This formulation of 'inclusive' strays back into Special Educational Needs and Julie Allan's observation of schools; that 'Difference is continuously verified and valorised and the individuals upon whom inclusion is to be practised are marked out with a special status' (Allan 2008 p.40). As such, whilst I am sure many children would be delighted with horse riding, I cannot help but wonder how it functions: Who does and does *not* go horse riding in this context. Whether like the 'woodwork', 'cookery' or even 'basket-weaving' in educational settings over past generations, it contributes to whom it is possible or impossible to be; the constitution of student identities. Indeed reflecting back over generations, a questioning of allocation to 'treatments', the creation of types of students as 'problems' through bureaucratic processes and associated value judgements about students' parents by school staff in terms of perpetuating inequality of educational outcomes stretch at least as far back as the work of Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963) almost half a century ago.

My interest in 'double meanings' could well become tiresome to the reader ('fixing' children, 'making' children) but before I continue I cannot help myself; 'interventions which we carry out with different children' is evidently meant to convey a range of interventions and children, but for me carries the insinuation of the different children, those different – in whichever identified ways – to those who fall within the homogenous majority. Slee asks (2009 p. 180) 'In whose interest do diagnosis, categorization and treatment work? If the goal is absorption and assimilation, then it might well be in the interest of the recipient of this intense scrutiny. If the goal is the recognition of difference as legitimate and valuable, then the answer forms a potent

critique of the catechism and ceremonies of special education'. I suggest that the sentence the 'finite number of Statements that can be run in a primary school this size', reduces children to their diagnoses and categorizations, limiting rather than enhancing their access to education with their peers.

Inclusion experience

As I thought about Vincent sat outside his classroom every morning and the seven children filing out of their Year 2 classroom because sitting the SATS test would apparently be hopeless; the 'horseback riding' and the children in the hall 'injected' with 'interventions' but not up to 'average', I noted, in the context of reading, 'inclusion experience'.

Looking at my interviews with children, Roda in Year 6 perceived the issue raised by staff around limiting 'the number of Statements' so that they are 'manageable' (above) to have negative impacts for her:

CR *Can you tell me a bit more about this school? How would you describe it to an outsider?*

R Fun, but if you're in a wheelchair, a little bit difficult.

CR Yeah. What difficulties do you mean?

R Like um, there is a lift, but when it gets stuck , if you're on the top floor you can't go out to play and if you're on the ground floor, you can't get up to class.

CR Right I see. Does that happen often?

R Quite often, it has broken down a lot. Yes and um, <pause> well and also the lift doesn't go to the mezzanine floor, so when we have to do jobs for [my class teacher] and give them to [admin staff], do you know [admin staff?]

CR Not really.

R One of the people sort of the appointment maker.

CR Who makes appointments for people.

R Yeah, so her office is on the mezzanine floor so I can't get to it. <she pauses because a girl is crying nearby>

CR Oh dear. <pause, we refocus> Um, I'm not going to get time to ask you everything. In what ways do you think the school does well and in what ways would you change things?

R Well the school does well in everything apart from er, the amount of people with disabilities really.

CR Right.

R I mean, I feel so lonely and isolated sometimes.

CR Really?

R Yeah.

CR How do you think that could be improved?

R There's only er, three other disabled people in the school, two of which are in my class, but they're nothing like me and the one who is like me is in year 2. That's four years younger than me.

CR When you say 'like you', what sorts of things d'you mean?

R Like, same disability.

CR Right.

R And so I feel lonely and isolated, although they do have playground friends.

CR Yes.

R And I'm one of them so I go and help with the little ones.

CR Oh yes, tell me what you told me earlier, that was really interesting.

R Oh, um, well the kids all want me to play follow the leader all the time! They want me to go up and down.

CR They want your chair to go up and down? This is the younger children isn't it?

R Yeah <she laughs>

CR So you're a particular playground friend

R Yeah!

<We talk about whether it's the end of the school day>

CR How do you think they could make you feel less isolated?

R Get some more, maybe get some more disabled people in the school. Um, but I am, I'm going to secondary school next year

CR Where are you going?

R [...] it's um a special school for children with physical disabilities.

CR Was that your choice?

R Yeah, cause with the bullying and all the other stuff I really want to leave.

CR Did you tell your mum about that?

R She knows. I cried all the way to one of my appointments once.

CR Good grief. So did you decide between you?

R Yeah, we visited it. It was the best one, it was SO good. Um they have like automatic doors that open. Every door!

CR Is automatic?

R Or, there's a touch pad.

CR Wow, fantastic.

<a child near by, not a wheelchair user, chips in> Why can't we have that here?

CR I know! Wouldn't we all like a touch pad?

R And there's no lift, it's all one floor.

CR Perfect.

R And um, the toilets are all accessible.

Interview with Roda, child in Year 6 (aged 10)

The Disability Discrimination Act (Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) duties on schools do not require any changes to be made to the physical features of their buildings. As one senior teacher said 'we have a lift and we have ramps everywhere', but putting it differently,

'Inclusive design extends a discussion beyond a focus on physical barriers (such as steps) to include a very wide range of design related issues that affect how people feel and which can set limits on their ability to participate to the full in the life of the school'.

Gathorne-Hardy 2001 p. 53

When Roda says 'people like me' she seems at this point to be particularly referring to using a wheelchair. I witnessed the fire alarm/practice on more than one occasion, which involved an impressively well coordinated movement of several hundred children; including all of those who would usually use the lift being carried manually several storeys down the external (outside) staircases of this large Victorian building by allocated staff using specially allocated equipment. But this is the thing, it is not about those exceptional circumstances and performances of inclusion. It is about the mundane moments of exclusion. Much as the children on the 'top'/'hexagon' table seemed to be constructed as the 'providers' of something during 'mixed ability' groupings and the children from the 'lower' tables somehow the beneficiaries; rather than equals in their learning, Slee highlights 'the misconception that disabled children are to be the sole beneficiaries of inclusion' in its appropriation by special education and that 'such an approach sustains the uncoupling of the education of disabled students from a robust study of all forms of

educational exclusion and the policy context that allows it to continue'. (Slee 2001 p. 120).

What Roda does not say, is that the lift not working brought with it, for example, exclusion from eating lunch and mixing effortlessly with her peers at break time. On one occasion when the lift was not working, I observed that Roda was excluded from lunch time with her peers. In addition to Roda not getting down to the lunch room or playground, two peers allocated as her 'buddies' did not (bother to) walk up three storeys that lunchtime to see her as arranged. Roda wondered where they were (I subsequently went downstairs to find them and ask about the 'buddy system') and as a result of them not wanting to go up, she spent the entire lunchtime by herself upstairs. Recalling 'the social model' (Abberley 1987, Oliver 1983, 1990, 1992) in the production of disability as well as turning to the rest of this chapter in its articulation of the production of students' identities, I also suggest that the cited difficulties with mobility around the school produce and foreground Roda as wheelchair user; rather than facilitating easy mobility thereby reducing enforced isolation. As Gathorne-Hardy emphasises:

The aim of inclusive design is to ensure that the built environment allows people to be physically, psychologically and emotionally comfortable and thus able to continue their educational journey with integrity and pleasure'.

Gathorne-Hardy 2001 p.53

Roda mentions 'Playground Friends'^{iv} in the above quote as a positive experience in the school: in short, a system whereby older students are 'trained' to play and organise games with the younger children together with allocated places in the playground where children can stand if they want a Playground Friend to play with them. This recalls for me the training for Roda's cohort of Playground Friends. My field notes recorded how brave I thought the organising teacher, bringing together large numbers (around 60) of mixed age children to play and rehearse games together in one of the large 'echoey' school halls. In the same session which involved several 'PE' type activities, the teacher asked the children to 'hop' in response to which I observed Roda bobbing up and down in her wheelchair:

1.51 They go to the hall + play 'move to your spot'

1.54 'Hop to your spot' John walks (fast) Roda moves in her chair.

- 1.55 'Move to your spot as if you're really frightened. *[adjust language to be more inclusive? For kids who can't 'hop'?)* You don't look scared! *[This is less overt than the hopping/toe touching which isn't inclusive for Roda, John].*

Fieldnotes: numbers indicate time

It occurred to me at the time, as noted in my field notes that whilst it was a small point, a slight adjustment to the language would have provided an accessible instruction for all of the students. In the absence of an easily accessible instruction, Roda translated 'hopping' into bobbing up and down in her chair – which would have been a possibly fleeting or unimportant moment, but nevertheless one that stood out to me at the time and one that I happened to hear later from Roda's allocated teaching assistant had resulted in children teasing Roda because she was not 'hopping':

- W I didn't actually spot her, because I have been watching, because they started to laugh at her. When they were hopping? You know they had to hop to a space.
- CR Oh. They were laughing at,
- W She was actually doing it in her chair and they all laughed. Did you see the way she was hopping? In her chair, and they started to laugh.
- CR I wondered about that, hopping and what was the other one?
- W Touching your toes.

Conversation with Wendy, Roda's allocated Teaching Assistant.

I see that I did not have to clarify what I meant by 'what was the other one?', Wendy already knew I meant; an instruction that could not be followed by all of the children. Given the enjoyment I observed between Roda and the younger children (as she described) and exclusions from easy peer friendships at playtimes - an aspect of the frequent exclusions she endured because of issues of access; it was more dispiriting that staff could not reflect that Roda's inclusion in the Playground Friends scheme might be particularly important to her. Also, given these experiences of exclusion, that she could construe a comment about her wheelchair (usage) as a possible reason for her exclusion from participation in Playground Friends,

And she takes everything very, very seriously because this morning when we finished Jane [a teaching assistant] said to her, 'I'm not being rude Roda, but I'm thinking you might run over the little ones', because frequently she drives

into people. She's driven over my feet a hundred thousand times over the year. <inaudible> [Wendy describes what Roda had said about this]. But she's just making a comment, she said 'I'm not trying to be rude' she actually stated at the beginning of the statement, 'I don't mean this as something rude but don't you think', and she [Roda] said 'but my driving's much better!' but, straight away she's taken it as an insult, as somebody being horrible to her and <she trails off, short of finishing her sentence>.

Conversation with Wendy, teaching assistant

What 'the lift not working' does not capture if reported by itself are the multiple small moments of exclusion, from peer interactions, classroom instructions, small routine journeys to the mezzanine floors^{vi}. I suggest that it is the number and persistence of these moments that culminate in wanting solidarity with students who are constituted as 'like her'. Gathorne-Hardy states,

Put simply, the aim of inclusive design is to ensure that the built environment allows people to be physically, psychologically and emotionally comfortable and thus able to continue their educational journey with integrity and pleasure'

Gathorne Hardy 2001 p.53

If special education is 'generally seen as a charitable, humanitarian concern' (Armstrong 2005 p.135) I cannot help but wonder if Roda is herself engaged in a charitable act in saying 'Well the school does well in everything apart from er, the amount of people with disabilities really', given the issues of basic access, bullying and loneliness to which she refers. Wheeling back in our interview, Roda describes herself as,

R ... not sporty much but I really like um, tennis and yeah tennis and horse riding too, as well as swimming. I'm sort of a tom boy, I hardly ever wear dresses. Mm. I'm very, very sensitive.

Pursuing this apparent 'sensitivity' she continues:

R Especially if anybody says something mean about my disability.

CR OK. Um. Can you tell me a bit about that?

R Well um like if anybody called me, I don't know a name like, spastic I would really be upset because,

CR I'm not surprised.

R Because that's actually the name of my disability?

CR Oh I see,

R Spastic quadraplegia, it just means stiff, but

CR Right.

R Um, cause all the four limbs are affected.

CR Right.

R In the disability. Um, but so even if people aren't calling me the name they're just saying it, I still get upset about that.

CR Right. OK

R Um, I was bullied.

CR You were.

R In year 5 actually,

CR OK. And what happened about that?

R <sighs> It got sorted out.

CR Did it? How did that work out?

R Er. Well I went to, I wrote a letter to the deputy head <pause>

CR So how did it get sorted out in the end?

R I wrote to the deputy head and the SENCO, the special educational needs coordinator and the deputy head sorted it out.

Now obviously I do not think that it is 'very, very sensitive' on Roda's part, given the contexts micro and macro, for her to have a radar for the deployment of the word 'spastic' as a derogatory term. Julie Allan observes that 'The young people themselves have no say in what kind of provision might make a difference to their lives' (Allan 2008 p. 40). It seems to me here that Roda *does* say, at some considerable cost to herself, what would make a difference. With a focus on 'technical solutions' underpinned by Special Education practices rooted in individual deficit and an absence of inclusive practice situated overtly within understandings of the wider context of discrimination, segregation and exclusion; what Roda says is heard not as a shared endeavour to challenge ingrained discrimination but as 'negativity', as someone who actively contributes to her exclusion. But as Slee foregrounds, 'Disability connotes an insidious and pervasive form of oppression and exclusion from civic life rather than a scientific description of individual defectiveness and difference. The function of sociological analysis therefore becomes a means for identifying the multiplicity of oppressions in everyday life for disabled people and building cultures and practices that dismantle barriers' (Slee 2010b p. 568). I am not suggesting that staff can have the 'right answer' to every situation. But it seems to

me that the continued focus on individual deficit rather than a foregrounding of contextual production in schools, frames or creates a disposition towards particular understandings. In the example below, rather than reflecting upon the ways in which the particular model of allocating/ attaching an adult 1:1 to a student might impact social outcomes (e.g. Ainscow 1999), the teaching assistant allocated to Roda ascribes Roda's social exclusion to Roda's own shortcomings.

CR Who are her friends?

W I think, um, not, not any of them any more are her friends. She's kind of alienated them. I think a lot of the problem with her, she's not got the ability to cope with things that are said in jest. You know like, when kids normally have a go at each other they sort it out between themselves? And not every issue goes to an adult. Every single issue goes to an adult with Roda and I think that's caused friction. And a gap between her and the rest of her classroom friends, they think she's teacher's pet. [speaking as if one of the children] 'Ooh we're going to get in trouble now 'cause we've said something to her that wasn't even real', then turns it into an issue and then now all the kids don't want to be friends with her 'cause it'll always be 'she says this' and 'he said that' and 'I didn't mean that'. That they all get into trouble.

CR Has it always been like that?

W I think as she gets older and gets more aware of her disabilities she's got resentment inside of her towards her friends and what they can do. But then she also has an unreal expectation that everybody's going to understand what she feels and what she's going through. And she expects everybody's going to know, what cerebral palsy is and most kids don't. They just see her as someone in a wheelchair. They don't know why or they don't have the realisation that she can't just do what they can do. And I think that causes a lot of trouble in herself. She has so much adult input, she never gets to deal with friendship things, or any problems on her own or in a group. It's always been taken out of context because it's brought to adults so it never gets a chance to actually be resolved within friendship group.

Discussion with Wendy, Roda's allocated teaching assistant

Leonardo (2009) asserts that 'oppression is simultaneously social and lived'. This is ultimately what McDade (1992) found in her study of teen pregnancy, where social oppression was lived everyday by adolescents who were constructed as problem students and whose bodies were ostracized from the general student population...oppression is material to the extent that it directs and controls the behaviour of student bodies, but it is discursive insofar as bodies in schools are culturally inscribed and normalized'. I do not know if there was any basis in conversation with Roda for Wendy's speculations that 'as [Roda] gets older and gets more aware of her disabilities she's got resentment inside of her towards her friends and what they can do', but she is constructed here as the problem student. It seems to contradict what Roda said to me, for example about her being involved in a range of sports and activities. I think Wendy was trying to assert that Roda's peers 'just see her as someone who happens to be in a wheelchair' as meaning a person, without further depth of thought about her situation, but it comes across more vividly is 'just see[ing] her as someone in a wheelchair'. Not the person, the wheelchair.

Despite, as I have documented my skepticism of pupil 'happiness' as a measure of 'success' following its emergence both in my data and research on the efficacy of ability grouping (e.g. Hallam et al 2004) I am nevertheless conscious that in conversations - including interviews - children spoke predominantly about liking Viner School. Of course I can cast a critical eye to how the school 'spoke itself' in terms of being a 'good school'. I could also reflect upon issues of validity and my positioning as an adult asking questions and the children potentially wanting to give the 'right' answers. However, my time in the school and looking at my data suggests that the children valued the teachers 'listening', 'not shouting', 'teaching well' and taking an active role in resolving bullying issues. Children quoted here were in years 4 and 5 (aged 9 – 10) speaking in short interviews with me after I had been in their classrooms regularly over a period of a year.

CR Anything else....?

B [He says they're bringing their biographies before the end of the term]
Well, people are good here, teachers. And my friends are good as well, they're nice.

CR What makes the teachers good?

B They teach well.

- P They teach better than they do at [names previous school]. Teachers are nice. They didn't teach properly, in this school they do. I just think they teach better in this school.
- CR So can you tell me what it's like at this school?
- F It's nice
- CR Tell me some of the things that are nice, if I was to see some nice things what would I see?
- F You'll see like, not teachers shouting at us, but only sometimes if we're very naughty, Um <pause> maths. When they explain to us, 'cause when I was at my old school they didn't explain, they just give us the sheets.
- CR What does explaining mean?
- F Like, tell us how to do it. And then say we was doing maths, and then she'll tell us what we have to do in maths. Say people need help yeah? She'll explain it to them.
- CR What's it like to be a pupil?
- S It's good, the playtimes are longer and the teachers are more nicer.
- P They used to shout [in her old school]. These teachers just listen to you. They listen to the other person's point of view. They listen to you instead of putting you straight into detention.

Interviews with children in years 4 and 5 (age 9 – 10)

Of course notions of the 'good', 'nice', 'better' teachers/teaching are fertile grounds for further exploration in themselves. I have previously touched upon, for example, the 'historically shifting nature of the good teacher discourse' (Moore 2004 p.42) and changing relations between teacher and child in a dependency of performativity (Jeffrey 2002). This said, given much of what the children had to say was outwardly 'positive', it is dispiriting as well as revealing that in the quote below, Roda's critical comments about school were not heard as pertinent and also constructive. Both Ms Bradley and Wendy's^{vii} descriptions individualise disability; 'the idea that disability is an individual's or at most a family's problem' and 'the view that disability is, perforce, a problem' (Linton 1998 p.526). I notice above that in response to 'cause with the bullying and all the other stuff I really want to leave', I asked, 'Did you tell your mum about that?' rather than 'Did you tell your *teacher* about that?'

In interview I asked each class teacher to 'say a few words' about each child in their class. Ms Bradley, responds to this question about Roda. Her response echoes teaching assistant Wendy's turn to individual deficit.

B Very able um. <pause> I think more and more it's becoming apparent of how frustrated Roda is with you know, her physical ability [contrast with what Roda says about the school, lessons – like the PE ones – and the building at her new school] um and her peers because she feels she can't, doesn't have anyone who can really relate to her. Um and is really keen to go away to boarding school, um, and I think she's very influenced by the media.

CR Oh really?

B And also her family. She's writing an article at the moment about inclusion in schools and whether it works and it's really, really, negative and I found it depressing to look at her first draft because she criticises everything. Peoples' attitudes, the way people look at her, where the lift button is situated, you know. And she, it, you think you're trying to do, you know, you think you've achieved a lot of things with these kids and, but I don't know whether how much of that she truly believes or whether she decided to take that negative standpoint and then just went hell for leather. It's not a <pause> The children some of them are writing articles to go in a newspaper that [the local authority] are putting together.

CR I see. OK.

B So. I mean, I think that's just something she'll work through as she gets older. And obviously she's become more aware of her own limits and she looks around her and I suppose she thinks of the future and I think she's going through a difficult time in that way at the moment. So I don't, I think friendships are hard for her here as well and she's so used to all the adult attention. I think some of the children in a way are even jealous of that. I certainly from what I heard last year Wendy would say that if there was a small argument which two other children would perhaps sort out themselves, with Roda because there were always adults around they'd know about it, it would become a big thing?

CR I see

- B And children felt she was very much, I don't know, wrapped up in cotton wool I suppose.

Interview with Ms Bradley, class teacher

Again in this situation where the school's responses and arrangements for 'special educational needs' are judged 'good practice', reflection of the barriers to peer relations *produced* by assigning a teaching assistant (e.g. Ainscow 1999, Lacey 2001) in this way are absent as a possibility or way of thinking. This description is reflective of an ableism that, in failing to engage with the social conditions that mediate responses to disability brings responsibility for exclusion back round to the excluded. It might be 'depressing' that 'Peoples' attitudes, the way people look at [Roda] and where the lift button is situated' are all problematic, but if at all because the problems *persist*, not 'depressing' because the issues are *being raised*.

On looking back for the citation I had noted as 'inclusion experience' at the start of this section, I found I had misquoted the source. It was something Julie Allan observed that 'Inclusion is constructed within accountability regimes as some kind of final destination for certain students, but the limited understanding of what inclusion means to the recipients has led to the establishments of quite unimaginative and inept 'outcomes', which are merely concerned with physical presence in mainstream schools and not with the quality of the school experience' (Allan 2008 p.15). I recalled the quote because the OFSTED report cited here is suggestive of inclusion as being a final destination that has been reached in this school, with children's experiences of this inclusion questioning 'the quality of their school experience'. But my misquotation was reminiscent for me of the phrase 'girlfriend experience' and indeed of some tourist attractions I had endured with children: the Doctor Who Experience (at Land's End for those who might be interested) and 'Tower Bridge Experience' (London). 'Girlfriend experience' (GFE) is a term used for particular features in a transaction between a prostitute and client that are suggestive of a 'conventional' (i.e. non-commercial) relationship (e.g. Sanders 2008). The tourist attraction 'experiences' present recognisable features suggestive for example, of being in an adventure with 'Dr Who' or being close to the moving parts of Tower Bridge. I come away from my fieldwork and reflections of data looking at the 'Inclusion experience' as a performance recreating features recognisable within managerialist understandings of 'the good school' and with epistemological roots in Special Education; an exclusionary inclusion that leaves challenges to persistent inequalities unexplored and maintains institutional equilibrium.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis has been concerned with issues of equity in an inner city primary school, at the turn of the new millennium. I started off, a long time ago it seems now, with questions around 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' and how these are understood in a primary school context. Reading Ball, Maguire and Braun's (2012) description of their inductive, qualitative research project, I feel in good company to see that in the process of their writing, thinking and analytical work they too were pressed in new directions, exploring 'a number of theoretical possibilities in relation to [their] data...confronted in [their] data by themes and issues that now seem to be more important than they originally looked to be' (Ball et al 2012 p. 137). Near completion, my struggle and confusion feels like more of a legitimate research process. I have presented data that I hope reflect what Youdell (2006a p. 13) has termed 'mundane' moments, 'to focus upon unintended and overlooked consequences, so as to render our practice critically problematic' (Ball 1995 p. 262). As such, I invite the reader to evaluate the plausibility of these findings in terms of recognisable school processes that are troubled, that is, made 'critically problematic' through the theoretical work and analyses advanced here.

The methodologies and findings of this research are inextricably linked. As an ethnographic study, I sought to come to an understanding of 'the way we do things around here' (Walford 2008 p. 7), seeking to find out, 'What's going on here? How does this work?' Leonardo (2009 p.18) observes that 'critical education means having to confront the reality of inequality...coming to terms with social arrangements that create structural disparities and understanding their sources'. The use of 'confront' and 'coming to terms with' in Leonardo's sentence conveys something of the profound discomfort involved in troubling routine assumptions. I described at the outset being immediately propelled, during fieldwork, into the minutiae of everyday life in school; processes and practices, 'hierarchies and everyday injustices' (Youdell 2011 p. 8). Throughout the research, my data indicated a need to question *taken for granted* practices and procedures. Initially my experience as a teacher, and my key research questions, suggested that I might be found hovering around 'formal' exclusionary processes: school 'discipline' and the machinations of Special Educational Needs. I was to be found in these arenas at different junctures during fieldwork. However, observations in classrooms and

listening to children talking about their classrooms and learning, drew my attention towards day-to-day familiarities such as where and with whom children were seated in their classrooms, allocation of work tasks and children going out of their classrooms for 1:1 or small group instruction. This pressed me to engage with understanding 'gentle' exclusions (Bourdieu and Champagne 1999); and 'the correct means of training' (Foucault 1979), by which I mean, theoretical work that has led to a wider exploration of pupil subjectivities than I might have imagined.

I like Stephen Ball's stated proclivity to 'chip away at the social' through his ethnographic work (2006 p. 2), citing Foucault's purpose (1980 p.145) 'to analyse the specificity of mechanisms of power'. Countering decontextualised or sweeping deficit judgement necessitates making explicit the context in which teachers themselves work and the disciplinary power in which they are enmeshed. I am referring to the emphasis in this thesis upon theorising education policy, drawing heavily on the work of Stephen Ball^{viii}. Like Ball and his colleagues (2012), I have used the term 'enacting' policy, and by this I also mean policy as a process – as well as 'texts and 'things' (legislation and national strategies)...also discursive processes' (Ball et al 2012 p.3).

The detailed and careful analyses in Deborah Youdell's (e.g. 2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2011) work, as well as that of Julie Allan (e.g. 2007) and Linda Graham (2006, Graham and Slee 2008) build upon the work of Foucault^{lix}. These have provided me with ways in which to think about and explore these taken for granted practices; 'dividing practices' (Foucault 1979) and what I term the 'latticework' of interlocking interventions; sorting and grouping pupils in a finely graded hierarchy throughout this school setting. I argue that educational inequalities were being made and re-made as apparently unanticipated and unquestioned outcomes of the many processes comprising 'good practice', notably grouping pupils by perceived 'ability'. Relating back to my initial questions, my findings problematise 'inclusiveness' and the reach of exclusionary processes across a school judged by OFSTED to be outstanding.

The work of Foucault has provided what Ball et al (2012 p. 137) term 'provocations' to think - in this context - about the making of the primary school pupil. I propose that small moments of every day classroom experience reveal 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p.135) functioning as 'disciplinary power' that 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes' (Foucault 1979). As

such, and through presenting and analysing data, I suggest that the same processes that serve an over-riding drive to 'fix' or repair children in order to meet the normative demands of the 'standards' agenda', increasingly 'fix' children as educational subjects in a finely graded hierarchy.

In this concluding chapter I shall endeavour to summarise the contributions this thesis makes to research in the sociology of education. Trying to be far more 'four square' (so to speak) in my written structure, I will go on to discuss the flaws and limitations of this project. Finally, I will reflect on the implications of this research, including potential for further investigation and study.

A hierarchy of learners: 'Ability' grouping in a new millennium.

This thesis has examined what one teacher described as 'setting three levels of ability, work-wise'. Through detailed analysis, I have explored processes that apparently start with the 'work' or 'objectives' - for example those defined by National Strategy documents - then 'set' three levels of ability into which children, with their erstwhile heterogeneity, are allocated to homogenous organisational groupings. Thinking about a liquid solidifying or 'setting' provided an image of the ways in which children in this schooling context appeared to become set or fixed in and by their allocated 'ability' and its co-location within a latticework of organisational processes by which children were sorted into a finely graded hierarchy by perceived 'ability' in every class from year 1 throughout the school. In his 2003 professorial lecture Ball (2003c p.9) mentions that he had considered the title, 'this is where I came in'. Recalling the way in which old films showing at the cinema used to run on a 'loop', Ball explains that the title refers to 'aspects of the policy context in which I began, which I and others were critically dismembering, [that] seem to have been magically recreated now without any sense of a history of research' (2003c p.9). I have unpicked taken-for-granted assumptions of 'ability' and pervasive 'ability grouping' throughout the data presented, recalling Gillborn and Youdell's findings in secondary school contexts of *'the new IQism* – an approach that affirms traditional notions of IQ, without conscious deliberation of the consequences...even masquerade[ing] as part of an inclusive project concerned with social justice and equity' (2000 p. 15).

Drawing upon the work of Foucault (1977 p. 170) who refers to '*minor procedures*', I have explored assumptions underpinning dominant pupil-grouping in classrooms. I

have illustrated in detail 'rather simple technical procedures' (Rose 1999 p.135), in which children are produced as 'top, middle or bottom ability' pupils, and through a multitude of procedures and calculations allocated to the associated interlocking latticework of interventions. Remembering where Stephen Ball 'came in', I have considered 'Particular disciplines, regimes of truth, bodies of knowledge, [that] make possible both *what can be said* and *what can be done*' (Foucault 1977, 1980 in Walkerdine p.154-5). Seeking, as John White exhorts (2006 p. 157), to 'become aware of these roots of our conventional perspectives so that we can...make ourselves free of them', I have recalled the words of hereditarian psychologists Galton and Burt, sounding eerily familiar in this school context. In her 1984 study of 'developmental psychology and child-centred pedagogy', Walkerdine explored the conditions of possibility, the regimes of truth (Foucault 1979) which 'surrounded the take-up and sedimentation of those practices we now take to be common sense' (Walkerdine 1984 p. 177). As Walkerdine (1984 p. 172) asserts, while Piaget's theories were set up 'in opposition to a view of inherited or pre-given intelligence, the general project within which his work is sited and the terms of its construction do not fall outside those'. Wheeling forward, and building on the work of Gillborn and Youdell (2000 p. 212) I share their assertion that whilst policy makers and teachers might not *consciously* accept 'hereditarian assumptions (and all the concomitant inequalities of opportunity that they produce and legitimate)' these are 'enacted through the discourse of 'ability' and in this study, in regard to children as young as five years old.

Education policy: researching the good teacher, good pupil, good school.

In my introduction I recalled Allan and Slee (2008 p. 45) describing Len Barton's work as having 'produced new ways of looking and thinking for others and himself'. I reflected that it is the 'and himself' that stood out for me in this sentence, what Allan and Slee (2008 p. 45) speculate as appearing to be 'engaging in the practices of the self, as outlined by Foucault (1988)'. I am not sure I can be so grand as to propose that I have been 'engaging in practices of the self'. Citing Bourdieu (2001), Puddephatt et al describe 'a reflexive approach to sociology' as 'the only way to be critical about one's own work and present it with at least some insight into the social and political context in which it was created' (Puddephatt et al 2009 p. 10). In my introduction, I cited Clough and Barton (1995, pp. 3 – 4), 'The biggest lie that a so-called 'methodology' tells is of the distance between us and our work; hence we

elaborate the clinical nature, the sterile cleanliness of the instruments we use'. I described 'writing myself in' to ensuing chapters, endeavouring to engage the reader in a reciprocal process; what I termed 'thinking out loud' on the written page, as a means of disrupting this notion of 'sterile cleanliness'; attempting to illuminate processes, dilemmas, analyses. The thought in my head when I read this back, is that the word missing in that sentence is 'teachers', as in, engage *teachers* in a reciprocal process to 'think otherwise'. I reflected how few opportunities there had previously been for me in the busy-ness of full-time teaching to 'think otherwise'. I am probably jumping ahead again, to 'implications', but I am also intertwining the process of being a teacher researching, with my findings of 'the good teacher' in 'the good school'. Nearing completion, I have been encouraged to 'look outwards'; beyond the tiny, seemingly insular acts of doctoral research to what this study might contribute. It is not that I would wish to inflict doctoral study on any of my teaching colleagues, or for that matter, reading this thesis as if it is generalisable. Remembering back to my introduction, it is telling that I was stuck so many times during this research process by imagining that I had to come up with 'answers' if I was 'so clever'. I return to Leonardo's observation that 'answers are only as deep as the *questions* that educators and students are able to pose' (Leonardo 2009 p. 19 *my emphasis*).

What my interjections and active insertion into the text have intended to convey is the specificity of *this* study in *this* school. Saying this, I have to emphasise this thesis seeks to be 'systemically critical', not critical of individual teachers or of this institution. Having foregrounded a quote from Stephen Ball:

Critical researchers, apparently safely ensconced in the moral high ground, nonetheless make a livelihood trading in the artefacts of misery and broken dreams of practitioners' Ball (1997 p.258)

I have reflected throughout the thesis on my own positioning and associated dilemmas as teacher 'insider', as well as seeking to theorise the 'good teacher'; the systemic context in which decisions – policy - was being made. I was rather intrigued by Walford's (2007) article title 'Everyone generalizes, but ethnographers need to resist doing so'. I am not so sure they do (and I assume this must be a self-conscious generalisation?). The concluding chapter of a thesis is not the place to start a debate. The reason I mention it is that it pre-empt the 'implications' section here, and any claims beyond the reach of this small study, particularly that I have

worked to interrogate and communicate the specificity of this research site, what Ball and colleagues (2012) call 'taking context seriously'. Presenting data as I have done, is inextricably bound up with my theoretical conceptualisations of policy, and teachers 'doing', 'enacting' rather than 'implementing' policy (Ball et al 2012). I would say that I have touched upon but not wholly succeeded in fleshing out contextual: situated contexts, professional cultures, material and external contexts.

I, of course, have a mental image of the research site, that I have called Viner School. I have taken care to anonymise my data, and also happen to disagree with Walford (2007, 2005) on anonymity. He links the issue of anonymity to the need instead for clearer theoretical sampling, rather than seeking the 'typical' school and what he asserts is the tendency for schools in educational ethnographies to be portrayed in their anonymity and pseudonyms as 'any-school'. I detailed the sampling of my 'site' as an 'ordinary' school – a feature of relevance in my findings as highlighted by Maguire et al (2011 p.2) who I cited as exploring 'the complexities and contradictions involved in the search for and the identification of the 'ordinary' school'. They continue that 'while experienced educationalists could easily identify schools that fulfilled our criteria of 'ordinariness', when we started to explore the ways in which the nominated schools were representing themselves, many of these schools were eschewing any sense of being ordinary and were constructing themselves as distinctive and, if not outstanding, well on the way to becoming so'. This has two implications, the first is the construction and telling of Viner School in data not as 'ordinary' but 'very good', and 'very inclusive'; a matter of significance to my findings. The second is that I cannot imagine the possibility of, or indeed desirability for non-anonymised critical research in this competitive, marketised policy context.

I have sought in my data to convey *these* teachers' and support staff's decisions and constraints. Descriptions, for example, of Vincent puffing his way to the top floor of this Victorian school building or Judy's detailed recounting of Early Literacy Support have been situated in analyses of relevant external contexts of the time. Indeed, many of the 'interventions' mentioned in data are either now out of date, in this 'fast' policy economy (Agger 2004) or were particular in their configuration to Viner School. Their effects ask questions for the hierarchized organisation of children to meet policy imperatives. Having explored conceptualizations of policy at the outset, and notions of policy sociology (Ball 1997), I have intended *not* to decouple events from their historically and geographically specific location (Nespor 2000 in Walford

2007 p. 163). Ball et al (2012 p. 33) observe, 'buildings and infrastructure join with agents to 'do policy' rather than the "best possible' environments for 'implementation': ideal buildings students and teachers and even resources' (Ball et al 2012 pp. 41 – 42). As one teacher said of Viner: it's a 'beautiful building and it's in a very nice area, um, but it's er, I would have thought if anyone wanted to build an accessible school they'd perhaps *not* chosen one that's on three levels'. Even this small quote belies the endless richness of one's data. With mezzanine floors (familiar in this Victorian school design) the school was actually on SIX floors. The LIFT only went to three: therefore children reliant on the lift for mobility could never access the mezzanines and were entirely excluded from the prized little jobs of 'running' errands to the small rooms on those floors. But I digress.

Across this thesis I have interrogated policy intersections and interactions, with particular attention to ways in which policies are sedimented into a history of previous policies (Ball 2003a p.27). In the allocation of children to groups and treatments for remediation it is possible to see 'the observation and classification of normal development' (Walkerdine 1984 p. 177) that reaches back to the nineteenth century when 'children as a category were being singled out for scientific study for the first time and the discourses which produced children were drawn from biology and topography' (Walkerdine 1984 p. 177). I have been reminded of something Roger Slee observed in interview (Slee 2009), that exclusion 'has a very, very long history and it's very, very pervasive, and its history will continue...different forms of exclusion to different groups of people will happen over time as a reflection of different social movements and different global movements.' There might be familiar sociological themes here, but their exploration reflects the complexity of specific context.

'Good teacher' and 'good pupil' are associated with *performance* in what Ball (2003b p.226) observes changes 'what academic work and learning are'. I have presented data and analyses exploring teachers' decision-making in the policy contexts of managerialist surveillance and performativity (Ball 2003b). These have pointed to a *technicist* model of teaching; 'the reduction of teaching to a narrowly defined concern with instrumental techniques, skills, and objectives' (Giroux 1992 p. 98), defined by the imperatives of the standards agenda and the logics of organisational convenience. Analysing small, candid, shared moments during interviews with teachers, I drew upon Shireen Benjamin's work, reflecting upon

issues of power, responsibility and ethics in ethnographic methodology and as a teacher being similarly 'multiply positioned' as Benjamin (2002 p. 27) termed it, in relation to teachers, pupils and research endeavour. Through these moments I have sought to communicate the dilemmas of ethnographic research; the dilemmas of 'insider' status, as well as findings that are tentative, suggesting 'profound changes' in the 'act of teaching and the subjectivity of the teacher' (Ball 2001 p. 219). Analyses of data around the National Strategies (literacy and numeracy) and associated 'interventions' provide evidence of pace and compliance, the pressures to 'teach teach teach' as one teacher put it, 'the fast pace of teacher-controlled activities' (Moss 2004 p. 129) to ensure content coverage. Evident in data is the notion of 'steering from a distance' through layers of surveillance and self-surveillance, with OFSTED judgements permeating practice even when inspectors are not physically present in the school.

Inclusion/ exclusion

This is where I came in. My initial research questions were conceptualised from my experiences in schools, particularly as 'Teacher in Charge' of a Pupil Referral Unit. This research project emerged in the context of the apparent paradox between the then New Labour Government's agenda for more 'inclusive' education practices on the one hand and yet the high level of school exclusions and expansion of segregated units on the other. I sought to enquire into how these tensions were negotiated and what understandings of inclusive education emerged in the primary school context; situating these processes within wider local and national policy contexts.

In my analyses, I draw upon a concept from Bourdieu and Champagne (1999 pp. 422-423), and their aptly titled book 'Outcasts on the Inside', in which they describe 'gentle' exclusionary practices, 'spreading out the process of elimination, the school system turns into a permanent home for potential outcasts'. Relationships between what teachers termed 'interventions' and in-class table groups (based on perceived pupil ability) were not immediately evident but patterns emerged, with principal interventions attaching to specific in-class groups; 'Gifted and Talented' to the top table (usually called the hexagon table); 'booster' groups to the middle (square table); Additional and Early Literacy support to 'just below the middle' (triangle table); and what were termed 'focus groups' to bottom tables (circle table). Key arenas for decision-making and maintenance of these allocations to the hierarchy

were special educational needs meetings and, towards the end of the academic year, a 'hand over meeting' in which the current class teacher talked about each child in turn and handed over table groupings to the new class teacher who would be taking the class the following year.

Bourdieu and Champagne's concept of 'gentle' exclusionary practices communicates an understanding of 'exclusion' beyond that of *formal* exclusionary processes. Analysing data across classrooms and meetings, I suggest that it is the *children themselves* who are increasingly produced in relation to their table allocation and associated positioning in the hierarchy: so whilst there is for example, one of each table name (hexagon, pentagon, square, triangle, circle) shape names were referred to *in the plural*: the hexagons, pentagons, squares, triangles or circles, dependent upon the table to which children are allocated for literacy and numeracy. I assert that in this school setting, interventions and their associated criteria contributed to the *production* of pupils (Youdell 2006), including their positioning in the within-class hierarchy; fixing as in repairing children and/or perceived deficits in their learning, contributing to the fixing or solidifying of the type of pupil each child was recognised as being.

Drawing upon a musical illustration, I spent a week one Summer helping to 'drum up business' for a friend's music concerts. During the day, their saxophone quartet would busk, performing a piece from that evening's show^{ix}. My task was to 'flyer' the crowd as they played – giving out details of that evening's concert. The piece was Ravel's 'Bolero'. To put it very basically, the piece involves instruments coming in by turn, one layering on the other. To add a bit of glitz, it was someone's bright idea to bring the saxophonists to the busking spot one at a time *whilst playing* on the back of a motorbike: one starting solo, adding another and another until they were all playing together. I create this visual image to try and make less heavy weather of combining these key themes. I have explored the re-articulation of 'ability' in the twenty-first century primary school, demonstrated the relevance of 'the good teacher and good pupil' discourses in current enactments of education policy and have referred to inclusion and exclusion. I referred in my literature review to 'policy ensembles' (Ball 1997), - saying this made them sound too harmonious. It is in the interaction of these key themes - ensembles of *interrelated* policies (Ball 2003a) - that this thesis makes a contribution to understanding the making of the primary school pupil^{ixi} in these school processes.

What is brought together here is the subjectivity of the 'good' teacher: striving for excellence (Ball 2003b), a part of which is to enact interventions that are sewn into the fabric of National Strategies and Special Educational Needs 'good practice'; interventions that reflect what Foucault (1979 p. 193) terms 'a 'descending' individualization:

...as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference.

Reflecting here upon the writing of the individual and group 'Individual Education Plan', as the fitting of children into the interlocking hierarchy of interventions and attendant group category, Foucault (1979 p. 192) observes 'This turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection'. As such I seek to problematise processes that are seen as 'good practice', and 'in the child's best interests'.

Bringing data together from across classroom contexts, I have signalled a situation in which curriculum and pedagogy have become opaque and teacher subjectivities shifted towards the technocratic. Referring back to Skrtic's (1995) 'decoupling' of special education in order that the organization remains unchanged – and foregrounding the persistence of 'fixed' notions of ability - there is a turn to the *children* as faulty, as 'cause for concern', when curricula and interventions do not work.

I finally explore 'inclusion' and understandings of inclusive education in this school setting towards the end of the thesis, presenting and challenging the idea of 'inclusion' as a destination, suggestive as it is of successful arrival and closure. 'Performing the good school' (Perryman 2009 p. 611) and associated 'closure and certainty' pertaining to 'limited notions of inclusion' (Graham 2006) are relevant to key findings in this study. The closure inherent in the OFSTED judgement that this school 'includes *all* pupils' for me echoes the concern that inclusion as a concept has been 'tamed' (Edward Said in Slee 2005 p.181). As such, and taken together with the conceptualisations of 'good practice',

Underpinning the entire movement on standards, standardisation and school effectiveness is the assumption that once a set of educational 'truths' has been established, they hold good for all teachers, schools, children, parents and communities. School Effectiveness can represent an epistemology of closure and certainty. It is both a homogenised and homogenising discourse.

Morley and Rassool (1999 p.13) cited by Perryman (2009 p.615)

I have cited Roger Slee who asserts that 'inclusive education has become what Edward Said describes as a 'travelling theory...in their movement across time and space they lose their original insurrectionary force' (2011 p. 153). The insurrectionary force relates to what Slee (2011 p. 152) refers to as a continuation of inclusive education's past: 'a struggle against exclusion and oppression', and as such this thesis seeks to contribute to Slee's 'Proposition #1': 'identifying and dismantling educational exclusion' (2011 p. 153). I suggest that the interplay between special educational needs, associated 'interventions' and seeking to be inclusive, contributed to the school context in which ongoing and insistent processes of defining the children took place. The existing structures and arrangements for 'including' children within this school (and in this school within this Local Education Authority) here delineate children as 'normal' and 'other' via special educational processes.

Finally what I have tried to do is listen. Recalling Len Barton's emphasis on 'voice' in research (Barton in Slee 2010), I have interviewed children, and specifically 'disabled' children in this school setting. Again, considering this data in the context of this 'very good' school, I suggest the term 'Inclusion Experience' to capture a performance recreating features recognisable within managerialist understandings of 'the good school' and with epistemological roots in Special Education; an exclusionary inclusion that leaves challenges to persistent inequalities unexplored and maintains institutional equilibrium.

Flaws and Limitations

The phrase 'how long have you got?' springs to mind. Starting in my introduction on the inductive nature of pursuing themes in data, I have written the thesis that I have wanted to, and that represents my data as well as I can. If I had the strength and the time I would probably cut up whole chapters and start again, but there's an element of 'painting the Forth Bridge'^{lxii} in the writing process. In terms of limitations, as I hinted in my section titled education policy in this chapter, I might have liked to have had the time and resources to explore 'context' more thoroughly. My data touched

upon professional cultures (such as 'policy management') and material contexts (budget, buildings) and it would have been interesting to pursue those in more detail. But given that issues such as 'budget and buildings' often loom large in stated constraints for admitting previously excluded disabled children into schools, these issues were not 'fore-grounded' in data.

I have data related to a wider range of 'interventions' than those discussed here, that are further illustrative of the tendency to define and allocate children to a range of groups and remediation based upon social and biographical identity categories, including racialised and gendered attributes, those attached to 'behaviour' and disability. Of course it would be illuminating to look at all of these in detail, but within the confines of this thesis, this would send exploration of inclusion and exclusion sprawling outside of word limits and does not alter the central arguments and findings: of an exclusionary inclusion, and the vulnerability of an ever increasing number of students to 'gentle exclusions' within the organisation of a 'top, middle, bottom' ability hierarchy. Roger Slee's observation is apposite,

'Inclusive education research has not only aligned itself with the interrogation and amelioration of the exclusion of disabled students. Indeed, exclusion, forgive my expression, is far more embracing. Researchers in disability studies and inclusive education have long identified strong links with the experience of other vulnerable student identities'

Slee 2009 p. 184

In relation to these additional issues I have appended graphs indicating the associations between table allocation, ethnic background and receipt of Free School Meals. I do not wish to over-state their significance because of the small numbers involved; nevertheless, the emerging patterns are in the predicted direction. Even with numbers across the entire school this would be a small sample, but it would be interesting to interrogate these issues further.

Alexander's (2004 p. 23) observation of the persistence of the Victorian curriculum into the twenty-first century ('the basics and the rest') is reflected in the children's 'tabled' identities; a feature I term 'morning all day' to capture the persistence of literacy and numeracy hour identities into the 'mixed ability' seating arrangements of the afternoons.

CR I'm smiling because a lot of my disks are so evocative
because there's music,

Teacher	In the background!
CR	Echoing up from different rooms all the time and it's always really different.
Teacher	Yes.
CR	Literally. You can have jazz or opera.
Teacher	Drums.
CR	Or recorder or saxophone.

Teacher and Claudine during an interview

I have analysed data representing key features of this learning environment, but with more time I would have been interested to further investigate other curricular 'offers'. For example individual and group music lessons outside of the mainstream classrooms, horse riding off-site and 'craft/ design technology' type activities with the learning mentor. Also interventions and activities aimed at social participation: for example 'Task Force', School Council, breakfast and after-school clubs and performances such as 'International Evening'. My 'sociological imagination' wonders whether these echoed table groupings along with other interventions: highly valued music lessons to top tables, horse riding to disabled children and 'craft' out of class (within the realm of the learning mentor), to those deemed to have social or behavioural difficulties. In interview, children suggested that 'Task Force' (helping round the school) was for those 'with behaviour problems' whereas 'School Council' was a higher status form of student participation based upon training and Local Education Authority links. These remain tantalisingly out of reach.

Implications and potential for further research

There were many points when I worried that I would not complete this degree. A few months before submitting this thesis, during another of these troughs, I happened to be in an unfamiliar primary school classroom. The teacher instructed the children by table name, directing the children's attention to their respective numeracy tasks for that lesson. It was a different school, different place, different time to my fieldwork. The teacher instructed the 'tables' by shape name: the hexagons, rectangles this time, squares, triangles, circles. My attention was seized and my eyes flicked up. I realised the children's names were there on the wall, listed at their allocated table. Before the children had started on these allocated tasks, the teacher went over to the circles – the 'bottom' table – and added in a tone somewhere between despairing and disparaging, 'you should know this by now'. Maybe it was meant to be 'rallying', to communicate high expectations, a call for them to work harder. But what it meant was, no matter how hard they worked that lesson, it wasn't going to be

good enough, they should know this by now. It was pretty much the jolt I needed to complete writing.

I take implications and potential for further research to mean the asking of questions that Leonardo (2009) articulates so well. The reason I cite this recent event is that my findings are specific to the particular questions I raised, in one school at one time, but which ask questions that reach beyond this one school. The ways in which policies combined raises questions about the unanticipated consequences of policy ensembles in other school settings. Specifically, I share one of Roger Slee's questions, 'who gains?' I am not suggesting that Viner School is every school, that this is what happens in primary schools, plural. I am suggesting that the ways in which policies were enacted in this school raises questions about 'doing' policy in other primary school settings.

I see David Cameron (current Prime Minister) quoted as promising 'aggressive setting by ability' (2007 in Exley and Ball 2011), and also that 'attempts at inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools are dismissed [in current Conservative policy] on the basis they are 'ideologically driven' (Exley and Ball 2011 p. 107). This recalls 1997 for two reasons. The first is Brantlinger's robust challenge to the term 'ideology' as applied to inclusive education, the second is the band *D:Ream*, and their track 'Things Can Only Get Better', anthem to the Labour Party's campaign preceding their landslide win at that year's general election. Things, we can see, can also get worse.

So I am seeking to engage others in 'critically dismembering' understandings and deployment of 'ability' in primary school discourse. I have suggested this is intertwined with aspects of what it means to be a 'good teacher'.

In a completely unrelated aspect of work, I happened to read this sentence in a recent Primary School OFSTED report. It states 'two particular weaknesses in some teaching which prevent the inspected school from being outstanding' . This was one:

In the themed lessons, teachers sometimes set the same work for the most able as for pupils of average ability and this is leading to the former not always being challenged enough.

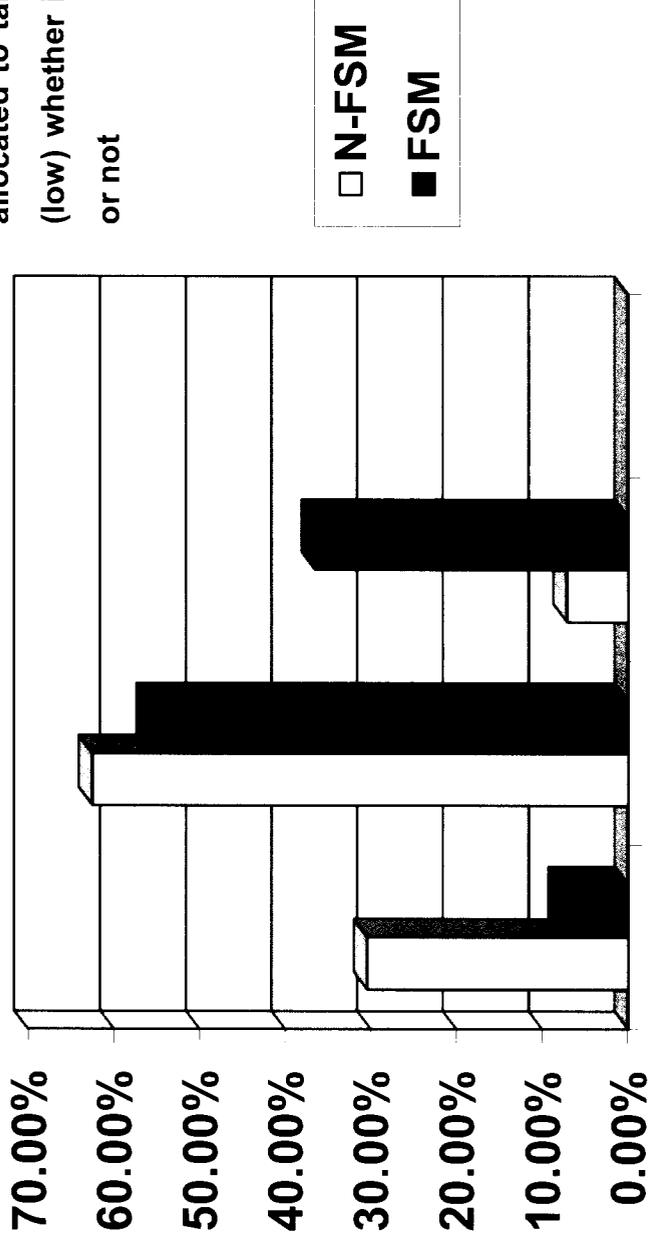
This small study contributes to the questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions in schools and seeks to illuminate aspects of the ways in which inequalities are perpetuated for others to research further. Others are already asking the questions: 'In question are the very conceptions of ability, disability, and disablement, and the patterning of social relations attendant with these varying conceptions...' Slee (2009 p. 179) but it takes many people, across constituencies, to chip away at the social in the struggle for inclusive education that is not inherently exclusionary.

Appendices:

- a. Graph 1: Percentage of children allocated to tables 1 (high) to 5 (low) whether in receipt of Free School Meals or not.
- b. Graph 2: Allocation to tables 1 (high) to 5 (low) by broad categories 'White' and 'Black Caribbean'.
- c. Monitoring document: Children's table allocations in 4 classes studied.
- d. Sample teacher interview
- e. List of acronyms used.
- f. Sample classroom sketch.
- g. List of Participants

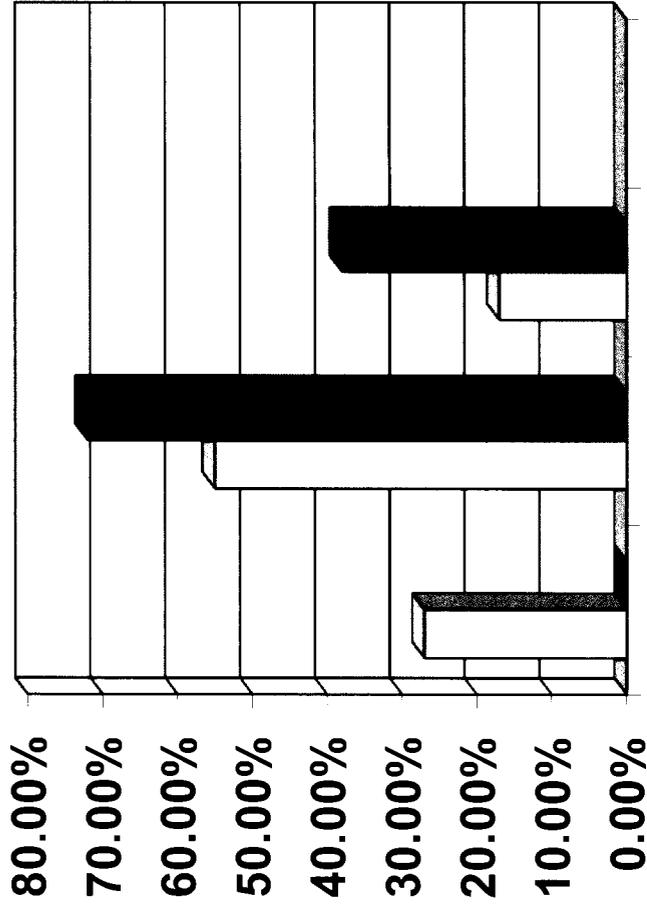
a. Graph 1

Percentage of children allocated to tables 1 (high) to 5 (low) whether in receipt of FSM or not



**table 1 tables table 5
2-4**

b. Graph 2



**table 1 tables table 5
2-4**

Taking into account small numbers: allocation to tables 1 (high) to 5 (low) by broad categories 'White' and 'Black Caribbean'.

□ White
■ Black Caribbean

c. Working monitoring documents: class lists (anonymised) of table groups across four classes studied in detail.

School over all

White UK	White Other	Black Caribbean heritage	Black African heritage	Black other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other (known) group
119 = 27%	88 = 20%	26 = 6%	82 = 19%	44 = 10%	9 = 2%	4 = 1%	25 = 6%	0	44 = 10%
Total 'white' 47%	Total 'black' 35%				Total 'Asian' 9%		0		10%
Pupils eligible for a FSM 192 = 44%									
Number of boys 238 = 54% Number of girls 203 = 46%									

Total

441

Aggregate Numbers – All 4 Classes: (28 pupils), (29 pupils), (26 pupils), (26 pupils) = 109 out of 441 = 25% of the whole school

1White UK	2White Other	3Black Caribbean heritage	4Black African heritage	5Black other	6Indian	7Pakistani	8Bangladeshi	9Chinese	10Other (known) group
12 Girls (1 FSM) 13 Boys (7 FSM)	9 Girls (4 FSM) 6 Boys (1 FSM)	8 Girls (6 FSM) 10 Boys (5 FSM)	Girls (4 FSM) Boys (9 FSM)	1 Boy (FSM) 1 Girl	1 Boy 1 Girl	1 Boy	1 Boy (FSM)		4 Girls (2 FSM) Boys 14 (10 FSM)
FSM 8/25 = 32% Girls 12 = 11% Boys 13 = 12%	5/15 = 33% G9 = 8% B6 = 6%	11/18 = 61% G8 = 7% B10 = 9%	13/26 = 50% G9 = 8% B17 = 16%	½ = 50% G1 = 1% B1 = 1%	G1=1% B1=1%	B1= 1%	1/1 = 100% B1= 1%		12/18 = 67% G4 = 4% B14 = 13%
25 = 23% 40 = 37% (32.5% of whom FSM) Boys 19 = 18% Girls 21 = 19%	15 = 14% 46 = 42% (52% of whom FSM) Boys 28 = 26% Girls 17 = 16%	18 = 16% 46 = 42% (52% of whom FSM) Boys 28 = 26% Girls 17 = 16%	26 = 24%	2 = 2%	2 = 2% 4 = 4%	1 = 1%	1 = 1%		18 = 17% 18 = 17% (67% of whom FSM) Boys 14 = 13% Girls 4 = 4%
Pupils eligible for a FSM 13,16,10,12 = 51 (47% compared to 44% whole school)									
Total in school boys 64 = 59% Number of girls 44 = 41% Total in school boys 54% Girls 46%									

Girls44	Boys64	FSM = 51 Total
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Table name	Top	Middle	Bottom	
Pupils on table (numbers = ethnic code)	Gir1, Boy2, Gir2 FSM, Gir4, Gir1, Boy2, Boy4, Gir10, Boy10 FSM, Gir1, Boy2, Gir4, Boy4, Gir6, Gir5, Boy1, Boy1 FSM, Boy1, Gir2, Gir4 FSM, Boy10 FSM, Total 22	Gir1, Boy3, Gir3 FSM, Gir4, Boy5 FSM, Boy1, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, boy6, boy7, Gir1, Boy2, boy4 FSM, boy4 FSM, boy10 FSM, boy4, boy10, gir1, boy1 FSM, gir3, boy10 FSM, Total 21	Gir3 FSM, boy4, boy4, boy10, boy10 FSM, gir1, boy2, gir2, gir2, gir3 FSM, boy3 FSM, boy4 FSM, boy1, boy3, boy3, boy4, boy10 FSM, Boy1, Gir4, Boy4, Gir10, Total 22	Gir2, Gir2 FSM, Boy3, Boy4 FSM, Gir4 FSM, Boy8 FSM, Boy1, Gir2 FSM, Gir2 FSM, Boy3 FSM, Boy10 FSM, Boy10, FMS, Gir10 FSM, Boy10 FSM, BoyFSM10, Boy1 FSM, Boy3 FSM, Boy3 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Gir1 FSM, Gir3 FSM, Gir4 FSM, Total 23
% of class	30% top 2 tables = FSM	70% bottom 2 tables = FSM		
G41%	B10 out of 64 = 23% of the boys	B15	B16 = 70%	
B59%	B = 45% of the table	G7	White boys 4 = 17%	
FSM (51)	G12 out of 44 = 27% of the girls 55% of the table 5 = 10% 23% of table = FSM	7 = 14% 32% of table = FSM	Black boys 7 = 30%	
	Gir1 = 42% of the top two tables White girls = 27% (19%) Black girls = 18% Boys = 58% of the top two tables White boys = 27% Black boys = 9% Category 10 boys 9% Girls 4%		'10' boys 4 17% Bangl. boys 1 G7 = 30% White G2 9% '10'g1 bl G4 17% 18 = 35% 78% table = FSM	
White UK	6 Boys 3 Girls 3	4	5	
25 = 23%				
White Other	6 Boys 3 Girls 3	3	1	
15 = 14%				
Total 'white'	12 = 30% 54% of table	7 = 17.5% 32% of table	4 = 22% 17% of table	
40 = 37%	White pupils = 42% of top tables 0 = 0%			
Black Caribbean		5 = 28% 23% of table	4 = 22% 17% of table	

heritage 18 = 16%						
	Black Caribbean pupils = 7% top tables				23% of bottom tables	
Black African heritage 26 = 24%	5 = 19% Boys 2 Girls 3	6 = 23%	6 = 23%	6 = 23%	2 = 8%	7 = 27%
Black African & Caribbean pupils = 33% top tables			50% of middle table		44% bottom tables	
Black other 2	1 = Girl	1				
Total 'black' 46 = 42%	6 = 13% 27% of table	10 = 22% 48% of table	11 = 24% 50% of table	11 = 24% 50% of table	8 = 17% 40% of table	11 = 24% 49% of table
	37% of top tables = black (Black Caribbean; African & 'other')				44% bottom tables	
Indian 2 = 2%	1 = 4.5% of table	1				
Pakistani 1 = 1%		1				
Bangladeshi 1 = 1%						1 = 4% of table
Chinese 0						
Total 'Asian' 4						
		2 = 9.5% of table				
Other (known) group 18	3 = 17%	3 = 17%	4 = 22%	4 = 22%	3 = 17%	5 = 27%

2 out of 12 FSM "other" pupils = 17% Category 10 with FSM on top table
2 out of 3 white pupils with FSM = 15% categories 1&2 with FSM on top table
1 out of 24 black pupils with FSM = 4% categories 3&4 with FSM on top table

28 pupils listed

1White UK	2White Other	3Black Caribbean heritage	4Black African heritage	5Black other	6India n	7Pakista ni	8Bangladeshi	9Chines e	10Other (known) group
2 girls 1 boy (FSM)	4 Girls (2 FSM) 1 Boy: FSM,	2 Girls (FSM) 3 Boys	4 Girls (2 FSM) 3 Boys (1 FSM)	Boy: FSM			Boy: FSM		Boy (Latin American) Boy (mixed) Boy (Kurdish);FSM, Boy (philippines/Ireland) FSM Boy ('other')
4 = 13%	5 = 18%	5 = 18%	7 = 25%	1 = 4%	1 = 4%		1 = 4%		5 = 18%
9 = 32%	13 = 46%	13 = 46%							5 = 18%
Pupils eligible for a FSM 13 = 46%									
Number of boys 17 = 61% Number of girls 11 = 39%									

FSM 7 boys 6 girls =13

'Top' →	'Bottom'	Orange (4)	Yellow (5)	Green (ELS) (5)	Blue (6)	Red (8)
Table name		Orange (4) Boy 2, Girl4, Girl2 FSM, Girl1,	Yellow (5) Boy3, Girl3 FSM, Girl1, Boy5 FSM, Girl4	Green (ELS) (5) Girl 3 FSM, Boy4, Boy4, Boy10, Boy 10 FSM,	Blue (6) Girl2, Boy3, Boy 4 FSM, Girl2 FSM, Girl4 FSM, Boy10	Red (8) Boy2 FSM, Boy10, Boy10 FSM, Boy 1 FSM, Girl4 FSM, Boy3, Boy8 FSM, Girl1
% of class G (11) B (17) FSM (G3 = 27% B1 = 6% 1 = 8%	G3 = 27% B2 = 12% 2 = 15%	G1 = 9% B4 = 23% 2 = 15%	G3 = 27% B3 = 18% 3 = 23%	G2 = 18% B6 = 35% 5 = 38%	
1 White UK	1	1	0	0	2	
2 White Other	2			2	1	
Total 'white'	3 =	1 =	0 =	2 =	3 =	
3 Black Caribbean heritage	0	2	1	1	1	
4 Black African heritage	1	1	2	2	1	
5 Black other	0	1	0	0	0	
Total 'black'	1 =	4 =	3 =	3 =	2 =	
6 Indian						
7 Pakistani						
8 Bangladeshi					1	
9 Chinese						
10 Other (known) group	0	0	2	1	2	
% of table G B FSM	1 = 25%	2 = 40%	2 = 40%	3 = 50%	5 = 63%	
White UK	1	1	0	0	2	
White Other	2			2	1	
Total 'white'	3 = 75%	1 = 20%	0	2 = 33%	3 = 38%	
Black Caribbean heritage	0	2	1	1	1	
Black African heritage	1	1	2	2	1	
Black other	0	1	0	0	0	
Total 'black'	1 = 25%	4 = 80%	3 = 60%	3 = 50%	2 = 25%	
Indian						
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi					1	
Chinese						
Other (known) group	0	0	2 = 40%	1 = 17%	2 = 25%	

29 Pupils listed

1 White UK	2 White Other	3 Black Caribbean heritage	4 Black African heritage	5 Black other	6 Indian	7 Pakistani	8 Bangl.	9 Chinese	10 Other (known) group
2 girls 3 boys (1 FSM)	5 Girls (2 FSM) 2 boys 7 = 24%	1 Girl: FSM 4 boys: FSM 4 = 14%	1 Girl (FSM) 5 Boys (3 FSM) 6 = 21%		1 Boy 1 = 3.5%	1 Boy 1 = 3.5%			3 Boys (all FSM) 2 girls (1 FSM)
5 = 17%					2 = 7%				17%
12 = 41%		10 = 35%							
Pupils eligible for a FSM 16 = 55%									
Number of boys 18 = 62% Number of girls 11 = 38%									

FSM 12boys 4 girls

'Top' → 'Bottom'

Literacy	Hexagons (6 on table)*	Pentagons 5 on table	Squares (7 on table)	Triangles 5 (on table)	Circles (6 on table)
Table name	Girl 2, Girl1, Girl10, Boy2, Boy10 FSM, Boy 4	Boy1, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boy7, Boy6	Girl1, Boy2, Boy4 FSM, Girl2, Girl3 FSM, Girl2, Boy 3 FSM	Boy1, Boy3 FSM, Girl2 FSM, Boy3 FSM, Girl2 FSM	Boy1 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Girl10 FSM, Girl4 FMS, Boy10 FSM Boy FSM10
% of class G () B ()	G 3 = 27% B 3 = 17%	G 0 B 5 = 27%	G 4 = 37% B 3 = 17%	G 2 = 18% B 3 = 17%	G 2 = 18% B 4 = 22%
% of those with FSM (16)	1 = 6%	2 = 12%	3 = 19%	4 = 25%	6 = 38%
1 White UK	1	1	1	1	1
2 White Other	2	0	3	2	
Total 'white' (12)	3 = 25%	1 = 8%	4 = 34% most likely	3 = 25%	1 = 8%
3 Black Caribbean heritage	0		2 (most likely tables)	2	
4 Black African heritage	1	2	1		2
5 Black other					
Total 'black' (10)	1 = 10% (least likely)	2 = 20%	3 = 30% (most likely)	2 = 20%	2 = 20%
6 Indian		1			
7 Pakistani		1			
8 Bangladeshi					
Total 'Asian' (2)	0	2	0	0	0
9 Chinese					
10 Other (known) group (5)	2 = 40%				3 = 60%
Total 'other'					
% of no on table* G B	G3 = 50% B3=50%	G = 0 B = 100%	G4 = 57% B3 = 43%	G2 = 40% B3 = 60%	G2 = 33% B4 = 67%
FSM of table compared to	17%	40%	57%	80%	100%
% of class (= 55%)	Only 3 girls on "top tables" = 27%				
White UK	1 = 17%				1 = 17%
White Other	2 = 33%				
Total 'white'	3 = 50%				1 = 17%
Black Caribbean heritage	1 = 17%				
Black African heritage					2 = 33%
Black other					
Total 'black'	1 = 17%				2 = 33%
Indian					
Pakistani					
Bangladeshi					

Chinese						
Other (known) group	2 = 33%					3 = 50%

FSM figures are stark
 "Other known group" is polarised: top & bottom groups

'Top' → 'Bottom'

Numeracy		Hexagons (6 on table)*	Pentagons (6 on table)	Squares (6 on table)	Triangles 5 (on table)	Circles (6 on table)
Table name		Girl2, Girl1, Girl10, Boy2, Boy10 FSM, Boy4 SAME AS LIT	Boy1, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boyh7, Boy6 Boy3 FSM	Girl1, Boy4 FSM, Girl2 FSM Boy3 Boy1 Girl10 FSM	Girl2, FSM, Boy2, Girl2 FSM, Girl3 FSM, Girl4 FMS,	Boy1 FSM, Girl2 Boy4 FSM, Boy3 FSM Boy10 FSM Boy FSM10
% of class (G11 = 38% B18 = 62%) FSM (out of 16)		G3 = 27% B3 = 17%	G0 B6 = 33%	G3 = 27% B3 = 17%	G4 = 37% B1 = 5%	G1 = 9% B5 = 28%
White UK (5)		1 = 6%	3 = 19%	3 = 19%	4 = 25%	5 = 31%
White Other (7)		1 = 20%	1 = 20%	2 = 40% most likely	0	1 = 10% least likely
Total 'white' (12)		2 = 29%	0 least likely	1 = 14%	3 = 43% most likely	1 = 14%
Black Caribbean heritage (4)		3 = 25%	1 = 8%	3 = 25%	3 = 25%	2 = 17%
Black African heritage (6)		0	1 = 25%	1 = 25%	1 = 25%	1 = 25%
Black other		1 = 17%	2 = 32%	1 = 17%	1 = 17%	1 = 17%
Total 'black' (10)		1 = 10% least likely	3 = 30% most likely	2 = 20%	2 = 20%	2 = 20%
Indian (1)		0	1	0	0	0
Pakistani (1)		0	1	0	0	0
Bangladeshi						
Total 'Asian'			2			
Chinese						
Other (known) group (5)		2 = 40%		1 = 20%		2 = 40%
% of table G B FSM		G3 = 1 = 17%	3 = 50%	3 = 50%	4 = 80%	5 = 83%
White UK		1	1	2	0	1
White Other		2	0	1	3	1
Total 'white'		3 = 50%	1 = 17%	3 = 50%	3 = 50%	2 = 33%
Black Caribbean heritage		0	1			1
Black African heritage		1	2			1
Black other						
Total 'black'		1 = 17%	3 = 50%	2 = 33%	2 = 33%	2 = 33%
Indian			1			
Pakistani			1			
Bangladeshi						

Total 'Asian'		2											
Chinese													
Other (known) group	2											1	2

26 Pupils listed

1 White UK	2 White Other	3 Black Caribbean heritage	4 Black African heritage	5 Black other	6 Indian	7 Pakistani	8 Bangl.	9 Chinese	10 Other (known) group
3 Girls (1FSM) 5 Boys (2FSM)	1 Girl	4 girls (3 FSM)	3 Girls (1 FSM) 3 Boys (1 FSM)						5 Boys (4 FSM) 1 girl
9 = 35%									6
FSM 12 = 46%									
Girls 13 Boys 13 inc Vincent									

Vincent black African heritage

FSM 5 girls 17 boys

Literacy & Numeracy – listed as the same on each table, although different names (colours) for maths						
Table name	Hexagons (6 on table)*	Pentagons (6 on table)	Squares (4 on table)	Triangles (5 on table)	Circles (4 on table)	
Pupils on table	Girl4 FSM, Girl2, Boy1, Boy10 FSM, Boy1 FSM	Boy4, Boy10, Boy1, Boy1 FSM, Girl3, Boy10 FSM	Girl4, Boy4, Girl10, Boy1	Girl3 FSM, Girl1, Boy10 FSM, Girl3 FSM, Boy10 FSM	Boy4 FSM, Girl1 FSM, Girl3 FSM, Girl4	
% of class G B						
FSM (12)	3 = 25%	2 = 17%	0	4 = 33%	3 = 25%	
White UK	3	2	1	1	1	
White Other	1					
Total 'white' (9)	4 = 44.5%	2 = 22.5%	1 = 11%	1 = 11%	1 = 11%	
Black Caribbean heritage	0	1		2	1	
Black African heritage	1	1	2		2	
Black other						
Total 'black' (10)	1 = 10%	2 = 20%	2 = 20%	2 = 20%	3 = 30%	
Indian						
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi						
Chinese						
Other (known) group	1	2	1	2		
% of table G B						
FSM	G2B4 3 = 50%	G2 B4 33%	0	80%	75%	
White UK	3	2	1	1	1	
White Other	1					
Total 'white'	4	2	1	1	1	
Black Caribbean heritage		1		2	1	
Black African heritage	1	1	2		2	
Black other						
Total 'black'	1	2	2	2	3	
Indian						
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi						
Chinese						
Other (known) group	1	2	1	2		
Vincent not listed am at all						

26 listed

1White UK	2White Other	3Black Caribbean heritage	4Black heritage	African	5Black other	6India n	7Pakista ni	8Banglades hi	9Chines e	10Other (known) group
4 Girls 4 boys (3 FSM)	2 boys	1 Girl 4 Boys (2FSM)	1 Girl 6 Boys (3 FSM),		1 Girl	1 Girl				2 boys (both FSM)
8	2	5	7		1	1				2
10	13				1	1				2
Pupils eligible for a FSM 10 = 38%										
Number of boys 18 Number of girls = 8										

FSM 10 boys

Literacy & Numeracy						
Table name	Meteorites 6	Asteroids 5	Comets 6	Stars 4	Planets 5	
Pupils on table	Girl1, Girl4, Girl6, Girl5, Boy2, Boy4	Girl1, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boy10 FSM, Boy2	Boy4, Boy1, Boy1 FSM, Boy3, Boy3, Boy10 FSM	Girl3, Girl1, Girl1, Boy1 FSM	Boy3 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boy4 FSM, Boy3 FSM, Boy1 FSM	
% of class G8 B18 FSM (10)	G4 = 50% B2 = 11% 0	G1 = 12% B4 = 22% 3 = 30%	0 B6 = 33% 2 = 20%	G3 = 38% B1 = 6% 1 = 10%	0 B5 = 28% 4 40%	
White UK	1	1	2	3	1	
White Other	1	1	0	0	0	
Total 'white' (9)	2	2	2	3	1	
Black Caribbean heritage	0	0	2	1	2	
Black African heritage	2	2	1	0	2	
Black other	1	0	0	0	0	
Total 'black' (10)	3	2	3	1	4	
Indian	1	0	0	0	0	
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi						
Chinese						
Other (known) group	0	1	1	0	0	
% of table G B FSM	67% B33%	20% B80%	0 100%	75% B25%	0 B100%	

c. Sample teacher interview

This outline shows a class teacher interview, the exact layout of 'aide memoires' that I used for semi-structured interviews. The bold/ emphasised text are key words and phrases to remind me during the interview itself. I subsequently transcribed every interview so have transcriptions of whole interviews showing the exact questions I actually used. I prepared different schedules for Teaching Assistants and deputy/ head teacher respectively, to reflect issues arising in data, with similar layout and key word emphasis for use during the interviews.

In addition, checking over data from recent weeks I used phrases such as those in square brackets to acknowledge specificities: issues discussed, names or areas that have arisen in observations.

Thank you for your willingness to participate and sparing the time to be interviewed. Although I've been around in the school there hasn't been much time to speak to teachers directly.

As I have done all year, I will observe complete **confidentiality**. I'll be the only person who listens to what you say, and anything I write is completely **anonymised**, so no-one is named – the school's identity is not identified in any way, or anyone in it.

So, as I said, although I've been visiting the school for about a year now and have mostly spoken to pupils, so in some ways **I won't know it as well as you** and this interview is to help me get a **better understanding** –

So I'll **start off** with a couple of **general questions** about the school and your role and try to get a better idea of **things that happen day to day**.

I hope we'll have time at the end to just have a few minutes to say a **couple of sentences, no more**, about **each pupil** in your class because although I've spoken to a lot of them again I don't know them as well as you.

As you've probably seen me doing with the children, **I use the minidisk** so I can remember what you've said, rather than what I **think** you've said – and I don't have to slow things down by sitting here scribbling.

There may well be some things that you've told me before – but do tell me again – in case I haven't remembered them.

1 **Right, can I start with asking how long you've been at the school and what your roles?**

2 **I've heard some people say this school is different to other schools – in what ways do you think it's different and in what ways similar to your other schools?**

For example some people have called it an inclusive school.....?

"In what ways"

*key words: repeat/give me an example of/
how would Look in practice?*

how things run day to day,

Links to Q5

routines & organisation

The **way you organise** things

Staffing

curriculum

New initiatives, Literacy or Numeracy Strategies,

what you teach

Q8

Who comes to the school

3. I'm focussing on (class names) was the first class I observed. How are you finding your new class?

individual students named

key words?

"good class": Meaning?

routines = Q5

Groups = Q6

4. (You mentioned a few features of the school before, (if they did!) If you were describing this school to a complete outsider, how would you describe it?

key words: repeat/

give me an example of/

how would Look in practice?

5. I've been in during mornings or afternoons, but not whole days in one class, can you tell me about some of the main routines in your class, the main ways in which things are organised?

Is there anything you would do differently (if you could)?

6. I've noticed there are a lot of groups and activities going on for pupils in and out of class during the day. [I know we talked a little bit about it last week] – Could you tell me how these are organised? How you decide who goes where?

7. I realised as I was thinking about this, it's aural not visual. Can you give me a quick verbal tour guide of your classroom? Just a minute or two about the layout, the main features we can see?

Key words or phrases “5 tables” or whatever

8. I've dropped in on lots of different lessons and spoken to pupils, but I haven't really been behind the scenes as such. [I remember you mentioned/ or I saw your] planning sheets on the wall – how do you decide what you're teaching?

9. [Some of the children said they were doing some work last week, and I found out it was an assessment activity – I know you showed me an assessment timetable] – can you tell me a bit about that, about assessment?

10. Finally,

I wondered if you could mention a little about each student, not much, two or three sentences to describe each of them....?

Follow up on individual students named or key words?

11. That's all the things I wanted to cover ... but, bearing in mind that I'm trying to build a picture of how the school works day to day – is there anything that we haven't discussed which you think we should?

Thank you again for your time.

d. Acronyms

ADHD	Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder
ALS	Additional Literacy Support
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BAS	British Ability Scales
BESD	Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties
BIS	British Intelligence Scales
BPS	British Psychological Society
CDT	Craft Design Technology
DES/WO	Department for Education and Science and Welsh Office
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ELS	Early Literacy support
FLS	Further Literacy Support
GCA	General Conceptual Ability
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SATS	Standard Assessment Tasks
SEN	Special Educational Need
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit

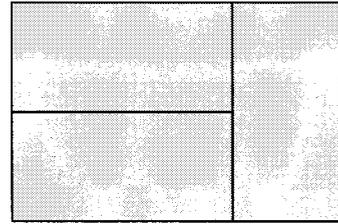
e. Sample sketch of table positions in one classroom

1 (high) to 5 (low): Each table has 4 – 6 children.

White board

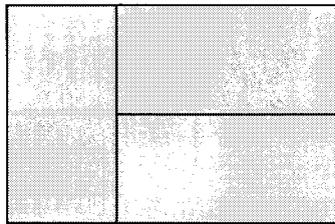


5



1

4



2



3

Door

f. Participants

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Role</u>
Barbara	Teaching assistant
Ms Bradley	Senior teacher
Ms Daisley	Senior teacher
Evelyn	Teaching assistant
Ms George	New teacher
Ms Gold	Senior teacher
Ms Jones	Senior teacher
Judy	Teaching assistant
Ms Keswick	Class teacher
Nina	Teaching assistant
Ms Nolan	Class teacher
Mr Parsons	Class teacher
Ms Saunders	Class teacher
Ms Scott	New teacher
Susie	Speech and language therapist.
Ms Wolvek	Senior teacher
Ruby, John, Henry, Richard,	Year 1 rising into Year 2 children Aged 5 – 6
Lucy, Brian, Hattie, Helen	Year 4 rising into Year 5 children Aged 8 – 9
Patrice, Verity, Ruth, Lila, Arif,	Year 5 rising into Year 6 children Aged 9 – 10

Senior teachers include:

- Head teacher,
- Deputy Head teacher,
- SENCO, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two coordinators.

Teaching assistants include those with responsibility for:

- Handwriting groups
- Speech and language groups
- Early Literacy Support
- Additional Literacy Support
- 1:1 support for child with Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- In-class support.

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ⁱ Sparks and Isaacs (2004) introduce this >> fast forward and << rewind device to signal links for readers between chapters.

ⁱⁱ I discuss my 'foreshadowed problems' (Malinowski 1922 p. 8), initial questions, starting points and sampling further in my methodologies chapter.

ⁱⁱⁱ I use the term 'pupil' to indicate 'schooled subject', a child as he or she is known in and through schooling.

^{iv} I seek to question taken-for-granted notions of 'ability' at the outset. In my fourth chapter I explore the persistence 'ability' in small moments of teachers' decision-making and the residue of discredited meanings and practices associated with innate intelligence (Hill 2005, Gillborn and Youdell 2000) still present in the ways in which children are organized, talked about and taught.

^v Gillborn (2004 p. 44) describes 'critical' as 'seemingly one of the most frequently used terms in contemporary social science', and I discuss the term further in relation to setting out on this research project in my first two chapters.

^{vi} Jeffrey and Woods' (1998) book 'Testing Teachers' amply communicates the impact of these times.

^{vii} Jumping forward to Chapter 3, I open with one of the routine instructions for children at the outset of a task and explore the prevalence and impacts of grouping children by perceived ability.

^{viii} There is a quietly understated difference between these two taken-for-granted school meal-time terms: 'lunch' (as in 'packed') and dinner (as in 'lady'). Recognised as being 'classed' terminologies – see for example Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective By Robin Fox <http://www.sirc.org/publik/foxfood.pdf> - the newer term 'meal time supervisor' avoids the two, but Jo Pike's article '*I don't have to listen to you! You're just a dinner lady!*': *power and resistance at lunchtimes in primary schools* offers some interesting insights into what she terms 'the contested nature of power relationships played out between teachers, lunchtime staff and pupils within the spatial and temporal boundaries of the dining room' (Pike 2010 p. 275)

^{ix} Following on from the initial gate-keeping of the head teacher, I was given access to a range of data by school staff during the process of fieldwork. This included written policies, teachers' planning sheets; detention records; a small sample of one teacher's end of year school reports, class lists, SEN lists and monitoring data for the class groups that I researched in detail. On one day during my third term in the school, the school administrator was working on monitoring documents whilst I was photocopying reports in the office. She agreed to me taking notes that established children's ethnic coding and whether they were eligible for Free School Meals. I brought together data from these different sources to produce an anonymised Excel document recording class group and pupils' table group allocation for literacy, numeracy and 'afternoons', ethnicity, gender, FSM.

^x My thanks to Helen Lucey for responding to my emails about ways in which she had sought parental consent in her work.

^{xi} I agree with Levinson (2010 p.197) 'There is a tendency to use the term 'access' as if it were some immutable, fixed state, the implication being that, once negotiated, access ceases to be an issue'. Delamont (2002) also details the potential insights 'access negotiations' can provide. Access, and the more thorny, 'informed consent', continued as practical and ethical issues throughout the period of fieldwork.

^{xii} 'Playground Friends' features in my discussion of 'inclusion' in this school setting in Chapter 6, whilst taken-for-granted notions of ability are pursued further in Chapters 3 and 4

^{xiii} I discussed note-taking during supervision with Professor David Gillborn; the practicalities of leaving space on the written page for ensuing comment, coding and analysis. Sara Delamont (1999) provides examples of 'real time' and 'out-of-field' notes. Prior to commencing this study I could not have imagined consideration of 'field notes' could fill fifteen tightly written pages (Emerson et al 2001). Now as I near completion I am interested in the dissection of what others' do (Walford 2009). This account has drawn upon field notes, subsequent analytical memos and strays into the recreation of a vignette similar to that described by Bob Jeffrey (Walford 2009 p. 123). As it turned out, I completed my analyses using 'Word' computer documents by typing up all of my 'real time' notes. I subsequently

typed up all of my audio recordings, transcribing interviews and key incidents exactly. This facilitated easier subsequent searches for and coding of words, phrases, moments. But my original, 'in-field' jottings were all made in Europa A5 spiral bound notebooks of varying colours and I see that other more established researchers than I have their notebooks of choice (Walford 2009). I still refer to original jottings, sketches and moments in these notebooks, each colour respectively representing a temporal section of data.

^{xiv} Whilst illuminating in terms of methodological reflection, reading about insider/outsider perspectives (e.g. Foster 1994, Benjamin 2001) and 'ethical dilemmas' (e.g. Barbour 2010) have done little to dull this perpetual discomfort during and looking back on fieldwork.

^{xv} Team Teach is a private educational consultancy, providing training that 'includes training in physical interventions, known as 'positive handling strategies... Team-Teach views 'positive handling' as a concept confirming a commitment by organisations, and individuals within an organisation, to a framework of risk reduction strategies (non-verbal, verbal and where absolutely necessary physical)'. Hayden and Pike 2005.

^{xvi} I discuss being on the non-participant end of participant observation further in my methodologies chapter.

^{xvii} The 1990s television series 'Friends' named each episode starting 'The one with...' for example 'The One With The Thumb', 'The One With The Dozen Lasagnas'. <http://www.friendsontv.co.uk/container.html>

^{xviii} As well as Derrida and Butler's reworking of Althusser and Bourdieu in Youdell's case

^{xix} Excluded temporarily (for a 'fixed term') or 'permanently' via disciplinary processes (e.g. DCSF 2007) or via a Statement of Special Educational Need to a segregated special school.

^{xx} Taken from <http://www.poetryslam.com>: 'Simply put, poetry slam is the competitive art of performance poetry. Established in the mid-80s as a means to heighten public interest in poetry readings, slam has evolved into an international art form emphasizing audience involvement and poetic excellence. In the majority of slam series, organizers stage weekly or monthly events in a public space, such as a bar or cafe... The host finds five audience members who wish to serve as judges....To ensure that the entire audience is involved, the host encourages the audience to respond to the poet in any way they see fit, be it impassioned cheering or lusty booing. The judges, in turn, are encouraged to remain consistent with themselves and not let the audience influence them...Cash prizes or other prizes are offered to the winner as further impetus for performing well. In most cities, the slam series culminates with a final slam at the end of the season to determine which poets will represent the city in the four-person team at the National Poetry Slam...Whereas many open mike events tend to serve either the poets who participate or a particular target community, slam's emphasis on addressing the audience has garnered slam a more inclusive, more diverse audience than the typical poetry reading.'

^{xxi} Special settings in this sense means schools designated as being for students labelled as having special educational needs. The schools are separate from mainstream local schools. The definition of SEN in [s 312, Education Act 1996] the Education Act 1996 says that: A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision.

A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) has a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LEA;
- c) is under five and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if SEN provision was not made for the child.

Special education provision means:

- a) for a child of two or over, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the child's age in maintained schools (other than special schools) in the area;
- b) for a child under two, educational provision of any kind.

^{xxii} The use of terms 'outstanding' and 'very good' were used in relation to my research setting and these are explored in relation to inclusive practice in my sixth chapter. The acronym FGTO ('From Good to Outstanding') is used as if common parlance in an

increasing number of training packages and 'outstanding' described as 'a way of being' <http://www.fromgoodtooutstanding.com/>, pertinent to the Foucauldian analyses explored throughout this thesis.

^{xxiii} I say finish this project, by which I mean complete this report. I agree with Walker (1986 in Jeffrey and Troman 2004 p. 538) that 'ethnographic projects are never finished, only left, with their accounts considered provisional and tentative'.

^{xxiv} I use this term to reflect the language of 'ability' used in this school context, and in studies (e.g. Ireson & Hallam 2001; Hallam et al 2002, 2004) whilst concurring with William & Bartholomew (2004 p.280) who state that 'Such grouping systems are referred to by schools as 'grouping by ability' or 'ability grouping' even though what is meant by ability (and in particular whether this is some fixed notion of ability, or just what a student is able to do at a particular time) is rarely made clear...we... continue to refer to 'ability grouping'... simply because that is how schools describe the practice and this provides a convenient label.' They continue, 'However, we would wish to make it plain that we believe that such notions of ability are not in any way well founded and are of dubious validity'. I take up this issue when discussing 'ability' further in later chapters.

^{xxv} I use the terms 'child' and 'children' throughout this chapter, except in the term 'pupil grouping'. Whilst the word 'pupil' comes very easily to me as a teacher, I had a sense during the research process that the term conjured up for me school assumptions, pupils being taught and organised. I see that Jeffrey and Woods (1998) assert the use of 'pupil' rather than 'child' is the preferred term deployed in the OFSTED 'Handbook' and 'Framework': a model, they propose, in which 'the child is seen as a pupil (rather than 'child'), *in need of managing and disciplining and needing to learn certain prescribed things in order to be able to survive in a competitive market*' (Jeffrey and Woods 1998 p. 57 *italics in original*). Further, Liz Brooker (2002) in her book about young children 'starting school' describes processes, following earlier ethnographic studies (Jackson 1979; Pollard with Filer 1996) of 'the transition from child to pupil' (Brooker 2001 p.89). What I am seeking to do is to use both terms so as to raise attention to both.

^{xxvi} I have appended anonymised working documents for the four classes studied in detail and graphs: Percentage of children in or not in receipt of Free School Meals across the top-middle-bottom tables and (with such small numbers) children by ethnic code data aggregated into 'black' and 'white' students.

^{xxvii} I think about this notion of 'contradictory' policy again in Chapter 6.

^{xxviii} Blankety Blank was a cheaply made British game show based on the American game show 'Match Game'. Celebrities suggested the missing word in a sentence and contestants chose one of these as the word from the original sentence.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blankety_Blank

^{xxix} See sample questionnaire in appendices.

^{xxx} Francis Galton, psychologist 1822 – 1911. 'It was Galton who first claimed, in an article in Macmillan's Magazine 1865 that intellectual ability is inherited. His fuller and more celebrated exposition of his theory appeared in his 1869 book Hereditary Genius' (White 2006 p. 11).

^{xxxi} SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001c) Glossary p. 206 **School Action**: when a class or subject teacher identify that a pupil has special educational needs they provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies. An IEP will usually be devised.

^{xxxiii} See graph and table of 'who sat where' in appendices.

^{xxxiv} The 1990s television series 'Friends' named each episode starting 'The one with...' for example 'The One With The Thumb', 'The One With The Dozen Lasagnas'. <http://www.friendsontv.co.uk/container.html>

^{xxxv} Individual Education Plan see DFES (2001) Special Educational Needs Code of Practice; DfES/581/2001 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001

^{xxxvi} Online the programme is described as including "photocopiable worksheets and record forms, reading lists and sentences for dictation. After the early stages of use, a very small amount of adult input is needed. The PAT programme takes only 10-15 minutes daily". <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/educational-psychology/cpd/pat.htm>

^{xxxvii} An interesting example of reinvention is recounted by Alex Moore (2004 p.42) which he titles 'Performativity Victorian Style', illustrating 'the historically shifting nature of the good

teacher discourse'. Sally Tomlinson (1995 p. 128) reminds us of the segregation of 'The blind, the deaf, dumb and educable classes of imbeciles' (Egerton Commission 1889 p.1 in Tomlinson 1995 p. 128) towards the end of the period Moore describes, thereby ensuring 'normal' pupils received adequate schooling.

^{xxxviii} It was an unsettling process to encounter sociological readings during my MA studies, following the psychologised understandings of my professional training.

^{xxxix} The Mitchell and Webb PC and Mac 'Home Office' advertisement makes an apt reference to management and the wearing of glasses:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_DWTg_WzSQ

^{xi} Gillborn and Youdell (2000 p. 231) provide an extended note on Cyril Burt 'leading British hereditarian psychologist...whose ideas exercised considerable influence over the shape of the selective post-war education system'. Referring to fabrications found in Burt's work after his death, they note that Leon Kamin (1974, 1981) 'raised serious doubt over the authenticity of Burt's work...and Burt's supporters began to accept publicly that he had behaved in a 'dishonest manner'. Gillborn and Youdell also note attempts (for example by Clare Burstall then director of the National Foundation for Educational Research) in the late 1980s to 'rehabilitate Burt's reputation'.

^{xli} The SEN Code of Practice paragraph 5:15 (DfES/581/2001) makes reference to 'The importance of early identification, assessment and provision'

^{xlii} One might say instead approximate or developing rather than 'wrong' spelling.

^{xliii} See Foster 1994 for discussion of a similar incident and its relationship to 'insider' status.

^{xliv} The 'resource base' being a small number of children in school with Statements of Special Educational Needs whose additional funding brought them resources specifically allocated for physical impairments.

^{xlvi} School Inspections Act 1996 (section 10)

^{xlvii} With reference back to Sennett's bakers (Sennett 1998 pp. 66 - 68) in chapter 6. The impacts of the OFSTED Inspection regime on teachers' work has been documented for over a decade (e.g. Jane Perryman 2006)

^{xlviii} Slee (2011 p. 152) says something similar. 'I have often sat through conference addresses and workshops in which metaphorical steps are confidently painted on the floor for people to follow when they return home...Retracing the steps will, they are promised, ameliorate their troubles.' He settles instead on 'an agenda that may make inclusive education happen a little more frequently'.

^{xlviii} With reference to the classroom game described in Chapter 5, in which the class teacher was astonished that a girl seated on a lower/ middle (triangle) numeracy table was beating a boy seated on the top (hexagon) table at quick-fire arithmetic questions.

^{xlix} ELS (Early Literacy Support) as described in my previous chapter (DfES 2001 0651/2001)

ⁱ The Index for Inclusion was sent to all UK schools following its publication in 2000

ⁱⁱ Segregated classrooms within a mainstream school were one organisational arrangement for the 'integration' of those labelled as having Moderate Learning Difficulties in the 1990s.

ⁱⁱⁱ Obviously this entire thesis owes a debt to conversations with Professors David Gillborn and Stephen Ball in developing my understandings, but in this particular instance I thank Stephen for guiding me towards this section of Foucault's 'The Order of Things'.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ With reference back to my literature review chapter and discussion there of Critical Theory and critical theory.

^{lv} For example, Riding for Disabled Association, <http://www.rda.org.uk/about-us/history-of-rda>.

^{lv} <http://playgroundfriends.co.uk/aboutus.htm>

^{lvi} I draw here on the concept of 'Microaggressions' defined by Solorzano, Ceja, Yosso (2000 p.60) as 'subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously'

^{lvii} This is a school in which the teachers were referred to by the children using their surnames and the teaching assistants by their first names. I was expressly introduced to the children as 'Claudine'. I did not enquire, unfortunately, why this arrangement was in place and whether it was something that had been specifically decided more recently or inherited. Either way, this hierarchical naming implied for me the classed, gendered and raced relations between the role of 'teacher' and 'teaching assistant'.

^{lviii} It might be said too much, although I evidently do not think so. On editing a final draft of one of these preceding chapters I found a note Stephen had attached to one quote, 'you cite a lot of Ball, he's not that good you know'. Whatever happens in the dreaded Viva examination, and however much I have bemoaned the torturous process of this project, the unremittingly painstaking, insightful and funny comments by my two supervisors both during supervision meetings and in the margins of my many drafts are an enduring treasure.

^{lix} As well as Derrida and Butler's reworking of Althusser and Bourdieu in Youdell's case.

^{lx} Saxtet began life as a saxophone quartet in Birmingham, UK in 1985. The group's early success came from busking (playing on the street) in their home city. This much maligned activity is a great leveller for musicians. If the group was good, people stopped, if not the worst that happened was your audience melted away.

<http://www.saxtetpublications.com/about/saxtet.php>

^{lxi} See note iii

^{lxii} It has been completed apparently, the painting of the Forth Bridge. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-16110496> and so should this thesis. I also recall the words of Sara Delamont (1992 p. 30) from reading for my methodologies chapter: one reason people do not finish projects is that they want them to be perfect' or that 'they believe their work is so bad no one else will want to see it'.