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How EPs can Support Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Participatory Action Research (PAR)

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Declaration

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

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Impact Statement

This thesis investigated the experiences of school staff at a special school who took part in a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group, supported by an Educational Psychologist (EP) and planned for using the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) tool as a framework. It is one of few studies to demonstrate the pivotal role for EPs in both supporting schools with RSE and promoting collaborative systemic and organisational change through relationships built with schools over time. This study showed how EPs can use PATH as a holistic, flexible framework for participatory organisational change.

This study adopted Participatory Action Research (PAR) in order to provide evidence for mechanisms to work in a collaborative, person-centred and co-produced way. Three broad Implications were found for schools and EPs, highlighting the intrinsic value of the EP's unique skill set, psychological perspective and close relationships with schools which enables them to work systemically alongside schools providing a variety of functions. These include supporting the participation of young people and families, facilitation of groups, assisting with planning organisational change and developing staff practice (including highlighting the importance of containing relationships between staff and pupils which enable personalisation of RSE learning for individuals). The research also demonstrated how EPs can use PATH as a flexible, participatory framework to plan for organisational change by providing structure while incorporating the views of key stakeholders. Finally, this study demonstrated how EPs can employ a range of participatory tools to gain the views of all stakeholders to inform policy and practice in

school. This thesis is one of few qualitative studies to provide a case study demonstrating the range of systemic support EPs can provide when delivering RSE for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In addition, this thesis adds to the evidence base for the efficacy of PATH in organisational planning and change and advances the evidence base by demonstrating how PATH can inform long term changes to practice through the working group.

Specific implications for EP practice include:

- Supporting schools with organisation change and implementation of new curriculums and educational initiatives through positive relationships built over time.
- The use of PATH as a participatory, person-centred framework to support organisational change.
- The flexible use of working groups, planned using PATH supported through AR across subject areas and a variety of organisational change.
- Promoting and providing supportive spaces for staff to reflect on and develop practice.
- The use of collaborative groups to develop and evaluate staff training.
- Supporting schools through using a variety of tools to gather parent and pupil voice and promote partnership working.

Specific implications for EP practice in relation to RSE include:

- Raising awareness for the importance of RSE in schools, especially for those with SEND.
- Developing training for staff to support them with planning, teaching and evaluating RSE. This includes exploring the supportive impact of attuned staff/pupil relationships which support staff to make the adjustments needed for individual needs in RSE.
- Developing and delivering RSE information for parents alongside schools.
- Developing relationships and effective communication pathways between home and school to strengthen partnership working in relation to RSE.
- Promoting pupil participation in developing RSE practice.
- Advocating for the rights of pupils with SEND to receive inclusive RSE
- Using consultation with parents and school staff to: further understand the needs of children in relation RSE, develop positive home/school relationships and facilitate appropriate information sharing.
- Designing bespoke RSE interventions and curriculums for pupils with SEND.

Abstract

Background Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a complex and historically disregarded area. Parents and staff often grapple with the myriad of socio-cultural factors and range of attitudes and beliefs. Research calls for professionals to work collaboratively, allowing the participation of all stakeholders, however there is little guidance to inform frameworks which support this way of working. This study aimed to address this by exploring and evaluating how an RSE working group can be developed, supported by an EP, using Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), guided by the views of parents, staff and pupils.

Method This exploratory ethnographic case study followed one school over time. It used participatory action research (PAR) and adopted a range of qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, field notes and artefacts. The views of parents and staff and pupils were gained to inform the actions of the working group.

Findings The EPs range of knowledge and skills and relationship with the school was pivotal in planning, facilitating and supporting the group. The EP was key to supporting the working group provided a safe space for staff to support planning for RSE and contemplate key issues, including the significance of attuned staff/pupil relationships which support the adjustments needed for individualised RSE learning. PATH provided a structured, collaborative, participatory person-centred framework to plan for the group and support the group process. The mechanisms that were identified inform a framework that can be applied to address a range of systemic work.

Conclusion Three broad implications for schools and EPs were found: highlighting the centrality of the EP's unique skill set, psychological perspective and relationships with schools in supporting systemic change; the EP's pivotal role in supporting the participation of all stakeholders: and the use of PATH as a flexible, holistic framework to address both the complexity of RSE for SEND pupils and contend with implementing a variety of organisational change.

Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education (previously known as Sex and Relationship Education-SRE)
SEF	Sex Education Forum
DfE	Department for Education
YP	Young people
CYP	Children and Young people
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Two-Spirit
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism Spectrum Condition is also used-ASC)
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
SLD	Severe Learning difficulty
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
ID	Intellectual disabilities
LD	Learning disabilities or difficulties
AR	Action Research
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PA	Psychology Assistant

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Study

This chapter will provide a background to the study, including the focus of the study and the relevant legislation.

This research sought to understand how a RSE working group may help staff at a special school (for complex needs) to deliver RSE to children and young people (CYP) with SEND. A young person (YP) is seen as having SEND if they have, “a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her”, and “has a greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age”, or “has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for other of the same age in mainstream schools”, paragraphs xiii and xiv, p 15-16 (Children & Families Act, 2014).

Policy, practice and provision in all schools are informed by legislation. Special schools have needed to respond to an intense agenda of SEND legislation in recent years. This has included the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the Equality act (2010) and more recently the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). This inclusion agenda has formalised and driven practice to embrace the implementation of reasonable adjustments to meet individual need.

Additionally, RSE has undergone recent legislative changes (Children & Social Work Act, 2017,) resulting in all schools being required to deliver RSE as a statutory

requirement from September 2020, following guidance from the Department of Education (2019). Historically, RSE has lacked guidance for all learners (Stewart et al., 2015), however there is further 'reluctance and confusion' regarding the delivery of RSE to pupils with SEND (McDaniels & Fleming, 2016, p.216). McDaniels and Fleming argue that formal, individualised and specific sex education for those with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) is lacking, highlighting that there is little research describing effective curricula worldwide. Bustard and Stewart (2002) also report inconsistencies in practice for UK pupils with SEND, including lack of materials and insufficient clarity in regards to roles and responsibilities; good practice hinges on the skills of individual staff members. Furthermore, Bustard and Stewart argue there is risk of skilled and experienced staff leaving their roles, thus further jeopardising the effective delivery of RSE. Stewart et al. (2015) clarify that for pupils attending specialist schools, improvements are needed to elevate the standard of practice. WHO stated that lack of RSE for learners with SEND excludes them from society more than their disabilities (Nelson et al., 2020). The inextricable links between inclusion and the inconsistencies of RSE for learners with SEND has prompted the researcher to formulate the following aims and research questions.

1.2 Aims and Research Questions

The facilitation of a working group for relevant stakeholders would offer a means by which to support the implementation of RSE, by providing a reflective space to discuss, review and refine evolving practice. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore and evaluate: how a working group might help staff to implement the RSE curriculum at a

special school, how an EP may be able to support and facilitate this and how the PATH (Murray & Sanderson, 2007) tool could be used to plan for the working group, while incorporating the voices of parents and pupils.

Therefore, the subsequent research questions to be addressed were:

- What are the group members' perceptions of the experience of being part of a RSE working group?
- What are group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group?
- What are the group members' perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE working group?

1.3 Rationale

This section provides an overview and justifications to support the researcher's aims and research questions. It will highlight the main issues, identify the research gaps and explain the unique contribution of the research to the wider knowledge base of RSE for pupils with SEND.

RSE can be described as learning about the social, emotional and physical aspects of growing up, including relationships, sex, sexuality and sexual health (Sex Education Forum (SEF), 2015). The SEF (2015) argues that there is overwhelming evidence for the protective function of RSE and strongly calls for an acceleration for its improvement. Ofsted (2007, 2010, 2013) reported that RSE requires improvement in over a third of schools, that teachers lacked training in this subject and that it was not given space on the timetable. Similarly, the SEF (2013) reported that 75 per cent of mainstream pupils

rated RSE as ‘very bad’, ‘bad’ or ‘ok’, thus indicating strong evidence to improve the quality and raise the profile of RSE.

The implementation of RSE is complex: it is laden with political, religious and moral values (Halstead & Reiss, 2003). These views were exemplified at a Birmingham Primary School which laid out the “No Outsiders” initiative in relation to RSE and LGBT+ education, created by Andrew Moffett (2017). While it was informed by the Equality Act (Gov.UK, 2010) and British Fundamental Values (DfE, 2014), it came under great scrutiny (Parveen, 2019a, 2019b), leading to a significant number of pupils being withdrawn from school and the eventual resignation of the head teacher. This highlights the contradictory and anxiety provoking nature of RSE which is demonstrated within our culture and media (Fairbairn et al., 1995).

While RSE for mainstream pupils is complex, this is magnified for pupils with SEND. Additionally, RSE for those with SEND remains under-researched, thus reflecting prevailing societal attitudes regarding people with Learning Disabilities (LD), who are regarded as perpetually innocent and therefore RSE is deemed not appropriate or relevant (Murphy & Young, 2005). This is rooted in a eugenic past with a reductionist tendency to see those with disabilities as eternal children or at risk (Garbutt, 2008). Research has highlighted that people with SEND are vulnerable to abuse (Kitson, 2010), yet others argue that the sexual vulnerability of those with SEND is socially constructed (Hollomotz, 2011) and it is the very lack of education regarding self-advocacy which leaves learners with SEND vulnerable (Cambridge & Carnaby, 2000). It

is also argued, RSE is key to addressing the social inequality experienced by many people with LD (Emerson & Hatton, 2007). Therefore, the themes of safety and social equality are central in the exploration of facilitators and barriers to the implementation of RSE to SEND learners.

Educators face countless barriers, including teachers' ambivalence to RSE that is flavoured by personal morals and beliefs and confounded by a lack of confidence and resources (Garbutt, 2008). A number of studies have examined the RSE curricula for learners with SEND, criticising curricular for narrowly focusing on risk prevention and sexual offending over intimacy, pleasure and desire (McCann et al., 2009, Sala et al., 2019). Fault has also been found in using complicated, undifferentiated materials (Grieve et al., 2007). RSE in special education is often reactive and vague and therefore not meaningful to students (Gourgeon, 2009). It can be concluded that materials for learners with SEND are underdeveloped and poorly understood.

Furthermore, RSE for learners with SEND fails to address the subtleties of the learner's lived experience (Gourgeon, 2009) and discounts the ignored curriculum (incidental peer interactions). Similarly, while RSE knowledge for many YP is derived from a variety of systemic sources; friends, family and media (Stewart et al., 2015), this 'hidden curriculum' is often inaccessible or poorly explained to learners with SEND. Additionally, staff attitudes are pervasive to RSE teaching- including paternalistic behaviours, heteronormativity, prejudice and discrimination as well as a prevailing opinion that those with ID are either asexual or hyper-sexed (McCann et al., 2019).

Therefore, RSE must surpass its existing narrow curricular to challenge established attitudes and assumptions. It is essential to develop RSE through co-produced, person-centred and collaborative approaches (McCann et al., 2019), with community engagement and stakeholder input (Sala et al., 2019). Thus, frameworks and models are crucial in order to work in this collaborative and participatory way.

To address these complexities, Gourgeon (2009) calls for a critical pedagogical approach in order to provide meaningful experiences that legitimise and validate learners with SEND. Currently there is limited guidance for the practicalities of such an approach. Stewart and Bustard (2012) partly addressed this through exploring the use of a stakeholders' RSE monitoring group. This small-scale study produced promising reviews of the training resulting from the group, but provided limited opportunities for transferability. The researcher acknowledges the potential of such a group in mediating the intricacies of RSE for pupils with SEND and enacting a critical pedagogy within a collaborative, person-centred approach. EPs are arguably well-placed in their role to facilitate such groups due to their knowledge of school systems, group work and child development, in addition to their experience of implementing evidence-based, inclusive practices to support schools (McKay & Lindsay, 2015). Therefore, this study aims to address the gaps in the research by using participatory methods to collaboratively plan, create and run a RSE working group informed by the views of the stakeholders such as parents, pupils and staff. The efficacy of the group will be explored and evaluated through exploring members' perceptions of the group, the role of the EP and the use of

PATH. It is hoped that this will provide evidence for a co-productive, collaborative, person-centred framework which supports the RSE learning for those with SEND.

A key part of qualitative research is recognising the position of the researcher, in that they implicitly make assumptions when trying to answer their research questions (Willig, 2013). Fox et al. (2007) impress the need for researchers to establish their position and motives clearly: therefore, my position as a researcher is explored here.

The researcher's awareness of the multiplicity of factors within RSE for learners with SEND was amplified during the preparation of a puberty parent-workshop in a special school (in the role of Psychology Assistant (PA)). This ignited a curiosity regarding RSE learning for pupils attending special schools; including the prevalent factors, challenges and experiences. The researcher was also involved in using PATH to plan for the new PA role in the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), which developed an interest in the flexible nature of these tools for adaptive use in practice.

During the researcher's training as an EP and as a year 1 research project, RSE and the systemic influences on practice in a special school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, (SLD/ PMLD) was explored. This resulted in key findings indicating that: the quality of RSE was informed by the quality of relationships; there is a lack of resources and guidance and RSE is potentially at risk of reduced priority due to the significant needs of the pupils. The researcher concluded that special

schools could benefit from opportunities for staff to discuss RSE; this has been enacted though this doctoral thesis.

1.4 Overview of the structure of the Report

This chapter has introduced the research, outlined the aims and research questions and provided a rationale for the study. Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the relevant literature and research, while Chapter 3 will describe the methodology used including the research design and methodologies. The research findings will be presented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss the findings in relation to the relevant literature and present implications, strengths, limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

In order to pursue research that was of value, a review of the literature was undertaken to identify gaps in the evidence base and methodological limitations of existing literature. The search for literature was conducted using various databases including: Psychinfo; Google Scholar; ProQuest Education; British Education Index (EBSCO); and Taylor & Francis. The journals Educational Psychology in Practice, Educational & Child Psychology and Sexuality and Disability were also searched. The search terms included "relationships", "sex education", "learning difficulties/disabilities" "intellectual disabilities" and "Autism/ASD". The researcher also found relevant literature in the reference lists of some of the articles within the databases. The inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in Appendix 30. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research, including both theoretical and empirical data. The chapter will also argue how the present study will add to the existing body of knowledge and how it relates to the role of an EP.

2.2 Language and Labelling

In order to discuss RSE for those with SEND it is important to understand and define who is being referred to. CYP with SEND make up a heterogeneous group, identified by a myriad of labels, which are described in different ways across time and culture and by different professional bodies (MacKay, 2009). MacKay exemplifies this - in the UK the term ‘learning disability’ is more commonly used by health professionals, while ‘learning difficulty’ is a term used in educational settings. Further to this, the term

‘intellectual disability’ replaced ‘mental retardation’, illustrating how labels are embedded in time and culture, reflecting the beliefs and understandings of society.

In this study the two main identified needs of the pupils at the special school were Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), subsequently these will be defined in more detail here. MLD is a term used to describe a group of pupils who are the largest proportion of those identified as having SEND in England (DfE, 2010). However, this misleads, as Norwich et al. (2014) argue that the term MLD is ill-defined - describing low attainment rather than intellectual impairment. Learning Disability (LD) is more commonly used in the UK, while Intellectual Disability (ID) is a term used internationally. An ID can be defined as having impairments in both intellectual abilities and daily living skills (adaptive functioning), which begin before the age of 18 years (APA, 2013). In this study the terms ‘ID’, ‘learning difficulty’ (LD) and ‘learning disability’ (LD) will be taken to mean the same thing and will be used interchangeably. ASD or Autism is a complex condition characterised by impairments in communication and social interactions as well as repetitive behaviours (APA, 2013). Those with autism do not necessarily have LD, although it is thought that up to a third of people with LD may also have autism (Asagba et al., 2019). This highlights some of the complexities encountered when defining learners labelled with SEND.

2.3 Sexuality and Disability

To fully understand RSE for learners with SEND the current position will be situated within the historical context. Traditionally the sexuality of people with disabilities have been disregarded and stigmatised, entrenched in a dominant socio-cultural,

heteronormative and paternalistic view of the world (Esmail et al., 2010). Löfgren-Mårtenson (2004) reasons this position has stemmed from eugenic roots, which led to mass sterilization and segregation of people with disabilities. The subsequent legacy, is those with disabilities are often seen as sexually deviant (Di Giulio, 2003), irrelevant, asexual, prone to criminality and as a problem to society (Richards et al., 2006).

Slowly, a movement away from the predominant medical model to a social model of disability, has called families, educators and professionals to critically examine prevailing attitudes. This has led to developments such as the 1986 UN declaration for therapeutic sterilization without consent to be unjustified and the 2008 UN convention, which gave a platform for the discussion of sexual rights for disabled people. However, Shakespeare and Richardson (2018), in a 25 year later follow up paper, argue that little has changed due to “austerity policies undermining hard-won independence and wellbeing” (p.82). This is supported by Rouf (2015) who affirms how systemic changes profoundly affect human, behaviour and action.

In a UK systematic review of peer reviewed and grey literature, Harflett and Turner (2016) explored the barriers for people with LD in developing sexual relationships. They outline multifaceted barriers that disabled people face, including attitudinal barriers-encapsulating not only general societal views, through lack of policy and muddled legislation, but how these permeate to parents, staff and teachers. They also explored the lack of training and resources for families and teachers, which limits the RSE taught. This dearth of information has resulted in a narrow curriculum that lacks evidence. This

lack of guidance is exacerbated by real world practical issues, including limitations on privacy, independence and opportunities to have relationships. Additionally, specific groups face further difficulties, for example women having little control over reproductive health, while men's sexual behaviour is often pathologised, meantime LGBT+ groups are practically invisible. Using a qualitative lens of enquiry to take account for the multifaceted factors at play, Kramers-Olen (2016) used a Foucauldian understanding in their literature review. Similarly, MacKenzie (2018) uses Fricker's analysis of testimonial justice for 'autists' (autistic people) as knowers of their own sexuality. These viewpoints allow a greater depth of understanding, taking account of the interdependence between social phenomena and power, impressing the need to bring a voice to this marginalised group.

Privileging a voice for disabled people regarding sexuality needs a considered, sensitive approach (Richards et al., 2006). Media visibility has started to increase through programmes like *The Sessions* and *The Undatables* and a greater coverage of the Paralympic Games. However, Shakespeare and Richardson (2018) explain how activist groups understand these programmes to "ghettoise disability into a spectacle" (p.84). Conversely, Löfgren-Mårtenson (2008) explores how the internet has provided opportunities for dating and advocacy and greater openness towards sexuality for all people, including those with a disability (Hollomotz, 2013). This shows wider societal changes shown through policy, reflected in the media, in turn impacting the attitudes and beliefs within wider communities. To support these attitudinal shifts impacting the nature of RSE, Travers and Tincani (2010) highlight the need for collaboration and

participation with stakeholders when designing approaches. However, Brown et al. (2020), Frawley and O'Shea (2020) and MacKensie (2018) call for further steps - insisting that the testimonies of the individuals themselves be central to research. Rouf (2015) asserts that psychology should use qualitative research to privilege these unheard voices.

2.4 Pupil views of RSE

The Children's Act 2004 and other key guidance and legislation such as The Farrell Report (Farrell et al., 2006) and the Children and Families Act (2014) emphasise the importance of seeking and hearing the views of pupils. Gaining the views of YP with SEND (specifically ASD and ID) is beginning to be explored - revealing valuable insights regarding RSE. The majority of research has come from North Europe, Australia and Canada, reflecting their societal values and politics, which are inevitably entangled with RSE and disability. Also, research with YP is limited to those over 16, with a dearth of evidence for the view of younger CYP. Many studies employ qualitative interviews, which gives a depth of information and new insight, but does not speak for everyone (and perhaps only those who are willing and able to articulate their views).

A systematic review concerning the views of YP with ID reveals a desire and interest from YP to learn about RSE, with some wanting relationships and some wishing to be sexually active (McCann et al., 2019). YP explain that RSE is flavoured by the prejudice and paternalistic attitudes of adults (McCann, 2019), which draw from a limited, heteronormative script, reflecting restrictive cultural norms and biases (Löfgren-

Mårtenson, 2012). Further to this, YP report being policed by adults, with high levels of adult supervision, coloured by discourses of ableism, resulting in adults inhibiting YP's 'becoming an adult agenda' (Frawley & Wilson, 2016). Often YP report they are reluctant to criticise curriculums, as they remain dependent on those around them (Löfgren-Mårtenson, 2012). Thus reflecting the diminished power of this group, who rarely complain of human rights violations as they remain, for the most part, uninformed and therefore disempowered (Kramers-Olen, 2016).

Cheak-Zamora's (2019) qualitative interviews with adolescents with ASD highlighted that this group may have a later sexual debut and that RSE is given at a time which does not resonate. Yet, Frawley and Wilson (2016) affirm that this 'suspended adolescence' is due to high levels of adult surveillance: similarly Löfgren-Mårtenson (2004) asserts that parents, staff and institutions can be obstacles. However, King (2013) reminds us to consider that age is an important factor in relation to sexuality, as it changes with time. Therefore, it is helpful to look at lifespan studies such as Shakespeare and Richardson (2018) to acknowledge how RSE needs a cyclical approach.

YP express strong interests in having relationships (Schaafsma et al., 2017), but there is a disparity between desires and hopes and the reality of having meaningful relationships (Cheak-Zamora, 2019). YP reported nervousness in talking to someone they found attractive, coupled with a lack of understanding about dating protocols and a need for others to understand sensory issues (Cheak-Zamora, 2019). Hannah and

Stagg (2016) argue YP's lack of sexual awareness is not compensated through peer group interaction as YP with SEND are more likely to be excluded form 'dirty talk' discussions. Building on this, Löfgren-Mårtenson (2012) asserts that YP need the opportunity to explore identity, notwithstanding sexual preferences, as homosexual YP with SEND are an invisible group (Löfgren-Mårtenson, 2008, 2009). Yet sexual orientation is a pertinent topic as there is emerging evidence that those with ASD are more likely than the rest of the population to report attraction to the same sex (Dewinter et al., 2017).

In conclusion, studies with YP highlight the need for RSE to move away from moral panic, to teaching skills for navigating ethical, nuanced social situations and relationships (McCann, 2019). McCann's systematic review argues for RSE that is co-produced, collaborative with a key peer educative aspect. While Löfgren-Mårtenson calls for RSE which insights a pedagogy critical of norms and enables YP to find their 'internal compass'.

2.5 Parent views of RSE

Parents are YP's first educators and key partners for implementing RSE, acting as a potential facilitators or barriers (Reynolds, 2019). Arguably RSE starts early within families, through close relationships, enacted through intimate care (Stein et al., 2018). Wilson et al. (2016) summarises key issues that pervade RSE for mothers as: difficulty in finding the right help (that help being reactive); fear-based narratives dominating choices; and how RSE choices pervade other areas of YP's lives. Reynolds condenses

findings from multiple studies identifying barriers for parents such as: anxiety; prioritising other needs; grief; belief of disinterest; view of YP as eternal child; questioning ability for consent; discomfort; and waiting for child to ask. Chappell (2016) uses Foucauldian discourse analysis to understand these barriers through a lens of power, highlighting a dual discourse of public/political verses private/personal. Additionally, Reynold (2019) indicates further possible RSE difficulties for parents of children with SEND including: prolonged need for intimate care support (less opportunity for privacy); fewer boundaries (including nudity); less resilience in families; and less opportunities for YP to be assertive. However, there is a lot of variety (Stein et al., 2019) and little research exploring families who feel confident with RSE.

Rogers (2010) impresses that failing to support parents with RSE and colluding in the protection agenda is 'weak eugenics', while a fear of loss of 'childhood innocence' may perpetuate societal power and control (Robinson, 2008). Therefore, understanding the mechanisms to enact participatory support is needed. Stein et al. (2018) argue for a proactive approach, while Wilson et al. (2016) recognise the need for peer-support and mentoring for parents. Studies of parent-child communication recognise that style of discussion is key (Corona et al., 2016), that YP want better communication from parents (Hartmann et al., 2019) and that understanding communications can help develop evidence based programmes (Holmes et al., 2019). When parents have been included in training, parental concern has decreased (Corona et al., 2015). However, training should include the 'how to' of effective communication (Holmes et al., 2019), while Prezant and Marshak (2006) stress the need for professionals to work in a respectful,

collaborative way with families. Frank and Sandman (2019) aimed to meet the need for access to training, resources and peer support for families by developing 'Home Based Adolescent Sexuality Education (B.A.S.E) for Intellectual disabilities to support parents as primary educators; however, pilot studies have yet to be completed.

This work should account for the special school context, which presents further barriers. These include possible distance from home which makes developing a local peer group difficult and home-school communications challenging (Reynolds, 2019). Further research should also take account of the absence of father's voices (Wilson et al., 2016) and the role of race and ethnicity (Holmes et al., 2019, Löfgren-Mårtenson & Ouis, 2019). Many parents' perspectives that have previously been privileged are white, Western and female. Research in this area is in its infancy and would benefit from further investigation in the form of long term follow up studies.

2.6 Teaching and curriculum

2.6.1 Teaching and staff

Teachers are key partners along with pupils and parents in RSE. Using phenomenology, a Swedish study interviewed teachers who expressed high motivation for teaching RSE and adequate access to resources, yet participants felt they lacked skills and would retreat to a protective stance – based on nuture and safety (Nelson et al., 2020). While Sweden has a well-established RSE agenda, staff studies in Australia report that teachers are reluctant counsellors, feeling unprepared and guided by their own values (Wilson & Frawley, 2016). Young et al. (2012) report staff attitudes as

pivotal, with females perceived as innocent and males perceived as sexually motivated. Indeed, in the UK, Garbutt (2008) describes moral beliefs as a key barrier in RSE, along with a lack of both confidence and adequate materials. These studies show how staff have high responsibility combined with low self-efficacy, resulting in self-guidance based on their own moral compass.

Grieve et al. (2008) suggested remediation to these issues through training: including awareness of attitudes; ways of supporting YP to make choices; pathways to deal with abuse; and whistleblowing when staff practice in a restrictive way. Garbutt (2008) adds to this, impressing that training should be with and from professionals who work proactively, sensitively and closely with parents and teachers in a joined up way. Young et al. (2012), affirms that staff who were younger, had more training and were of higher professional status presented with more positive attitudes. Charitou et al. (2020) in a UK systematic review and thematic synthesis of qualitative research with staff supporting adults with ID, highlighted the importance of training and supervision to address anxieties surrounding attitudes and practice and the need to develop these through policy alongside professionals such as psychologists. Therefore, this provides evidence for staff training and supervision to ensure awareness of attitudes, whilst giving staff clear guidance and pathways to navigate dilemmas.

2.6.2 RSE Curriculum

Key characteristics of effective RSE programmes for the general population are suggested to include: coverage of a comprehensive range of topics; trained educators;

education before the YP has sex; inclusion of psychosocial factors (such as values, norms and self-efficacy); participatory methods; small group work; and contributions from home and school (Kirby, 2007, 2008, Trivedi, 2007).

Some systematic reviews have been undertaken for RSE programmes for those with SEND. Grieve et al. (2007) reviewed the literature for MLD learners, finding that programmes show little differentiation, with a focus on sex offending and the use of complicated materials. Group work was often used without an evidence base, while optimum timing of education is not understood. Studies typically used small participant numbers with no long-term follow up measures. More recently, McCann's systematic review for learners with ID, also confirmed that programmes were abstract with a focus on risk prevention. These results were replicated in Sala et al.'s (2019) systematic review for learners with ID and/or ASD, finding that studies were of a poor quality with scant descriptions of theoretical and ethical paradigms and non-validated outcome measures. McDaniels and Fleming (2016), in a literature review from 1995-2015, confirm there is little formal, individualized and specific RSE curricular for those with ID. Brown at al. (2020) used a systemic review to understand the important variables in the design, content and delivery of RSE - calling for parents, pupils and professionals to be fully involved at each stage and approaches to be evidence based and person-centred. All reviews recommend a need to develop co-produced, person-centred programmes with an examination of attitudes and values as a central component.

Gougeon (2009) addresses this, calling for a critical pedagogy, which links learning to lived experience (through providing learners meaningful experiences, underpinned by language). They suggest a peer teaching model to address power relations, which includes 'real' information about intimacy, logistics and emotions. Similarly, Murray (2019) explored an inter-professional, collaborative development model to deliver a sexual health programme. This served as a way to include all stakeholders but did not act as an ongoing mechanism to evaluate learners over time. These studies offer the sound principles for teaching RSE to SEND learners but lack the 'how to' mechanisms to enact it. This was addressed by the use of monitoring groups (Stewart & Bustard, 2012), which included stakeholders meeting regularly to develop RSE practice collaboratively. However, the effectiveness of the group was measured by the views of the training it produced rather than understanding the value of the group for managing the dilemmas and complexities of RSE for this group of learners. The voice of the YP was also absent within this model. Therefore, there is a need to understand the experiences of group members to understand the mechanisms of such a model and how it achieves tackling the intricacies of practice.

2.7 RSE and Organisational Change - The Role of EPs

Harding (2017) asserts that EPs are well placed to facilitate the development of the policy and organisation change for those with SEND, as well as supporting their voice to be heard. The role of EPs in relation to RSE will be explored, highlighting how EPs can support organisational change such as implementing the RSE curriculum. This will be

discussed here in relation to universal and group work, hearing the voice of YP and the use of person-centred planning (PCP) tools.

2.7.1 EPs and Universal work

EPs work at three levels: individual, organisational and systemically- promoting inclusion at all levels (Cameron, 2006). Mackay and Lindsay (2015) argue that EPs have extensive scope to use psychology universally at a systems level for the benefit of individuals. Additionally, EPs can use research to address real-life problems by adopting psychological perspectives, unravelling problem dimensions and promoting innovative concepts or big ideas (Gersh, 2004). Similarly, EPs can address inequalities and promote inclusion through qualitative research to promote social action and co-designed services (Rouf, 2015). Farrell et al. (2006) explain how EPs are integral and valued in organisation change as they have a deep understanding of the interacting systems of school and the relationships within them. The wealth of skills EPs have makes them well placed to act as agents of change, working universally through supporting organisational change, this will be explored further here.

2.7.2 EPs and Organisational Change

Woods et al. (2013) describes EPs as facilitators and 'bridges' in organisational change, bringing together a range of professional communities to contribute to change over time. Fox (2009) describes this process, highlighting how EPs can enact organisational change through organisational development and school improvement 'systems work' which also includes elements of consultative, collaborative group work informed by

‘systems thinking’. Systemic practice takes account of the internal ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ parts of a larger ‘system’ or organisation (Falkenberg & Herremans, 1995). These parts of the system are thought of as dynamic and interrelated, being shaped by the actions of leaders (Schein, 2010). Hopkins and Stern (1996) explain how school improvement is a process whereby school systems are supported in their capability to manage change and therefore improve wellbeing and achievement outcomes for students, school staff and the school community. Ideally this process should be ‘bottom up’, so that key stakeholders drive the direction of change and therefore have ownership over improvement (Hopkins, 2001). Fallon et al. (2010) impresses the importance of EPs exemplifying their role in school improvement and organisational change. They call for EPs to showcase the diversity of their work and unique scientific specialism through case studies which shed light on the EPs unique role in organisational change in schools.

EPs knowledge of change is multifaceted. EPs are professionals who have a breadth and depth in their understanding and competencies in relation to change (Gillham, 1999). This is shown in their understanding of change models (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986) which they enact and embed in their practice through their role as ‘change agent’ in schools (MacKay, 2000). In addition to this EPs also have skills and knowledge of the factors related to the successful implementation of change (Humphrey et al., 2018). One part of successful implementation is understanding the school’s desire and readiness to change (Wang et al, 2020). This includes working closely alongside schools to ascertain their ability to change: which encompasses commitment

and ownership of the change process; an examination of the school culture; and understanding the ability of the school to learn and engage with school improvement work (Evans & Cowell, 2013). Therefore, the relationships between EPs and schools is central to facilitating this process (Farrell et al., 2006).

One way EPs can work alongside schools and support them in organisational change is through Action Research (AR). Geiger et al. (2015) exemplifies this, showing how AR can be employed by EPs working with schools as a systemic approach to developing quality provision for YP. McNiff et al. (2003) explain how AR can promote change throughout schools, at both individual and organisational levels. Participatory Action Research (PAR), takes this further and engages stakeholders throughout the process so that those most invested and effected can promote change in their own schools and organisations (Reason & Bradbury, 2013). EPs can support this type of work by engaging schools as co-researchers, through their role as scientist practitioner, promoting and catalysing systemic change in school cultures (Ackerley & Bunn, 2018). This kind of work can arguably be used to support the development and implementation of new curriculums and legislative changes, such as RSE.

2.7.3 EPs and Group work

EPs have a key role in promoting organisational change through group work. Muchenje and Kelly (2021) advocate the value in teachers meeting to share common issues, concerns and solutions in the form of Problem Solving Groups (PSGs), highlighting a key role for EPs in contracting group working agreements and facilitating such groups.

EPs are well practised in group work through their experiences with group supervision, enacting models such as staff support groups (Hanko, 2016) and supporting shared problem solving in PSGs such as Solution Circles (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021). The ability to receive and deliver supervision remains a core professional competency for EP's (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). However, it is recognised that teachers are largely alone in not receiving any boundaried space to reflect on professional practice (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015).

EPs have a key role in providing supportive spaces for teachers and professionals, supporting them to reflect on their practice rather than engage in cycles of reaction (Jackson, 2002). Their key skills in consultation allow group members to consider and reconcile a range of views (Cameron, 2006). Wagner (1995) argues that EPs can introduce elements of cognitive dissonance safely, whereby group members tolerate and resolve tensions in their thinking, thus promoting changes in their views and practice. Reflective spaces provide opportunities to examine tacit understandings and provide opportunities for sense making. These can lead and contribute to the development of new group thinking and shared understandings (Schon, 1991).

Bartle and Travis (2015) note that the success of groups rely on building a culture of safety. Hulusi and Maggs (2015) describe how EPs support the development of safety in groups through providing 'containment'. Containment is a concept from Bion's (1985) 'Container and Contained' work. In groups, this can be explained by the EP providing the function of a 'container' who can hold and digest challenging thoughts and

emotions, allowing group members to feel 'contained' and more able to explore and make sense of difficult situations, emotions or conflicts in practice. EPs support this 'containment' by offering predictability through regular, timetabled group spaces which offer validation, group identity, builds safe and secure professional working alliances and relationships and a sense of belonging (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021). This is arguably important for implementing the organisational complexities of an RSE curriculum for pupils with SEND and indeed, any organisational change which schools inevitably face frequently. This demonstrating a clear role for EPs in reflective group work to support organisational change for staff in schools.

2.7.4 EPs and hearing the voice of CYP

As CYP are key stakeholders in their learning and the implementation of any new curriculums such as RSE, their voices should be heard. Gersh et al. (2017) argue that listening to YP is a key function of EP work. There had been a growing understanding of the importance of hearing the voice of the YP. Key reports such as The Farrell Report (Farrell et al., 2006), the Every Child Matters initiative (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2004) and the Children and Families Act (2014), have impressed the importance of the centrality of YP's views. Yet, Shier (2001) reminds us that the participation of YP in decision making is one of the most disregarded areas of YP's lives. Research has gone some way to remediate this, looking at participatory, creative methods (Hill et al., 2016, 2017) for YP with SEND, but there is some way to go before these participatory techniques are widely embedded in practice.

2.7.5 EPs and PATH

One way of listening to YP, is through PCP techniques and tools. PCP aims to support people by obtaining their unique perspectives on what is important, using them to facilitate their increased inclusion in society (Murray & Sanderson, 2007). PCP approaches include tools such as PATH (Pearpoint et al., 1993) and Making Action Plans (MAPS; Forest, Pearpoint, & O'Brien, 1996) amongst others. PATH is a solution focused, PCP approach, most typically used with individuals (Morgan, 2016) but also used with organisations (Hughes et al., 2019). PCP tools like PATH use a series of clear stages to make a co-produced plan. This is guided by the process facilitator and recorded visually by a graphic facilitator. Specifically, PATH asks the participants to visualise a different future and then plan backwards from the future vision through goal setting, creative thinking and alliance building (Newton et al., 2016). Arguably, using PATH allows the creation of a shared vison through the development of the graphic record, allowing many voices to be heard and to contribute to change. PCP tools like PATH are widely used in EP practice but there is relatively little research to support their use (Hughes et al., 2019) and PCP tools often operate within a service delivery context with difficultly in establishing evidential links (Claes et al., 2010).

PATH's use as a tool for organisational change has a small but expanding evidence base (Hughes et al., 2019 and Morgan, 2016). These case studies exemplify PATH as a collaborative, participatory tool which can be used to support organisational change. This change is supported through creating new shared understandings in groups by

transforming ‘bottom up’ knowledge and tacit understandings and views into new cultural knowledge which can inform policy and practice (Morgan, 2016). Morgan suggests that a key success factor is the facilitator skill in supporting the group to develop their own solutions, enacted in the facilitator’s experience and confidence. Hughes et al. build on this, adding that the group members need to be adequately prepared for the process by the facilitator, alerting them to practical considerations. They also highlight a need for school readiness for change. This provides a rationale for an EP, to use their consultative skills, knowledge of psychology and experience supporting groups and organisational change within a reflective framework to both act as a facilitator and ascertain the school’s readiness for change.

There is limited research relating to the role of EPs in RSE. Moffet and Field (2020) argue that EPs are well placed to support schools to navigate RSE through their skill set including training, their distinct contributions to multi-agency work and hearing the voice of the child. In addition, EPs also have a depth of knowledge, relating to organisational change, and developmental psychology. By using a combination of consultation, intervention and research skills, EPs are well-positioned to empower organisational change and guide groups, to use reflective spaces to discuss, review and refine evolving practice which includes the voices of relevant stakeholders.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored RSE for pupils with SEND. RSE is a complex, socially-nuanced topic which interfaces with religious, political and societal views. There is a historical

disregard for the intimate lives of those with disabilities. This has resulted in a complex legacy, where those with SEND are viewed as potentially dangerous or innocents that need protection. Consequently, those with SEND are further limited and disabled. These pervasive attitudes continue to act as a barrier for learners with SEND: through the views of parents and teachers; the restricted opportunities for RSE learning; poorly developed materials and lack of pupil and family collaboration. There is a growing body of research that highlights the disempowerment of this group, coupled by the desire for opportunities to learn which match need.

While research has started to explore RSE for older learners with SEND, there are several research gaps and methodological limitations to the existing literature. Firstly, existing research focuses on older adolescences and/or young adults, with little understanding of RSE for pupils under 16. Studies employ small sample sizes, making generalisability difficult. Systematic reviews reveal poor quality studies, with extremely limited explanation of theoretical and ethical paradigms and non-validated outcome measures. Studies are based on those with the labels of ID or ASD rather than looking at curriculums for special schools, which have a variety of needs. Although there are some UK studies, much research comes from a small number of other countries which is guided by different cultural agendas, policy, and prevailing beliefs and attitudes. Additionally, research in this area is problem saturated and summarises the barriers. Suggestions for better practice are made, calling for a cyclical, collaborative, participatory and person-centred approach. However, there is little exploration of the mechanisms and practical considerations for enacting a critical pedagogy where key

stakeholders can work together in developing practice, which is fit for purpose within a special school.

EPs have a range of skills which they can use to support schools to bring key stakeholders together to develop practice in RSE through supporting organisational change. These key skills include training for staff; distinct contributions to multi-agency work; and gaining the voice of the child. EPs also have a deep understanding of change and can support this through the facilitation of group spaces and the use of tools like PATH to plan in a participatory, containing and collaborative way.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the gaps in the existing literature by using PAR to develop a RSE support group for staff in a special school as a means of providing a platform for stakeholders to work collaboratively in a reflective and cyclical way. The development of the group and the subsequent action will be informed by seeking the views of all stakeholders (pupils, families and staff). The role of an EP will also be examined within this approach. Finally, the use of PATH, a PCP tool, will be explored as a mechanism to plan for collaborative, person-centred, organisational change in a school context and culture that is ready for change and development.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction to Methodology

This chapter will seek to describe the methodology used, including a description of the research design, methodologies and the epistemological, ontological and axiological position of the researcher. It will also discuss the adaptions made to the study in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2 The Context

The study was conducted in a special school for pupils aged 4-17 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including complex needs and LD, located in the home counties in England. The study was conducted as part of a Doctorate in Professional, Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology. The researcher was a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) on placement in an EPS located within the same Local Authority (LA). At the midpoint of this research, lockdown restrictions were imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and remained in place periodically for the remainder of the research.

3.3 Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed were:

RQ1: What are the group members' perceptions of the experience of being part of a RSE support group?

RQ2: What are group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE support group?

RQ3: What are the group members' perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE support group?

3.4 The Researcher's Epistemological and Ontological Position

The epistemological and ontological stance of the researcher is explored here, in order to situate the research in context and understand the philosophical underpinnings of this study.

Ontology is the study of 'being' and seeks to understand 'what is': this may be related to the nature of existence or structure of reality (Crotty, 1998), or in relation to what it is possible to know about the world (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Whereas, epistemology is concerned with making sense of the world, the 'nature' of knowledge and its scope and legitimacy (Crotty, 1998). Blaike (2000, p.8) defined epistemology as "the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be. In short, claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known".

Epistemology and ontology range from two main extreme positions: positivism or objectivism and constructionism or interpretivism. Positivism focuses on the importance of objectivity: facts and truths that can be extracted from a world unaffected by the researcher, thus making it possible to undertake objective, value-free inquiry (Snape & Spencer, 2003). In opposition to this, is the constructionist standpoint which understands that knowledge of the world is produced by not only experiences, but our reflections, explorations and understandings of those experiences (Ormston et al.,

2014). In this way the researcher cannot detach themselves from their research, as their values and perspectives are influential at every level.

Social constructionism is adopted as the epistemological position in conducting this research, while the ontological position is interpretivist. A social constructionist stance is concerned with how people construct knowledge and understanding through engaging in activities together, therefore a number of constructions can exist between people. This is evident in this research as members in the support group take up different roles (EP and teacher). Also, meaning making is generated through interactions with people, events and context (McNamee, 2004), therefore knowledge is not based on the world as it 'really' is, but rather how people construct knowledge between them through their daily interactions (Burr, 2018). This research involves activities such as constructing knowledge, reflecting on this knowledge, and socially validating it as useful or as a barrier (Hosking, 1999). Social constructionism is used here through action-orientated research as the collaborative processes between the researcher and special school staff work to construct new knowledge (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). Finally, Action Research (AR) may invite reflection on current practice, thus enabling the group members to construct new meanings, realities and knowledge during the interaction process.

3.5 Axiology

The researcher's axiological stance is discussed here to acknowledge how the researcher's intrinsic values and beliefs impact on the research (Killam, 2013). Axiology describes how, when undertaking research, the beliefs and values we hold can bring

bias, potentially influencing the way data is collected and interpreted by the researcher (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). The researcher believes that all young people greatly benefit from a full and participatory RSE curriculum. This is particularly imperative when the young people have SEND, as this population has been typically overlooked or disregarded, assumed to be either asexual, innocent or a threat (Richards et al., 2006). The literature suggests that there is a dearth of evidence for effective, supportive RSE for pupils with SEND and suggest collaborative, participatory opportunities for curriculum development. The researcher places high value on opportunities for professionals to collaborate and reflect and is interested in the participants' subjective views of these types of opportunities and how it benefits their practice. The researcher also places high value in working alongside stakeholders and incorporating the voice of young people and their families into developing curriculum that fits need.

To address concerns relating to researcher bias the researcher has considered issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability, which are detailed in paragraph 3.11.

3.6 Research Design and Methodology

The study used a flexible qualitative design in the form of an exploratory ethnographic case study using a PAR approach. It used qualitative methodology, which allows the researcher to describe and shed light on individuals' experiences (Willig, 2013). A qualitative approach allows for a range of approaches to data collection in order to generate complex data which is inclusive of multiple experiences, reflections and conceptualisations.

3.6.1 Ethnography

By taking an ethnographic approach the researcher aimed to gain an insider's perspective by both taking part and observing through participant observation (Robson & McCartan, 2016), combined with a multi-method approach (Tacchi, 2015). Ethnography is an established approach in qualitative research (Voldbjerg, 2014), offering multiple data collection methods which are valuable for validating and cross-checking data (Axford et al., 1999). By using an ethnographic approach, this study benefits from a holistic way of obtaining knowledge and a rigorous approach to qualitative research (Berman et al., 2001). Additionally, by immersing themselves in the field for a prolonged amount of time the researcher was able to obtain meaningful data that takes account of the cultural nuances of the school (Tacchi, 2015).

3.6.2 Case Study Design

Using a case study design allows access to a greater depth of knowledge (Simons, 2009), while allowing the creation of many accounts from a single method (Lewis, 2003). In this study the school serves as a 'bounded system' and is the unit of analysis (Stake, 1994). Yin (2009) explains how case studies can be either exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. This research seeks to explore the experiences of members of an RSE working group, the role of the EP and the use of PATH and is therefore an exploratory case study. Case study design is often criticised for lacking rigour and systematic organisation of data (Yin, 2009), being open to researcher bias in selection of data for inclusion in the findings and difficulties in reporting reliable conclusions about cause and effect relationships across similar case studies (Shaughnessey et al., 2003).

However, case study methodology has a number of strengths, including: a strong focus on reality; findings that have immediate and practical application; accessibility to wide audience; and the facility for implementation by a single researcher rather than a team (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study a case study design allowed for a rich and deep understanding of the experiences of the group members, through a variety of data collection methods (Yin, 2009). The researcher looked to organise their data rigorously and transparently and report their rationale for selection of data in the findings to address any criticisms of design.

3.6.3 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

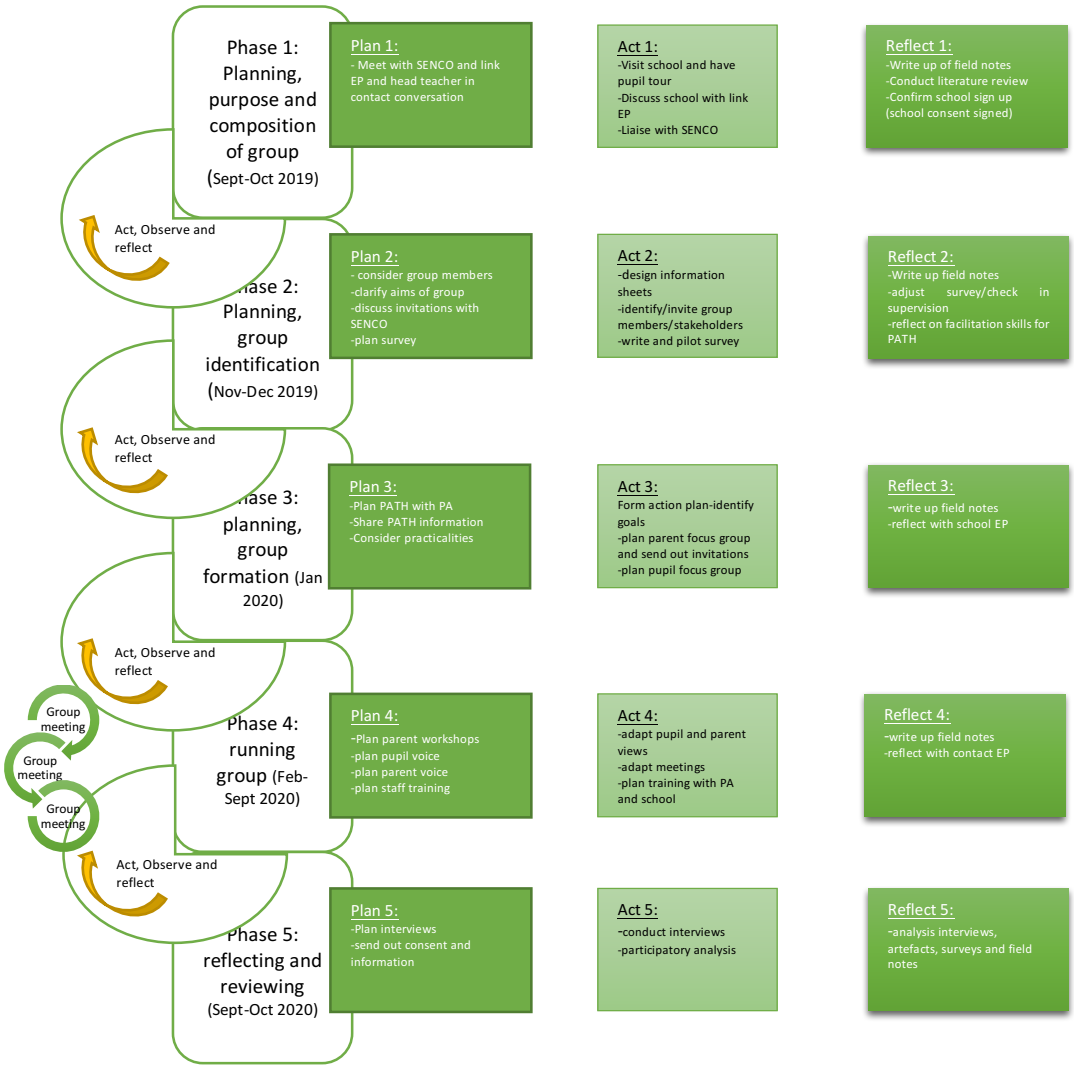
AR is a methodology which allows for collaboration and participation between researchers and co-researchers (e.g. 'the participants') while engaging in cycles of contemplation and action (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). PAR highlights this participatory aspect: encouraging an active, involved role for participants (Ponciano, 2013), thus facilitating them to develop skills and knowledge to affect change within their own unique and individual setting (Reason & Bradbury, 2013). PAR was selected as a research approach for several reasons including: its potential to contribute to practice based evidence (Pring & Thomas, 2004); encouraging school staff to use research in their practice (Torrance, 2004); and its ability to promote change at both individual and organisational levels (Robson & McCartan, 2016). PAR was selected above over other designs of co-production such as Research and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model (Timmins et al., 2003) and Soft Systems methodology (SSM) (Checkland &

Scholes, 1990), as these approaches use ‘top down’ initiatives and therefore are more likely to highlight systemic issues (Simm & Ingram, 2008). PAR also gave the study flexibility to respond dynamically to the feelings and wishes of the working group.

In this study Kemmis and McTaggart’s (2000) ‘action research spiral’ was adopted and adapted to ensure that research followed a systematic cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting while maintaining a level of flexibility. The researcher adapted the AR spiral as phase 4, of a 5 phase pathway model developed by the researcher.

Figure 1.

The Five Phases of Developing The RSE Working Group Using PAR



3.6.4 The Researcher's Role within Research

The researcher recognises their active role within this ethnographic PAR as participant observer. The researcher acknowledges the tensions this dual role brings and understands "in order to truly grasp the lived experience of people from their point of view, one has to enter into relationships with them, and hence disturb their natural setting. There is little point in trying to control what is an unavoidable consequence of becoming involved in people's lives in this way" (Davidson & Layder, 1994, p83). Rather than trying to control the effects of their presence, the researcher acknowledges this and looks to engage participants, not only practitioners but as research partners in the spirit of AR (Denscombe, 2003). As a result, the role of reflexivity in this project was crucial - requiring the researcher to be conscious of the impact of their personal experiences and professional skills whilst working alongside participants (Heikkinen et al., 2012). In this way, the researcher engaged in ongoing negotiation with the school to agree on progress and priorities while acknowledging and providing transparency regarding the adoption of a coordinating and facilitative role.

3.7 Sampling Strategy and Participants

3.7.1 School

A special school for pupils with complex needs and LD, was recruited through opportunity sampling. The researcher had worked within the school previously in their role of PA, alongside an EP. The school was part of a federation of three special schools, served by the Local Authority (LA). The school was made up of three parts:

lower (age 4-9): middle (age 9-13); and upper school (age 13-16), with four classes within each part of the school. Each class had approximately 10 pupils, with one teacher and two teaching assistants. The CYP in each class were usually of a similar age but were grouped relating to need, rather than chronological age. The most common needs of the pupils at the school were ASD, MLD and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). The pupils attending the school lived in a variety of locations. While some pupils were local, many pupils were transported in from locations all around the large county within which the school was situated.

The researcher initially called and emailed all special schools in the LA to try and recruit a school for the research, however this approach was unsuccessful. The researcher was able to recruit the school in this study by being introduced to the school through the link EP, during shadowing a planning meeting at the beginning of their placement.

3.7.2 Participants

The researcher and the key liaison person (SENCO) agreed on and invited seven participants to the RSE support group:

Table 1.

RSE Support Group Participant Information

Participant	**Gender**	**Role**	**Meetings Attended**
1	Male	Head of Middle School	1,2,3
2	Female	SENCO and RSE lead	1,2, 3,4
3	Female	Head of Upper school	1,2,3,4
4	Female	Psychology Assistant for Local Authority EPS	1,3

5	Male	Safe guarding lead and teaching assistant	2,3,4
6	Male	Head of Lower school	1,2,3,4
7	Female	School contact EP	1,2,3
8	Female	Head teacher	1,2

The participants represented a range of people who potentially could be involved in RSE. Discussions included inviting parents, pupils and outside agencies/professionals. However, it was decided, as this was a new initiative to start the group with just staff members, with the possibility to invite other members along the way.

3.8 Research Tools

This study employed a number of research tools in order to address the research questions. Adjustments to these research tools were made in light of Covid-19 pandemic. These adjustments and the researcher's reflections are discussed in detail in paragraph 3.14.

3.8.1 Field notes (phase 1-5)

Field notes were used as a research tool to document the researcher's observations in their role as participant observer, actively engaging with the group, building relationships with them as both participant and observer/researcher (Angrosino, 2007).

Emerson et al. (2011) highlight the need for high quality field notes to observe, reflect and capture what happens. After piloting different models of organisation for field notes,

the researcher selected Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) model for its user friendliness and adaptability (Table 2). This model breaks notes into observational, theoretical and methodological types. An example of the field notes can be found in Appendix 31.

Table 2.

Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) Model for Organisation of Field notes

Type of notes	**Function**
Observational Notes (ON)	Descriptive statements derived from watching and listening. Little interpretation.
Theoretical Notes (TN)	Self-conscious controlled attempts to derive meaning. Inference, hypothesis and conjectures of the researcher. Development of new concepts, links to old ones.
Methodological Notes (MN)	Instructions to oneself Notes of operational acts planned or completed. Notes timing, sequencing, manoeuvring.

Adapted from Palmer (2010) in Jones and Watt (2010) p.148-149

3.8.2 Artefacts (phase 3 and 4)

Artefacts such as meeting notes, co-constructed group rules, e-mails, drawings and diagrams were used to explore different perspectives, processes and collaborative work within the study. These techniques are recognised as ethnographic AR tools which build a picture and support understanding of complex issues leading to more robust findings (Tacchi, 2015). These were photographed by the researcher in order to capture them for this study see Appendix 32.

3.8.3 Semi-structured Group Member Interviews (phase 5)

Semi-structured interviews were used to capture the perceptions of the group members. This format was chosen as a flexible method which allows for the identification of themes while giving a rich and detailed account and goes further to allow interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). This is particularly salient for exploratory research such as this study, where participant's views are unknown (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This format was also chosen as the questions can be shaped to the individual responses of the participants (Kvale,1996). Rubin and Rubin's (2012) recommendations for eliciting depth, detail, vividness, nuance and richness were used in developing a schedule for interview (see Appendix 33).

3.8.4 PATH (phase 3)

PATH is a solution focused, collaborative process designed to help teams of people plan for a more positive future (Pearpoint et al., 1993). A process facilitator guides the group, using solution focused questioning through sequential stages, starting with their preferred future. These stages are recorded visually by a graphic facilitator. Although PATH is more commonly used as PCP tool, here it was used as a research tool as part of the AR process for organisational planning. It was used to collaboratively discuss and plan for the RSE group. The researcher used an adapted PATH process based on Hughes et al. (2019) adaptions of PATH for organisational use (see Appendix 1). While there is little UK educational evaluation of the effectiveness of PATH for organisational change (Stobie et al., 2005). Morgan (2016) argues that PATH allows for the creation of tacit, 'bottom up' knowledge and its transformation to explicit, useful, shared knowledge.

Additionally, Morgan argues that PATH serves as a 'tipping point' for change to occur in organisations.

3.9 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher recruited the school through attending a planning meeting with the school link EP, the SENCO and head teacher. Possible functions of the group were discussed. The SENCO then acted as the key liaison person from there on. The research was undertaken in five phases (see Figure 1).

3.9.1 Phase 1: Planning purpose and composition of the group

The SENCO and the researcher met again to discuss possible group members and give informed consent (see Appendix 2). This was discussed with senior leadership by the SENCO and then agreed with the researcher in another telephone call.

3.9.2 Phase 2: Planning and group identification

Group members were agreed on and information forms (see Appendix 3), consent forms (see Appendix 4) and invitations to the PATH meeting were sent out (see Appendix 5). A date was agreed for the PATH (planning meeting). Meanwhile the researcher spent some time in the school over several sessions to observe the everyday activities of the school. At this time parent and staff views were sought through the use of surveys (survey invites can be seen in Appendix 6 and 7, surveys can be seen in Appendix 18 and 19 and results can be seen in Appendix 36 and 37).

3.9.3 Phase 3: Planning and group formation

The group met for the first time and was guided through planning by the researcher (in role of facilitator) and a PA (in role as graphic facilitator) using PATH. Dates were agreed for the next two meetings (one each half term). Actions were identified for the group including parent and pupil focus groups to inform subsequent actions of the group. The group named themselves “The Dream Team”.

3.9.4 Phase 4: Running the group

At each group meeting the agenda was co-constructed and the researcher acted as facilitator. The SENCO recorded the actions and recorded them onto an action plan and each meeting was recorded graphically and kept as an artefact (see Appendix 32). After the Covid-19 restriction were in place the group did not meet for five months, after which two further virtual meetings took place using Microsoft Teams, an online video platform (further detail is given in Table 3). Further views were sought from a pupil survey (redesigned from pupil workshop due to COVID-19 restrictions) and parent interviews (redesigned from a focus group due to COVID-19 restrictions). Informed consent was sought – see Appendices 8-16 and 20-26, materials for collating views were co-designed with the school – see Appendices 16, 17, 27 and 28 and results can be seen in Appendices 38-42.

Table 3.

RSE Working Group Meetings

Meeting	Date	Function	Actions	Participants present	Format	Graphic facilitation
1	27/01/20	PATH meeting for planning	-plan and pupil focus group -share data from staff and parent surveys -plan parent focus group	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Face to face	Psychology Assistant (participant 4)
2	02/03/20	Follow up from PATH, resource planning, key topic discussion (public/private)	-invite parents and pupils to focus groups -build bank of resources online and physical	1,2,3,5,6,7,8	Face to face	Researcher
3	14/07/20	Reflecting, updates, next steps	-plan online training for staff -pupil views y11 -online resources for parents -continue to plan parent workshop	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Remote working	Psychology assistant (participant 4)
4	29/09/20	Reflecting so far (pupil voice, strengths,	-letter for parents	2,3,5,6	Remote working	Psychology Assistant

		curriculum, evaluation), impact of Covid -19	and workshop -review planning -use roadmap			

3.9.5 Phase 5: Reflecting and Reviewing

In this final phase the members of the group were interviewed by the researcher to understand their experiences of being part of the RSE support group (see Appendix 33). Due to the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic the interviews took place over the phone. They lasted around 30-45 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed into a word document. The interviewee was given the opportunity to reflect on the themes evident to them in the interview as a way of them engaging in participatory analysis of the data. They were given the opportunity to read the transcript and confirm the themes.

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Field notes and Artefacts Data (phases 1-5)

The field note data was analysed both inductively and deductively using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The artefacts were included as part of the field notes (to be included in the analysis). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and reporting patterns and themes and goes further, to allow the researcher to interpret these themes (Boyatzis, 1998). The data was coded at a semantic and a latent level - offering both descriptive themes and themes which represent the underlying assumptions and ideologies within the data. The thematic analysis of the field notes

and artefacts was completed after the thematic analysis of the interview data and then triangulated and mapped onto the interview themes as outlined in figure 2 (see Appendix 34 for more detail).

The PATH artefact was reviewed in real-time using Kolb's (1984) learning cycle for participants to reflect on the process by writing comments on post it notes under the 4 areas. This analysis was guided by and facilitated by the researcher at the end of the PATH meeting. These themes were then triangulated with the themes identified to answer question 3, outlined in figure 2 (see Appendices 34 and 45 for more detail).

Table 4.

Kolb's learning cycle for reflection on PATH

Kolb's Stage	Question for Reflection
1. Concrete Experience	What did you think/see/feel?
2. Reflective Observation	What worked well?
3. Abstract Conceptualisation	What could have been done better/differently?
4. Active Experimentation	What are your next steps?

3.10.2 Group Member Interview Data (phase 4 and 5)

The interview data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was supported by participatory thematic analysis (Muchenje, 2020) at the time of interview (see Appendices 34, 43, 44 and 45). The data was coded at a semantic and a

latent level and themes were data driven rather than fitting a pre-existing coding frame to reflect the participant's experiences. However, the researcher acknowledges that analysis was not conducted in an 'epistemological vacuum' (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the coding will have been researcher's pre-existing values, assumptions and knowledge. In this way the analysis was both inductive and data driven and deductive, reflecting implicit researcher led ideas.

The interview data was analysed in a step-by-step manner using Braun and Clarke's six phases, including: familiarisation with the data set (through transcription); generating initial data driven codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining; and naming themes and finally writing about themes in a report (see Appendix 34). This was not always a linear process and the researcher moved back and forward through the different stages, sometimes revising themes and subthemes. This was especially true of the triangulation stages outlined in Figure 2 and while addressing issues of validity.

Issues of validity were addressed by the researcher in three ways. The first was by inviting the participants to take part in participatory analysis. In addition, the researcher shared three transcripts during research supervision during the initial search for data driven codes. Research supervisors were then consulted again when defining and naming themes. Finally, the researcher shared and discussed a transcript and examples of codes, subthemes and themes during peer supervision with a fellow TEP.

The participatory adaptation of Braun and Clark's (2006) six phases as described by Muchenje (2020) based on Nind et al. (2011) allows participants to be participants and partners in analysis. Working in a participatory way to analyse the data is reflective of the collaborative nature of this study and mirrors the way the researcher has worked alongside the participants throughout the study. Nind et al. (2011) explains that there is a growing body of evidence to support participatory analysis and little is known about the effects on the quality of research. However, by understanding the role of researcher to act as facilitator using a clear approach, this supported the participant to be a 'sense maker' and partner in research.

Table 5.

Muchenje's (2020) Adaptions to Braun and Clarke's Six Phases

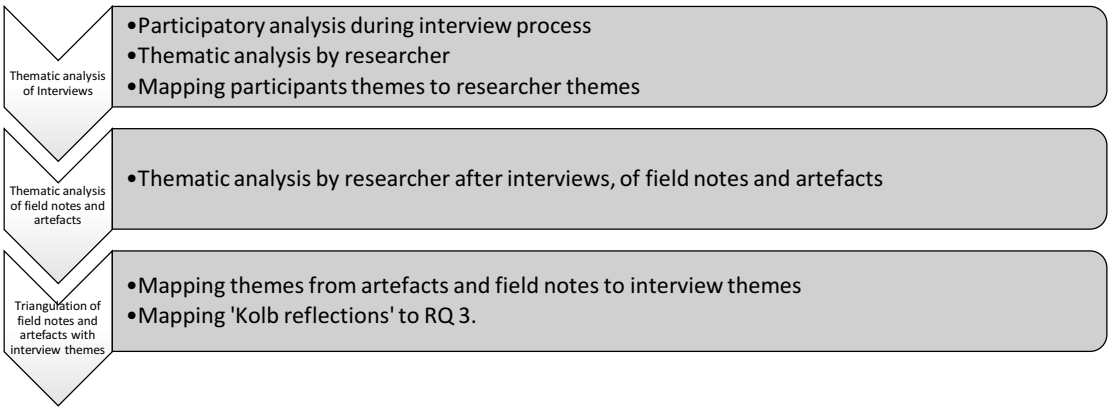
Braun and Clarke's Stage	**Participatory Adaptation**
1. Familiarisation with data	"Take some time to reflect on what we've discussed today"
2. Generating initial codes	"In our discussions, what key phrases or words or ideas do you feel reoccurred or were significant?"
3. Searching for themes	"How might we sum up these reoccurring key ideas?" "How could be group these into themes?"
4. Reviewing themes	"Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped these ideas?" and/or "Let's rank these themes in order of importance"
5. Refining themes	"Is there anything else to add that has not come up?" "What would we call these themes?"
6. Report writing	Researcher to write report and share with participants.

3.10.3 Order of Analysis of Data Sets

The researcher made the decision to analyse the interview data first, as this data most reflected the direct perceptions of the participants. The researcher then went on to use thematic analysis to identify themes in the field notes and artefacts to triangulate with and map onto interview themes. This is explained in Figure 2 and further detail can be found in Appendices 34, 43, 44 and 45.

Figure 2.

Order of analysis of data sets



3.11 Trustworthiness, Credibility and Transferability

Trustworthiness and credibility relates to how well the research has been carried out and making judgements about the findings being seen as trustworthy or transferable (Yardley, 2008). Flexible designs such as this one are vulnerable to threats of trustworthiness or credibility in relation to description, interpretation and theory (Maxwell, 1996, In Robson & McCartan, 2016). The researcher took several measures to ensure these threats are mediated. Jones and Stanley (2008) argue the need to recognise the 'validity of the subjective viewpoint' to enhance authenticity and

trustworthiness. Therefore, threats related to description were alleviated by audio recording interviews, using technology that transcribed 'in the moment'. The transcriptions were checked with the participants in real-time and the analysis was participatory (the themes will be generated and checked with and by the participant). As much of the interpretation of the interviews was done alongside the participants, this mediates or lessens any researcher bias in relation to interpretation and adds validity to the subjective viewpoint.

The researcher's field notes are less open to collaborative analysis and therefore the researcher needed to maintain a level of critical reflexivity throughout the recording and analysis stages. This was discussed in supervision sessions and reflected upon and within group meetings with the participants/co-researchers. The researcher was rigorous in the recording of field notes, clearly demarcating what is observation and what is reflection. Several theories were referred to within the field notes and these were reflected on in supervision and in group meetings with the fellow researchers.

To further support the credibility and trustworthiness of this study the researcher spent a long time (a year and half) as a prolonged involvement with the school in order to fully immerse themselves in the context being studied. Robson and McCartan (2016) highlight the possibility of greater researcher bias with prolonged involvement, however as the researcher was not located within the school at all times and works in a variety of settings this is less likely. Triangulation, in the form of gathering multiple forms of data

with a range of methods further alleviates any potential threats to trustworthiness and credibility, as well as keeping a clear and full audit trail in the form of a research diary.

Heikkinen et al. (2012) espouse five validation principles in relation to AR to consider within each step of the process. These include historical continuity, reflexivity, dialectics, workability and ethics. These have been considered at each stage, embedded throughout the study and reflected in the choice of research question, methodology and methods selected by the researcher and co-researchers (participants).

Transferability relates to what extent the findings of the research can be used outside of the research either internally (within the setting) or externally (beyond the setting) (Maxwell, 1992). This research uses a flexible case study and therefore is concerned with explaining and understanding the mechanisms within a particular school, which are individual to the setting and therefore cannot be generalised. However, Ragin (1987, In Robson & McCartan, 2016) refers to analytic or theoretical generalization which explores the way a study might provide evidence for a set of procedures or mechanisms by which a setting might operate. As this study is seeking to understand how a RSE group might be useful to staff, the researcher hopes to uncover or shed light on the useful procedures and mechanisms at play, which in turn could provide a model or framework for other settings.

3.12 Pilot Studies

The researcher engaged in piloting each of the research tools and made adaptions, recorded in the field notes.

3.12.1 PATH Piloting

As research suggests that the success of the PATH process is highly contingent on the skills of the facilitator (Morgan, 2016), the researcher looked to pilot the PATH with a team of TEPs regarding the role of TEPs within the local authority. This gave the researcher the opportunity to work with the PA who acted as graphic facilitator and gain the feedback from the group about mechanisms and questions that supported the process and 'even better ifs'.

3.12.2 Group Member Interview Piloting

The questions were first designed in response to the research questions. The researcher then piloted the interview questions with a secondary teacher with the responsibility of teaching RSE. The process of using participatory thematic analysis was also tried. The researcher made adaptions in the response to this and recorded in the field notes. This included giving the interviewee time to reflect at the end by inviting them to make brief notes.

3.12.3 Field Note Piloting

The researcher piloted a structure explored by Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein (1997), which used a detailed format - highlighting language and sensory observations. However, this was deemed too complex and the researcher opted for a pragmatic

choice, using Schatzman and Strauss's (1973) guide due to its flexibility and ease of use.

3.13 Ethical and Professional Issues

At all stages of the research it was of utmost importance to consider the ethical implications, especially as this study focuses on a vulnerable population in relation to a sensitive topic. The researcher was guided by the British Psychological Society (BPS) Codes of Ethics and Conduct (2010) and Human Research Ethics (2014) throughout - adhering to the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence and justice. Ethical approval was sought and gained from the UCL Institute of Education Research Committee before data collection started and again after Covid-19 restrictions were put in place (see Appendix 29). The researcher also complied with the LA's ethical approval procedures, again readdressing them after Covid-19 restrictions were put in place.

3.13.1 Sampling

It was important to consider that the participants were comfortable with talking about RSE, as it is a sensitive topic. This was addressed by working closely with the SENCO to select potential participants for the working group.

3.13.2 Informed consent

Consent was gained for all participants for this study. The school gave informed consent for the research to take place (see Appendix 2) and the group members gave

informed consent (see Appendices 3 and 4). As the researcher visited the school several times and spent time with the participants, this offered them opportunities to ask questions and become familiar with the researcher. Hill et al. (2016) explain that spending extended time with the participants allows them the time to decide if they want to participate.

3.13.3 The Right to Withdraw

The participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at all stages of the research (at each meeting and phase).

3.13.4 Deception

This study did not use any deception, the researcher was transparent and kept participants fully informed at each stage.

3.13.5 Autonomy and Confidentiality

The interviews of the group participants were offered at a time selected by the participant, supported by a discussion about where might feel safe and comfortable (Greig et al., 2007). As the interviews were conducted on the phone, participants were able to choose a location that felt comfortable to them. The researcher made every effort to ensure confidentiality by discussing this with the interviewee in advance and working from a confidential space when conducting the interview. The researcher followed guidance outlined by the BPS (2020) for adapting practice during the Covid-19 pandemic.

All participants were informed that their information would remain anonymous and would be used within this research. The data will be stored in a locked cupboard and destroyed after 10 years. Any transcriptions will be anonymised with pseudonyms created for each participant. Interview transcripts and recordings were deleted from the computer.

3.13.6 Recognition and feedback

The participants were given an opportunity to read their words at all stages. This took the form of reading transcripts and graphic recordings. Participants acted as co-researchers in analysing data in the form of participatory analysis and theming of data sets. In this way they were given the opportunity to read their words and provide feedback. All participants took part in the opportunity for participatory analysis.

3.13.7 Research Methods

The participatory research methods were selected because they sought to empower the participants and treat them as co-researchers, in order that: they be encouraged to make decisions with the researcher; guide the research; have control in the data collection process; and have an equal position in the interpretation process (Hill et al., 2016). However, the researcher acknowledges the challenges in maintaining a 'gold standard' in participatory research and also had to take a pragmatic approach (Davis, 2009) - making choices related to the timeframe given and the limitations posed by the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.14 Adaptions in light of Covid-19

During the course of this research there were several interruptions and adaptions made due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These are outlined here along with a brief explanation.

3.14.1 Group Meetings

Before the Covid-19 pandemic the group met at the school at the end of the school day. After the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were put in place the school was no longer receiving outside visitors and therefore all meetings took place using Microsoft Teams.

3.14.2 Group Member Interviews

Before the Covid-19 pandemic the group member interviews were planned to take place face to face, but due to restrictions, took place over the telephone.

3.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the methodology used in this study as well as the research design, methodologies and the epistemological, ontological and axiological position of the researcher. It also discussed the adaptions made to the study in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Chapter 4 will present the findings for each research question.

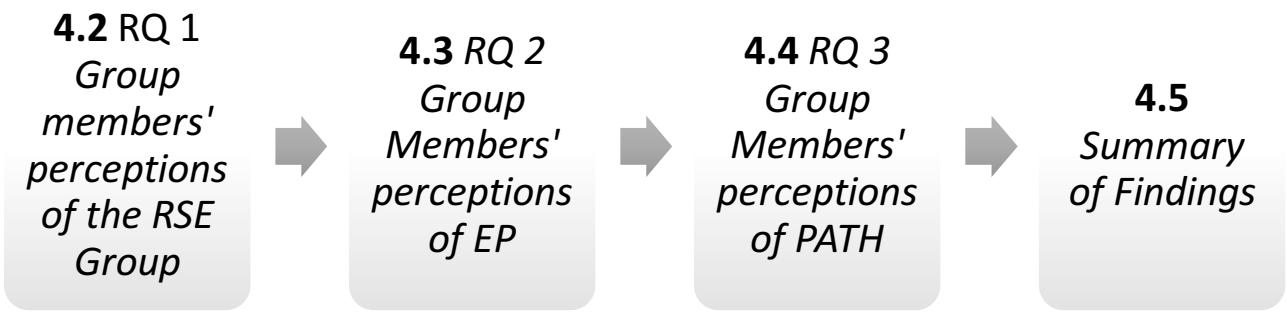
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is presented in 4 sections. Figure 3 is provided to orientate the reader through the findings. The findings for RQ 1, 2 and 3 are explored in turn. Finally, the findings are summarised at the end of the chapter.

Figure 3.

A Roadmap of Research Findings



The majority of the findings are presented as themes generated from the thematic analysis of group member interviews which were triangulated with field notes and artefact data. The participants' words are presented as transcribed and are represented as closely as possible to their verbal accounts. Occasionally small changes have been made to support readability. The choice of methodology for data analysis is presented and explored in detail in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.10. In addition, further quotes to represent subthemes and themes are provided in Appendix 35 to give the reader further context.

4.2 RQ 1:

What are the group member's perceptions of the experience of being part of a RSE working group?

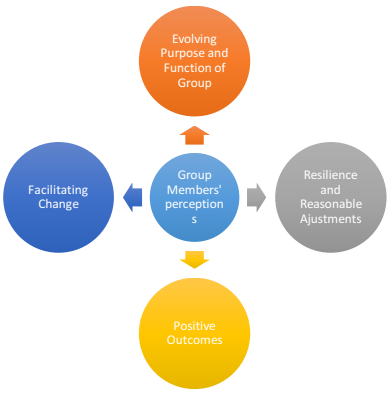
Four main themes were identified from the group participant interviews relating to the group member's perceptions of their experiences of the RSE working group, shown in Figure 4. The themes were triangulated with themes identified in the field notes and artefacts. They will be explored here starting with the evolving purpose and function of the group.

4.2.1 RQ 1: Main Themes

The main themes identified for group members' perceptions of the group were 'evolving purpose and function of the group', 'positive outcomes', 'facilitating change' and 'resilience and reasonable adjustments' (see Figure 4). See Appendix 35 and 43 for more detail.

Figure 4.

Main Themes for RQ 1



4.2.2 RQ1: Main Theme 1: Evolving Purpose and Function of Group

The theme 'evolving purpose and function of the group' represents the multitude of potential and realised functions that such a working group can provide. This theme captures both the intentional consciously stated purposes of the group as well as the unintentional by-products which the group provided space for. The original invitation to the school was the offer of a collaborative, co-participatory group space for RSE. Therefore, the purpose and function of the group was for the group to decide collaboratively. As this was piece of PAR the researcher was purposely mindful not to steer the direction of travel for the purpose and function of the group but rather to work alongside the school and offer potential directions or roles for the group. Participant's reflections identified 4 distinct functions of the group which are further explored below starting with the subtheme 'planning' (see Figure 5).

Figure 5.

Main Theme 1: Evolving Purpose and Function of Group - Subthemes

4.2.2.1 Subtheme 1: Planning

Participant 2 selected planning as a key theme during participatory analysis, while other participants explored how the group was purposeful and productive and helped them to identify next steps. Participant 2 recognised that the group helped them to plan:

"We were using this model to work through a process of planning…..a very clear plan in terms of our goals"

4.2.2.2 Subtheme 2: Safe Space

Participant 8 identified safe space as a key theme during participatory analysis, going on to explain, *"It sounds stupid, it was a safe space and in fact, as a result, we weren't judged, we could say what we want."* This sense of support was also identified by participant 5:

"*A constant theme of support…having that time and space"*

Both participants expressed a sense of relief that they felt free to be open and honest without fear of judgement which had led to honest conversations with their colleagues and also supported them to feel contained in their roles at the school.

4.2.2.3 Subtheme 3: Time to Think

The subtheme 'time to think' was identified by participants 5 and 6 during participatory analysis. Participants found the group provided a forum for a greater depth of understanding through discussion which gave them scope to understand their current position as a school. This is exemplified by participant 3:

"Again the opportunity to discuss, bounce ideas, see where we are at."

Participants reflected how the group provided a 'boundaried' space and time for the specific tasks related to the RSE curriculum. Participant 1 explained how they valued the group because it compartmentalised the task and prompted action:

"I thought it was a good idea because, it forced us to give it time……having a structured time when we had to do things"

While participant 7, in her role as EP, explored how she viewed the group as a space for staff to consider their practice, highlighting her psychological understanding and interpretation of group processes.

“the idea of espoused theory, of what you might think you do and what you do in practice. That was highlighted, it was like: well we do that, well do we?”

4.2.2.4 Subtheme 4: Collaboration

Collaboration was also selected during participatory analysis as a subtheme. This included the way the group allowed a space for collaboration and participation across the school by having key staff members present.

“it was important that we got together as a collective across the school to make sure we were doing what we were supposed to be doing”- participant 1-head of middle school

This subtheme also represents not just how the group members were given the opportunity to work alongside each other but how they reflected on collaborative relationships and practice across the school. They noticed and reflected on their shared experiences as well as their differences in opinions, as exemplified by Participant 8-head of school.

“I work closely with my heads of department anyway and we are used to getting our opinions across and disagreeing with each other”

In addition, this subtheme also captures the value that the group members placed on hearing the views of key stakeholders such as parents and other staff. This allowed them a richer awareness of the key issues in their school relating to RSE.

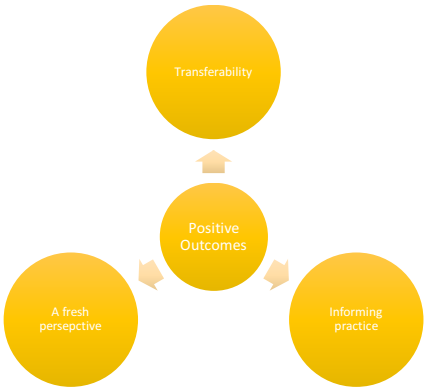
"I think having that piece of work with the parent's questionnaires…that was really important…. It was really interesting and it reminded us a little bit of actually how concerned parents are about their children"- participant 2 - SENCO

4.2.3 RQ 1: Main Theme 2: Positive Outcomes

The theme 'positive outcomes' builds the previous theme 'evolving purpose and function of the group'. It encapsulates both the possibilities which meeting as a group provided through reflection on practice and gaining a fresh perspective and also the potential for transferability to practice both within school, in professional practice and across schools. The participants expressed positivity about being part of the group and identified some of the key beneficial outcomes of the group which are captured within the subthemes (see Figure 6).

Figure 6.

Main Theme 2: Positive Outcomes - Subthemes



4.2.3.1 Subtheme 1: Transferability

This subtheme highlights the opportunities for transferability of knowledge and skills gained from taking part in the working group to other areas of practice for all group

members. Participant 4 selected transferability as a key theme during participatory analysis, highlighting the possibility of transferability of practice to other special schools. She reflected that the model of the working group could work be extrapolated and applied across settings:

"I really like the idea of having maybe a representative of someone who's a lead on RSE within each school and then those leads come together within the county and kind of share good practice, similar to mental health leads and SENCO forums"

Participant 4 also identified how being part of the group had impacted her own practice as a PA and newly started TEP. This demonstrated that the group had the potential to build capacity in skills, knowledge and confidence in not only the staff at the school but also the professionals that work alongside them.

"I think as this grows and then hopefully is nurtured by national policies, EPs could have a bigger role" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant

"EPs in the future could support intervention work as well, as we do a lot of intervention and assessment" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant

This was in contrast to school staff who explored transferability of the working group model in relation to their own practice within school. This demonstrates how participation in a new way of working can have potential knock on effects to the way staff practice or view opportunities in their practice across their work.

"*having done it with RSE, we could apply it to other areas of the curriculum…there are certainly things we could apply more broadly"*- participant 6 – head of lower school

4.2.3.2 Subtheme 2: A Fresh Perspective

This subtheme captures how the group had provided an opportunity for focus, forming plans and had generated motivation and positivity, thus providing a fresh perspective for participants.

"but actually this has been really good at kind of focusing us, giving us that time really, like I say focus on that one thing and do it properly"-participant 6-head of lower school

Participant 8 identified motivation as a theme during participatory analysis, adding:

"it was new, it was fresh and it was safe and it was very positive"

4.2.3.3 Subtheme 3: Informing Practice

The theme 'informing practice' highlights how the group supported members to reflect on their own and staff practice across the school. Members commented on ways to further develop practice with the school, filter information to other staff and engage parents and pupils as partners.

"I'd like cohesion throughout the school and I think we are working on that. I think sharing experiences throughout the school will help us do that"-participant 3 – head of upper school

They also acknowledged that the group had elevated RSE as a subject but there was a need to keep momentum going within school.

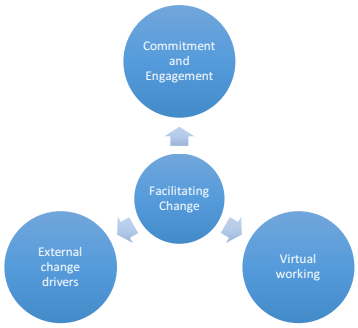
"We as a school, we need to keep momentum going with the RSE and make sure we are putting in and we don't forget about it"- participant 6 – head of lower school

4.2.4 RQ 1: Main Theme 3: Facilitating Change

The theme 'facilitating change' demonstrates how participants explored the different factors which facilitated change, within the group and externally. Within the group, virtual working and the commitment and engagement of the group were factors thought to support and facilitate change (see Figure 7).

Figure 7.

Main Theme 3: Facilitating Change - subthemes



4.2.4.1 Subtheme 1: Virtual working

This subtheme represents the facilitative elements that virtual working allowed. Virtual working was a necessary change in working practice brought about as a result of Covid-19. Although some participants explained that virtual working was not ideal, they did acknowledge it as a facilitatory factor, which allowed the group to continue through the first Covid-19 lockdown.

"but I think we are lucky to have this technology, to be able to continue doing it, so if this is the way then we carry on, then I'm absolutely fine with that"-participant 2 -SENCO

Additionally, participants identified how virtual working allowed meetings to be more focused by providing boundaries around meeting times, giving time limits.

“Also software poses a time limit on things…it forces conversations and meetings to be a bit more focused….it makes it more boundaried in terms of timing”- participant 1- head of middle school

4.2.4.2 Subtheme 2: Commitment and Engagement

The subtheme commitment and engagement was highlighted as a theme during participatory analysis and was discussed by four of the participants during interview. Those participants felt that their engagement and dedication to the group had played a part in the group’s success and had facilitated changes within the school.

“I think we, we’re committed, we did commit to it, we saw the value of it”- participant 3 - head of upper school.

Participants linked the high levels of commitment and engagement to their passion for RSE and their view that it was an important and valuable subject, especially for pupils with SEND. There were some concerns at first about getting buy in from key members of the staff as participants saw this as key to the success of the working group.

“One was to get key people on board, to actually make them buy into what is was and to actually get them to see it was a valuable piece of work. I did think it was going to be a challenge to get everybody on board and have the time to do it”- participant 2 - SENCO.

4.2.4.3 Subtheme 3: External change drivers

This subtheme encapsulates the ‘external change drivers’ identified by the participants, including larger structural and societal influences such as Ofsted and statutory changes

to RSE legislation as well as working with an external agency such as the EPS. RSE was thought to of immediate relevance due to the pressures of legislative changes.

"So RSE for sure is very important, at the moment particularly. We've got to get the curriculum up and running, so there is a time limit to it" –participant 1-head of middle school

In addition, three participants made reference to the additional pressures of external inspection in the form of OFSTED.

"It's something that OFSTED will be looking at over the next round of inspections"- participant 6 –head of lower school

As well as these larger influences, participants perceived having an outside person to support as an additional external change driver. They reflected that working with EPS provided an external person to lead the change process by providing the functions of leadership and coordination.

"I think it was interesting having an outside, someone from the outside the school to come in and be part of the working party….it helped kind of lay things out clearer…someone to lead and give us kind of almost timelines and deadlines"- participant 2 - SENCO

Participant 7, the school contact EP commented how the researcher was key in driving the process forward:

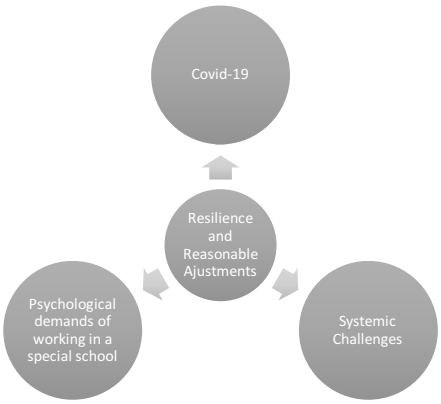
"I also think in terms of being persistent, at bringing them to the table…… actually it took a lot of work on your part to be able to get them, keep it going, bring them together, be positive, move to the next thing"

4.2.5 RQ 1: Main Theme 4: Resilience and Reasonable Adjustments

The theme 'resilience and reasonable adjustments' captures the myriad of challenges and barriers which participants identified as potentially impacting the functionality of the group. The participants noted these areas, which required resilience and reasonable adjustments, including the impacts of Covid-19, ongoing systemic challenges and the psychological demands of working in a special school (see Figure 8).

Figure 8.

Main Theme 4: Resilience and Reasonable Adjustments - subthemes



4.2.5.1 Subtheme 1: Covid-19

This subtheme highlights some of the impacts of Covid-19 which not only impinged on the group but the wider school community and society as a whole. The working group was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants commented on the way in which they had to adjust to rapid change and respond to new priorities.

"We would have been even better if we didn't have a viral pandemic when we were about to start doing stuff…..a lot happened this year….we kind of mentally signed ourselves out from March"- participant 1- head of middle school

"who prioritises RSE? I don't think, that's you know realistic, who's going to prioritise that right now? Maybe I'm sounding too negative?"-participant 4 - psychology assistant.

The school closed for a few months and the working group stopped their activities.

Once the school had opened again and staff adjusted, meetings became virtual.

Participants discussed how virtual working, although it allowed the project to continue,

had drawbacks. These included less accountability, difficulties with communication and

a preference for meeting people face to face.

"I think it's a personal thing, maybe slightly cultural….because its online, it's a little less real….dismissing a link, or having to delay, I feel slightly less guilty"- participant 5 - safeguarding lead

4.2.5.2 Subtheme 2: Systemic Challenges

In addition to the challenges brought about by Covid-19, participants reflected on some

of the systemic obstacles that may have had an impact on the working group.

Participant 7 identified this as a key theme. These included difficulties engaging

parents with RSE as a subject.

"I'm very disappointed in the parent response, that for me is such a shame, despite my pushing, I think that is evidence of a boundary"- participant 3 - head of upper school

Participants explained they felt there was often limited time for implementing new initiatives, despite good will, which caused frustration for the staff. Some participants explained that with was reflective of school culture.

"It's come up a lot over the recent years that we start some things really well and then we don't get to finish them and that frustrates people"- participant 6 –head of lower school

Participant 2 explored potential barriers related to accountability and leadership, highlighting this as both an obstacle for the group and reflective of wider practice within school.

"the other concern which is still a bit of a concern, is what do we do with the information? Who's going to do it? Who's going to run with it? Who's going to lead from the front really? That's still on going on."

This view was also reflected from an outsider's perspective by participant 7, the EP who considered the theme of ownership.

"there can be a lot of good intentions, agreed actions but then in terms of follow up….. it's difficult"

Participant 4 (PA), also from an outsider perspective, considered organisational change over time, highlighting their psychological knowledge of organisations and systems.

"I'd really taken this as looking at it from a kind of organisational view and how to implement change over time"

4.2.5.3 Subtheme 3: Psychological demands of working in a special school

This final subtheme encapsulates the challenges related to working in a special school. Participant 1 named this as a theme during participatory analysis, describing the high levels of work, stress and need to manage competing demands.

"When you start teacher training, it's like learning to spin plates…then you find out teaching, you're spinning 300 plates and some of them are on fire!"

Other participants explained that the thought of taking on another project or having another meeting was overwhelming.

"The biggest challenge is everyone is already swamped with leading various things and it's like another thing"-participant 2 - SENCO

Participants described the erratic, unpredictable nature of working in a special school and how that dictates the culture and actions of the staff.

"At x school, depending on the time and the day, what other things going on in the background, depends were things go"- participant 5 - safeguarding lead

4.3 RQ 2:

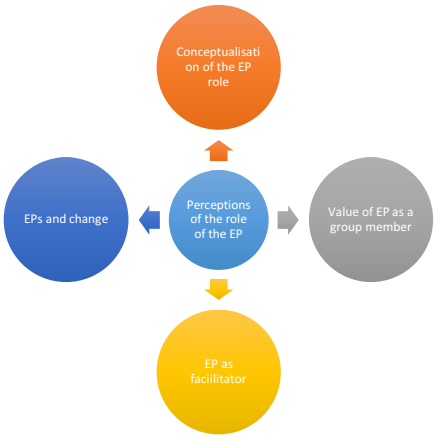
What are group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group?

4.3.1 RQ2: Main Themes

Four main themes were identified from the interview data which represent the group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group (see Figure 9). These include the perceptions of the EP as both facilitator of the group and as group member as well as wider conceptualisations of the EP role and EP's role in change. The themes were taken from group member interviews and triangulated with data from field notes and artefacts. See Appendix 35 and 44 for more detail.

Figure 9.

Main Themes for RQ 2



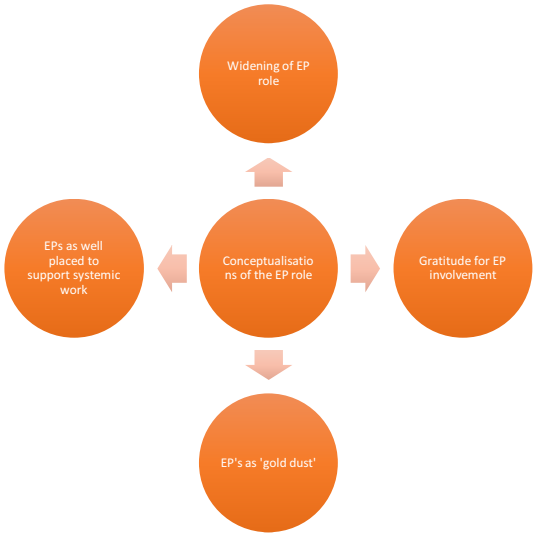
4.3.2 RQ2: Main Theme 1: Conceptualisations of the EP Role

The main theme 'conceptualisations of the EP role' captures the perceptions of the group members regarding the wider role of an EP (see Figure 10). This includes EPs

occupying an ‘expert’ role, typically used for individual case work in response to crisis situations. These views were historically bound to the direct experience of the group members and the way they have interacted with the EPS. This is in contrast with an unfamiliarity with systemic work from EPS and the view that is ‘extra’ or a luxury rather than part of the range of work an EP is involved with. In addition, there was appreciation and respect for the work of EPs while recognising how EPs might be well placed to support systemic work.

Figure 10.

Main theme 1: Conceptualisations of the EP Role - subthemes



4.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Widening of the EP Role

This subtheme demonstrates the way participants viewed the EP, often positioning them as an expert and someone to consult in a crisis for individual case work. This was reflected on by both the EP and the school staff.

“I’m sometimes positioned in there as sort of being the expert”- participant 7 – EP

“Sometimes that EP report is very important for further steps to support that child”- participant 1 - head of middle school.

Group members explained that EP involvement in systemic work was not something they were used to, but had appreciated it, once they had experience of it.

Again, It’s always something I would have expected or thought to turn to for support for this particular area but the fact that it was there was really great”-participant 5 - safeguarding lead

4.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Gratitude for EP Involvement

This subtheme explored the way most participants appreciated, respected and valued the involvement of EPs. They explained they were grateful for EP involvement as it increased their confidence and reassured them.

“I am very, very grateful for it. I love any and all EP time I can get”-participant 5 - safeguarding lead.

“you know to have yourself and the EP there, I think I can speak for myself, but gave me confidence and reassurance” -participant 2 - SENCO.

4.3.2.3 Subtheme 3: EPs as ‘Gold Dust’

The subtheme ‘EPs as gold dust’ demonstrates the view held by some group members that EPs had limited time and were hard to reach or engage with. This indicates that they perceived EPs as a limited resource. It was echoed by the views of the PA.

"Certain EPs have a lot of other demands on their time"- participant 1 - head of middle school.

"I think we picked up that EP time is limited" -participant 4 - Psychology Assistant

4.3.2.4 Subtheme 4: EPs as Well Placed to Support Systemic Work

This final subtheme explores how group members reflected on the tools and skills of an EP as being suited to systemic work. After being part of the working group, some staff participants explained the value of the EP having worked with the school over a number of years and the depth of contextual information this privileged. This included a first-hand understanding of the needs of the pupils and the challenges the staff face.

"She knows what it's like and what we have to deal with"- participant 6 - head of lower school.

Both the PA and EP reflected that EPs were well placed to support systemic work due to a combination of systemic contextual understanding born out of a well-established working relationship and the EP's wider skills set.

"I do think I had a lot to contribute in terms of systemic issues within school"-participant 7-EP

"I thought EPs are well placed and psychology assistants are well placed to support schools because they know the tools, our knowledge of the school and pupils" - participant 4 - Psychology Assistant

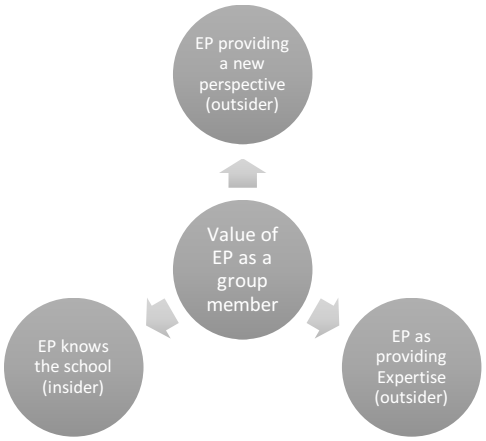
4.3.3 RQ2: Main theme 2: Value of EP as group member

The theme 'value of EP as group member" highlights the additional value which participants perceived an EP to bring as a group member rather than a facilitator. This

working group was supported by myself as a researcher and facilitator, by a PA as graphic facilitator and also by the EP as a group member. This theme encapsulates the way in which the EP was perceived to bring both 'insider' expertise as the contact EP and 'outsider' expertise through their unique skill set and depth of knowledge (see Figure 11).

Figure 11.

Main Theme 2: Value of EP as Group Member - Subthemes



4.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: EP Providing New Perspective (Outsider)

This subtheme exemplifies how the EP was able to provide a new perspective in the role of 'outsider'. Participant 8 explained how the EP was able to introduce a new perspective adding depth to the discussion and broadening the understanding of the group.

"So I think it is about having somebody else that might have a different kind of perspective on it as part of the meeting, if you're trying to battle through something"

Other participants explained that the EP was able to provide a new perspective in a slightly different ways including bringing up issues the school had not addressed or thought about. The EP identified this as her role:

"I see my role as supporting the school to bring up issues for them"

Other group members also noted this, explaining is as a 'court jester' or 'devil's advocate' role:

"I like to play devil's advocate at times, actually challenge this idea, have we thought about this, have we covered all our bases? So that's really useful, that someone is there still fulfilling that role"-participant 5 - head of safeguarding

"I think that's really important, the court jester role. Someone who can point out holes in a plan without fear of issue"- participant 1 - head of middle school.

4.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: EP as Providing Expertise (Outsider)

This subtheme encapsulates the perceived value of EP bringing knowledge and expertise as an outsider. This took the form of signposting, specialist knowledge and perceived expertise and was highlighted by six of the participants.

"Actually supporting with maybe signposting us to resources, to training sessions was really, really useful"-participant 2 – SENCO.

"She can also bring that more general broader experience"- participant 3 - head of upper school.

"We had someone experienced and not just somebody that perhaps had taken up kind of the title"-participant 8 - head of school.

4.3.3.3 Subtheme 3: EP Knows the School (Insider)

The group were appreciative of the established relationships that existed with the EP, noting how it allowed them to communicate in an open and honest way in group meetings.

"We know the EP, we kind of know her. If it was someone we didn't know, someone else, perhaps we wouldn't be as frank and open"- participant 6- head of lower school.

Participants also valued the depth of contextual understanding and knowledge the EP possessed as a result of a long working relationship. This included understanding needs of the children and their families.

"I think EP X knows our school. She knows our children"- participant 3 - head of upper school.

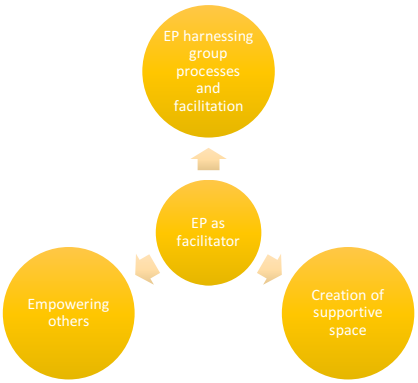
"Also the demographics of where our school is and the types of children that feed into our school and the parental deprivation and needs of parents"- participant 8 -head of school.

4.3.4: RQ2: Main theme 3: EP as Facilitator

This theme captures participant's perceptions of the facilitator role which the researcher took up (see Figure 12). Group members explored the way in which facilitation enabled the group to function through creating a safe space, privileging the voice of others by working alongside them and harnessing the group processes and supporting discussion.

Figure 12.

Main Theme 3: EP as Facilitator - Subthemes



4.3.4.1 Subtheme 1: Creation of a Supportive Safe Space

This subtheme was highlighted by the head of school, safeguarding lead and EP who explained that this was an important element of the group for them. This is in contrast to other group members who did not comment on this aspect. The head explained that she felt group members could feel safe to explore their thoughts.

"We don't get that time really now where you can sit and feel safe to just kind of blurt"

The EP also discussed how important it was for the group to feel safe from judgement and to explore their experiences.

"So they need to feel like they can be open and honest and not feel like they are being judged"

4.3.4.2 Subtheme 2: Empowering Others

This subtheme demonstrates how the EP in facilitator role had potential to empower others to have their views and voices heard in collaboration and in partnership with each other to find the solutions to their own problems. The SENCO and the EP particularly valued the way in which the EP as facilitator gathered the voice of stakeholders, privileging group members to a range of perspectives and raising the profile of RSE. This was summarised by the EP:

"Other issues it's brought to the fore for me, in terms of communication with parents, how do we know what parents think? How do we gain pupil voice? Actually saying pupil voice does really matter, the parent voice does matter"

The SENCO explained that the group allowed for partnership working and choose 'empowering others' as a theme in participatory analysis. Additionally, the EP reflected on being conscious of facilitating group solution finding rather than influencing their choices.

"So, it was exciting to kind have a working partnership really, knowing that we were going to get something else"-participant 2 - SENCO.

"being mindful that for them, to come up with their own solutions to their own difficulties that they are experiencing. What they're priorities were. Not trying to shape that too much"- participant 7 – EP.

4.3.4.3 Subtheme 3: EP Harnessing Group Processes and Facilitation

This subtheme was particularly salient for the SENCO, who reflected on how the researcher in role of facilitator was able to support the group to plan, unpick their ideas

and guide the group in discussion, while attempting to remain impartial. The head of lower school noted how the researcher did not attempt to bring their perspective in the role of facilitator:

"you leading the group, didn't want to give your perspective. You know you don't want to lead us down anywhere because that means you're sort of affecting what we're doing"

The SENCO described how questions from the facilitator allowed the group to explore their ideas:

"What was clear is that you weren't just asking us a lot of questions, you kind of asked one question and from that came a quite a detailed discussion"

Other participants noticed how facilitation helped them to remain focused and stay on track.

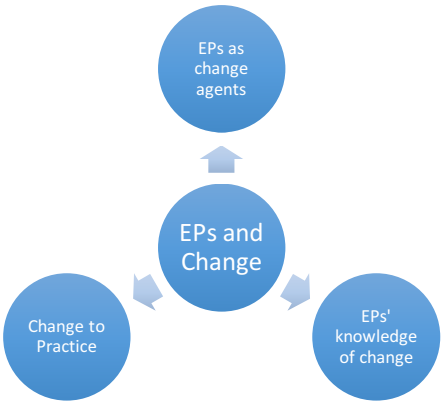
"to have a mediator to bring us back and focusing us was extremely helpful" - participant 3 - head of upper school

4.3.5 RQ2: Main theme 4: EPs and Change

The main theme 'EPs and Change' represents the way in which school staff participants valued the EP as an external change agent. It also acknowledges EPs knowledge of systemic and developmental change. Finally, it encapsulates the changes in practice for all participants as a result of taking part in the working group (see Figure 13).

Figure 13.

Main Theme 4: EPs and Change- Subthemes



4.3.5.1 Subtheme 1: EPs as Change Agents

Participants reflected on the way the researcher acted as an external change agent by providing timelines and deadlines and taking perceived ownership and leadership for the project.

"What you were offering was someone who could guide us through that process I suppose"-participant 2 - SENCO.

Some participants felt that having an external person allowed for a greater investment in the RSE working group.

"there is that extra element of attention paid when it's an external person"- participant 5 - safeguarding lead

The EP reflected that she hoped that participants might be able to extrapolate their experiences and apply them to other areas of their practice:

"I'd like to think that the school might utilise some of their experiences of the group. Whether it be group problem solving, group solution finding to apply their own practice"

4.3.5.2 Subtheme 2: EPs' Knowledge of Change

The EP and PA were aware of the unique insights EPs have in relation to supporting and implementing change on individual, group and systemic levels. The PA selected change as overarching theme during participatory analysis.

"I think your role as well was very supportive of implementing that change" -participant 4 - Psychology Assistant

4.3.5.3 Subtheme 3: Change to Practice

Both staff and EPS participants reflected on changes to their practice as a result of group membership and participation. The PA was able to notice how it had built her skill set and how it might impact of future practice:

"I feel more confident as a trainee EP now, to ask about kind of ask about RSE development and how that is looking and you know to be aware of government initiatives that come in….you know conversations with schools once they start having contact meetings, maybe that's something I could bring up?"

School staff thought about how it had supported practice by both evaluating concrete resources and reflecting on staff attitudes and confidence.

"To have those was really useful because it spurred us as a school to kind of look at our resources"-participant 6 – head of lower school.

"recognising when people feel uncomfortable teaching RSE"-participant 3 - head of upper school.

4.4 RQ 3:

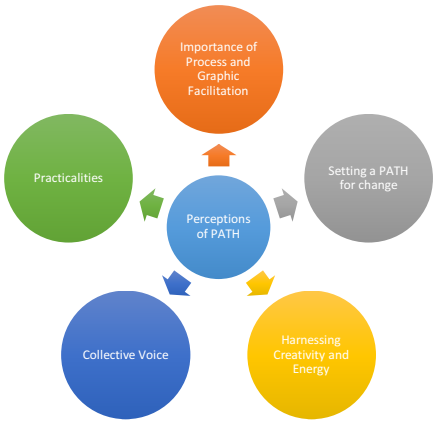
What are the group members' perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE working group?

4.4.1 RQ3: Main Themes

Five main themes were identified from the participant's perspective of PATH as a tool for planning a RSE working group (see Figure 14). These include the role of the process and graphic facilitator, how PATH elicited change and harnessed creativity, energy and collective voice and the practicalities of setting up and running a PATH meeting. The themes were taken from group member interviews and triangulated with group reflections from the PATH meeting and data from field notes and artefacts. See Appendix 35 and 45 for more detail.

Figure 14.

Main Themes for RQ3



4.4.2 RQ3: Main Theme 1: Importance of Process and Graphic Facilitation

The theme 'importance of process and graphic facilitation' encapsulates the contribution of these two facilitation roles to the process of a PATH meeting. This includes the confidence and skills of the facilitators and the benefits of these two types of facilitation (see Figure 15).

Figure 15.

Main Theme 1: Importance of Process and Graphic Facilitation - Subthemes

4.4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Facilitator Competence

Facilitator confidence was considered by the PA and the EP when reflecting on the PATH process. They highlighted the importance of building facilitator skills through professional interest and experience as well as having opportunities to work together as facilitators.

"So with the preparation process we met up with another trainee EP didn't we? We kind of prepared and I think that sort of supported me as graphic facilitator. And kind of

knowing the expectations and kind of, you know what to say if I didn't understand what someone was saying and how to visually and graphically record those ideas"-participant 4 - Psychology Assistant

4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2: Facilitator Benefits

Both staff participants and EPS participants reflected on the benefits of the graphic and process facilitation. Group members highlighted how the process facilitation supported them to focus, stay on task and supported conversation and understanding.

"I think to have someone who was facilitating the group and actually leading the group in kind of helping us unpick our ideas and put them in some kind of coherent kind of plan was a helpful idea really, a helpful, you know, process."- participant 2 -SENCO

Group members were positive about the graphic facilitation noting that it took pressure off the group for record keeping and supported the conversational flow.

"The visual recording was really, really good" -participant 1-head of middle school

"Which meant you weren't necessarily distracted by having to do that and you could continue the conversation rather than having to stop it all the time and then write something down which is really good"- participant 6 - head of lower school.

4.4.3 RQ3: Main Theme 2: Setting a PATH for Change

The theme 'setting a PATH for change' encapsulates the way in which the PATH tool was able to bring structure and clarity to the group's planning process. It highlights the way PATH harnesses future orientated thinking to elicit achievable goals (see Figure 16).

Figure 16:

Main Theme 2: Setting a PATH for Change- Subthemes

4.4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Clarity

Participants explored how the PATH meeting and process was able to afford the group some clarity by discussing and identifying their collective vision.

"I think identifying our vision as a group. I think it helped because it sort of gets you on track"- participant 8 - head of school

The graphic recording was identified as a central element of what helped people to find and 'see' a collective vision.

"The visual obviously really helped with that in terms of guiding people"- participant 7 - EP

Participants also reflected that having some understanding of the PATH model through literature shared by the researcher. Additionally, explanations given were supportive to helping them understand the process.

“I think actually understanding the model itself in the information you sent out prior to our first meeting about PATH was really informative”-participant 2 - SENCO.

4.4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Future Thinking

Participants highlighted the helpfulness of the future thinking structure of the PATH, noting how it helped them to understand their ‘endpoint’ and what they needed to work towards.

“I think when you present people with a new project that they’ve got to do that’s going to last a year or however long it’s going to last, if they don’t have a route to get to the endpoint, you are not going to achieve anything”- participant 6 - head of lower school.

The PA reflected on the impact of hearing the motivations, hopes, dreams and goals during the PATH meeting:

“I found it quite empowering to hear their motivation as well especially talking about that kind of last end goal at the very beginning and what are their hopes and dreams”

4.4.3.3 Subtheme 3: Achievable Goals

Group members appreciated the way in which the PATH facilitated the setting of realistic, achievable goals or ‘easy wins’.

“I think they were achievable. I mean you know, without wanting to go down the whole SMART acronym, which I don’t want to do, actually they were focused”- participant 3 - head of upper school

4.4.3.4 Subtheme 4: Structure

The structure of PATH was identified as helpful and supportive to the group for structuring and managing change. Participants highlighted the way in which the PATH gave a structured action plan with an inbuilt timeline.

Help us work out where our starting point is and then how we develop that, what that looks like I suppose in terms of an action plan"- participant 2 – SENCO

"It's given us a place to go, a PATH to follow"-participant 8 - head of school.

4.4.4 RQ3: Main Theme 3: Harnessing Creativity and Energy

This theme captures the creativity and energy generated in the PATH meeting which helped set the scene and supported the development of an open and honest culture within the group going forward (see figure 17).

Figure 17.

Main Theme 3: Harnessing Creativity and Energy-Subthemes

4.4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Creative

Staff reflected that the relaxed atmosphere within the group contributed to open discussion. This in turn allowed for a sense of creativity and engagement.

“It was a discussion between all of us on staff. Which allowed us to kind of say what we felt, rather than being more formal I suppose”- participant 6 - head of lower school.

“I actually thought we were quite creative. We did bounce ideas, they were refreshing”- participant 3 - head of upper school

“The first session, I thought you know, how engaged will everyone else be? I was quite surprised actually.”- participant 2 - SENCO

4.4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Energy

Participants noted the positivity that the PATH meeting; generating energy, passion, enthusiasm and engagement.

“I thought it was a very positive meeting. I thought everyone was very enthused and engaged”- participant 7 – EP

“It felt like we were kind of on a bit of a wave really of ideas and vision and yes do this and let’s do this”-participant 8 - head of school

4.4.5 RQ3: Main Theme 4: Collective Voice

The main theme ‘collective voice’ encapsulates the way in which using PATH was able to foster a collaborative, participatory working style within the group. It also includes the gathering and harnessing of key stakeholder voices to inform planning. Additionally, it highlights issues of ownership, responsibility and leadership within the group and how PATH might support this (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

Main Theme 4: Collective Voice - Subthemes

4.4.5.1 Subtheme 1: Taking Ownership

Taking ownership captures the tensions within the PATH process of balancing the need to work collaboratively with the need to put names to actions. The EP explored the way in which collaborative working has potential to reduce individual responsibility:

"there were a lot of participants in that group but there was maybe no one taking the lead as such"

This was also explored by the SENCO who reflected on the need to maintain momentum within school, once the meeting has ended:

"Working out who does what, you know and how it's done"

4.4.5.2 Subtheme 2: Collaborative Working

Participants reflected on the participatory nature of the PATH which allowed for a staff to come together in a collaborative way. This fostered a joint working partnership which conceded a culture of equity and collective agreement.

“it’s having all those strengths in one room, at the same time which is slightly unheard of”- participant 8 - head of school.

“It was very much a shared approach”- participant 7 - EP

4.4.5.3 Subtheme 3: Key Voices

This subtheme highlights the value of careful selection of group members to ensure that key staff members were present and that voices were heard from across the school.

“it was nice, there was a mixture as well: different levels of experience, different qualifications, different backgrounds”- participant 5 - safeguarding lead.

In addition, participant’s placed importance on bringing key stakeholder voices into the room; such as parents, pupils and other staff members.

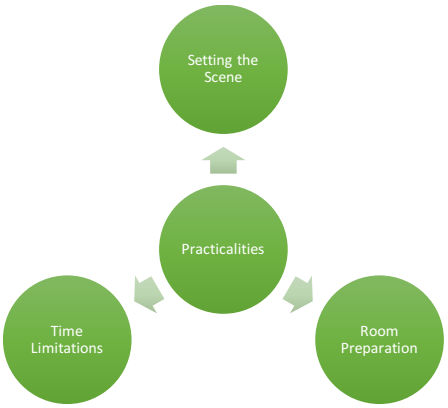
“That was really important, I mean I think that while we had some you know information about sort of parent views, it was really interesting”-participant 2 -SENCO.

4.4.6 RQ3: Main Theme 5: Practicalities

The main theme ‘practicalities’ demonstrates the preparation and considerations which needed to be planned for ahead of the PATH meeting (see Figure 19).

Figure 19.

Main Theme 5: Practicalities - Subthemes



4.4.6.1 Subtheme 1: Setting the Scene

Both the SENCO and the EP reflected on the usefulness of the facilitator providing information both before and during the PATH meeting to help group members to understand the process and set expectations. In contrast, other participants commented that they had not found the time to engage with the preparation materials due to their large workloads.

"Positive that you know, you invited me to it and I think it was helpful in terms of everybody knowing beforehand what they were signing up to, I suppose emphasising the collaborative approach to it"- participant 7 - EP

4.4.6.2 Subtheme 2: Room Preparation

Some participants attributed the careful preparation of the room and availability of refreshments to supporting a relaxed, informal atmosphere, which helped set the scene.

"I guess that you know having the food and snacks about was nice, it made us feel a bit more informal and people were perhaps a bit more comfortable"- participant 6 -head of lower school.

"I think you kind of set up the room very well, as well we organised to have it on a window so it is easily accessible. I think the seating arrangement, as well so that everybody could easily have access and it didn't feel like a pressured meeting"- participant 4 - Psychology Assistant

4.4.6.3 Subtheme 3: Time Limitations

This subtheme captures the challenges of setting expectations and finding suitable times for a PATH meeting. Participants commented that they both found it a long meeting and that it was difficult to schedule at an appropriate time. While participants appreciated the outcomes of PATH and were positive about the process, timing presented a potential inhibitory factor and needed to be considered carefully.

"It was okay, it was at the end of the day, so everyone was already knackered, but I don't see a way around that with teaching staff" -participant 1 - head of middle school

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the three research questions have been addressed and themes identified primarily from interview data and supported by data from field notes and artefacts.

- Varying functions of the RSE working group were identified. These incorporated opportunities for collaboration and planning and a safe space for time to think. These functions led to positive outcomes of the working group including: informing practice; transferability; and gaining a fresh perspective. Factors that facilitated change in the group comprised of the commitment and engagement of

group members, having access to virtual working as well as external change drivers such as the involvement of the EPS and legislative changes. Finally, resilience and reasonable adjustments were recognised in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, systemic challenges within the school and the psychological demands of working in a special school.

- Reflections of the EP role within the group included historical conceptualisations as well as a widening of the EP role, including EP's role in and knowledge of change. Two distinct roles for the EP were described - the EP as a group member (providing expertise) and the EP as a facilitator (who created a safe space for collaboration).

- PATH permitted group members to plan for change collaboratively with clarity and purpose, whilst setting achievable goals. It allowed for creativity and energy and provided a conduit for collective voice. The role of the process and graphic facilitators were seen as beneficial to the process. The practicalities of running a PATH meeting were also considered including providing information, room preparation and the time needed for PATH.

Chapter 5 will discuss these findings in relation to existing literature and implications for practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This research adopted PAR to explore and evaluate how a working group could support staff to implement the RSE curriculum at a special school. It was proposed that a working group could provide a reflective space to discuss, evaluate, then review evolving practice in a school context that was ready for change. This study also explored and evaluated the central role of an EP in supporting organisational change through implementing the RSE curriculum in a special school context. The EP supported and facilitated the working group, which was enabled by secure and containing professional relationships developed over time. Finally, it explored and evaluated the use of PATH to plan for and provide a framework to operationalise the working group, while incorporating the voices of parents and pupils.

This chapter first discusses the views of parents, pupils and staff (as they informed the working group). Then the key findings identified for each research question are then addressed in turn; relating the evidence gathered to existing literature. This includes reflections on how the group responded to these views and included them in the implementation of the RSE curriculum. It also includes the role of the EP in supporting the group and the use of PATH to plan and structure the group. Implications for practice are considered alongside reflections, strengths, limitations and considerations for future research.

5.2 Interpretation of Key Findings

5.2.1 The Views of Key Stakeholders

In order to work in a collaborative, participatory way the researcher/TEP sought the views of the staff, parents and pupils, in order to inform the PATH meeting to plan for the working group. The stakeholders' views revealed similarities to the evidence base, including polarised parental attitudes; barriers to parent and pupil partnership; the high interest in RSE from pupils; and the call from staff for training and support (despite reporting moderate confidence). The key differences to previous research were the specific RSE topics identified by pupils, which included safety, rather than just the nuances and mechanisms of relationships. New findings from this research revealed the importance of open and trusting relationships between staff and pupils. These close relationships facilitated staff to respond more confidently to the individual needs of pupils.

5.2.1.1 Attitudes

Following newly introduced RSE guidance produced by the Department of Education (2019), all schools are required to implement a diverse and inclusive RSE curriculum. Capturing the spectrum of views and attitudes of stakeholders was therefore essential. Both staffs' perceptions of parents' attitudes and parents' views mirrored the diversity of attitudes in relation to RSE- reflecting the often polarised societal outlooks and the intrinsic challenges of delivering an RSE curriculum which attempts to reconcile these values (Moffat & Field, 2020).

The polarised attitudes of parents reflected previous research which highlights the juxtaposition of the themes of public/political versus private/personal apparent in RSE (Chappell, 2016) and the tensions between rights of the CYP and the rights of parents. Some parents acted as perceived obstacles, adopting a protective, infantilising stance (Lofgren-Martenson, 2004). This may have led to parents granting limited consent for gaining pupil views in the study. However, the lack of engagement by parents may also have been a reflection of other factors, including limited home-school communication pathways due to the special school context (Reynolds, 2019). Additionally, parental engagement in this study was impacted by the unprecedented pressures of Covid-19, including reduced support and increased financial, social and caring demands for families of children with SEND (O'Hagan, 2020).

The polarised 'keep it innocent' parental attitudes contrasted with pupils' curiosity regarding RSE, reflected in previous research (McCann et al., 2019). This curiosity was evident in the open, candid interactions between pupils and staff, which provided staff with greater insight into pupils' mind sets. These interactions were a product of close relationships between staff and pupils, enabled by the nurturing school culture and small class sizes and staff/pupil ratios (1:3). Group members referenced how staff's attuned, high quality relationships with the pupils gave them valuable nuanced relational knowledge, helping to individualise RSE and support individual pupils. This knowledge of pupils' attitudes informed the working group and guiding discussions during the PATH meeting, which enacted person-centred, participatory planning.

5.2.1.2 Parent and Pupil Partnership

Previous research determines that parents, as key partners, should be involved in the collaborative development of RSE policy and practice in schools (Murray 2019, Reynolds, 2019). Parents in this study requested that the school should provide more information and called for increased engagement, reinforcing the notion that schools should be proactive rather than reactive (Stein et al., 2018) and involve parents as partners in RSE curriculum design. At the time of the survey, the collaboration between the school and parents was limited to gaining consent and informing parents of RSE teaching, resulting in limited parental awareness of the RSE curriculum. This awareness of limited collaboration informed working group discussions. Discussions considered developing information for parents and running parent workshops, thus addressing the gaps evident from stakeholder views and in the research literature. These explorations included working in a collaborative and respectful way (Prezant & Marshak, 2006) and providing peer support and mentoring for parents (Wilson et al., 2016). The group also considered methods to gain pupil views and the inclusion of YP in the development of the RSE curriculum. Consequently, the views of the pupils and parents were key to informing the group and allowed for both the participation of stakeholders and developing mechanisms for continued parent/school collaboration.

5.2.1.3 Key Topics in RSE for CYP with SEND.

Both parents and pupils reflected on key RSE areas for children with SEND. Parents emphasised the importance of the following topics: change; safety; relationships; understanding emotions and appropriate behaviour. This reflected previous research (McCann, 2019). The need to start RSE learning at a young age (Stein et al., 2018), with opportunities for cyclical repetition (Shakespeare & Richardson, 2018) also reflected the existing evidence base. Pupils as key stakeholders (McCann, 2019) provided both confirming and conflicting views. The views were limited (due to Covid-19 limitations and low response rate) but offered some insight into topics that are important to pupils with SEND and potential methods for obtaining these views. Pupils agreed with parents that the topics safety and appropriate behaviours were important, but placed less significance on changes and understanding emotions. Previous literature asserts that pupils value a curriculum which addresses the nuance of relationships over safety (McCann, 2019); pupils' views in this study differed – citing safety as well as wanting to learn about relationships. These views and discussions regarding the mechanisms to elicit them, informed the group's discussions and reflections. However, limitations related to impacts from Covid-19 and time limitations of the study impacted the group's potential to fully develop the ideas of the group and transform them into meaningful school policy and practice, including ongoing opportunities for parental and pupil engagement and collaboration.

5.2.1.4 Staff Practice

Previous research suggests that historically quality RSE has relied on the skills of a few well trained staff (Bustard & Stewart, 2002). Additionally, individual staff may be highly motivated but lack relevant skills and experience (Nelson et al., 2020), or are left guided by own values (Garbutt, 2008). This study revealed moderate staff confidence and positive attitudes to RSE, but a lack of formal or specialist training, guidance or information. Staff asserted the importance of RSE and its increased status due to the changing guidance and their experiences of teaching RSE. Staff confidence was rooted in the ability to respond to pupils 'in the moment', within the context of attuned, quality staff and pupil relationships. Attuned interactions involve receiving, responding and understanding each other's communications and interactions with emotional warmth (Biemans, 1990). Staff impressed that their attuned relationships with pupils (enabled by small staff/pupil ratios and frequent, daily interactions) facilitated a culture of openness, which in turn, privileged staff's nuanced understanding of their pupils' RSE needs and interests. These containing and supportive staff/pupil relationships supported staff to adjust RSE accommodating for individual learning and needs.

Garbutt et al. (2010) emphasises the need to balance reactive/relational approaches with proactive, preventative RSE curriculum planning (which the group allowed time for). Additionally, although research highlights the benefits of specialist training for staff which considers the impact of attitudes (Grieve et al., 2008), the majority of support for RSE at the school had historically come from informal staff discussion. This acknowledges how reflective conversation in the form of supervision (Charitou et al.,

2020) can also support staff in addition to training. The group afforded the members much needed reflection time to consider the range of practice in school, including variations in staff confidence and the importance of quality pupil and staff relationships.

The way in which the group, guided and facilitated by an EP using PATH, provided a mechanism to consolidate and transform the views of stakeholders into policy and practice and support for staff is explored through discussion of RQ 1, 2 and 3.

5.2.2 RQ1

What are the group members' perceptions of the experience of being part of a RSE working group?

The group members' perceptions revealed that the working group provided a bespoke, individualised opportunity to support staff in the implementation of the RSE curriculum, through providing a variety of functions. The functions included: opportunities for planning; collaboration and time to think within a safe space. The working group met the complexities of the challenge of implementing RSE and produced several positive outcomes, which included supporting change by engaging staff with new perspectives and attitudes, opportunities to inform practice and transferability of new knowledge and mechanisms to support collaborative organisational work both for RSE and other areas. This reflects and expands upon previous research highlighting the usefulness of RSE groups (Stewart et al., 2015). It also demonstrated how such groups can support change by providing conduits for 'systems work' through organisational development

and school improvement, while concurrently facilitating ‘systems thinking’ through collaborative consultation leading to newly co-constructed perspectives (Fox, 2009). This study built on previous research by further highlighting the factors which facilitated change (including motivations for change). It also explored the potential barriers to change by highlighting areas which required resilience from staff and the consideration of reasonable adjustments.

5.2.2.1 Purpose and Function of Group

The working group provided a myriad of important functions. Firstly, it acted as a vehicle to incite organisational change through planning for the new RSE curriculum, and was named as an explicit function of the group by participants. This exemplifies the importance of such a group to enact systemic work and school improvement activities. While in this study the group supported the implementation of a new RSE curriculum, the mechanisms detailed could also be applied to meet other challenges schools will inevitably face. Systemic practice understands the school to be an organisation or ‘system’, with internal ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ systems or parts (Falkenberg & Herremans, 1995) that influence and communicate with each other. Schein (2010) describes the culture and structure of an organisation as dynamic - being constantly created through interactions and shaped in the behaviours of leadership. Furthermore, school improvement is concerned with working with the system to strengthen a school’s capacity to manage change and enhance student outcomes (Hopkins & Stern, 1996). Ideally, the process should be ‘bottom up’ so that improvement is owned and driven by

the school and key stakeholders (Hopkins, 2001). The working group provided staff access to this 'bottom up' process and afforded all key stakeholders ownership, through the use of PATH.

Participants recognised that as well as planning for organisational change, the group privileged the members to a safe space and time to think by offering predictability (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021) and containment (Bion, 1985) from the facilitating EP. When considering the plethora of challenges that teachers face, the responsibility to act as change agents to transform policy into practice (Priestly et al., 2015), coupled with the lack of time to develop professional capacity (Coldwell, 2017), it is argued often teachers are inadequately supported. Therefore, the group was able to provide an arena for staff to enact organisational change while being able to problem solve safely and resolve evolving challenges, working alongside an EP.

The working group provided the function of a problem solving group (PSG), allowing for learning and reflection, validation and containment, and group identity and belonging (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021). Staff were able to explore their own constructs (Bartle & Trevis, 2015) and examine key issues through the lens of others (Babinski & Rodgers, 1998). This was exemplified by the creation of a shared narrative (Grahamslaw & Henson, 2015), as a product of hearing the views of others members of the group, as well as the views of staff, parents and pupils who had also been consulted. Thus a new reality was forged through co-constructed language (Fox, 2009). This process demonstrates the construction of knowledge through social interaction (Burr, 2018).

While PSGs such as the RSE working group are different to group supervision (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021), they too provide indirect support for teacher wellbeing (Annan & Moore, 2012). Some participants were clear that the group provided a supervisory function, which supported group members to 'reflect' rather than 'react' (Jackson, 2002) and felt like a safe space. The success of PSGs hinge on the notion of safety (Bartle & Travis, 2015). Participants in the working group valued the culture of honesty and openness which contributed to this concept of safety, an essential element within the context of RSE (a topic that is potentially personal and exposing). Bion's (1985) 'Container and Contained' work sheds light on this supportive process and creation of a safe space (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). Within this study the EP and working group space acted as the container, which received, engaged and modulated the communications of the other (group members). The group members (who were contained) had the experience of being held in mind by another (the researcher as EP facilitator). Furthermore, by having access to the mind of an 'other' to scaffold and reflect, group members were able to feel safe and manage the intrinsic challenges of RSE, instead of being overwhelmed by it. In the section 5.2.3, the role of the EP will be explored, examining how they supported the group with organisational change, group processes and the creation of a safe space.

5.2.2.2 Positive Outcomes

As part of the structured circular process of inquiry enacted by key stakeholders in AR, the positive outcomes of the group included dual opportunities to build reflective practice and influence school cultures. Members explained the working group afforded them time to think and reflect on RSE practice collaboratively. Analysis of stakeholder views allowed the group to consider espoused practice, including variations and differences throughout the school. A reflective space was created in order to consider tacit understandings, related criticisms and opportunities for sense making, leading to the creation of new shared understandings (Schon, 1991). This reflects the social constructionist underpinnings of this research, which explains how new meanings are generated and negotiated though social interactions (McNamee, 2004). Therefore, the group space facilitated the development of a mutually constructed perspective to address the intrinsic complexities of RSE, while dynamically supporting the development of new organisational understandings.

The group's activities depicted AR's potential to promote change at both individual and organisational levels (McNiff et al., 2003). While group members considered their own practice and the practice of others, they also saw the potential for transferability of learning across the school and other organisations. The working group model, along with the tools of AR, pupil and parent participation and collaborative coproduction were recognised as mechanisms to potentially support other organisational change and implement other school initiatives. Additionally, some participants noted that the mechanisms of the group could be extrapolated in order to support implementation of

RSE across organisations (in the form of network groups of special school representatives). The participatory aspect of PAR allowed participants to promote change in their own setting and beyond (Reason & Bradbury, 2013), at both individual and organisational levels (Robson, 2002).

5.2.2.3 Facilitating Change

The drive to change was impacted by external factors such as legislative reform, which motivated the school to develop policy and curriculum that aligned to government expectations. These external organisational motivations for change increased the school's desire and readiness for change (Wang et al., 2020) and paved the way for the EP to further support, as a 'change agent'. Evans and Cowell (2013) note the importance of understanding a school's ability to change by examining their commitment and ownership, organisational culture, school stability, staff engagement and the ability of organisation to learn when engaging in school improvement work. Indeed, participants cited the commitment and engagement of the group as a change driver. However, they also reflected on the difficulties of implementing the myriad of changes and initiatives that was required of them, citing time for implementation as a major barrier. This demonstrates how AR groups can be time consuming and therefore hard for people to commit to (Simm & Ingram, 2008). In this case the commitment was a product of the importance given to RSE as a subject at the school.

A key facilitator of change cited was the role of the EP as an agent of change, both in supporting the working group as researcher/facilitator and as a group member. The role

of the EP and the unique psychological perspective they offer will be further explored in section 5.2.3.

5.2.2.4 Resilience and Reasonable Adjustments

Finally, group members considered factors which may have impeded organisational change. The most salient was the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown restrictions. This demonstrates the influence of external factors which interact with a school system (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In addition, participants noted that established school culture was influential - including under-developed parent partnership pathways and difficulties with accountability and ownership. Furthermore, participants emphasised the impact of the psychological demands of working at a special school. These demands resulted from continually balancing competing demands, meeting a diverse range of needs and the unpredictability of working with CYP with SEND. These psychological demands often acted as a barrier to implementing systemic change, leaving little space to execute actions and enact change.

5.2.3 RQ 2

What are group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group?

The role of the EP as facilitator and group member was pivotal in facilitating and contributing to the working group, drawing on EPs in-depth knowledge of change and

their unique psychological perspective. This reflects previous research outlining the important role for EPs to contribute to systemic work and organisational change (Fox, 2009) and the role for EP in privileging the views of stakeholders, including pupils (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). The study sheds light on the varied roles EPs can inhabit in systemic work, including that of facilitator or as a member of a working group. It provides new evidence to suggest that EPs' involvement in working groups can help to build capacity in both schools and professionals alike, while also broadening service users' and stakeholders' perspectives of the EP role.

5.2.3.1 Conceptualisations of the EP role

The findings indicated that while the role of the EP was respected and valued by the school, EPs had historically worked primarily on individual casework. The contact EP had been working with the school for over 7 years and had well established relationships and working arrangements with the school. However, participants perceived EPs to be a limited resource which they were grateful for. Consequently, the participant's views of the EP role were confined to a narrow scope, linked to change for individuals. This reflects the ongoing debate relating to schools', often conflicting, understandings of what EPs do (Ashton & Roberts, 2006) and contentions regarding whether focus should be placed on individual casework or consultative systemic work (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009).

Participants also explored the value they placed on systemic work, which they had experienced through the working group - noting it was unexpected and 'additional' to the

core casework EP offer. This represents a broadening of the conceptualisation of EP work within the working group, activated by taking part in the study. Moffet and Field (2020) note the unique skills of the EP in relation to RSE: including training for staff (Lee & Woods, 2017); distinct contributions to multi-agency work (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009); and gaining the voice of the child (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Participants were able to experience these functions, thus challenging their existing perceptions and widening their notion of what EPs can offer. This shift in understanding reflects the way AR is able to position EPs as scientist practitioners to support systemic changes and to create a catalyst for change within school culture (Ackerley & Bunn, 2018).

5.2.3.2 EPs and Change

The role of the EP in the change process was pivotal within this study both as practitioners who have a deep understanding of change (Gillham, 1999) and as 'change agents' (MacKay, 2000). The researcher as facilitator and TEP was able to bring a unique psychological perspective of change, including models such as Prochaska and DiClemente's (1986) stages of change, bringing awareness of group members' fluctuating responses to and readiness for change. The EP could also consider the stages of implementation of change (Humphrey et al., 2018) to monitor the group's perspective throughout the process and adjust facilitation style accordingly. Additionally, in this study, participation in the working group supported change in the EP and PA's practice, building on their experience and skill set, thus exemplifying a symbiotic beneficence for both professionals (such as the EP and PA) and school staff.

5.2.3.3 EP as Facilitator

Participants reflected on the researcher's facilitator role, noting how facilitation supported group processes for organisational change through creating a safe, containing, supportive space and empowering others. This reflects the range of functions for EPs (Mackay, 2000) including promoting collaborative work uniting stakeholders (Ashton & Roberts, 2000) and as facilitators and 'bridges' in organisational change (Woods et al., 2013). In this study, the facilitatory role brought a distinct psychological perspective through consultation, which harnessed interactive, multifaceted views while reconciling the perspectives of different stakeholders (Cameron, 2006). Bion's (1985) 'container contained model' explains the processes and mechanisms involved in how safety in professional working relationships enhances reflection and informed thinking replacing reactive and impulsive behaviours and responses. Participants valued gaining the perspectives of stakeholders such as parents, staff and pupils and appreciated the opportunity to be exposed to unique views privileged from a variety of roles throughout the school (lower, middle and upper school). This demonstrates the EP's key role in consulting with and consolidating the views of all stakeholders.

As facilitator, the researcher guided the group discussion maintaining rhythm, timing and flow (Muchenje & Kelly, 2021), holding their own views to one side while providing opportunities for initiating, information giving and seeking, clarifying, elaborating and summarising (Hayes & Stringer, 2016). By providing structure, predictability and protected time the facilitator was able to contribute to the creation of a safe space

(Muchenje & Kelly, 2021). Participants noted the trusting ethos of the group, which encouraged the open and honest sharing of ideas. As the researcher held a dual role both as facilitator and participant observer, the role of reflexivity was key. The use of reflective field notes and participatory methods were rigorously adhered to in-order to support reflexivity and acknowledge the researcher's indisputable part within the research.

5.2.3.4 EP as Group Member

Participants valued the EP as a group member, highlighting their outsider and insider 'expertise'. Staff considered the EP to have insider expertise, born out of the long standing professional relationship with the school, which privileged a nuanced knowledge of pupils' needs and understanding of their unique context. This expertise could be considered as an example of practice-based evidence, whereby the EP had gained professional practice expertise through a wealth of experience born from many interactions with families and pupils (Argyris, 1989, Schon, 1987). In addition, participants valued the 'outside' expertise the EP provided to the group, which included a broad understanding of inclusion at individual, organisational and systemic levels (Cameron, 2006), coupled with a deep knowledge of evidence based interventions (Fox, 2011). Both these conceptualisations of expertise were seen as enriching the experiences of the group members.

Participants noted that the EP privileged the group with different perspectives and provided alternative views. This process demonstrates how EPs use consultative skills to challenge practice (Cameron, 2006) by introducing cognitive dissonance (Wagner, 1995). This cognitive dissonance encouraged group members to safely and collaboratively reflect, consider and question the tensions and inconsistencies evident when implementing RSE in a special school. This challenge and discussion further supported change by promoting joint problem solving and enabling the group to collaboratively develop shared values - impacting evolving school culture. This case study therefore highlights the diversity of skills and knowledge EPs can bring to groups to support organisational change and develop staff practice; it contributes substantially to this knowledge base (Fallon et al., 2010).

5.2.4 RQ 3

What are the group member's perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE working group?

The PATH tool was used by the researcher as EP and facilitator to plan for the working group, demonstrating its effective capacity to enact the principles of participation, collaboration and coproduction aspired to from previous RSE research. This study has added to growing evidence that PATH can provide a flexible and effective mechanism for organisations to plan for change, through the assimilation of the collective voice of the group and stakeholders. The strengths of PATH demonstrated through this study

includes its ability to harness energy and creativity and provide structure and clarity to plan for change. This research has highlighted the importance of planning and facilitation which contributes to the effectiveness of PATH, thus reinforcing the pivotal role for EPs in facilitating and developing this practice in schools and organisations.

5.2.4.1 Setting a PATH for change

PATH supported the group to plan for organisational change by providing a number of different functions. It gifted the group a structured 'bottom up' process, whereby their views (or tacit understandings) were transformed into explicit knowledge contributing to cultural change (Morgan, 2016). This was enhanced by the use of graphic facilitation which reflected a collective vision back to the group, thus co-creating new cultural knowledge.

The group noted the sense of connection to the future which provided them with a sense of direction and allowed them to set achievable goals. The importance of the 'future orientation' in PATH is a key aspect of its efficacy in the change process (Wood et al., 2019). Cox and Lumsdon (2020) impress the importance of EPs developing strengths in individuals, groups and organisations to support pathway thinking to enhance agency within the context of hope theory (Synder et al., 2003). In this study PATH provided a framework for collaborative pathway thinking and a tool for EPs to develop these strengths in others (such as the group members and within organisations).

In this study, PATH provided a motivational starting point for change (Morgan, 2016), allowing contributors to realise new ways of working and enact collaborative, participatory practice. Participants were provided with a 'circuit breaker' in thinking, allowing them to engage in a 'future thinking', structured way. This demonstrated how PATH is a useful tool for planning for change. However, the maintenance of change over time needs careful consideration, as this was contingent on other factors (Morgan, 2016) such as workload, competing demands and the pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2.4.2 Harnessing Creativity and Energy

This study demonstrated how PATH fostered a sense of creativity and energy, allowing for the creation of new ideas and possibilities in the group. As a consequence, PATH set the tone for future group meetings and acted as a tipping point of organisational change by lifting the group from their unconscious routine (Morgan, 2016) and providing motivation (Wood et al., 2019). It also promoted a sense of commitment and ownership within the group, which research suggests is key to the success of school improvement initiatives (Evans & Cowell, 2013).

5.2.4.3 Collective voice

In this study, participants appreciated that PATH allowed for the participation and collaboration of a diverse range of people - encouraging key stakeholder voices to be heard (Corrigan, 2014). PATH enabled group members to be equal partners (Hayes, 2004) promoting equity and shared ownership (Morgan, 2019). However, this

subsequently led to tensions regarding accountability - it appeared while everyone was equal, no one was accountable. This was despite the researcher following the discrete stages of PATH, including the 'next steps' stage which invites individuals to put their name to actions. In this study, intentions did not always transform into actions, which impacted on the ongoing implementation of change. It should be noted that the impact of Covid-19 brought unprecedented challenges for the school due to extensive staff sickness, which had a huge impact on implementation. In addition, the researcher/ facilitator was regarded as a change agent in this study and potentially played the role of the 'hero innovator' (Georgiades & Phillimore, 1975), therefore potentially further limiting accountability within the group.

5.2.4.4 Facilitation

Previous research reveals the importance of the role of facilitation in PATH. PATH requires facilitation from two people - a process facilitator who guides the group through questioning, and a graphic facilitator who records the group's views. The skills of the facilitator are seen as pivotal to the success of PATH (Childre & Chambers, 2005), which should help people feel safe, take risks (Morgan, 2016) and remain neutral, guiding the participants towards their preferred solutions. This study reinforced the importance of the process facilitator's competence in being able to support and guide collaborative conversation and the value of preparation in this process. Preparation included researching PATH facilitation, writing scripts and rehearsing. Opportunities for graphic and process facilitators to build their practice together were also sought. This

preparation was facilitated by the researcher's previous experience of PATH and their subsequent passion and enthusiasm for the tool. It should be considered that this investment and beliefs of the researcher regarding PATH's efficacy may have impacted the resulting findings. In addition, Hughes et al. (2019) note that EPs are well placed to facilitate PATH, however there is insufficient understanding of the role of graphic facilitation and the part PAs can play in supporting this.

5.3.4.5 Practicalities

There were several practical elements relating to facilitation of the PATH that required careful organisation and forward planning in advance of the meeting. This included providing participants with clear information about what to expect, in a bid to avoid participants being unprepared, noted by previous research as a barrier (Wood et al., 2019). However, group members were unable to read material before the session due to competing demands on their time (but did appreciate having a clear explanation of the process at the start of the meeting). The notion of timing and time for PATH meetings has also been raised as an obstacle in previous research (Wood et al., 2019), this was also apparent in the study. Participants struggled to reconcile the contradiction between finding time for the meetings themselves and wishing to lengthen the duration of the meetings due to their perceived usefulness. The implementation of change was impinged by the time between meetings: members cited a lack of capacity to complete agreed actions.

5.3 Implications for Practice

The implications for educational practice and EP practice has been considered throughout the discussion but will be summarised here.

5.3.1 Educational Practice

This study demonstrated the complexities faced by teachers when navigating the implementation of a new RSE curriculum for pupils with SEND - which calls for participatory, person-centred practice. This research has highlighted some key areas and practices for schools to address and consider when they are planning for RSE.

Firstly, schools should be cognisant of the range of attitudes and values which are intrinsically embedded in RSE at individual, organisational and societal levels. In order to contend with and respond to the range of attitudes, schools should engage in gaining the views of key stakeholders, including: staff; parents; and pupils. In addition to gaining these views, schools should look to develop mechanisms to enable collaborative partnerships between home, school and pupils. Parents and pupils should have regular opportunities to engage with school to both inform curricular, develop shared perspectives to guide RSE practice and break down potential attitudinal barriers. These opportunities for engagement and collaboration should highlight which RSE topics are important to and for pupils with SEND such as safety, changes and the nuances of relationships and emotions. These collaborative partnerships should start when pupils are young and be cyclical and repetitive, as part of proactive school practice. In addition to home/school partnership, high quality staff/pupil relationships

should be harnessed to elicit reciprocal conversations, which illuminate topics which are important to pupils with SEND and inform curricula. Staff should be encouraged to understand the value of supportive attuned staff/pupil relationships, which privilege staff to awareness of individual needs and differences, helping them to adjust and plan for individualised learning. In addition, staff practice should be nurtured through providing supportive spaces, such as working groups, to enable the implementation of new curricula, develop specialist training, and provide opportunities for reflective supervision. Finally, the use of PATH as a framework for collaborative, participatory work should be considered as a flexible tool for schools to address the complexities of RSE in partnership with key stakeholders.

5.3.2 EP Practice

This study has demonstrated that EPs are extremely well-placed to support schools with RSE by using their wide ranging skill set, including: consultation; research; pupil participation; knowledge of evidence-based practice; and practice-based knowledge (Fox, 2011). Additionally, these findings have demonstrated that EPs are uniquely positioned to support change in schools at individual, group and organisational levels (Cameron, 2006). It has also been contended that by engaging this kind of work, EPs can broaden stakeholders' and service users' conceptualisations of what EPs do.

5.3.2.1 Organisational Level

This study has highlighted the integral systemic role for EPs in RSE, who can support organisational change through positive and containing relationships over time. The use

of PATH as a framework for participatory organisational change can be used to collaboratively capture stakeholders' views for the enactment of 'bottom up' change. EPs are central to the successful implementation of PATH for a variety of reasons. They have a unique understanding of person-centred, solution focused approaches. EP's also appreciate the practical difficulties related to implementing organisational change (Evans & Cowell, 2013) allowing them to use tools like PATH flexibly and holistically. They are also uniquely situated within local authorities, with close relationships to schools, enabling them to ascertain school's readiness and motivation for change (Wang et al., 2020). These close relationships enable EPs to work closely in partnership with schools and use PATH as a flexible framework for change, adapting it to the unique needs of the school. As PCP tools like PATH provide a tangible, powerful, time limited approach, this allows EPs to them to encourage schools to take the first steps in making small changes in their practice (Simm & Ingram, 2008). When using organisational change tools like PATH, EPs can work alongside schools to change 'hearts and minds', negating any potential overwhelm engendered by school improvement initiatives (Evans & Cowell, 2013). Additionally, EPs can use PATH to support the involvement from all stakeholders, using their consultation skills and knowledge of collaborative tools to elicit views and ensure participation. Finally, EPs can ensure continued implementation of these small steps of change and action created in PATH, through using their close working relationships with schools to engage them in cycles of assessing, planning, doing and reviewing. These cycles should include careful consideration of core implementation components (Fixen et al., 2009) and reflection of how new knowledge can be transferred into action (Chidley & Stringer, 2020). This

demonstrates the key role for EPs, working alongside schools to use PATH to enact cyclical, holistic and reflective approaches to systemic change for RSE and other burgeoning educational agendas.

5.3.2.2 Group and Individual Level

In addition to EP's systemic role as organisational change agent using PATH, they can support schools with RSE at individual and group levels through initiatives such as a working group. EPs have a unique psychological skill set to provide support and emotional containment for staff when implementing the complexities of RSE. This support could include: supporting staff to contend with the range of attitudes and personal values evident in RSE. Also EPs can support raising awareness for the importance of RSE in schools, especially for those with SEND; developing training for staff to support them with planning, teaching and evaluating RSE; and developing and delivering RSE information for parents alongside schools. In addition, EPs may support developing relationships and effective communication pathways between home and school to strengthen partnership working in relation to RSE. They may use consultation with parents and school staff to: further understand the needs of children in relation RSE; develop positive home/school relationships; and facilitate appropriate information sharing. Finally, they may promote pupil participation in developing RSE practice, advocating for the rights of pupils with SEND to receive inclusive RSE, and design bespoke RSE interventions and curriculums for pupils with SEND.

5.4 Reflections, Strengths and Limitations

5.4.1 Personal Reflections

As the researcher, I acknowledge my impact within this study as a participant observer: just as the attitudes of the staff, parents and pupils will have informed the research, so will have my views (which are aligned to full participation for individuals with SEND in RSE). In addition, my previous experience of PATH, competencies as a facilitator, past positions as teacher and PA, and experience as a TEP, will have also have impacted the planning, execution and analysis and interpretation of findings. This study built capacity with the school I worked with, and strengthened my skill set. The experiences I gained using PAR and PATH to organise and plan the for the working group, facilitating PATH and subsequent group meetings, and the use of a variety of methods to obtain stakeholder views will have unequivocally impacted and developed my own practice-based experience, and will have a lasting legacy on my future practice as an EP.

5.4.2 Strengths

This research benefitted from a qualitative approach and case study design, which allowed for an in depth account of the participants' experiences (Simons, 2009). The ethnographic approach supported collection of data from multiple sources (parents, staff, pupils and professionals), that could be cross-checked and validated (Axford et al., 1999). The use of a wide range of research tools allowed for a robust, holistic 'real world' account (Burman et al., 1998), while capturing the cultural nuances of co-produced systemic work in schools (Tacchi, 2015). The PAR design encouraged the

school staff to use research (Torrance, 2004) for the creation of practice-based evidence (Pring & Thomas, 2004).

The study demonstrated a high level of ecological validity through the use of research tools such as field notes and semi structured interviews, allowing participants to express their viewpoints without being led (Yardley, 2008). The researcher aspired to high levels of trustworthiness and credibility through judicious attention to reflexivity, which was achieved through diligence in keeping field notes (that clearly demarcated between observation and reflection). In addition, the researcher engaged the participants as co-researchers throughout (Denscombe, 2003), inviting them to plan for the group through the use of PATH and engaging them in participatory analysis. The researcher was privileged in a prolonged involvement with the case school, which allowed for immersion in the field and a rich level of contextual knowledge. This also allowed the researcher to build open and trusting relationships with the participants, thus facilitating ease of reflection during interviews. The researcher was rigorous in their analysis of the data, including participatory analysis and triangulation between data sources.

Although there were limitations to transferability, related to exploration of the mechanisms in a particular school which could not be generalised (Maxwell, 1992), the case study did allow for analytic or theoretical generalization (Ragin, 1987, In Robson, 2016). Therefore, evidence was provided for a set of procedures or mechanisms by which other settings might operate. This was an innovative, ambitious study which aspired to high levels of participation, reflexivity and triangulation of data to provide

evidence for the usefulness of PAR in developing a working group, the role of the EP and the use of PATH.

5.4.3 Limitations

The recruitment process demonstrated that special schools, parents of children with SEND and young people with SEND are challenging groups to access. In recruitment of the school the researcher relied on existing professional relationships. Future research may need to account for this and research should be born out of expedient relationships where tangible difficulties have previously been identified. Given that RSE for YP with SEND is still considered contentious, recruiting parents and seeking their consent to recruit their children as participants was challenging. This was exacerbated by the additional pressure of Covid-19.

This study would have benefitted from being able to apply and explore the preferred research tools (planned for pre-Covid-19), which would have allowed participants greater opportunities for co-production and provided greater ecological validity. Although the adaptations to the study (made in light of Covid-19), allowed the researcher to capture the voices of parents and pupils, the tools and methods did not encapsulate the depth of information that the researcher had intended. Frawley and O'Shea (2019) argue that the voices of people with SEND should be central to research, which was not addressed here in the fullness the researcher had intended. Similarly, the views of parents were limited to those respondents whose values and interests aligned with the research. There would be further beneficence in gaining the

views of those parents who do not consider RSE to be a crucial educational matter. Furthermore, gaining paternal views and the views of stakeholders with varying ethnicity (albeit a small population within the case school) would also have been beneficial.

As this study was limited to the exploration of one school context, there were limitations to the transferability and generalisability as specific mechanisms related to that particular school (Maxwell, 1992). Therefore, future studies may look to explore how the theoretical mechanisms and procedures developed from this study could be adapted and applied in other settings and schools (Ragin, 1987, In Robson, 2016).

5.5 Future Research

The current study was revelatory in terms of school staff experiences of taking part in a working group using PATH in order to cohesively and coherently plan for RSE. It examines the pivotal role of the EP in the working group to enact organisational change. Outcomes highlighted the necessary development of work with parents and training for staff. Therefore, it would be valuable to conduct further research into the implementation of these actions, and ways to increase accountability, taking account of systemic challenges which potentially create barriers to change. In addition, it would be beneficial to further explore how this model could be applied to develop networks of support for staff, parents and pupils, with regard to supporting the RSE and other challenging areas of the curriculum.

Future research should seek engagement with a wider representational pool of parent participants whose values and attitudes better reflect societal diversity. In addition, the views and experiences of pupils should continue to be sought. Finally, mechanisms for embedding pupil views into curriculum development and review should be explored, drawing on those examined in this study.

Future research to understand the impact of virtual working on organisational change and systemic work would be useful, as in this study it had benefits such as enabling the project to continue. This might include evaluating the advantages and drawbacks of virtual meetings, and the use of virtual training and webinars. Finally, the role and contribution of the PA both as graphic facilitator, and more generally in supporting systemic work, could be further investigated.

5.6 Conclusions

This study explored and evaluated the central role of an EP in supporting organisational change, implementing the RSE curriculum in a special school context. The EP supported and facilitated the working group through applying the PATH tool, which was further enabled by secure and containing professional relationships developed over time between the EP and school staff working party.

This study used a PAR approach to develop a working group in a special school to support the RSE curriculum. It was proposed that a working group could provide a reflective space to discuss, evaluate, then review evolving practice. The views of

parents, pupils and staff were sought to inform the planning for the working group, which was operationalised by using the PATH tool. An EP (the researcher) supported the development of the group as a facilitator while another acted as a group member; both helped to enact organisational change.

This is one of the few studies to demonstrate the role of EPs in systemically supporting schools with RSE (Moffat & Field, 2020). The research enacted this in several ways: eliciting pupil, parent and staff voice; supporting the school plan for RSE curriculum changes by using PATH; and support for staff through the working group. The working group planned for by PATH provided the concurrent functions of planning for organisational change and supporting staff practice. These functions permitted group members a fresh perspective, which informed practice with identified possibilities for transferability across the immediate context and other contexts. This included highlighting the value of attuned and supportive staff/pupil relationships which facilitated the planning of individualised RSE. The role of the EP was pivotal to the group - as a facilitator, to provide momentum to the project and guide meetings through the creation of a safe space, and as a group member (providing 'expertise' and challenging the views and perceptions of staff). The EP's existing and ongoing relationship with the school was key to developing the trust and safety required to challenge perspectives and therefore support organisational change. In addition, this research added to the evidence base for the use of the PATH tool in organisational planning. PATH provided the group with a flexible, collaborative planning tool which supported the inclusion of key stakeholders, providing group members momentum for organisational change in a

person-centred, participatory way. PATH motivated staff to ‘set a path for change’ by providing a structured framework to enable future thinking and set achievable goals. It also demonstrated the participatory mechanisms that could be applied to other organisational change or implementation of educational initiatives, including understanding and harnessing the school’s readiness to change and adapt their school culture.

This study has provided an example of a co-produced, collaborative, person-centred, participatory approach which can support schools, with guidance from an EP, to plan for change and provide ongoing support to school staff. These mechanisms have much potential to be used to address both the multifaceted complexities of implementing RSE and other burgeoning educational issues.

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Appendix 1: PATH outline, adaptions and script

PATH Set up and script

Need to:

- Send out invites, consent forms, information sheets (week before)
- Communicate survey feedback/possible functions of group (two weeks before to TL)
- Ensure graphic facilitator (confirm with TM and RM)
- Communicate about room, set up, confirm date and time (week before)
- Have pens, paper, tape, chicken, chains, judges hat, flip chart, oranges, water, cups, post it notes, functions of group on A4, survey results. (on day)

Beginning:

- Arrive at 3.00 to set up room.
- Paper on wall, pre written out.
- Flip chart with rules
- Flip chart with reflections: What worked well/Even if better if (related to research questions
- Refreshments out

1. **Introductions including my role of participant observer and action research**

Welcome to the first RSE support group meeting. My name is Natalie Carpenter. I am a trainee EP on placement in ****. As part of my training I have to undertake research for part of a doctoral thesis. My interests are in RSE in special schools initially in taking part in a parent workshop around Puberty in a special school while I was a PA. This sparked an interest in the topic as two hours felt as if it barely scraped the surface. This lead me to my first year piece of research which looked at how the adults and systems around the pupils in special schools contribute to supporting them with the RSE curriculum. That research has lead me here today to work with the school to set up a support group for RSE. My research is interested in how the group might function to support the pupils with RSE by creating a supportive space for the adults delivering the curriculum.

This research has been developed to be a piece of action research which aims to generate solutions to practical problems and to empower practitioners.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ov3F3pdhNkk

My hope is that we can make a plan of action today and then meet at least three times before the end of the year.

My role today is a dual one. I will be acting as a facilitator today as part of the PATH but also as a researcher in the role of participant observer (whereby I participate in the group but also observe and reflect)

2. **Explain about PATH and group agreement (by end will have a name for group)**

Ground rules include:
Chains of past-throw them away to activate solution finding and forward thinking.
No jargon-jargon busting chicken
No judgement (equal participation, take risks, creative thinking)
Respect one person talking at a time.
As facilitator, I may ask more questions or move the group on.

3. **Share survey results**

4. **PATH (6 parts)**

- **Vision/dream (cook the dream)**

What matters most when planning for delivering an RSE curriculum?
What does the future look like if everything is on track?
What would you love to see happening? When you walk around the school what might you see?
What would staff be doing? Who would be working alongside you/each other?
What would parents be saying? What would pupils be saying?
How does the future feel?

- **One Year from now**

What would have been achieved? (grounded and realistic)

- **Now**

What exactly is going on right now?
Where are we starting from?
Are there some green shoots of the dream happening right now?
We can name things now that are not where we would like them to be.

- **What helps (synectics?)**

Who will we need?
What knowledge have we got?
What skills and knowledge need to be developed further?
Do we need to get more information?

Does anyone else need to be invited to the group? Or voices heard?
How will the time be used effectively? (synectics)
Who will run each meeting?

- **Keeping strong**

What will we need to do to stay focused on the path ahead?
What will be need to ensure commitment to the goals and maintain strength?

- **Action Plan**

Identify next steps:
What are the actions that need to happen to reach our dream?
What can we do today, tomorrow, next week, next month and in three month's time?

5. **Reflections**

Kolb

1) Concrete: What did you see/feel/think?
2) Reflection: What worked well? What didn't work? Why?
3) Abstract: What could have been done better/differently?
4) Active: What are the next steps for the group/for you?

<u>Gargoyles of change:</u>
FEAR
CONTROL
COMPLACENCY

<u>Champions of change:</u>
Teamwork
communication
trust
humour

Appendix 2: School Consent

Institute of Education

UCL

Staff and professionals Consent Form

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand the school's role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I (on behalf of the school) is free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and that if we choose to do so the data they have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that the school's participation in the research is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if we disclose any information which suggests that I or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that names will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the

confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____ Role _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

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Appendix 3: Group Information form

Institute of Education

Staff and professionals Information Sheet

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

The researcher

I am Natalie Carpenter, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education University College London. I am passionate about working in partnership with children and young people who attend special schools and their families.

What is this research and why is it important?

- RSE has recently undergone huge reforms. After guidance not being updated for 20 years, the status of the subject has recently been elevated to statutory in secondary schools with new guidance published. The new curriculum will be mandatory by 2020 with recommendations to start implementing the changes in September 2019.

- There is limited research to suggest how to best deliver RSE to pupils in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools is layered with complexities, including balancing the rights of the individual to be a sexual being with issues surrounding safeguarding. These matters are further compounded by the changing and fluid political and ethical landscape.

- Therefore, it is imperative that special schools have access to advice and support that is fluid and as individual as their pupils. Research shows that some schools have attempted to meet this need by creating a support group for staff made up of staff, professionals and parents. These groups have performed a range of functions such as production of policy and procedure, consolation for curriculum and assessment, supervision for staff, creation and evaluation of resources, production of information for families and advocacy of pupils.

- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help to build a supportive culture for staff so they can in turn deliver an RSE curriculum which offers safe opportunities for pupils and advocates for their rights.

- The findings from this part of the study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE working groups.

What will I be asked to do?

The Group

- You will be asked to take part in a group comprised of school staff, governors, professionals and other parents.
- The group will meet approximately four time and meetings will be once a term. Group meetings will take approximately one hour with the exception of the first, which will last approximately 2 hours.
- The first meeting will comprise of a PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) process to create a shared vision for the group through goal setting, visioning and enrolment.
- The PATH will be guided by two facilitators, one who will record the groups responses graphically.
- The following meetings will be a product of what is decided by the group at the PATH process.
- You will be asked to reflect on being part of the group after each meeting and as part of an interview at the end of the whole process.

The Interview

You will be asked to take part in a semi structured individual interview in a setting of your choice. Interviews will take approximately one hour. You will be asked about your experiences of taking part in the group (i.e. What was helpful? What could be more helpful?)

The Process

1) If you are happy to take part in the project, please view this information about PATH https://inclusive-solutions.com/person-centred-planning/#typesofplanning
2) If you would like to take part in the research, please sign and return the enclosed consent forms to me.
3) I will contact you to discuss the process and answer any questions you have.
4) You will attend and contribute to the RSE support group. You will be asked to complete a short reflection sheet after each meeting.

5) After the three group meetings have been competed I will invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview.
6) Once the interviews have been analysed, I will send a research briefing to you, explaining the findings.

What will happen to my information?

- All data will be anonymised and every effort made to ensure that you can't be identified.
- The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed; these transcriptions will be stored separately from any contact details or personal information provided on the consent forms and questionnaire, which will be stored securely and not shared with anyone.
- The interviews will be confidential. If you disclose any information which suggests a child or others are at risk of significant harm, then I will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

What should I do now?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone (07970 977405) or email (natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk). If you would like to take part, please sign and return the consent forms to me. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Supervision and ethical approval

This research is being supervised by Dr Dawn Male, Associate Professor in the Education & Psychology of Children with SEN and Dr Frances Lee, Professional Educational Psychology Tutor; IOE - Psychology & Human Development; UCL Institute of Education.
The project has ethical approval from the department of Psychology and Human Development, which means that the committee has carefully considered the risks and benefits of the research.

Data protection notice

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 4: Group Consent

Institute of Education

Staff and professionals Consent Form (1)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand my role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do so the data I have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that my participation in the group and interview is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if I disclose any information which suggests that I or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand that other

authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way London

WC1H 0AL

natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 5: PATH invite

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Dear
I would like to take the opportunity to invite you to a PATH. The PATH will be used to set and plan for an RSE support group. This letter contains information about PATH and how it can be used to plan in organisations like schools.

P.A.T.H. (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)

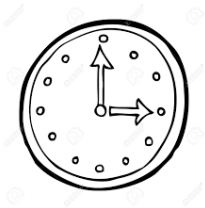
PATH was developed by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest in 1993 as a person centred tool.

What does it mean?

PATH means **Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope.** It is most commonly used to plan for individuals but is flexible enough to be used to create shared visions for families, teams or organisations.

What is PATH?

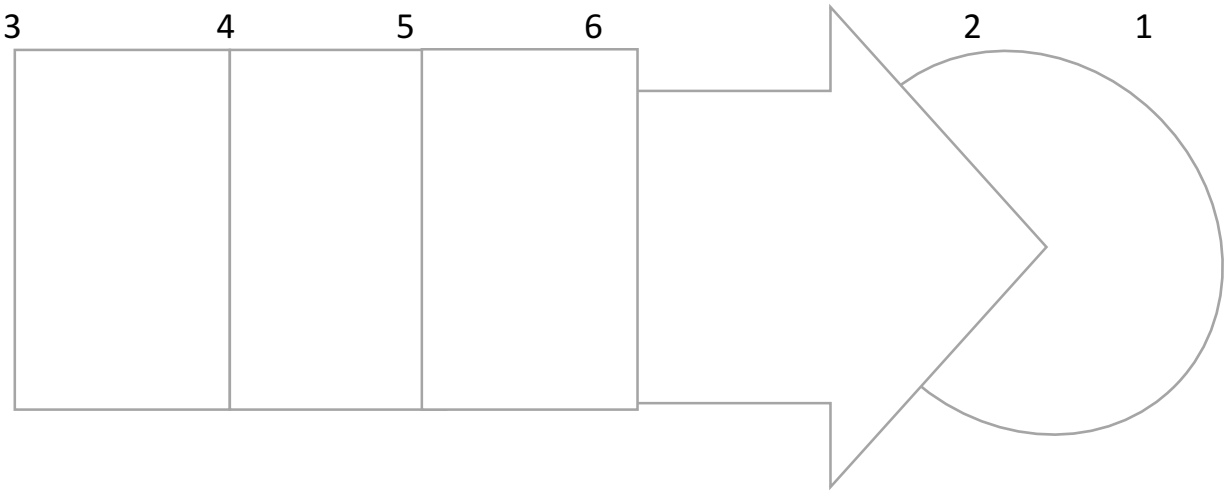
Just like a path leads you from one place to another, a **PATH** will lead you to where you want to be in life. It is a graphic recording of future dreams and goals and what is needed in order to achieve these things. The process is collaborative and dynamic and at the end you will be able to look back at a shared vision.



How long will the PATH take?

The PATH meeting will take 2 hours. Refreshments will be provided.

What happens at a PATH meeting?
Each PATH meeting is facilitated by to individuals. One will facilitate, gently guiding the group from each stage to the next. The other will be the graphic facilitator, they will capture the groups ideas and vision on one large piece of paper, thus creating the 'PATH'.



The PATH

1. **Our Vision/The Dream**

Group members will be asked to visualise how their ideal RSE curriculum is implemented and supported in school. The group will decide what function and purpose they would like it to serve. You might be asked questions like:
-When you walk around the school you would see?

-What would the parents say?
-How would the pupils feel?
-What would staff be doing?

2. **One Year from now**

You will be asked to imagine that a year has passed since the PATH, what positive things will have happened and how will things have changed?

3. **Now**

Group members will be asked to discuss what will help them move towards their vision and what might hinder the process.

4. **What helps**

This step explores existing skills and knowledge amongst school staff that would help work towards the vision and overcome the barriers. What skills and knowledge needs to be developed further?

5. **Keeping strong**

This step helps us to consider if our goals are realistic. Also is helps us to make plans for when things don't go to plan.

6. **Action plan**

Here clear actions are identified to help move towards the future. Questions may be Who? What? When? Where? We will think about long term steps (6-12 months) and short term steps (1-3 months).

Reflections

We will end with some reflections, thinking about how useful the PATH process was and what could be even better.

Before the PATH:

I will share the results of the parent and staff survey. This might help us to collaboratively decide the purpose and function of the group with clarity.

When is the PATH?

The PATH will take place on: **Monday 27th January 2020 at 3.30-5.30**

Do you have any questions?

Please e mail Natalie on: natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk
Kind Regards
Natalie

Appendix 6: Parents Survey

Information about the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) survey (parent)

Aims:

This **anonymous** survey/questionnaire aims to understand what parents currently know about the RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) curriculum and what's important to them.

Completion:

Option 1)

Please complete survey by clicking on:

https://uclioe.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2aXqKEghxiv5VYx

All responses are **anonymous**.

Option 2)

Alternatively, you can complete a paper copy (**anonymously**) and return to …….. via the school office.

Option 3)

You can request to fill in the survey over the telephone with Natalie Carpenter (researcher).

What will be done with the information?

The survey results will be used to inform planning of the RSE curriculum through an RSE action research group. This is part of a doctoral research project looking at ways in supporting staff deliver RSE in special schools. **All respondents will remain anonymous.**

If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Carpenter: natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 7: Staff Survey

Information about the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) survey

Aims:
This **anonymous** survey/questionnaire aims to understand what staff currently know the RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) and how confident they feel about teaching it.
Completion:
Option 1)
Please complete survey by clicking on:
https://uclioe.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_06z6sLhHjAyCAYd
All responses are **anonymous**.
Option 2)
Alternatively, you can complete a paper copy (anonymously) and return to …… via the school office.
What will be done with the information?
The survey results will be used to inform planning for the implementation, support and development of the RSE curriculum through an RSE action research group. This is part of a doctoral research project looking at ways in supporting staff deliver RSE in special schools.
All respondents will remain **anonymous**.
If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Carpenter: natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 8: Parent focus group letter

Institute of Education

UCL

February 2020

Dear Parents,

As you may know there is currently some research being undertaken at ******* regarding the **RSE curriculum**. This research is looking at how an RSE staff group and be used to support the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

Thank you so much if you have already taken part by completing the parent survey. Your responses are so valuable and have already been used to inform the next steps in the research.

What's next?

The RSE support group has had its first planning meeting where we explored the possibility of having some RSE parent workshops. In order to plan these effectively parent's views are integral!

With this in mind, **we would like to invite you to a focus group** where we can explore and discuss your views. The focus group would be an opportunity for you to help shape future parent workshops and information and communication you receive from school.

The parent RSE focus group will be taking place on:

Tuesday 31st March

Friday 3rd April

At:

11-12.30 am

If you would like to take part, please read the attached information sheet and tell the school office you are coming!

I look forward to meeting you.

Kindest regards

Natalie Carpenter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

IoE UCL

Appendix 9: Parent focus group information sheet

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Information Sheet (3)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research.

The researcher

I am Natalie Carpenter, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education University College London. I am passionate about working in partnership with children and young people who attend special schools and their families.

What is this research and why is it important?

- The RSE curriculum is changing and schools have been given new guidance. RSE now has to be taught in all secondary schools. In primary schools children are taught about relationships.
- There is not a lot of information and research about the RSE curriculum in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools can be tricky as all pupils have very different needs.
- Therefore, it really important that we find out about the best way of teaching RSE to pupils in special schools.
- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help staff deliver an RSE curriculum that suits their pupils while working together with pupils and their families.
- The findings from this study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE support groups.

What will I be asked to do?

The Focus Group

I will ask you your views on RSE at your child's school. This includes what is currently

taught, what you would like to be taught, how parents and young people work in partnership with school and how you would like to be communicated with.

The Process

1) If you would like to take part in the research, please inform ***** via the school office. You will be able to collect a consent form to complete from there.

2) Please sign and return the consent forms to me (in an envelope addressed to **Natalie Carpenter**) and return to the school office.

3) You will then be invited to come and discuss RSE at your child's school.

4) You will receive an information sheet summarising the findings.

What will happen to my information?

All data will be anonymised and every effort made to ensure that you can't be identified.

What should I do now?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone (07970 977405) or email (natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk). If you would like to take part, please sign and return the consent forms to me. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Supervision and ethical approval

This research is being supervised by Dr Dawn Male, Associate Professor in the Education & Psychology of Children with SEN and Dr Frances Lee, Professional Educational Psychology Tutor; IOE - Psychology & Human Development; UCL Institute of Education.

The project has ethical approval from the department of Psychology and Human Development, which means that the committee has carefully considered the risks and benefits of the research.

Data protection notice

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at

dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 10: Parent Focus Group Consent

Institute of Education

Parent Consent Form (2)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand my role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do so the data I have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that my participation in the focus group is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if I disclose any information which suggests that I or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way London

WC1H 0AL

natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 11: Pupil focus group parent letter

Institute of Education

UCL

March 2020

Dear Parents,

As you may know there is currently some research being undertaken at ***** regarding the **RSE curriculum**. This research is looking at how a RSE staff group and be used to support the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

Thank you so much if you have already taken part by completing the parent survey. Your responses are so valuable and have already been used to inform the next steps in the research.

What's next?

The RSE support group has had its first planning meeting where we explored gaining the views of the young people at ****** about **their RSE curriculum**.

With this in mind, **we would like to invite your child to a focus group** where we can explore and discuss their views. The focus group would be an opportunity for your child to help shape future RSE lessons and workshops. The focus group will take place over **two sessions** in partnership with **Miss ****** Head of Upper School.**

The young person RSE focus group will be taking place on:

Tuesday 2nd June and Thursday 4th June.

At: **1-2pm**

If you would like your child to take part, please **read** the attached information sheets**, discuss** with your child, **complete** the consent forms and **return** to the school office.

I look forward to meeting your child.

Kindest regards

Natalie Carpenter
Trainee Educational Psychologist
IoE UCL

Appendix 12: Pupil Focus Group Pupil Information Sheet

Young Person Information Sheet

Who am I?

Hello, I am Natalie. I am training to be an Educational Psychologist. I often work with young people to find out what helps them at school.

I would like to talk to you about your relationships and sex education learning. I think it's important to know what young people think.

What will I be asked to do?

You and some other young people will be asked what you think about your

relationships and sex education learning.

Our talk:

Will last for **1** hour, over **2** days.

Will happen with a group at school.

You can stop at any time.

You can bring a teacher with you in you want to.

I will bring some pictures to help you.

What we talk about is private, but if you tell me something that will hurt you or others I will have to tell someone about it.

I will write a report of what you tell me.
Your name won't be on it.
I will show you to check.

Do you want to take part?

Yes, please!

No, thank you!

No problem. Thank you!

Complete the **consent form**

I will come to your school to meet you and you can ask me any questions then.

You can also email me on natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk.

I will set a date/time with you to meet.

See you soon! ☺

Tick 'NO' on the consent form

I will not contact you again.

All the best! ☺

Remember you can stop at any time.

Appendix 13: Pupil Focus Group Parent Information Sheet

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Information Sheet for Young Person's focus group

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research.

The researcher

I am Natalie Carpenter, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education University College London. I am passionate about working in partnership with children and young people who attend special schools and their families.

What is this research and why is it important?

- The RSE curriculum is changing and schools have been given new guidance. RSE now has to be taught in all secondary schools. In primary schools children are taught about relationships.
- There is not a lot of information and research about the RSE curriculum in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools can be tricky as all pupils have very different needs.
- Therefore, it really important that we find out about the best way of teaching RSE to pupils in special schools.
- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help staff deliver an RSE curriculum that suits their pupils while working together with pupils and their families.
- The findings from this study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE support groups.

What will my child be asked to do?

The Focus Group

- I will invite your child to take part in a focus group to discuss what they think of the RSE curriculum.
- The focus group will take place over **two afternoon sessions**, lasting around **1 hour each**.
- The first session will introduce some of the main areas taught in RSE as a discussion with the group. This will be led by the researcher (Natalie Carpenter) and *******.
- During the second session we will ask the group their views. We will ask them what they feel is **important** to learn about as part of RSE and what is **not important.**
- We will invite your child to record their responses visually.

The Process

7) If you are happy for your child to take part in the focus group please discuss with your child before **both signing and returning** the enclosed consent forms to me.
8) You can return the forms to me by handing them into the office in an envelope addressed to Natalie Carpenter.
9) I am available to discuss the process and answer any questions you have, please pass on your phone details and I will get in touch.

What will happen to my child's information?

- All data will be anonymised and every effort made to ensure that your child can't be identified.
- The information will be used as part of doctoral thesis.
- The focus group will be confidential. If your child disclosed any information which suggests they or others are at risk of significant harm, then I will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

What should I do now?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone (07970 977405) or email (natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk). If you would like to take part, please sign and return the consent forms to me. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Supervision and ethical approval

This research is being supervised by Dr Dawn Male, Associate Professor in the Education & Psychology of Children with SEN and Dr Frances Lee, Professional Educational Psychology Tutor; IOE - Psychology & Human Development; UCL Institute of Education.

The project has ethical approval from the department of Psychology and Human Development, which means that the committee has carefully considered the risks and benefits of the research.

Data protection notice

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 14: Pupil Focus Group Pupil Consent form

Institute of Education

UCL

Young Person Consent Form

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

I would like/would not like to take part in this study (circle the one which applies to you).

If you would like to take part, please circle yes or no to each statement:

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet.	👍	👎
I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie questions on the phone or by email.	👍	👎
I confirm that it is my decision to take part is my own and not anybody else's.	👍	👎
I understand that I am free to ask Natalie any questions about the study at any time.	👍	👎
I know that I will talk to Natalie and asked questions about Relationships and Sex Education	👍	👎
I understand that I do not have to answer questions I do not want to and can pull out at any time.	👍	👎
I understand that what I say will be typed up.	👍	👎

I understand that Natalie will use the information I tell her to write presentations and reports which will be shared with others, but that no one will be able to identify me from what I've said.	👍	👎
I understand that Natalie will not use my real name in the report or presentation.	👍	👎
I understand that if I tell Natalie anything that makes her think I or anybody else is in danger, she will have to tell somebody.	👍	👎

Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix 15: Pupil Focus Group Parent Consent Form

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Consent Form on behalf of Young Person (3)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand my child's role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent for my child to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw my child at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do so the data they have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that my child's participation in the focus group is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if my child discloses any information which suggests that they or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that my child's name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data my child provides to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve

the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my child's words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way London

WC1H 0AL

natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 16 Questions for the Parent Focus Group

Focus Group Questions:

Item Number	Question	Follow Up/Prompts
1	What do you think your child is learning in RSE at the moment?	How do you know? What has been most helpful/least helpful?
2	What are your main concerns about RSE?	Tell me a little more How is that? What is that like?
3	What would you like to see taught and how?	What would that look like?
4	How could the school work with you in the best way regarding RSE?	What would it look like? What would be most/least helpful?
5	Why is it important that CYP learn about RSE?	What might be the barriers? What might help?
6	What would you like to see as part of a parent workshop/s?	When? Where? Who? How?

Participatory Analysis Questions:

Item number	B and C Stage	Questions/statements
1	Familiarisation with data	"take some time to reflect on what we discussed today"
2	Generalising initial codes	"In our discussions what key phrases or words or ideas do you feel reoccurred or were significant?"
3	Searching for themes	"How might be sum up these reoccurring key ideas?" "How could be group these into themes?"

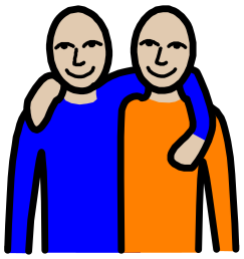
4	Reviewing themes	“Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped these ideas?” and/or “Let’s rank these themes in order of importance”
5	Refining themes	“is there anything else to be added that has not come up?” “What would we call these themes”

Appendix 17: Prompts for Pupil Focus Group

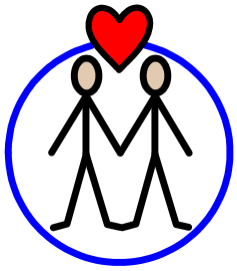
Relationships and Sex Education

love

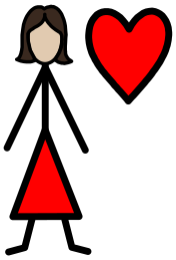
relationships



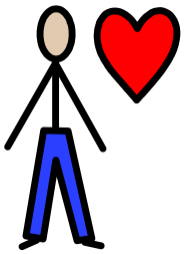
friendships



marriage



girlfriend



boyfriend

body parts

wet dream

sex

How babies

masturbation

masturbation

Appendix 18 Parent Survey

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) survey parents/Carer

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Who are you? (select only one)

- ○ mother (1)
- ○ father (2)
- ○ carer (person with parental responsibility) (3)
- ○ grandparent (with parental responsibility) (4)
- ○ other (5) _____

Q2 How old is your child?

_____

Q3 Which part of the school is your child in? (select only one)

- ○ lower school (1)
- ○ middle school (2)
- ○ upper school (3)

Q4 How long has your child been in the school?

_____

Q5 What is the gender of your child?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ non-binary (3)
- ○ Prefer not to say (4)

Q6 What is your ethnicity? (select only one)

○ White (say which i.e. British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/Irish/Gypsy or Irish Traveller/other) (1) _____

○ Mixed or multiple ethnicity (say which i.e. White and Black Caribbean/ White and Black African/White and Asian/other mixed or multiple ethnicity background) (2) _____

○ Asian/Asian British (say which i.e. Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Chinese/Any other Asian background) (3) _____

○ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (say which i.e. African/Caribbean/Any other Black/African/Caribbean background) (4) _____

○ Other ethnic group (say which i.e. Arab/other ethnic group) (5) _____

○ Prefer not to say (6)

Q7 What is the nature of your child's SEND (special educational need and/or disability)? (select all that apply)

- ☐ ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) (1)
- ☐ ADD (attention deficit disorder) (2)
- ☐ ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) (3)
- ☐ SpLD (specific learning difficulty) (4)
- ☐ MLD (moderate learning disability) (5)
- ☐ SLD (severe learning disability) (6)
- ☐ PMLD (profound and multiple learning disability) (7)
- ☐ SEMH (social emotional and mental health) (8)
- ☐ DS (down syndrome) (9)
- ☐ speech and language difficulties (10)
- ☐ other (11) _____

Q8 How important is it to you that your child is given RSE teaching? (select only one)

- ○ Extremely important (1)
- ○ Very important (2)
- ○ Moderately important (3)
- ○ Slightly important (4)
- ○ Not at all important (5)

Q9 When is your child taught RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ lower school (1)
- ☐ middle school (2)
- ☐ upper school (3)
- ☐ I don't know (4)

Q10 How is your child taught? (select all that apply)

- ☐ In class (1)
- ☐ In small groups (2)
- ☐ Individually (3)
- ☐ At home (4)
- ☐ Other (5)
- ☐ I don't know (6)

Q11 Who teaches your child RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ teachers (1)
- ☐ support staff (2)
- ☐ senior leaders (3)
- ☐ Educational Psychologists (4)
- ☐ Specialist teachers (5)
- ☐ Occupational therapists (6)
- ☐ Parents (7)
- ☐ other (8)
- ☐ I don't know (9)

Q12 Are you aware of school's RSE policy? (select only one)

- ○ no (1)
- ○ yes (2)

Q13 Do you understand what your child is being taught as part of RSE? (select only one)

- ○ no (1)
- ○ yes (2)

Q14 How are parents/carers/grandparents involved in RSE at your school? (select all that apply)

- ☐ They are asked for consent to teach RSE. (1)
- ☐ They are involved in deciding what is taught (2)
- ☐ They are on the board of governors (3)
- ☐ They are informed about RSE by letter (4)
- ☐ They are given information about RSE through literature (5)
- ☐ They are given information about RSE through workshops/training at school (6)
- ☐ informal chats (7)
- ☐ communication book/diary (8)
- ☐ other (9) _____
- ☐ I don't know (10)

Q15 How well are parents/carers/grandparents involved in RSE at your school? (select only one)

- ○ Extremely well (1)
- ○ Very well (2)
- ○ Moderately well (3)
- ○ Slightly well (4)
- ○ Not well at all (5)

Q16 How are pupils involved in the RSE curriculum? (select all that apply)

- ☐ focus groups (1)
- ☐ school council (2)
- ☐ pupil feedback to teacher (3)
- ☐ other (4)
- ☐ I don't know (5)

Q17 How well are pupil's involved in RSE at your school? (select only one)

- ○ Extremely well (1)
- ○ Very well (2)
- ○ Moderately well (3)
- ○ Slightly well (4)
- ○ Not well at all (5)

Q18 In your opinion, what are the important areas or priorities that need to be included in the RSE curriculum?

_____

Q19 Please could you share any questions that you may have about the RSE curriculum?

_____

Appendix 19: Staff survey

Staff RSE survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 What is your role at school? (select all that apply)

- ☐ teacher (1)
- ☐ professional/therapist (2)
- ☐ senior leadership (3)
- ☐ school nurse (4)
- ☐ support staff (5)
- ☐ other (6) _____

Q2 How long have you worked at the school?

▼ less than a year (1) ... More than 5 years (4)

Q3 Are you currently involved in teaching or supporting RSE. either formally or informally? (select only one)

- ○ yes (1)
- ○ no (2)
- ○ unsure (3)

Q4 Who teaches RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ teachers (1)
- ☐ support staff (2)
- ☐ school staff (3)
- ☐ senior leaders (4)
- ☐ Educational psyhcologists (5)
- ☐ school nurse (6)
- ☐ specialist teachers (7)
- ☐ Occupational therapists (8)
- ☐ parents/carers/grandparents (9)
- ☐ other (10) _____

Q5 Which age range do you work with? (select all that apply)

- ☐ lower school (1)
- ☐ middle school (2)
- ☐ upper school (3)

Q6 When is RSE taught? (select all that apply)

- ☐ lower school (1)
- ☐ middle school (2)
- ☐ upper school (3)

Q7 How is RSE taught? (select all that apply)

- ☐ individually (1)
- ☐ small groups (2)
- ☐ as class (3)
- ☐ other (4) _____

Q8 How is RSE differentiated? (select all that apply)

- ☐ by needs of individuals (1)
- ☐ by needs of small group (2)
- ☐ by needs of class (3)
- ☐ other (4) _____

Q9 What resources do you use to teach RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ professional produced resources for children and young people (1)
- ☐ professional produced resources for children and young people with SEN (2)
- ☐ adapted other people's resources (3)
- ☐ made own resources (4)
- ☐ other (5) _____

Q10 How do you decide what to teach? (select all that apply)

- ☐ follow curriculum set by school (1)
- ☐ follow curriculum in resource pack (2)
- ☐ follow National curriculum guidelines (3)
- ☐ school policy (4)
- ☐ follow class needs (5)
- ☐ follow individual needs (6)
- ☐ respond to changes in behaviour (7)
- ☐ other (8) _____

Q11 How were you trained to teach RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ in initial teacher training (1)
- ☐ specialist training (2)
- ☐ training provided by school (3)
- ☐ not received any formal training (4)

Q12 How are you supported to teach RSE? (select all that apply)

- ☐ feedback from lesson observations (1)
- ☐ staff discussions (2)
- ☐ formal training (3)
- ☐ informal discussions with peers (4)
- ☐ informal discussions with senior leadership (5)
- ☐ parents/carers/grandparents (6)
- ☐ other (7) _____

Q13 How do you evaluate how effective RSE is? (select all that apply)

- ☐ reflection on lessons (1)
- ☐ lesson observations (2)
- ☐ pupil feedback (3)
- ☐ parent/carer/grandparent feedback (4)
- ☐ formal pupil assessment (CAPPs) (5)
- ☐ observe pupil behaviour (6)
- ☐ other (7) _____

Q14 Does the school have policies/guidelines for RSE? (select only one)

▼ yes (1) ... don't know (3)

Q15 If yes, what do these policies/guidelines cover? (select all that apply)

- ☐ getting parent's consent for RSE (1)
- ☐ how to deal with disclosure for abuse (2)
- ☐ the age at which pupil's receive RSE (3)
- ☐ inclusion in RSE (4)
- ☐ Supervision for staff in relation to dealing with RSE Issues (5)
- ☐ training for staff (6)
- ☐ guidelines about topics included in curriculum (7)
- ☐ gender specific issues (8)
- ☐ LGBTQ (9)
- ☐ gender identity (10)
- ☐ expectations/boundaries for staff (11)
- ☐ cultural awareness/inclusion (12)
- ☐ role of religion and beliefs about RSE (13)
- ☐ confidentiality (14)
- ☐ staff values (15)
- ☐ rights of people with SEN and complex needs to express sexuality (16)
- ☐ don't know (17)
- ☐ other (18) _____

Q16 How do you work with parents/carers/grandparents? (select all that apply)

- ☐ ask for consent (1)
- ☐ involve them in deciding what should be taught (2)
- ☐ they are part of the board of governors (3)
- ☐ they are informed about RSE by letter (4)
- ☐ they are given information about RSE through literature (5)
- ☐ they are given information about RSE through workshops/training at school (6)
- ☐ they visit class (7)
- ☐ informal conversations (8)
- ☐ communication book or diary (9)
- ☐ other (10) _____

Q17 How well do you consider that you work with parents/carers/grandparents in relation to RSE?

- ○ Extremely well (1)
- ○ Very well (2)
- ○ Moderately well (3)
- ○ Slightly well (4)
- ○ Not well at all (5)

Q18 How are pupils involved in the RSE curriculum? (select all that apply)

- ☐ focus groups (1)
- ☐ pupil feedback to teacher (2)
- ☐ not involved (3)
- ☐ other (4) _____

Q19 How well do you consider that you work with parents/carers/grandparents in relation to RSE?

- ○ Extremely well (1)
- ○ Very well (2)
- ○ Moderately well (3)
- ○ Slightly well (4)
- ○ Not well at all (5)

Q20 How confident are you about teaching RSE?

- ○ extremely confident? (1)
- ○ very confident (2)
- ○ moderately confident (3)
- ○ slightly confident (4)
- ○ not at all confident (5)

Q21 Do you have any particular concerns about teaching RSE?

_____

Q22 In your opinion, what would best support you in your role when teaching RSE?

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix 20: Letter to parents for pupil survey

Institute of Education

UCL

June 2020

Dear Parents,

As you may know there is currently some research being undertaken at school xx regarding the **RSE curriculum**. This research is looking at how a RSE staff group and be used to support the delivery of the RSE curriculum.

Thank you so much if you have already taken part by completing the parent survey. Your responses are so valuable and have already been used to inform the next steps in the research.

What's next?
The RSE support group has had its first planning meeting where we explored gaining the views of the young people at school xx about **their RSE curriculum**.

With this in mind, **we would like to invite your child to take part in a simple survey** where they can express their views. The survey would be an opportunity for your child to help shape future RSE lessons and workshops.

The young person RSE survey will be taking place through a RSE discussion in class over the next few weeks. Your child will take part in a discussion about RSE and then asked what they think is important to learn about and what isn't important to learn about.

If you would like your child to take part, please **read** the attached information sheets**, discuss** with your child, **complete** the consent forms and **return** to the school office by **Monday June 22nd.**

Kindest regards

Natalie Carpenter
Trainee Educational Psychologist
IoE UCL

Appendix 21: Information for parents for pupil survey

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Information Sheet for Young Person's survey

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research.

The researcher

I am Natalie Carpenter, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education University College London. I am passionate about working in partnership with children and young people who attend special schools and their families.

What is this research and why is it important?

- The RSE curriculum is changing and schools have been given new guidance. RSE now has to be taught in all secondary schools. In primary schools children are taught about relationships.

- There is not a lot of information and research about the RSE curriculum in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools can be tricky as all pupils have very different needs.

- Therefore, it really important that we find out about the best way of teaching RSE to pupils in special schools.

- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help staff deliver an RSE curriculum that suits their pupils while working together with pupils and their families.

- The findings from this study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE support groups.

What will my child be asked to do?

The survey

- I will invite your child to take part in a survey to say what they think is important to learn about in the RSE curriculum. This will take place as part of an RSE lesson where pupils will complete the survey after a discussion. This will be led by their teacher.

The Process

10) If you are happy for your child to take part in the survey please discuss with your child before **both signing and returning** the enclosed consent forms to school.
11) You can return the forms to me by sending them to the school office in an envelope addressed to Natalie Carpenter c/o teacher.

What will happen to my child's information?

- All data will be anonymised and every effort made to ensure that your child can't be identified.
- The information will be used as part of doctoral thesis.
- The survey will be anonymous.

What should I do now?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone (07970 977405) or email (natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk). If you would like to take part, please sign and return the consent forms to me. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Supervision and ethical approval

This research is being supervised by Dr Dawn Male, Associate Professor in the Education & Psychology of Children with SEN and Dr Frances Lee, Professional Educational Psychology Tutor; IOE - Psychology & Human Development; UCL Institute of Education.

The project has ethical approval from the department of Psychology and Human Development, which means that the committee has carefully considered the risks and benefits of the research.

Data protection privacy notice

The data controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. UCL's Data Protection Officer can also be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found here:https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy- notice

The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data will be [performance of a task in the public interest.] The legal basis used to process special category personal data will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes/explicit consent.
Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project.
If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 22: Information for pupils for pupil survey

Young Person Information Sheet

Who am I?

Hello, I am Natalie. I am training to be an Educational Psychologist. I often work with young people to find out what helps them at school.

I would like find out about your relationships and sex education learning. I think it's important to know what young people think.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked what you think about your relationships and sex education learning.

The survey:

Will take around 10-20 minutes.

Will be filled in by you.

You can stop at any time.

You can ask an adult to help if you want to.

There will be some pictures to help you understand.

I will write a report of what you tell me.
Your name won't be on it.
I will show you to check.

Do you want to take part?

Yes, please!

Complete the **consent form**

I will come to your school to meet you and you can ask me any questions then.

No, thank you!

No problem. Thank you!

Tick 'NO' on the consent form

I will not contact you again.

All the best! ☺

You can also email me on natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk.

I will set a date/time with you to meet.

See you soon! ☺

Remember you can stop at any time.

Appendix 23: Consent for pupil survey -parents

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Consent Form on behalf of Young Person (3)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand my child's role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent for my child to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw my child at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do so the data they have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that my child's participation in the survey is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if my child discloses any information which suggests that they or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that my child's name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data my child provides to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand

that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my child's words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way London

WC1H 0AL

natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 24: Consent for pupil survey -pupil

Institute of Education

UCL

Young Person Consent Form

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

I would like/would not like to take part in this study (circle the one which applies to you).

If you would like to take part, please circle yes or no to each statement:

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet.	👍	👎
I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie questions on the phone or by email.	👍	👎
I confirm that it is my decision to take part is my own and not anybody else's.	👍	👎
I understand that I am free to ask Natalie any questions about the study at any time.	👍	👎
I know that I will talk to my teacher and be asked questions about Relationships and Sex Education	👍	👎
I understand that I do not have to answer questions I do not want to and can pull out at any time.	👍	👎
I understand that what I say will be put in a report.	👍	👎

I understand that Natalie will use the information I tell her to write presentations and reports which will be shared with others, but that no one will be able to identify me from what I've said.	👍	👎
I understand that Natalie will not use my real name in the report or presentation.	👍	👎
I understand that if I tell Natalie anything that makes her think I or anybody else is in danger, she will have to tell somebody.	👍	👎

Name_____ **Signature**_____**Date**_____

Appendix 25: Information Sheet for Parent Interviews

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Information Sheet for interview

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

The researcher

I am Natalie Carpenter, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education University College London. I am passionate about working in partnership with children and young people who attend special schools and their families.

What is this research and why is it important?

- The RSE curriculum is changing and schools have been given new guidance. RSE now has to be taught in all secondary schools. In primary school children are taught about relationships.

- There is not a lot of information and research about the RSE curriculum in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools can be tricky as all pupils have very different needs.

- Therefore, it really important that we find out about the best way of teaching RSE to pupils in special schools.

- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help staff deliver an RSE curriculum that suits their pupils while working together with pupils and their families.

- The findings from this study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE support groups.

What will I be asked to do?

The interview

I will invite you to take part in a semi structured individual interview at a time of your choice. This will be conducted over the telephone. Interviews will take approximately one hour. I will ask you your views on RSE at your child's school. This includes what is currently taught, what you would like to be taught, how parents and young people work in partnership with school and how you would like to be communicated with. I will invite you to participate in analysing the interview with me by asking you for suggested themes.

The Process

12) If you would like to take part in the research, please sign and return the enclosed consent forms to me.
13) You will then be invited for an interview to discuss RSE at your child's school.
14) You will receive an information sheet summarising the findings of the research.

What will happen to my information?

All data will be anonymised and every effort made to ensure that you can't be identified.

What should I do now?

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone (07970 977405) or email (natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk). If you would like to take part, please sign and return the consent forms to me. Please note that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Supervision and ethical approval

This research is being supervised by Dr Dawn Male, Associate Professor in the Education & Psychology of Children with SEN and Dr Frances Lee, Professional Educational Psychology Tutor; IOE - Psychology & Human Development; UCL Institute of Education.

The project has ethical approval from the department of Psychology and Human Development, which means that the committee has carefully considered the risks and benefits of the research.

Data protection privacy notice

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The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data will be performance of a task in the public interest. The legal basis used to process special category personal data will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes/explicit consent.
Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project, this is likely to be up to 10 years from completion.
If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 26: Consent for parent interviews

Institute of Education

UCL

Parent Consent Form (2)

Research title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) working group for staff in a special school through Action research

Name of researcher: Natalie Carpenter

☐ I have read and understood the attached information sheet about the research

☐ I have had the opportunity to ask Natalie any questions that I have about the project and can do at anytime

☐ I understand my role in the project.

☐ My decision to give consent to participate is entirely voluntary.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do so the data I have contributed will not be used.

☐ I understand that my participation in the interview is confidential and that Natalie won't be able to share the information that is shared outside what has been agreed.

☐ I understand that if I disclose any information which suggests that I or others are at risk of significant harm, Natalie will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult/professional.

☐ I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.

☐ I understand that the information gathered in this project will be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the findings may be used in future reports and presentations.

☐ I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

☐ I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Service. I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Name _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Natalie Carpenter

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way London

WC1H 0AL

natalie.carpenter.16@ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 27: Questions for parent interviews

Parent interviews RSE

Explanations

In this interview I am going to ask you some open ended questions about your experiences, hopes and needs relating to RSE at your child's school.

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). EPs support children, young people and their families with their learning and wellbeing. EPs are interested in the way people think and interact with others. They aim to work alongside people, in collaboration, to make positive changes to improve their lives.

What is this research and why is it important?

- The RSE curriculum is changing and schools have been given new guidance. RSE now has to be taught in all secondary schools. In primary schools children are taught about relationships.

- There is not a lot of information and research about the RSE curriculum in special schools. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools can be tricky as all pupils have very different needs.

- Therefore, it really important that we find out about the best way of teaching RSE to pupils in special schools.

- This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help staff deliver an RSE curriculum that suits their pupils while working together with pupils and their families.

- The findings from this study will be shared with a group of Educational Psychologists (EPs) to consider how EPs can contribute to RSE support groups

The interview questions are deliberately open ended so that you can guide the conversation, sharing as little or as much as you feel comfortable to do so. There are no right or wrong answers. This study is looking to capture your own unique experiences. Please feel free to ask questions, interrupt or ask for clarification. If at any time you feel that you want to take a break or stop, please let me know.

After the interview I will invite you join me in analysing the interview by finding themes in the discussion. In this way you will act as a partner in research. This can done straight after the interview or in days after to suit you.

I will be recording the interview. The recording will be kept safe under the data protection act. After the interview, I will transcribe what you have said into written words. You and any persons you talk about will remain anonymous. I will do my utmost to record a true representation of what you have expressed in interview, writing word for word what you have said, in the tone that you used.

Closing Comments

Thank you for talking to me today. I really value the time you have taken to talk about your experiences. I will be feeding back a summary of the themes to you before sharing with the RSE group to inform planning of parent partnership work.

Please let me know if you have any questions, either today or afterwards. I am happy to be contacted.

Parent Interview Questions

1	What do you know about your child's relationship and sex education currently?	How do you know? What/Who has been most helpful?
2	What are your main concerns about relationship and sex education?	Tell me a little more… Why is that?
3	What would you like to see taught and how?	What would that look like?
4	When would you like it to be taught?	Why do you think that is important?
5	How could the school work in the best way with your family regarding relationships and sex education?	What would that look like? What would be the most/least helpful?
6	Why is it important that CYP at the xxxxx school learn about relationships and sex education?	What might be the barriers? What might help?
7	What would you like to see as part of a parent workshop and any information/resources/leaflets?	When? Who? How? Where?

Participatory Analysis Questions:

Item number	B and C Stage	Questions/statements
1	Familiarisation with data	"take some time to reflect on what we discussed today"
2	Generalising initial codes	"In our discussions what key phrases or words or ideas do you feel reoccurred or were significant?"

3	Searching for themes	“How might be sum up these reoccurring key ideas?” “How could be group these into themes?”
4	Reviewing themes	“Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped these ideas?” and/or “Let’s rank these themes in order of importance”

Appendix 28: Questions for pupil survey

Relationships and Sex Education: My Views

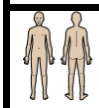
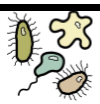
	not important	sometimes important	Important
friendship			
love			
marriage			
sex			
relationships			
girlfriend			
boyfriend			

body parts			
wet dream			
sex			
how babies are made			

	not important	sometimes important	important
masturbation for girls			
masturbation for boys			
consent			

pregnancy			
contraception			
menstruation (periods)			
keeping safe			
public/private			
sexuality			
intimacy			
kissing			

	not important	sometimes important	important

gender			
gender identity			
 pornography			
abortion			
rape			
sexting			
online safety			
 sexual transmitted diseases			
dating			
internet dating			

public toilets			

	not important	sometimes important	important
body changes			
personal hygiene			
sexual health			
touching			

Appendix 29: Ethics form

Institute of Education

UCL

Doctoral Student

Ethics Application Form

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

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

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**. To do this, email the complete ethics form to data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval.

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

Section 1 Project details

a.	Project title: Developing a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) support group for staff in a special school through Action research				
b.	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)		Natalie Carpenter 16134640		
c.	***UCL Data Protection Registration Number**		No Z6364106/2019/10/97 11/11/19		
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor		Dr Dawn Male and Dr Frances Lee		
d.	Department		Psychology and human development		
e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD	☐	EdD	☐
		DEdPsy	✓		
f.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.		n/a		
g.	Intended research start date		September 2019		
h.	Intended research end date		August 2021		
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be **required** before ethical approval can be granted: http://ioe-net.inst.ioe.ac.uk/about/profservices/international/Pages/default.aspx*		UK		
j.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?				
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:			

May 2018

	No ✓ ⇨ *go to Section 2*	Date of Approval:

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

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

Section 2 Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

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

supportive ways of working.
The researcher would take the role of participant observer.

As this is an action research design some decisions (such as who will be participating and data collection methods) are yet to be finalized due to the participatory nature of the design.

Participants: The participants for all phases will be school staff, other professionals and parents. As key stakeholders young people will be involved in different phases (e.g. as possible members of the group) as key informants regarding their view of the RSE curriculum.

Sampling: the sampling would be convenience opt in sampling.

Method of data collection: Data would be potentially collected in 6 ways depending on the outcome of the group meetings. It will be mixed methods.

- *PATH reflections*
- *Field notes and reflective diary*
- *Observation*
- *Semi-structures interviews*
- *Questionnaires*
- *Focus group (as a possible way to elicit young person's view)*

The analysis of the data will include a range of data analysis procedure relating to the nature of the data (i.e. qualitative and quantitative).

Adjustments made in the light of Covid -19 pandemic:

-School staff and researcher will meet virtually using Microsoft teams
-Parent focus group will be changed to interviews conducted over the phone
-pupil focus group will be changed to survey conducted by supporting parent on the phone.

Section 3 Research Participants (tick all that apply)

☐ Early years/pre-school	✓ Adults *please specify below*
☐ Ages 5-11	☐ Unknown – specify below
✓ Ages 12-16	☐ No participants
✓ Young people aged 17-18	

(potentially)	

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

Section 4 Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)

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

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

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

Section 5 Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

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

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

*If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 8 Attachments.***

Section 6 Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

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

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

Purpose: To develop an RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) support group for staff in a special school.

Aims:
-To understand the perspectives of staff implementing the RSE curriculum including how confident and competent they feel in delivering the RSE curriculum.
-To form a support group made up of staff, professionals and parents through the PATH process. This group will be used to support staff delivering the RSE curriculum.
-To understand how the RSE support group helped staff with delivering RSE.

Rationale:
RSE has recently undergone huge reforms. After guidance not being updated for 20 years, the status of the subject has recently been elevated to statutory in secondary schools with new guidance published. The new curriculum will be mandatory by 2020 with recommendations to start implementing the changes in September 2019.

There is limited research to suggest how to best deliver RSE to pupils in special schools. While there are pockets of good practice, many teachers and support staff indicate they would benefit from further support to feel confident and competent with implementing the RSE curriculum. Implementing the RSE curriculum in special schools is layered with complexities, including balancing the rights of the individual to be a sexual being with issues surrounding safeguarding. These matters are further compounded by the changing and fluid political and ethical landscape.

Therefore, it is imperative that special schools have access to advice and support that is fluid and as individualized as their pupils. Research shows that some schools have attempted to meet this need by creating a support group for staff made up of staff, professionals and parents. These groups have performed a range of functions such as production of policy and procedure, consolation for curriculum and assessment, supervision for staff, creation and evaluation of resources, production of information for families and advocacy of pupils. However, there is not an evidence base which shows if, how and why this works in supporting staff and pupils. This research hopes to understand how an RSE support group can help to build a supportive culture for staff so they can in turn deliver an RSE curriculum which offers safe opportunities for pupils and advocates for their rights.

Main Research Questions:
What are the views of staff in a special school regarding the delivery of RSE?

How can an RSE support group support staff to deliver RSE in a special school?

Can PATH be used to form an RSE support group to support staff delivering RSE in a special school?

Can action research be used to develop an RSE support group that supports staff to deliver the RSE curriculum?

Research design: This thesis will use action research consisting of 5 phases:

- ***Phase 1** will be to build a relationship with a school, identify key stake holders and clarify purpose of group.*
- *This will inform **phase 2** where stakeholders will complete informed consent and the 'group formation' meeting will be scheduled.*
- *In **Phase 3** the group will form through the PATH process, where school staff and professionals to form a support group and develop ways of working, aims and evaluation processes.*
- ***Phase 4** will be a series of action research group meetings, each one being informed by the evaluation of the last group.*
- *Finally **phase 5** will interview support group members to understand if the group was successful in developing*

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

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

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

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

a.	**Data subjects** - Who will the data be collected from? Parents, staff members, professional and (potentially) young people.	
b.	**What data will be collected?** The reflections of support group members, evaluations of support group from support group members, reflections from support group members about how the support group helped them. The reflections of the researcher. The views of parents and (potentially) pupils.	
c.	**Disclosure – Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?** To the school, university, local authority, group members, school, parents and young people (in an accessible format)	
d.	**Data storage** – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick*, encrypted laptop* etc. encrypted USB stick and password protected files on computer Encrypted USB stick and password protected files on a computer *Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS	
e.	**Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution)** – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?	Yes ☐ No ✓
f.	How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format? 10 years on an encrypted USB stick and password protected files on a computer Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are: n/a Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.) n/a	

Section 8 Ethical issues

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

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

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

Participatory methodology such as ethnography and action research will be used to give as much agency to a vulnerable group as possible. Clear documentation of rationale will be kept with progress regarding rationale, design and methodology being monitored regularly during research supervision.

The sample will be obtained using opt in sampling, so that only the participants that wish to talk about this subject can participate. Participants will be recruited through case school and will be asked to give informed consent.

Questionnaires will be anonymous and not contain any personal details. The participants form a vulnerable group and will be discussing a sensitive topic, therefore great care will be taken in the design of the questions which will be developed through the ideas of the stakeholders.

The participants will be reminded that they can withdraw at any time. They will be reminded that their responses will be anonymized.

In phase 3 and 4 clear boundaries will be developed around safeguarding and pupils discussed will be anonymized in any transcriptions or observations. The safe guarding procedures of the school will be built into conversations and participants will be given opportunities for sign posting and debrief. A risk assessment will be carried out.

During phase 4 there will be an opportunity for older school pupils (aged 12-16) to contribute their views. These young people's views will be sought in a way that is suitable, perhaps through the opportunity to attend a focus group where pictures will be used as a prompt. The informed consent of the pupils and their parents will be sought. Information to pupils will be given in a suitable format to match their intellectual and emotional abilities and suit their communication style. The right to withdraw will be explained to the pupil and they will be given the opportunity for a debrief and sign posting. The pupils will be given the opportunity to read their contributions and confirm they are happy that this represents their words and views as intended. There will be on-going monitoring of the young people's wellbeing to ensure that they are comfortable with participating. This will be achieved by the researcher checking in with the young people's teachers. **The focus group for pupils will be changed to a survey supported by researcher and parent through telephone discussions. Every effort will be made to support the parent and young person with the questions provided. Parents will also be asked their opinions on support from school with RSE through telephone interviews. They will be asked to analysis their responses in a participatory way.**

In phase 5 care will be taken to make the interview process as convenient as possible, allowing the participant guide the dates and times. The interview will take place in at the school where the young person attends in a private room, which intended to be a neutral place. The interviewer must be sensitive to the participant, explaining the nature of the study at the beginning and that they do not have to talk about anything that they would not be comfortable to share. The questions will be open ended, so that the participant can guide the information that is given with no coercion from the researcher. By talking about their experiences this may cause participants to reflect on their experiences, behavior and future behavior. Therefore, there will be an opportunity for a debrief and also signposting to supportive services (such as contact Educational Psychologist) or staff members in school (such as the school nurse or young person's key worker to follow up with the young person). The respondents will be given the opportunity to read their transcripts and confirm they are happy that this represents their words and views as intended.

During the course of the study the researcher will record their reflections which will include reflexive thoughts around ethics.

Data will be stored for 10 years on an encrypted USB stick and password protected computer files.

The researcher will be clear with all participants how findings will be disseminated and will give participants to review any of their contributions. Accessible report will be made available for all participants. The researcher will give consideration to the misuse of research results in their write ups.

The researcher will make this study accessible to those families who have English as a second language by making the consent forms and information sheet available in their first language.

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

a.	Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research *(List attachments below)*	Yes ✓	No ☐

-information sheet for parents (questionnaire only)
-information sheet for parents (questionnaire and group member)
-information sheet for school staff/professions (questionnaire only)
-information sheet for school staff/professionals (questionnaire and group member)
-information sheet for pupils
-consent form for school
-consent form for school staff/professionals (questionnaire only)
-consent form for school staff/professionals (questionnaire and group member)
-consent form for parents (questionnaire only)
-consent form for parents (questionnaire and group member)
-consent form for young person
-consent form for parents giving consent for young person.

New documents in light of Covid-19:
-information sheet for parents regarding interviews
-information sheet for parent of YP regarding survey
-information sheet for YP regarding survey
-information sheet for staff
-consent for YP for survey
-consent for YP for survey parent version
-consent for parent for interview

	If applicable/appropriate:		
b.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee		Yes ☐
c.	The proposal ('case for support') for the project		Yes ☐
d.	Full risk assessment		Yes ☐

Section 10 Declaration

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

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.	✓	☐
I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.	✓	☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name	Natalie Carpenter
Date	29/08/19

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

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*

or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*

or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) . If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook.* London: Sage.
This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.
A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, the supervisor **must** refer the application to the Department Research Ethics Coordinator (via ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk so that it can be

submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A departmental research ethics coordinator or representative can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the REC. If unsure please refer to the guidelines explaining when to refer the ethics application to the IOE Research Ethics Committee, posted on the committee's website.

Student name	
Student department	
Course	
Project title	
Reviewer 1	
Supervisor/first reviewer name	Dawn Male
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No
Supervisor/first reviewer signature	[redacted]
Date	30/04/19
Reviewer 2	
Second reviewer name	Frances Lee
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No (explored in joint research supervision sessions)
Supervisor/second reviewer signature	[redacted]
Date	30/04/19
Decision on behalf of reviews	
Decision	Approved ☐
	Approved subject to the following additional measures ☐
	Not approved for the reasons given below ☐
	Referred to REC for review ☐
Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC	
Comments from reviewers for the applicant	

Once it is approved by both reviewers, students should submit their ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team: IOE.CDE@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 30: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
1. Type of publication	Articles from peer-reviewed journals.	Not an article in a peer-review journal.	To ensure methodological rigour by including high quality, scrutinised studies.
2. Language and Country	Studies published in English from an OECD country (for example UK, USA, Canada, Australia)	Studies not published in English and from non OECD country.	These countries are reasonably similar educationally and financially. Studies published in other languages could not be read without a translation service.
3. Time of publication	Studies published between 2000-2020	Studies published before 2000.	To ensure research is up to date and reflective of historical and recent developments (or lack of).
4. Participants	Individuals with learning or intellectual difficulties/disabilities and/or autism and parents of, teachers and professionals working with individuals with learning or intellectual difficulties/disabilities and/or autism.	Individuals without learning or intellectual difficulties/disabilities and/or autism and their parents, teachers and professionals that work with them.	The focus of the review is on evaluating the existing literature on RSE for those with learning or intellectual difficulties/disabilities and/or autism.
5. Type of study	Studies with a variety of designs including qualitative and quantitative designs, those using empirical primary data, case	No design type was excluded.	A variety of designs allowed a review of the breadth and depth of the literature.

	studies, individual accounts, systematic reviews and reviews of the literature.		

Appendix 31: Field notes-example

March 16th 2020

ON
-Coronavirus outbreak in UK, many people asked to work from home and rumours of all school closing by the end of the week.
-discussion with School contact regarding flexibility of research in relation to telephone interviews or a group meeting via videoconferencing or similar.
TM
-Lots of questions for going forward in light of a global pandemic:

- how can systemic EP work be maintained?
- Can EPs work in a non-face-to face way?
- Will school see research as a priority in light of pandemic
- Will research be able to go ahead?
- Uncertainty, change, interaction from greater systemic factors.

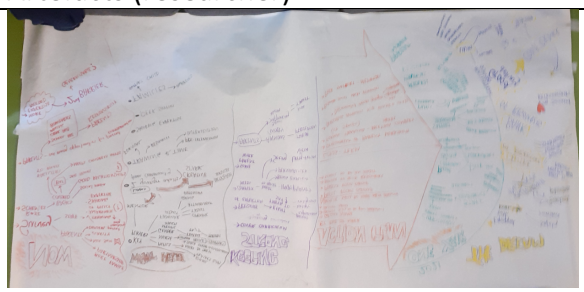
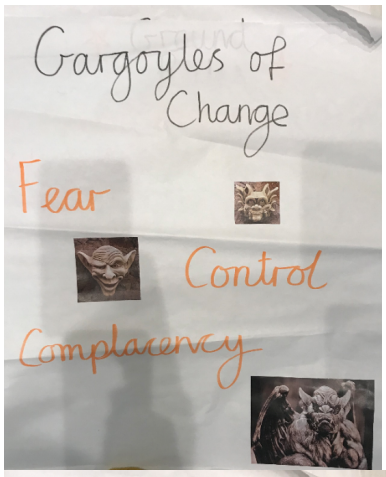
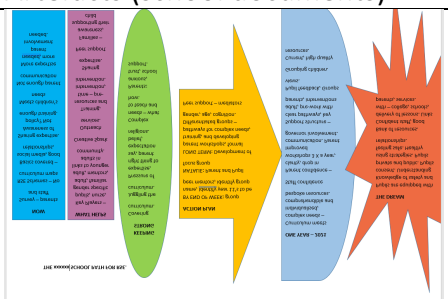
MN
-address ethics form and contact in a couple of weeks to see what has happened in school, discuss with research supervisors in light of ways forward regarding ethics and changes in plans.

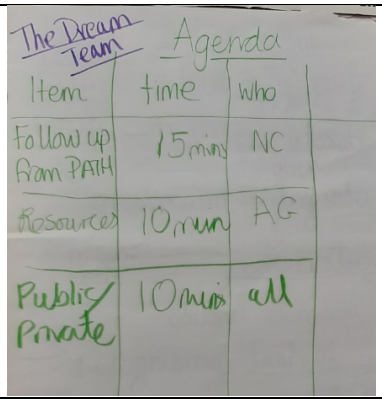
17th March-20th March

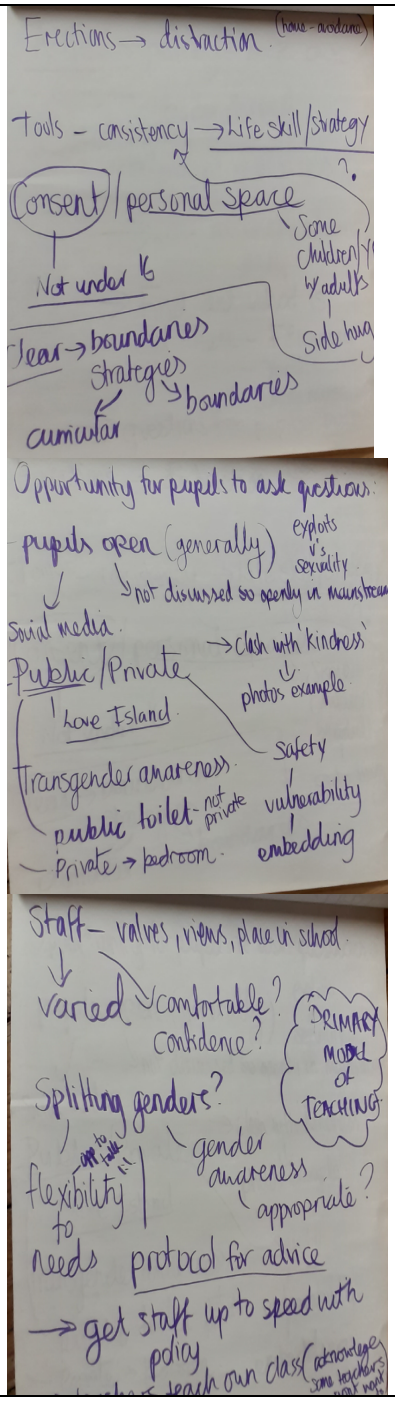
ON
-daily changes in the ways that local authorities and schools run.
-by 20th school closed to all children other than key worker children, those who are vulnerable and those who have EHCPs
-special schools to remains open
- early in week contact EP reports that research school is under lots of pressure to cater for children with free school meals, disabilities etc
-later in week it appears special schools will remain open, new challenges to address on an almost daily basis.
TM
-special schools do more than educate:
keep safe
community
childcare
social care
-staff at special school under more pressure than most to cater for a vast range of different needs.
-focus of the world has changed from thriving to surviving with threats of ill health
-a lot of anxiety present, a lot of uncertainty and daily change
-researcher feels it would be insensitive to contact school.

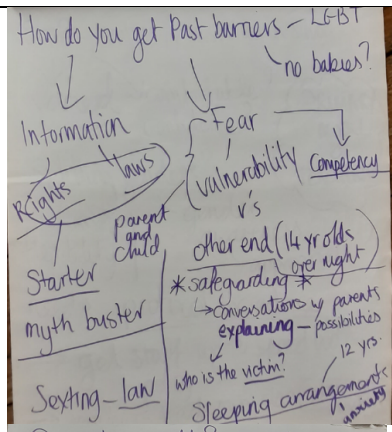
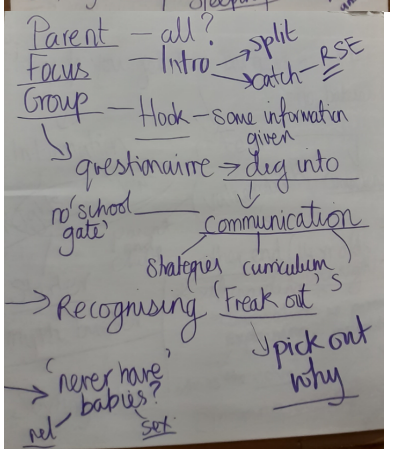
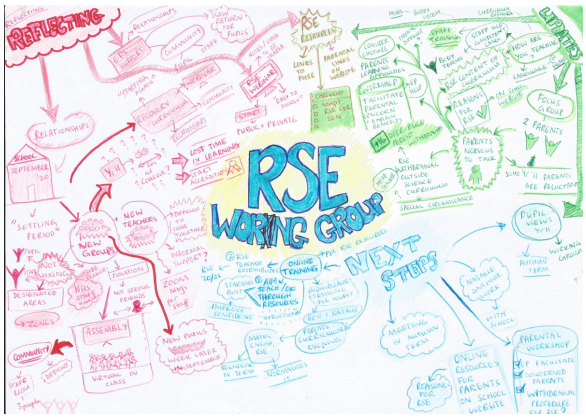
MN
Pause any contact school for time being to allow them to concentrate on basic needs of staff and pupils

Appendix 32: Artefacts

Meeting	Artefacts (researcher)	Artefacts (school documents)
1	 PATH  Person Centred Planning Facilitation Prompts	

	chains of the past *jargon busting chicken* *judges wig* Person Centred Planning facilitation props	
2		


Erections → distraction (home-academe)
Tools - consistency → Life skill/strategy
Consent / personal space
Some children / by adults
Not under 16
Side hug
Clear → boundaries
Strategies
boundaries
curricular
Opportunity for pupils to ask questions:
pupils open (generally)
exploits vs sexuality
not discussed so openly in mainstream
Social media.
Public/Private
→ clash with 'kindness'
photos example
Love Island
Transgender awareness.
public toilet - not private
Private → bedroom.
safety
vulnerability
embedding
Staff - values, views, place in school
varied
comfortable?
confidence?
PRIMARY MODEL of TEACHING
Splitting genders?
gender awareness
appropriate?
flexibility to needs
protocol for advice
→ get staff up to speed with policy
teach own class (acknowledge some teachers

	 How do you get Past barriers – LGBT no babies? Information Fear Rights laws vulnerability Competency v's parent and child other end (14 yr olds over night) Starter *safeguarding* myth buster conversations explaining – possibilities who is the victim? 12 yrs. Sexting – law Sleeping arrangements  Parent – all? Focus – Intro → split catch – RSE Group – Hook – some information given questionaire → dig into no 'school gate' communication Strategies curriculum Recognising 'Freak out's pick out why 'never have babies? sex	
3	 REFLECTING RSE WORING GROUP NEXT STEPS	
4		

	REFLECTIONS PUPIL VOICE STRENGTHS: EVALUATION: PARENT WORKSHOP CURRICULUM: RSE WORKING GROUP 29/09 UPDATES ACTIONS: COURSE: IMPACT OF COVID-19 PARENT VOICE: TRAINING BACK: UPPER SCHOOL MIDDLE SCHOOL LOWER SCHOOL ROAD MAP AUDIT LETTER PUPIL SESSION NEXT STEPS	

Appendix 33: Questions for Group Members

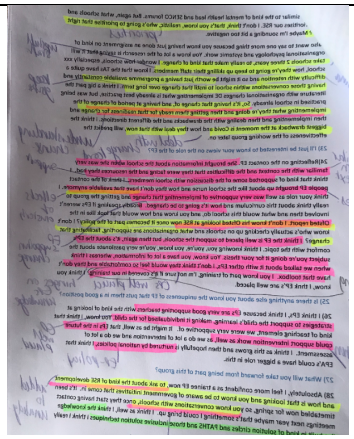
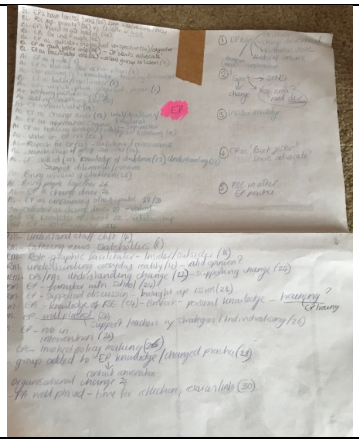
	Questions	Follow up/Prompts
1	What were your thoughts about RSE at the xxxx school before the working party started?	What was going well? What wasn't going so well? What were the barriers?
2	What were your thoughts/views/expectations when you found out about the RSE working party?	Tell me more about that… What were your hopes? What were your reservations?
4	What were your thoughts about the PATH invitation?	Tell me more…. What was helpful? What was not so helpful? What changes could be made?
5	What was your experience of the first meeting where PATH was used?	Tell me more…. What was helpful? What was not so helpful? What changes could be made?
6	What were your experiences of xxx EP being part of the group?	What was helpful? What could have been better? Were there any barriers/difficulties?
7	What were your experiences of being in the RSE working group the dream team?	What did you feel/think? What worked well? What did not work so well? What could be even better?
8	How did the RSE working group harness support systems in school to support RSE?	What did you feel/think? What worked well? What did not work so well? What could be even better?
9	What are your thoughts about RSE at xxxx school now the study has finished?	What have you learned? Can you tell me about any next steps?

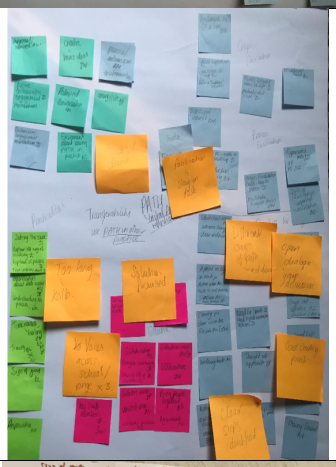
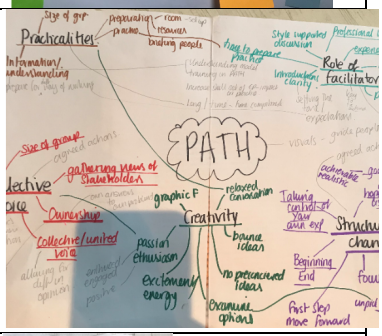
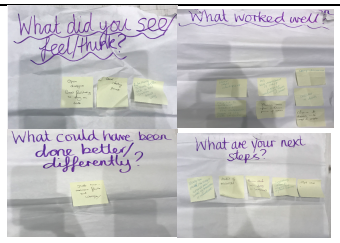
Participatory Analysis Questions:

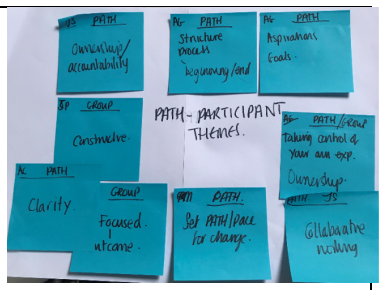
Item number	**B and C Stage**	**Questions/statements**
1	Familiarisation with data	"take some time to reflect on what we discussed today"
2	Generalising initial codes	"In our discussions what key phrases or words or ideas do you feel reoccurred or were significant?"
3	Searching for themes	"How might be sum up these reoccurring key ideas?" "How could be group these into themes?"
4	Reviewing themes	"Is there anything we might change about how we have grouped these ideas?" and/or

		“Let’s rank these themes in order of importance”
5	Refining themes	“is there anything else to be added that has not come up?” “What would we call these themes”

Appendix 34: Thematic Analysis and Triangulation with other data

Stage of Analysis	Researcher Actions Completed	Participatory Actions Completed	Purpose	Visual
1. Familiarisation with the data *	-Adaptation of transcription of audio recordings/written notes by researcher -Checking recordings with transcriptions -Immersion in data-rereading and listening to recordings -Initial 'noticings' recorded on transcripts -Transcript highlighted n relation to research question	-Time given to reflect on conversation. -Participant to jot down any initial ideas -researcher note making	-Ensuring transcripts are an accurate representation of audio recording -familiarisation with data set, initial thoughts/meanings -awareness of preconceptions/assumptions that may be present.	
2. Generating initial codes*	-systematic coding of dataset taking each RQ at a time. -all relevant data coded in relation to RQ -inductive and data derived coding -codes reviewed by researcher	-initial thoughts about key phrases/words or significant/reoccurring ideas	-identifying anything and everything of interest and relevance to the research question -ensuring codes/themes are not based on preconceptions, rather the voices of the participants. -checking/merging codes	

3. Searching for Themes*	-sorting codes into meaningful themes -identifying themes from codes that do not fit -creating thematic maps	-summing up reoccurring ideas and grouping them	-searching for larger patterns of meaning relating to RQ -identifying organising concepts which unify codes -exploring relationships between codes, subthemes and themes	
4. Reviewing and revising themes*	-reviewing the data and assuring fit to each theme -reworking/renaming themes -checking data set for data relevant to themes	-exploration of grouping/adjusting themes/key ideas	-checking there is meaningful data to support each theme -ensuring themes capture meaning from data set -do themes fit together to tell a coherent story from the dataset.	
5. Defining and naming themes*	-defining themes -themes reviewed with supervisors and TEP peers.	-exploration of other themes/ideas that have not been discussed, naming of these themes/ideas -share transcript and ask participant for further thoughts	-making clear what is unique and distinct about each theme -clarifying boundaries of theme, what fits and what does not -making sure theme names reflect a central organising concept rather than summarising.	
5a. Triangulation	-after analysis of interview data, thematic analysis of field notes and artefacts. -bringing together of these codes and mapping them to interview data -mapping participant themes and Kolb reflections	-checking participant codes and themes with thematic analysis by researcher	-triangulation of interview data with other data to support ethnographic style research.	 Kolb's Reflections

	with interview data. -looking at outliers and or possible new themes.			 Participant themes Participant Themes and researcher themes
6. Producing the report	-select pertinent quotes as examples of data to reflect each theme, across participants	-make clear and transparent how participant and researcher themes were combined in analysis	-show balance across the data set of each theme and participants. -construct a narrative which tells a story of the data.	

*Thematic analysis of interviews were conducted initially, following stages 1-5, then analysis of field notes and artefacts stage 1-5, to triangulate. Themes were then brought together.

Appendix 35: Examples of Codes and Data Extracts from each theme

Please note some different quotes have been selected here to those used in chapter 4 to provide the reader with a broader sense of the data.

RQ 1: What are group members perceptions of being part of the group?

Theme 1: Evolving Purpose and function of the group

Subtheme 1: Planning

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Productive/purposeful	*"It was not waffely, it had more purpose to it in the way we were doing it, I think, then we have had sometimes"-participant 6-head of lower school.* *"I can understand the drive for school improvement, school improvements, that was just constant focus" participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"I think it's very productive" participant 8-head of school* *"it gave a bit of clarity at the end of the day and that was really helpful"-participant 8-head of school*
Know next steps	*"I Don't think we have filtered down yet. I think that's our next step…..I think we still have to filter"-participant 3- head of upper school.* *"Maybe whole school training on using this model" -participant 2-SENCO* *"there was a process and there was a timeline"- -participant 2-SENCO*

Subtheme 2: Safe Space

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Un-judgemental safe space	*"Being able to explore, I know it's the cliché thing that it is that safe space, yes, I've really messed that up/how could I have done that differently" participant 5-safeguarding lead.*
Support	*"Because you've got that safety, you know you could clarify your thoughts, you could say 'I don't really get that' and that was okay" – participant 8- head of school.* *"there was that low level bit of supervision, which I adore, supervision, anything and everything, I'm up for it"- participant 5-safeguarding lead*

Subtheme 3: Time to Think

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Understanding	*"Each session there was some really good discussion and information and sharing of information"-participant 2-SENCO*
Enforced time and space	*"So it was really helpful to have that time to do that but in a very structured way"-participant 2 –SENCO*

	"it gave us as a school the opportunity to really have some quality time on that, the new framework" -participant 6-head of lower school *"This has been really good at kind of focusing us, giving us that time really, like I said to focus on that one thing and do it properly"- participant 6-head of lower school* *Having quality time to look at it like we did…..you know time is precious and there is a lot to do and if we don't devote quality time we're not going to get a quality end product"- participant 6 –head of lower school* *"you get a wider understanding, the context and things you haven't thought of because you're, you become a bit of an island within a school"- participant 8-head of school*
Espoused Theory/considering practice	*"in terms of the development of their practice, that was obviously key, in terms of them developing the school practice around supporting children and young people"-participant 7-EP* *"obviously that idea of your espoused theory of what you might think you do and what you do in practice, that was highlighted, was like well we do that, well do we?"- participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 4: Collaboration

Example Codes	**Example Quotes**
Collective voice	*"It's having all these strengths in one room, at the same time is slightly unheard of"-participant 8-head of school.* *"I found it very useful, having lots of different departments coming together, having xxxx as head, having departments of lower, middle and upper school sharing ideas and seeing how we could do a progression through the school"-participant 3 –head of upper school* *"Having all heads of department and the DSG person as well and his perspective on safeguarding, meant that we all had input"- participant 6 –head of lower school* *"I think it worked quite well to have representation across the school"- participant 1-head of middle school*
Stakeholder voice	*"That was really important, I mean I think that while we had some you know information about sort of parent views, it was really interesting"-participant 2-SENCO* *"it was nice, there was a mixture as well: different levels of experience, different qualifications, different backgrounds"- participant 5-safeguarding lead.* *"you were able to bring a lot of different ideas to the table. I found really useful."-participant 5- safeguarding lead.* *"I think potentially it could be quite interesting with this sort of project to include a parent from the outset"- participant 1-head of middle school*
Relationships between staff/pupils	*"the openness of how our children talk to us. I think its refreshing"- participant 3-head of upper school.* *"we recognised the relationship between teacher and pupil, or staff and pupils"-participant 3-head of upper school.*

Shared experiences	*"I hoped it would allow them to work alongside, see the value in terms of what could be achieved working together in that way"-participant 7-EP* *"It was very much-a shared approach"-participant 7-EP.*
Differences in opinions	*"I think it really highlighted the differences in people's stand point. I think they felt like at the beginning of the meetings there was agreement here and then as we talked a bit more it was about ohh actually we do have, maybe do have different views"-participant 7-EP* *"There was some lively discussion and good disagreement at times"-participant 7-EP*

Theme 2: Positive Outcomes

Subtheme 1: Transferability

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Transferability to other practice in school	*"I'd like to think that the school might utilise some of their experiences of the group. Whether it be group problems solving, group solution finding to apply their own practice"-participant7 –EP*
Transferability in EP practice	*"I think what it is has done for me, is highlighted systemic issues around how things get done, who drives things forward, accountability and follow through"-participant 7-EP* *"I could see this kind of project being used for, if there is another kind of need in a different area, not RSE, psychology assistants could definitely use this model and help support EPs"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant.*
Transferability to other special schools	*"it would be really encouraging to get more schools involved to be able to share good practice and share resources. Have that bank of county RSE resources, that would be really nice"-participant 4- Psychology assistant*
New ways of working virtually	*" I mean the advantage is that we can…..working remotely….logistically you know people can be anywhere and you can access you know what ever meeting as long as you have a laptop or computer"-participant 2-SENCO* *"I quite like virtual meetings. It forces me to pay attention"-participant 1-head of middle school* *"Also software poses a time limit on things…it forces conversations and meetings to be a bit more focused….it makes it more boundaried in terms of timing" participant 1-head of middle school*

Subtheme 2: A fresh perspective

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Motivation and positivity	*"I suppose in my mind I was enthusiastic about the school doing it because I could see there was a need"-participant 7- EP* *"So I felt like with the school, that there was a lot of positive intent"-participant 7-EP*

	"give it some energy, life and structure" -participant 5-safeguarding lead *"you were able to bring a lot of new ideas to the table"- participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"I was happy with the process. I thought it was helpful. I thought it was productive"-participant 3-head of upper school.*
focus	*"it has focused our, my priorities a bit more. When training opportunities have come around, I'm focused, this one is important"-participant 1- head of middle school* *"So it's nice to have a bit of time to focus on it, through this project actually"-participant 6- head of middle school*
Forming a plan	"So it was really nice to have that well rounded fully thought out approach…rather than buying in a full embedded, fully adopted approach"- *participant 5-safeguarding lead*

Subtheme 3: Informing practice

Example Codes	**Example Quotes**
Filtering to other staff	*"I don't think we've filtered down yet. I think that's our next step… I think we still need to filter"-participant 3-head of upper school.* *"maybe just a case of actually this is what we collectively as a smaller group have decided and so now we're sharing that with you"-participant 5- safeguarding lead*
Developing practice in school	*"it was useful to see staff engaging in a different way, in terms of taking their practice forward"-participant 7-EP* *"I think gain, making sure we're implementing it, you know in a structured and concrete way"-participant 3-head of upper school* *"This piece of work has been really useful for us, I wonder how we will continue using this model and taking that experience forward with us as well"-participant 2-SENCO* *"To have those was really useful because it spurred us as a school to kind of look at our resources"-participant 6 –head of lower school*
Keeping momentum going	*"I felt a little frustrated that maybe it lots, in between meetings, it lost a bit of impetus"-Participant 7-EP.* *"But I think the challenge was keeping that impetus going between sessions and really feeling like they followed up"-participant 7-EP*
Engaging parents and pupils	*"Other issues it's brought to the fore for me, in terms of communication with parents, how do we know what parents think? How do we gain pupil voice?....Actually saying pupil voice does really matter, the parent voice does matter" participant 7-EP* *"There's work to be done you know with children and parents and ourselves and that communication needs to be stronger as well"- -participant 2-SENCO*
Elevated subject	"It's elevated its profile a bit more" *participant 1-head of middle school*

<u>Theme 3: Facilitating Change</u>

Subtheme 1: Virtual working

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Focused meetings	*"I quite like virtual meetings. It forces me to pay attention"-participant 1-head of middle school* *"Work always expands to fill the amount of time available"-participant 1-head of middle school*
Ability to carry on through pandemic	*"nice to do in person….at least we still held them and pushed them off. That's what I've been pleased about you know, we haven't postponed, we haven't said no, we're not going to address this now, we have just gone with it"-participant 3- head of upper school* *"I hadn't quite clicked, is that I thought the whole lockdown was going to be hell on earth and then we'll get through it and then we will go back to some kind of normality"-participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"I think being able to share things on line and everything rather than going I'll e mail you later…which no one ever does"-participant 1-head of middle school*

Subtheme 2: Commitment and engagement

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Commitment and engagement	*"So I think there was that investment"-participant 7-EP.* *"I think we committed as much as we could to the process"-participant 2-SENCO.* *"The fact it's had support across the board, by all the heads of department"-participant 3-head of upper school* *"I was very excited when you asked me if could take part to help and felt very motivated to support the project"-participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"You could tell they're quite passionate about this subject as well, I think that enthusiasm has kind of supported the structure of our working group"- participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"I really enjoyed being part of the group actually"- -participant 2-SENCO* *"I think everyone was very engaged, in terms of the process, in terms of contributing"-participant 7-EP* *"there are lots of positives, willingness to learn from the staff, willing to implement what we can learn and keeping up to date"-participant 3-head of upper school.*
Getting buy in	*"there were concerns about who would be part of the group, whether we would get sign up in terms of senior leadership"-participant 7-EP* *"One was to get key people on board, to actually make them buy into what is was and to actually get them to see it was a valuable piece of work….I did think it was going to be a challenge to get everybody on board and have the time to do it"- participant 2-SENCO.*

Importance of the subject	*"I think that they were very interested in it, as an area"-participant 7-EP* *"You could tell they're quite passionate about this subject as well, I think that enthusiasm has kind of supported the structure of our working group"- participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"doing a piece of work which coincided quite well in terms of what we were hoping to do in school"- participant 2-SENCO.* *"So RSE for sure is very important"-participant 1-head of middle school*
communication	*"Each session there was some really good discussion and information and sharing of information"-participant 2-SENCO*

Subtheme 3: External change drivers

Example Codes	Example Quotes
External person to lead change process	*"I think it's having an outside person"-participant 3- head of upper school.* *"I was quite relived that there was some external support with it"-participant 5- safeguarding lead* *"it was really useful to have that central coordination, so that actually when we sat down to meet it was sitting down to talk with some points on the agenda"-participant 5- safeguarding lead* *"there is that extra element of attention paid when it's an external person"- participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"What you were offering was someone who could guide us through that process I suppose"-participant 2- SENCO.* *"I understood that you were on board to support constructing of that curriculum"-participant 5-safeguarding lead.*
Legislative changes	"*I knew it was meant well, was coming in to be a statutory requirement"-participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"But my understanding was, the government have said, right you need to start teaching this and we have been left to go errrrr how?"-participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Ofsted	*"I don't know if OFSTED are looking at RSE now, once it becomes part of policy? I don't know who's actually checking up on schools, and what organisations are supporting and facilitating that change?"-participant 4-psychology assistant.* *"Our two main priorities are reading and phonics because of our OFSTED report and RSE, reading and sex, that's all we are focused on"-participant 1-head of middle school*

<u>Theme 4: Resilience and reasonable adjustments</u>

Subtheme 1: Covid-19

Example Codes	Example Quotes

Less connection with people/parents	*"I think that might have been due to the disconnection of the virtual reality of online"- participant 4- Psychology assistant*
Virtual working not ideal	*"It was just kind of slower paced because one person would have an idea, but they would have to wait…there was less bouncing ideas off each other for ideas" participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"I think at the same time one of the difficulties with virtual is that you don't want to interrupt someone when they are speaking because the information may be lost"- participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"Personally, I like face to face……I like to be in the same room as the person, it's just a personal thing"- -participant 2-SENCO*
New priorities	*"I think we have an issue that everybody is just trying to keep going at the moment"-participant 3- head of upper school* *"with the complications of Covid, I am quite concerned that it would be pushed back as a priority"- participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"who prioritises RSE, I don't think, that's you know realistic, who's going to prioritise that right now? Maybe I'm sounding too negative?"-participant 4-psychology assistant.*
Adjusting to rapid change	*"As I said it was unfortunate, the circumstances, in terms of you know the school and the changes that were experienced"-participant 7 –EP.* *" So, it's having that change, having a period of change of implementing what they are doing and then getting ready for that readiness for change and then implementing and dealing with drawbacks and different directions" -participant 4-psychology assistant.* *"I think the biggest drawback at the moment is Covid and how they deal with that now, will predict the effectiveness of the working group later on"- participant 4-psychology assistant.* *"Obviously and then Covid happened and then it's the one size fits all excuse for everything. Covid happened…..we've kind of got to work around it, through it"- participant 1-head of middle school.*

Subtheme 2: Systemic challenges

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Limited communication pathways with parents	*"Again, in terms of involving parents, again that was an issue for me because I felt like that was something the school needed to develop a bit further"-participant 7-EP*
Limited time for purposeful planning	*"I kinda felt we ran out of time actually….but then for us to reflect on that information between then and the next meeting...we almost needed to have another meeting before the next meeting….just to kind of talk about and reflect on the points made"-participant 2 SENCO.* *"We're constantly starting things and then they kind of peter out a bit"- participant 6-head of lower school*
accountability	*"there were a lot of participants in the group but no leads as such"- participant 7-EP*

	"I think that if someone the group said okay, you know, I'm going to be the one that makes this happen, in terms of putting a name to an action"-participant 7-EP. *"if they're not pinned down in terms of actions and maybe they just get lost somewhere in transition"-participant 7-EP.*
Allowing time for adaptation/implementation	*"It always seems very pressured for giving time and space for these things"-participant 7-EP* *"Because as a school you have your own systems in place but It's really hard to adapt to something different. When you have been doing something for so long, actually it takes more time to actually accept and kind of transfer something new into your setting"- -participant 2-SENCO* *"just the barrier of keeping up to date, you know, from a teacher's point of view. Barriers keeping up to date, having time to learn, having time to develop our knowledge. I would say it's a barrier making sure we implement what we learn"-participant 3-head of upper school.*
Limited ownership	*"I hoped they would engage with the process and actually they would take ownership of the process"-participant 7-EP* *"again, without someone really taking responsibility for that and making sure they implement it"-participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 3: Psychological demands of working in a special school

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Always a crisis	*"there is always a crisis"-participant 1-head of middle school*
A billion demands on your time	*"They are a busy staff, busy school, time's limited"-participant 7-EP.* *"I just don't have time I'm afraid"-participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Another thing/meeting	*"Initially it was a bit negative, as in, there is another thing"-participant 6-head of lower school* *"More meetings? That's a natural teacher response, to think what now?"-participant 1-head of middle school*
Competing demands	*"I think that other priorities overtook at points you know, that was understandable"-participant 7-EP* *"It was really unfortunate that something came up that day and it just dragged on and on"- participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"having to squeeze in another meeting when you are already busy"-participant 1-head of middle school* *"There are so many things that we need to do, especially in a special school where there are complicated needs arising all the time"-participant 1-head of middle school*
Emotional stress	*"I knew how much pressure the staff were under…so many pressures and you know the classes have so much need within"- participant 4-Psychology assistant*

RQ 2: What are group member's perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group?

<u>Theme 1: Conceptualisation of the EP role</u>

Subtheme 1: Widening of the EP Role

Example Codes	Example Quotes
EP historically case work focused	*"historically I've been positioned in the school within casework and within child focus"-participant 7-EP*
EPs usually used for crisis	*"There are children in crisis, I know we have a very long list of people requiring EP support or respite"- participant 1-head of middle school.*
Systemic work not expected	*"It's been very unusual to have somebody from the outside coming in"- participant 8-head of school.* *"in the past it's got a bit like, over to the EP and hasn't been so much collaboration" -participant 7-EP* *"So, It's not necessarily anything I would have expected, an EP to be involved with"-participant 5-safeguarding lead.*
Systemic work a luxury	*"To have an EP doing that, felt a bit, kind of, a bit of a luxury if I'm honest"-participant 8-head of school*
Systemic work as getting something extra	"So to have someone come in to help us with this, it's like ohhhh, what have we done? It kind of makes you feel a bit more special"- participant 8-head of school
EP as expert	*"I've always been positioned within the school within the expert model"- -participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 2: Gratitude for EP involvement

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Respect	*"We do look at your service, you know with respect because you have that skill set"-participant 2-SENCO.*
Appreciation	*"Again that was really valued, really appreciated. Again, It's always something I would have expected or thought to turn to for support for this particular area but the fact that it was there was really great" - participant 5-safeguarding lead*
gratitude	*"We are lucky to have the experiences of EPs"- participant 8-head of school.*
Valued role	*"It's very valuable really"- participant 8-head of school.*
Confidence and reassurance	*"We were lucky because we had somebody more appropriate and relevant to it"- participant 8-head of school.* *"you know what you're talking about which is nice"- participant 8-head of school.*

Subtheme 3: EP's as 'gold dust'

Example Codes	Example Quotes
EPs like 'gold dust'	"EPs are a little like gold dust at the moment"- *participant 8-head of school.*
Hard to get hold of	*"You are very hard people to get hold of, you are very busy"- participant 1-head of middle school.*
Have limited time	*"To actually get EP time now, as I'm sure you are very aware and you know its premium and you're kinda lucky if you get a few visits a year"-participant 8- head of school.*
luxury	*"To have an EP doing that, felt a bit, kind of, a bit of a luxury if I'm honest"-participant 8-head of school*

Subtheme 4: EP's as well placed to support systemic work

Example Codes	Example Quotes
EPs have tools/skill set	*"I think the EP is well placed to support the schools" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
EPs have knowledge of pupils	*"we did have examples of certain children as we used as part of our kind of you know discussion during those sessions and you could understand, you understood what we were talking about. You understood the behaviours we were talking about and the barriers we were talking about" -participant 2-SENCO.*
EPs have knowledge of school	*"I feel like I've worked with the system long enough to really be able to give a voice and opinion on a par with them"- participant 7-EP* *"She brought information about the school when she was very familiar with the context and the difficulties that they were facing and the resources they had, think that supported the discussion with school members"-participant 4-Psychology Assistant"*

<u>Theme 2: Value of EP as group member</u>

Subtheme 1: EP providing new perspective (outsider)

Example Codes	Example Quotes
New perspective	*"I think you all come from different perspectives don't you? I think you have, you can add really"- participant 8-head of school.* *"To have two externals with different hats on can kind of focus you, what's going on at home with parents and how does that fit in….gives you a broader coverage I guess"- participant 8-head of school.*
EP as 'court jester'	*"Because you're detached from it, you're a bit like the court jester. Which classically, the whole point of a court jester, wasn't to make the king laugh, it was that they could tell the king when they were being stupid and the king couldn't cut her head off, so I think, in a way the EP fulfils that role, that if we are going down a blind alley you are able to point that out without consequences of disagreeing with everybody. I*

	think that's really important, the court jester role. Someone who can point out holes in a plan without fear of issue"-participant 1-head of middle school.
EP as devil's advocate	*"and actually the EP gave a different spin to the way some of us at school had thought about it"-participant 6- head of lower school.*
EP brought up issues	*"One of you brought up parents. When planning the curriculum, it hadn't really occurred to some of us about parents. Then you said it, it was, oh yes of course. So it's that other dimension"- participant 8-head of school.*

Subtheme 2: EP providing expertise (outsider)

Example Codes	Example Quotes
signposting	*"sign posting of information was really, was really really helpful actually and just helping us build up links to other sources of information was really helpful" -participant 2-SENCO.*
Knowledge of RSE	*"My role of psychology assistant….we also had a lot of reflection time as well and we spent a lot of time researching and creating banks of information and resources" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
Value of external support	*"Any 'outsider' always adds something else to it….sometimes you don't see that wider context"-participant 8-head of school.* *"I think it helps to have an outside person"- participant 3-head of upper school.* *"I quite value having the external input"- -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Expertise of EP	*"Definitely not any outsider and we are put off by people that offer us things with little understanding"- participant 8-head of school.* *"I really value her expertise"- participant 3-head of upper school.* *"you need to be aware of your role, what you bring, the power imbalance that you might bring"-participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 3: EP knows the school (insider)

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Staff can be open and honest in group	*"the context for me is I've worked in the school for a long time, so they are probably quite used to me and knew me, they were quite used to having me in meetings"- -participant 7-EP* *"I've worked in that school now for over 10 years now. I knew all of the staff so I think it felt like I was part of the team"-participant 7-EP* *"The contact EP kind of isn't an insider, we can talk very openly about internal issues"-participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Understanding the children's needs	*"I think it's more about understanding special needs and the problems there."- participant 8-head of school.* *"So it was your prior knowledge that really helped us kind of unpick some of these, you know dilemmas and concerns"- participant 2-SENCO.*

Understands school as system	*"It's an extra bonus that she understands our school"- participant 8-head of school.* *"I think because EPs are very good at supporting teachers with looking at strategies to support the child's learning, making it individualised for the child" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant*

Theme 3: EP as facilitator

Subtheme 1: creation of supportive safe/space

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Safe space	*"Being able to explore, I know it's the cliché thing that it is that safe space, yes, I've really messed that up/how could I have done that differently" participant 5-safeguarding lead.* *"because you've got that safety, you know"- participant 8- head of school*
nonjudgement	*"So they need to feel like they can be open and honest and not feel like they are being judged" -participant 7-EP*
support	*"there was that low level bit of supervision, which I adore, supervision, anything and everything, I'm up for it"- participant 5-safeguarding lead*

Subtheme 2: empowering others

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Gathering voice of stakeholders- pupil/parent/staff	*"Other issues it's brought to the fore for me, in terms of communication with parents, how do we know what parents think? How do we gain pupil voice?....Actually saying pupil voice does really matter, the parent voice does matter" participant 7-EP* *"In terms of EP skills of giving other people and voice and encouraging active participation" -participant 7-EP* *"Pupil and parent voice….. always come to mind"-participant 2-SENCO"*
Bringing people together	*"It was actually very helpful bringing people together"-participant 2-SENCO*
Allowing people to find answer to their own issues	*"I suppose I had to be clear to position myself in that group as being, you know, not an expert particularly, because actually they are the experts in their school" -participant 7-EP* *"being mindful that for them, to come up with their own solutions to their own difficulties that they are experiencing. What they're priorities were. Not trying to shape that too much"- participant 7-EP*
Working partnership	*"I hoped it would allow them to work alongside"- -participant 7-EP* *"So, it was exciting to kind of working partnership really, knowing that we were going to get something else"-participant 2-SENCO.*

Subtheme 3: EP harnessing group processes and facilitation

Example Codes	Example Quotes

planning	*"I think it just helped kind of lay things out clearer and also with someone to sort of lead and give us kind of almost timeline and sort of deadlines" -participant 2-SENCO.*
Unpick ideas	*"I think to have someone who was facilitating the group and actually leading the group in kind of helping us unpick our ideas"-participant 2-SENCO.*
Supporting discussion	*"Again, the opportunity to discuss, bounce ideas"-participant 3-head of upper school*
Guiding group	*"someone who could guide us through the process I suppose, to work out where our starting point is"-participant 2-SENCO* *"What was really important is that you could bring us back to what we were discussing…..it was really helpful to have someone bringing us back to what we were meant to be talking about" -participant 2-SENCO.*
Remaining impartial	*"having someone outside the system. That not making judgement on that but just eliciting views and steering the direction of travel through that"- participant 7-EP*

Theme 3: EPs and change

Subtheme 1: EPs as change agents

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Give timelines and deadlines	*"There was a process and there was a timeline"- participant 2-SENCO* *"What you were offering was someone who could guide us through that process I suppose"-participant 2- SENCO.*
Leadership/ownership	*"I don't think that we would have happened had we tried to do this on our own" - participant 2-SENCO* *"there is that extra element of attention paid when it's an external person"- participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Supporting change in practice	*"I'd like to think that the school might utilise some of their experiences of the group. Whether it be group problems solving, group solution finding to apply their own practice"-participant7 –EP* *"I think again making sure we're implementing it you know in a structured and concrete way"-participant 3-head of upper school.*

Subtheme 2: EP knowledge of change

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Understanding systemic change	*"I've really taken this as looking at it from kind of an organisational view and implementing change overtime" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant*

Understanding developmental change	*"I was interested in it from my point of view of working previously with children with autism…..it's a really big issue for a lot of these young people"-participant 7-EP*

Subtheme: change to practice

Example Codes	Example Quotes
EP reflections on own practice	*"but then again it's about EP's comfort with the topic… you know, you have a lot of information, whereas I think when we talked about it with other EPs, I don't know if they would feel so comfortable and they don't have that toolbox"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant* *"I feel more confident at a TEP now, to ask about the kind of RSE development and how is that looking and so be aware of government initiatives that come in"-participant 4-Psychology Assistant* *"I think as this grows and then hopefully is nurtured by national policies, EPs could have a bigger role" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant* *"EPs in the future could support intervention work as well, as we do a lot of intervention and assessment" -participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
Staff change own practice	*"I think gain, making sure we're implementing it, you know in a structured and concrete way"-participant 3-head of upper school* *"This piece of work has been really useful for us, I wonder how we will continue using this model and taking that experience forward with us as well"-participant 2-SENCO*

RQ 3: What are the group member's perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE working group?

<u>Theme 1: Importance of process and graphic facilitation</u>

Subtheme 1: Facilitator Competence

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Professional interest	*I did a lot of my own research as well and I think you gave me lots of resources, they kind of got my head in, you know sorted and knowing what to expect"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
Facilitator experience	*We kept to time again due to your facilitation skills"- participant 7-EP*
Building skills	*"But then again, it is also practice effect isn't it, the more times you, you as graphic facilitator practice that, you get better as time goes along"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
Facilitator skills	*"Reflecting on my part, it was a lot of, you know being new to graphic facilitation, there's a lot of information which I had to quickly, you*

	know get down on a piece of paper and then hear next"-participant 4-Psychology Assistant *We kept to time again due to your facilitation skills"- participant 7-EP*
Working together as facilitators	*" It's a working partnership with the graphic facilitator again, you know which was really helpful to bring it to life and visually represented for everybody"- participant 7-EP* *"You don't want to interrupt someone because the information might be lost….you don't want to interrupt as graphic facilitator, you don't want to disrupt the flow"- participant 4- Psychology Assistant*

Subtheme 2: facilitation benefits

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Style supported conversation	*You weren't just asking us a lot of questions, you kind of asked one question and from that came a quite detailed discussion"- participant 2-SENCO*
Stay on task	*"Having an outside mediator was very helpful. Because otherwise we keep, do tend to digress onto other subjects, we do tend to go off task, we do tend to joke"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"What was really important is that you could bring us back to what we were meant to be talking about"- participant 2-SENCO*
focus	*"but actually to have a mediator to bring us back and focus us was extremely helpful"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"it was really helpful to have someone bringing us back to what we were meant to be talking about, which meant that we were very focused in"- participant 2-SENCO*
Taking pressure off group	*"Which meant you weren't necessarily distracted by having to do that and you could continue the conversation rather than having to stop it all the time and then write something down which is really good"-participant 6-head of lower school.* *"I think having someone to do all the note taking is an excellent idea, I found that really, really good. It meant that we didn't need to worry about doing that bit" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"having the pressure taken off, everybody else, sort of you know, facilitating that sort of note writing was really helpful"-participant 2-SENCO*
Positivity about graphic facilitation	*"I think what worked well was, we had the visual, I forget her name, but the note taker, taking a note which was good"-participant 6-head of lower school.* *"The drawing lady was really cool" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"Obviously having a graphic facilitator, I think was really key"-participant 7-EP*
Guide/unpick	*"What you were offering I think initially was kind of someone who could guide us through the process I suppose"- participant 2-SENCO*
Examines options	*"Sometimes you come to the conclusion you started with just you examined all the other options" -participant 1-head of middle school*

Understand where you are	*"A very clear plan in terms of you know what our goals are, what we want to achieve, where we're at and what we need to do to get to that goal"- participant 2-SENCO*

Theme 2: Setting a PATH for change

Subtheme 1: clarity

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Visuals supported clarity/supported	*"Having that visual was important. We forget sometimes that adults are just like children, some of us are visual, some us are auditory, so to have that visual…I benefitted from that. I liked that. That was good"- participant 6-head of lower school*
Introductions/explanations brought clarity	*"You know you'd been clear and explained the steps before we did them, so that was very transparent to everybody"- participant 7-EP* *"At the time we had bits and pieces to kind of refer to, which was great, quite useful"-participant 6-head of lower school*
Visual brought views to life	*" It's a working partnership with the graphic facilitator again, you know which was really helpful to bring it to life and visually represented for everybody"- participant 7-EP*
clarity	*"Obviously it was very clear in terms of you know everyone had agreed actions at the end"- participant 7-EP*
Clear vision	*"I think identifying our vision as a group. I think it helped because it sort of gets you on track"- participant 8-head of school*

Subtheme 2: future thinking

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Moving forward	*"it makes working going forward easier"- participant 2-SENCO*
Goal/outcome orientated	*"It helped us, it gave us those kind of, our long term goal made very clear for everybody"- participant 6-head of lower school.*
A good starting point	*"There's a lot more to do but you know it's given us a good basis"- participant 2-SENCO*
Working back	*"We worked back from that didn't we and kind of work out how best to get there, which was an effective way of doing it"- participant 6-head of lower school*
Identified vision	*"We had the sort of long-term vision of where we wanted to get to was quite well established and clear in our minds"- participant 6-head of lower school*
Clear end point	*"We made it very clear what our endpoint was going to be. We worked out that part. I think that was important because it kind of helped everyone get on the same page"- participant 6-head of lower school.*

Subtheme 3: achievable goals

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Easy wins	*"Then we had some short term easy wins, which was really helpful because we could almost do that straight away"- participant 6-head of lower school.*
realistic	*"Were we able to achieve them in the future? Actually, I think yes, we possible can"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"I liked the fact that they weren't unreasonable, they were realistic and we could get there"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Achievable goals	*"I think they were achievable. I mean you know, without wanting to go down the whole SMART acronym, which I don't want to do, actually they were focused"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 4: structure

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Clear steps identified	Theme from Kolb reflections
Thought out approach	*"It helped me to understand that okay fine we are actually now, we're using to work through, help us work through a process of planning"- Participant 2-SENCO*
A PATH/track to follow	*"It's given us a place to go, a PATH to follow"-participant 8- head of school.* *"It gave us that clear picture or PATH that we were going to follow"- participant 6-head of lower school*
Action plan	*"I thought working out the action plan was really good"- participant 6-head of lower school*
timeline	*"I think it just helped kind of layout things clearer….and give us timelines and sort of deadlines"- participant 2-SENCO*
structure	*"Like I said, sometimes that meetings can go round in circles but I don't think it did. The discussion points that we had were relevant, we stayed on track. It felt like a purposeful meeting"- participant 6-head of lower school.* *"In terms of the PATH it's definitely the structure and process and the beginning and end"- participant 2-SENCO*

Theme 3: Harnessing Creativity and Energy

Subtheme 1: creative

Example Codes	Example Quotes
relaxed	*"It was a discussion between all of us on staff. Which allowed us to kind of say what we felt, rather than being more formal I suppose"- participant 6-head of lower school.*
Bounce ideas	*"Again the opportunity to discuss, bounce ideas, see where we are at, go back and focus on what the next steps are is great"- participant 3-head of upper school*
engagement	*"The first session, I thought you know, how engaged will everyone else be? I was quite surprised actually."- participant 2-SENCO*

	"I think everyone was very engaged, in terms of the process in terms of contributing"- participant 7-EP
Open dialogue	*"There were some quite lively discussions and good disagreement at times"- participant 7-EP* *"It felt like a very natural discussion on a topic, that is really important"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant*

Subtheme 2: energy

Example Codes	**Example Quotes**
Energy/life	*"give it some energy, give it some life and structure" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Enthusiasm/passion	*"I thought it was a very positive meeting. I thought everyone was very enthused and engaged"- participant 7-EP* *"I think that enthusiasm has kind of supported the structure of our working group"- participant 4-Psychology Assistant*
momentum	*"So momentum was quite high in terms of moving forward"- participant 7-EP* *"It felt like we were kind of on a bit of a wave really of ideas and vision and yes do this and let's do this"-participant 8-head of school*
excitement	*"it was new and it was fresh and it was safe and it was very positive"- participant 8-head of school*

<u>Theme: collective voice</u>

Subtheme 1: taking ownership

Example Codes	**Example Quotes**
Taking control of your own experiences	*"Allowing them to come up with their own answers to their own issues"- participant 7-EP*
Needing someone to take ownership/lead	*"But you do need someone to take ownership of it and kind of lead"- participant 2-SENCO* *"I also hoped that they would engage with the process and actually take ownership of the process"- participant 7-EP* *"there were a lot of participants in that group but there was maybe no one taking the lead as such"- participant 7-EP* *"it's the ownership of the PATH, you know you contribute to that but it's not, you're not directing or leading it or anything anyway"- participant 7-EP*
Need to put name to action	*"Working out who does what, you know and how it's done"- participant 2-SENCO* *"I think if someone within that group had said okay, you know, I'm going to be the one that makes this happen, in terms of putting a name to an action"-participant 7-EP* *"if they're not pinned down in terms of actions and maybe they just get lost somewhere in translation"- participant 7-EP*

EP not shaping the work	*"I suppose from my point of view it was about not giving, trying to steer the direction of travel based on what I knew about the school"- participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 2: collaborative working

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Collective voice	*"Most importantly it brings together everyone. Everyone is united in these goals and aspirations" –participant 2-SENCO*
Collaborative voice	*"it's having all those strengths in one room, at the same time which is slightly unheard of"-participant 8-head of school.* *"I hoped they would go on a journey in terms of…..being much more collaborative"- participant 7-EP* *"in terms of you know, facilitation skills of being true to the PATH, setting out the expectations and bringing their views to the for by encouraging them to do that"- participant 7-EP*
Equal contribution	*I think obviously in terms of equal participation, obviously you are going to get that difference in terms of different people feel a bit more confident"- participant 7-EP* *"There was no one in particular who dominated"- participant 7-EP*
Working partnership	*"So, it was it was exciting to kind of work in partnership really"- participant 2-SENCO* *"It was very much a shared approach"- participant 7-EP*
agreement	*"We all sat round there and we agreed on all of them you know….we are all on the same page"- participant 2-SENCO* *"I think it really highlighted the differences in terms of maybe people's standpoint. I think at the beginning of the meeting they were in agreement and then as we talked a bit more it was like ooohhh actually we do have, maybe have different views"- participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 3: key voices

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Key staff members present	*"The fact it's had support across the board, by all the heads of department"-participant 3-head of upper school* *"it was nice, there was a mixture as well: different levels of experience, different qualifications, different backgrounds"- participant 5- safeguarding lead.*
Voice heard across the school	*"I think it was positive that there was representation from middle school, upper school, the head of therapeutic services was there, head of middle school, for me I think everybody was able to give their contribution"- participant 7-EP* *"That was really important, I mean I think that while we had some you know information about sort of parent views, it was really interesting"-participant 2-SENCO* *"you were able to bring a lot of different ideas to the table. I found really useful."-participant 5- safeguarding lead.*

Theme 4: Practicalities

Subtheme 1: setting the scene

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Explaining SF practice	*"I just think before, then maybe setting out the store very clearly that the expectation was, this is about a joint journey, this is about looking forward again and their contribution to it, so I think it was very helpful in terms of setting the scene for the meeting really"- participant 7-EP*
Providing information	*"At the time we had bits and pieces to kind of refer to, which was great, quite useful"-participant 6-head of lower school* *"Positive that you know, you invited me to it and I think it was helpful in terms of everybody knowing beforehand what they were signing up to, I suppose of emphasising the collaborative approach to it"- participant 7-EP*
understanding	*"I think actually understanding the model itself in the information you sent prior to our first meeting about the PATH was really informative"- participant 2-SENCO*

Subtheme 2: room preparation

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Snack and drinks	*"I guess that you know having the food and snacks about was nice, it made us feel a bit more informal and people were perhaps a bit more comfortable"- participant 6-head of lower school.* *"Okay, is there cake? If you provide tea and cakes and keep people stable" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Setting up the room	*"You know, you taking a lot of effort to set up the room appropriately"-participant 7-EP* *"I think you kind of set up the room very well, as well we organised to have it on a window so it is easily accessible. I think the seating arrangement, as well so that everybody could easily have access and it didn't feel like a pressured meeting"-participant 4-Psychology Assistant*

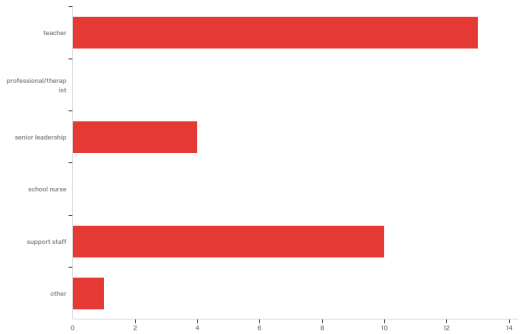
Subtheme 3: time limitations

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Not enough time	*"I kinda felt we ran out of time actually"- participant 2-SENCO*
Time was too long	*"I remember thinking it was a very long meeting for a very small amount of conclusion, but then sometimes you need to do that" - participant 1-head of middle school* *"I think it was a little bit long. I think we could have shortened it somewhat"- participant 3-head of upper school*

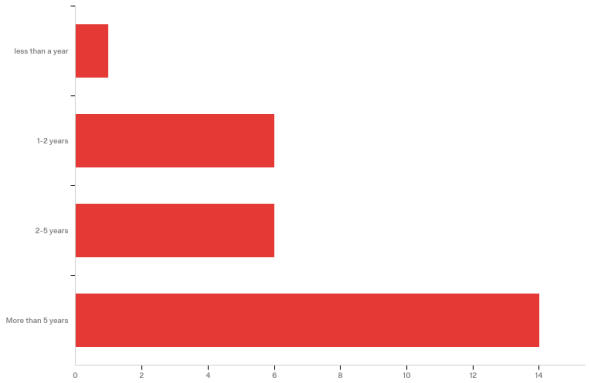
Finding a good time	*"It was okay, it was at the end of the day, so everyone was already knackered, but I don't see a way around that with teaching staff" - participant 1-head of middle school*

Appendix 36: RSE Staff Survey Results-One Page Summary

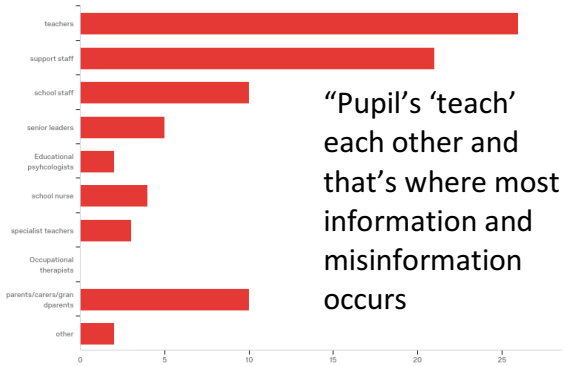
1 What is your role?



2 How long?

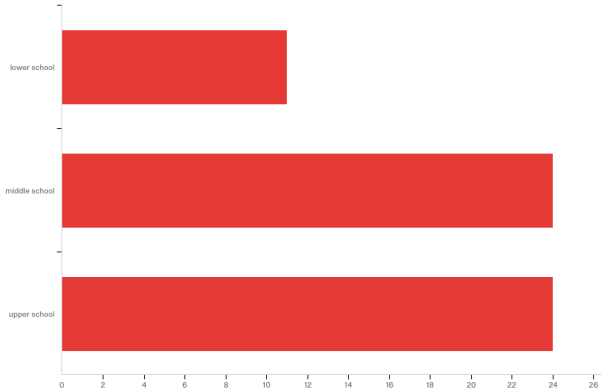


3 Who teaches RSE?

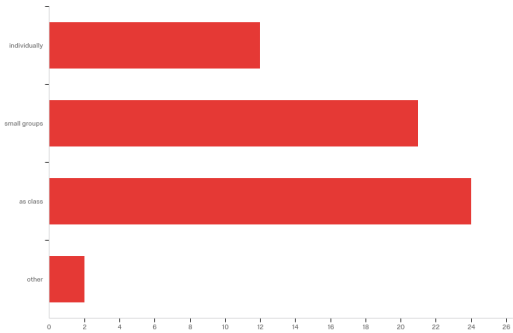


"Pupil's 'teach' each other and that's where most information and misinformation occurs

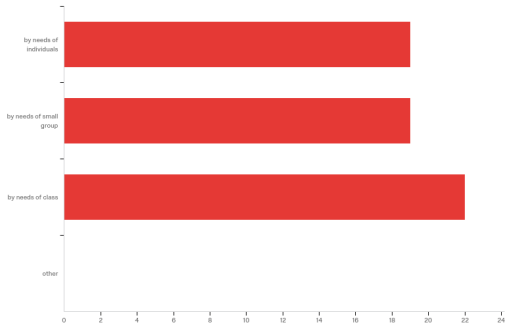
4 When is RSE taught?



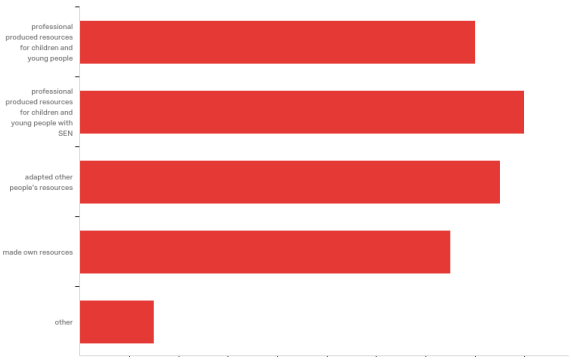
5 How is RSE taught?



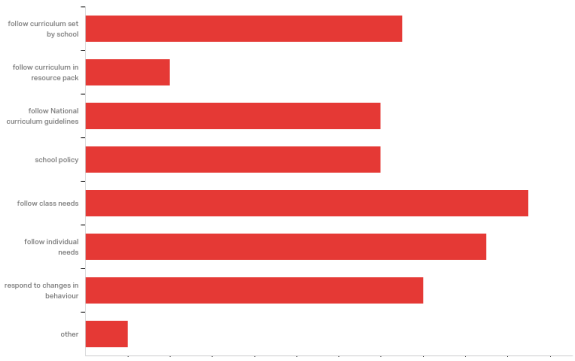
6 Differentiation



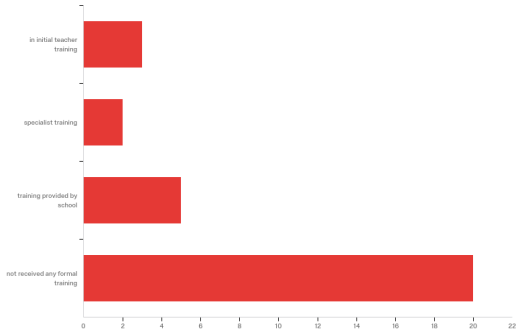
7 Resources



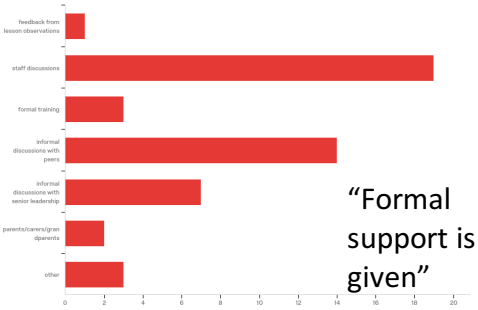
8 Teaching informed by:



9 Training

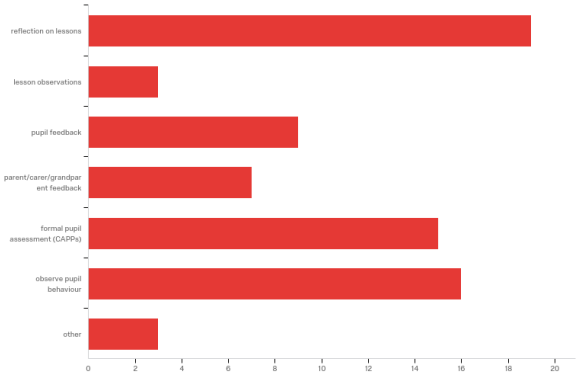


10 Support

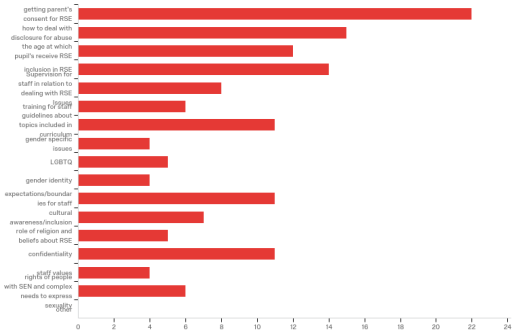


"Formal support is not given"

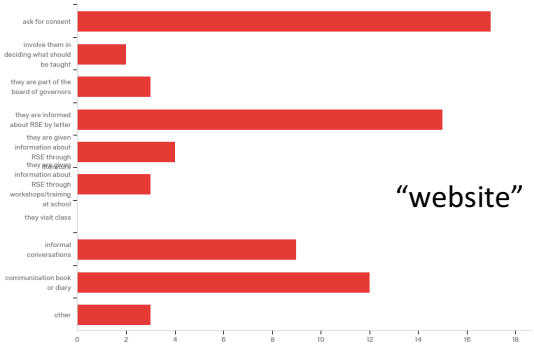
11 Evaluation of RSE



12 What does policy cover?

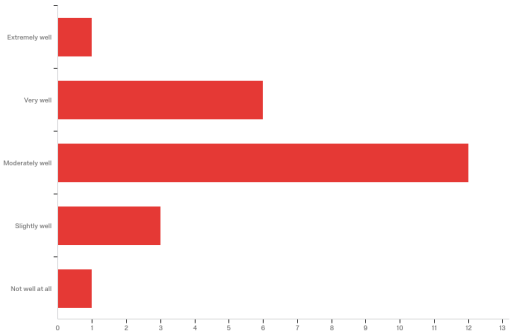


13 Working with parents

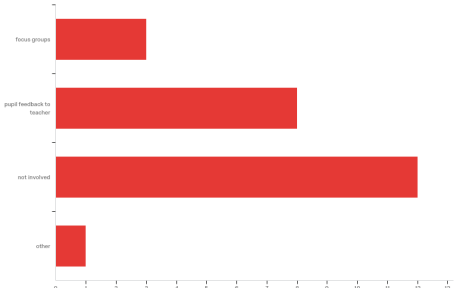


"website"

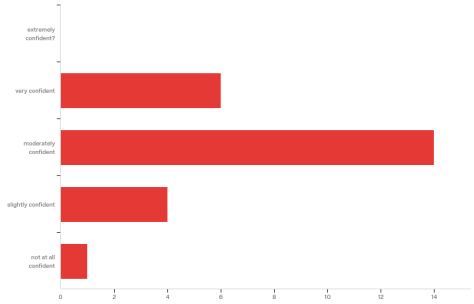
14 How well is it done?



15 Pupil involvement

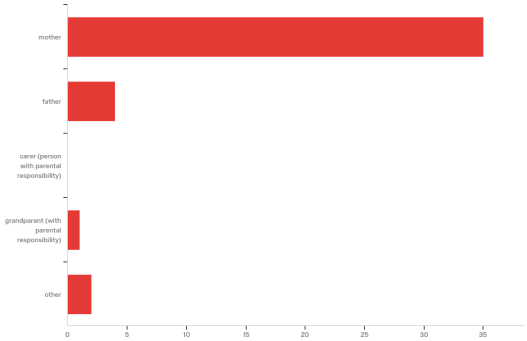


16 Confidence

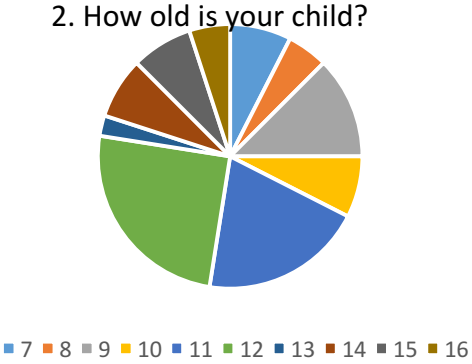


Appendix 37: RSE Parent Survey Results-One Page Summary

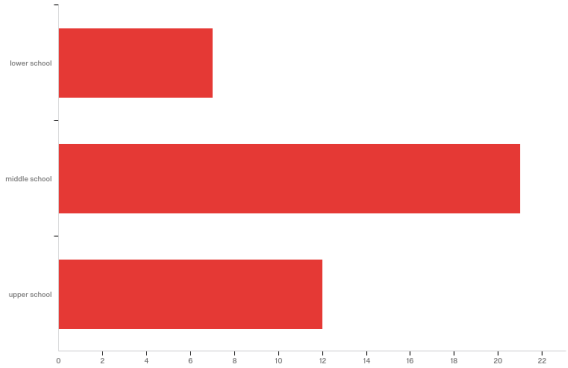
1.Who are you?



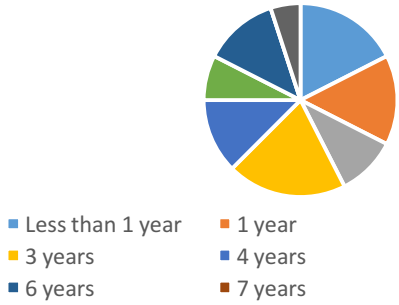
2. How old is your child?



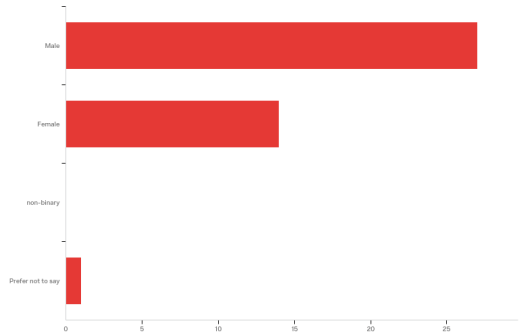
3. Part of school?



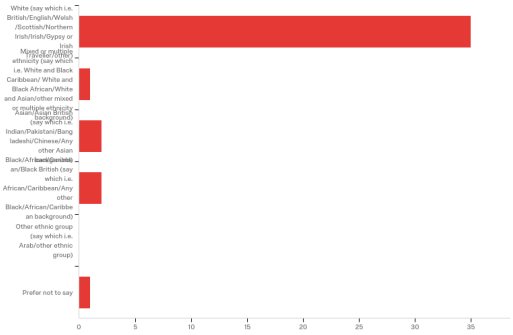
4. How long has your child attended?



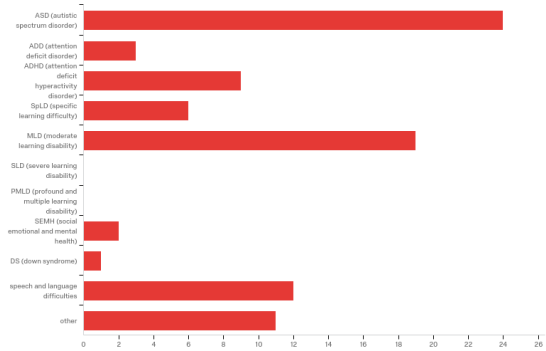
5. Gender of child?



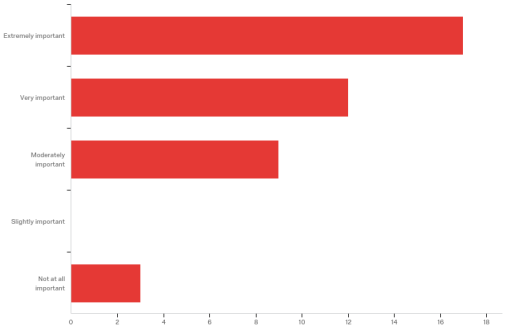
6. What is the ethnicity of your child?



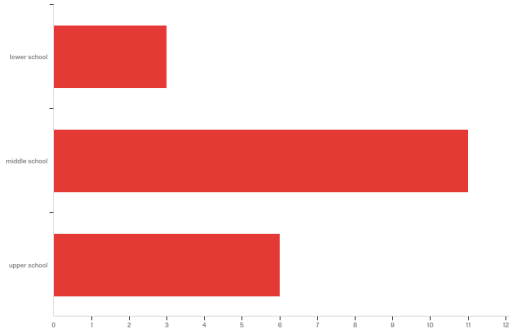
7. What are your child's needs?



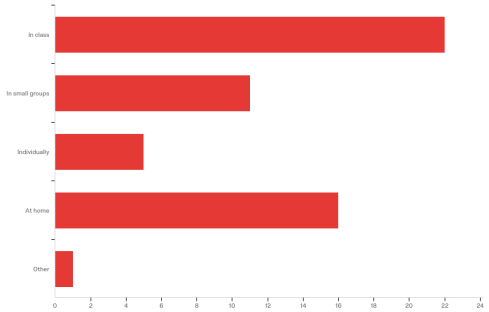
8. How important is RSE?



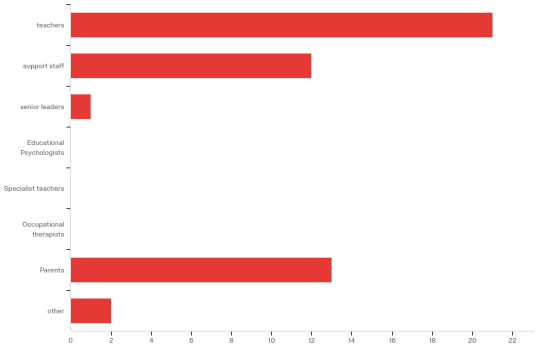
9. When is RSE taught?



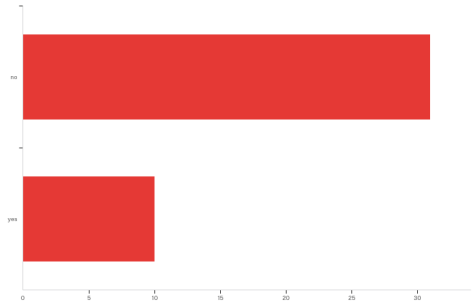
10. How is RSE taught?



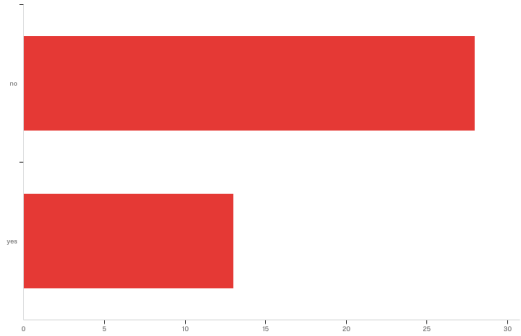
11. Who teaches RSE?



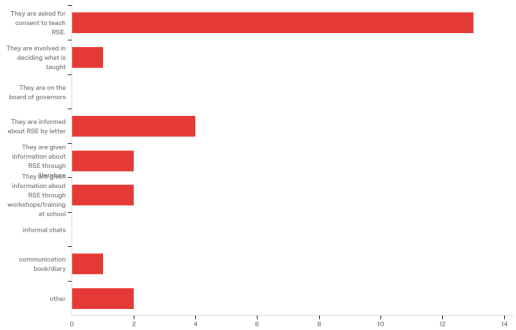
12. Awareness of RSE policy



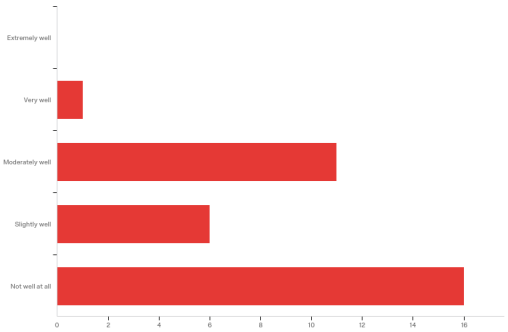
13. Do you know what is being taught?



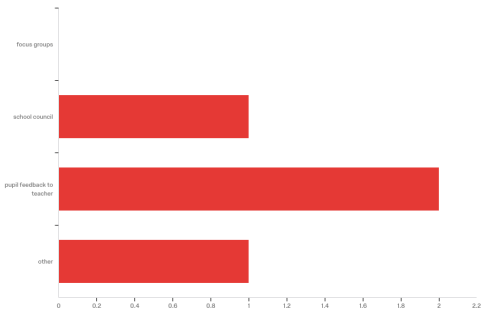
14. How are parents involved with RSE?



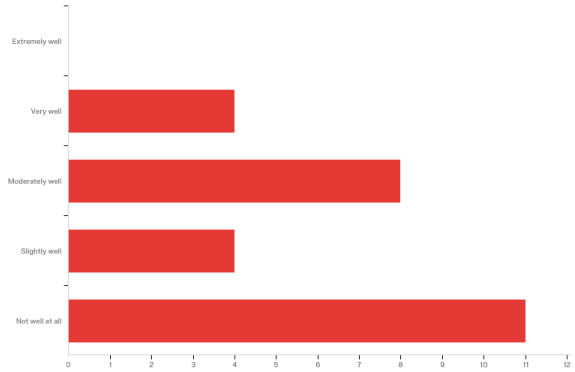
15. How well are parents involved?



16. How are pupils involved?



17. How well are pupils involved?



Appendix 38: Themes, Subthemes and Codes for Staff Views of RSE

RQ 4: What are the views of staff in a special school regarding the implementation of RSE?

Codes from Survey	Codes from artefacts	Codes from field notes	Codes from interviews	Subthemes	Themes
	meeting 3/4 discussion of training and roadmap meeting 3 impact on relationships from Covid 19		Focus/importance of relationships 3,6 Starting younger 5,6 Statutory duties 1, 2, 7, 8 Normalising RSE 1 Competing with other educational changes 1 Time to embed changes 3	Changes in statutory guidance	Change over time for the RSE curriculum
	Meeting 2 transgender awareness	02/03/20 LGBTQ	Big area 1,8 Inclusion of younger pupils 6 Inclusion of LGBTQ 1 Didn't previously get priority 1	Topic got broader	
	Meeting 2- supporting/engaging parents Meeting 3- planning workshop	17/06/20 parental views vary	Parents hindering natural development *3, 5 Infantilising 1,3 Parents in two camps 1,6 Some parents open 1 Parents as barriers 3	Parental attitudes vary*	Variations and tensions in Attitudes
	Meeting 2 open discussion re erections	02/03/20 staff views vary	Fear/embarrassment 1 Can be a sensitive area 7 Open 1,3 Willing 3	Staff attitudes vary	
			Closed 'British' attitudes 1, 7 Can be a sensitive area 7 Fear/embarrassment/discomfort 1,3 Scandalised 1 Societal attitudes changing 1	Societal attitudes	
	Meeting 2 building skills for children Meeting 2- indepth discussion of issues raised for children with SEN		Recognition of importance 1,3,8 A need to build skills 3,7 Best for children 1,3 Important for young people with SEN 3,7 Important to young people with SEN 3,7	RSE seen as important	Staff practice in relation to the special school context

Knowing what you can and can't say x3 More time needed x1 Training x 3 Resources x2 Discussions x2	PATH-Keeping Strong-Right thing to say Meeting 2-splitting genders/flexibility to need Meeting 3-sharing webinars/planning training for staff	7/10/19 22/10/19 nervousness around RSE 02/03/20 variety in confidence August 2020 virtual training for staff	Need for knowledge and confidence 2 Not knowing where to start 5 Lack of confidence 2,4 Pedagogical debate 1,5 Doing it 'right' 1 Need training 1 Need direction 2 Use of previous experience 1, 4, 5, 7 Respond to individual need 2 Time to learn 3	Knowledge and confidence*	
	Meeting 2-pupils very open	20/10/19 pupils open to share	Hear things they wouldn't in mainstream 3 Nurturing culture 3 Safety, nurture and protection * 2 Class dynamics 1 Pupil's open to share 3	Staff relationships with pupils*	
	PATH-Keeping strong-supporting parents Meeting 2-getting past barriers with parents-focus group	7/10/19 parent nervousness with RSE 17/06/20 parent want information	Importance of Working with parents 1,7 Working with parents forgotten 8 Parents seen as barrier 3	Working with parents	
	PATH-Keeping strong-complex needs Meeting 2 responding to issues around erections and consent Meeting 2 issues of private/public-safety/vulnerability	22/10/19 specialist resources individual needs 14/02/20 EP reflection-lack of specialist response	Diverse/complex needs 1,2,6, 7,8 Need to differentiate/adapt resources 8 Lack of appropriate resources 4,5 Responding to individual need 2 Vulnerability of children with SEN 3	Diverse/complex needs *	

Appendix 39: Themes, Subthemes and Codes for Parent Views of RSE

RQ 4: What are parents' views about RSE?

Codes from Survey	Codes from artefacts	Codes from field notes	Codes from interview	Subthemes	Themes
Let parents decide/ Keep it innocent/ Let children be children/ Taught too young/		17/06/20 hard conversation need to own language	Hard/tough subject Cover our eyes	Lack of comfort with topic	Attitudes to RSE
Start early /			Typical 'male' behaviour Start early Normalise emotions	Normalising*	
Differentiate//		17/06/20 Lack of resources	Differentiation and adaption of resources Using PECS/visuals	resources	School RSE Practice
Consistency and repetition/ Needs led//		17/06/20 every child is different 17/06/20 parents of children with SEN have enough on plate	Consistency Repetition Each child has different needs Sensory needs	Needs led	
			Inexperienced MENCAP students	Experience of staff	
Not enough information//// Share resources// Share policy/ Share curriculum////		17/06/20 Hard to find information Not received information	Hard to find information Not received information	Information sharing	Parent partnership
Parents more involved // Explain resources///		17/06/20 disappointed in school	Sharing practice/key words with home* Consistency Links with other settings	Links between settings	

			Use of dojo		
Consent // Safe sex///// Keeping safe//////			consent Risk in childhood Risk in adulthood Safe Implementation of strategies Safe with emotions	safety	Key topics for children with SEN
			Controlling emotions* Understanding own emotions Understanding other's emotions	Understanding emotions	
Appropriate behaviour// Inappropriate behaviour/ Identity///			Appropriate behaviour Inappropriate behaviour Firm boundaries	Appropriate behaviour	
Body changes///// Everyday life/ Hygiene/ Diseases/		17/06/20 menstruation	Body changes	Changes	
All relationships// Healthy relationships//// Basic sex education///		17/06/20 having babies	Difficulties with relationships in adulthood	Relationships	

*key theme from participant

Appendix 40: Examples of Codes and Data Extracts from each theme-staff views

RQ 4: What are the views of staff in a special school regarding the implementation of RSE?

Theme 1: Change over time for the RSE curriculum

Subtheme 1: Changes in statutory guidance

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Focus/importance of relationships	*"Obviously there is a new focus on the relationship side of things, as opposed to the more sciency and sex side of things. I think it's really important and certainly for lower school"-participant 6-head of lower school* *"I'm glad they had changed the shift to relationships as the first focus"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Starting younger	*"Just education in general stereotypically doesn't address relationships, sex education at a younger age" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Statutory duties	*"I knew that it was meant well, was, is coming in to be a statutory requirement" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Normalising RSE	*"There is a reason that we as a species survive, it's because at some point we all want to go off and make babies. That's what we are supposed to do biologically" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Competing other educational changes	*"I think especially with the changing requirements there is danger in education, because there are so many changing requirements" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Time to embed changes	*"The barrier of keeping up to date, you know from a teacher's point of view. Barriers keeping up to date, having time to learn, having time to develop our knowledge. I would say it's a barrier making sure we implement what we learn"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 2: topic got broader

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Big area	*"It's a big area"-participant 8-head of school* *"The topic has got a lot bigger over probably the last five years" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Inclusion of younger pupils	*"Just education in general stereotypically doesn't address relationships, sex education at a younger age" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Inclusion of LGBTQ	*"I think especially as there's much more about you know LGBTQ, plus trans, gender fluidity, non binary. A lot of stuff where, I'll be honest as*

	a 39-year-old white, heterosexual male I have to google it, look it up. It's not my direct experience" -participant 1-head of middle school
Didn't previously get priority	*"I think as a country we don't quite give it the priority it needs. I think its reflected in some of the statistics about teenage pregnancy and similar things" -participant 1-head of middle school*

Theme 2: Variations and tensions in attitudes

Subtheme 1: parental attitudes vary

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Parents hindering natural development	*"There's also, I think boundaries from the parents point of view, that's there's a very much loving caring aspect but that keeps some of the children quite young"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"Maybe not vulnerability, maybe hindering natural development….recognising that they want to explore sexuality"- participant 3-head of upper school*
infantilising	*"You must keep them as children forever because their bodies do not want to do that, they are biologically geared to that" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"There is a perception that special needs children are, I think protected in lots of ways, from a variety of sources"-participant 3-head of upper school* *"You know you can see this as reluctance to recognise these 15, 16 year olds are adults, that is very much one our biggest barriers"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Parents in two camps	*"Also working with parents as well because again, parents and their responses can be very varied" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Some parents open	*"Some of them are completely open and think everything should be taught" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"I think having that piece of work with the parent's questionnaires…that was really important…. It was really interesting and it reminded us a little bit of actually how concerned parents are about their children"- -participant 2-SENCO*
Parent as barriers	*"There's also, I think boundaries from the parents point of view, that's there's a very much loving caring aspect but that keeps some of the children quite young"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"I'm very disappointed in the parent's response…..despite my pushing, that again, I think is evidence of a boundary"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 2: staff attitudes vary

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Fear/embarrassment	*"recognising when people feel uncomfortable teaching RSE"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Can be a sensitive area	*"We're talking about a quite a sensitive area for people"- participant 7-EP* *"I think it really highlighted the differences in terms of maybe people's standpoint. I think at the beginning of the meeting they were in agreement and then as we talked a bit more it was like ooohhh actually we do have, maybe have different views"- participant 7-EP*
open	*"I've always found it ok to teach. I've not been too bothered by the embarrassment factor" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"I've never had an issue with it"-participant 1-head of middle school* *"I'm a very open person, quite happy to discuss anything and everything, quite hard to shock" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
willing	*"I think there are lots of positives, willingness to learn from the staff, willing to implement what we can learn and keeping up to date"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 3: societal attitudes

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Closed 'British' attitudes	*"we are very British about it. We get very 'oh no', whereas other countries they are very open about using the correct names for body parts for example from a young age" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"I think it's a very British thing"- -participant 1-head of middle school*
Can be a sensitive area	*"I think there has always been a very national level of prudishness around the subject" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Fear/embarrassment/discomfort	*"I think there is quite a lot of fear. Everyone is 'no, it's sex!'" - participant 1-head of middle school*
scandalised	*"When the tabloid press get hold of it they get al scandalised because they are using the word clitoris with 5 year olds" - participant 1-head of middle school*
Societal attitudes changing	*"It's getting better, it's always been there"- participant 1-head of middle school*

Theme 3: staff practice in relation to the special school context

Subtheme 1: RSE seen as important

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Recognition of importance	*"You could tell they're quite passionate about this subject as well, I think that enthusiasm has kind of supported the structure of our working group"- participant 4- Psychology assistant* *"So RSE for sure is very important, at the moment particularly"- participant 8-head of school* *"I think it's always been important, in mainstream or special, it's always been important"-participant 1-head of middle school*

	"I thought how crucial it was"-participant 3-head of upper school *"It's an important subject"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"So my initial thoughts were one of you know enthusiasm…it was a needed and vital area really"- participant 7-EP*
A need to build skills	*"Knowing that we've got to give them all self- regulation measures to protect themselves but that we have to build that for them"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Best for children	*"I understand their point of view, it's not helpful really for the children in the long run" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"I think we have to really remember that we want our children to experience all of that and not put barriers that we treat them as if they should never have that"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Importance for young people with SEN	*"Then you've got people in the middle of a whole range of needs. I think that's probably the challenge for us. Equally we recognise that it's crucially important because of that" -participant 8-head of school* *"I think it's a vitally important subject, especially for children with special needs"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"But that's the thing, if you don't educate people then you get the unknown happening and then you get fear" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"but it is still huge, really important issues that has caused our children difficulty in the past" -participant 5-safeguarding lead* *"From my point of view....there was an immediate interest…it wasn't something necessary people were talking about….I think particularly, in particular with special needs"-participant 7-EP*
Importance to young people with SEN	*"On the other hand, you're not helping them deal with the bigger world by not recognising they are going to have feelings and wanting boyfriends and wanting relationships and girlfriends and in whatever way"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"Recognising that they want to explore sexuality"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"it's a really big issue for a lot of these young people. In terms of their frustrations, they're experience, the connections they want to make, but actually you know how relationships are important to them"- participant 7-EP*

Subtheme 2: knowledge and confidence

Example Codes	**Example Quotes**
Need for knowledge and confidence	*"I think the main thing that was coming through was the lack of knowledge and experience and confidence in actually delivering such a programme"- participant 2-SENCO* *"I think it just highlights, it actually served to highlight the differences in people's understanding, differences in practice"- participant 7-EP*
Lack of confidence	*"I think sometimes lack of experience and knowledge, so training for staff"-participant 2-SENCO* *"the school didn't seem that confident, so I think it was something that was needed"- participant 7-EP*

Pedagogical debate	*"There was always a lot of, what's the word? Ethical? Pedagogical debate around, do you do boys and girls separately?" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Doing it 'right'	*"It's probably making sure you have to do, you have the right bits, so you cover the right subjects. Making sure you have the right resources" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Need training	*"How would be upskill teachers to deliver RSE?"- participant 2-SENCO*
Need direction	*"My first thoughts about RSE at school were that we needed to actually have some kind of action plan"-participant 2-SENCO*
Use of previous experience	*"I'm very pleased that I had attended a presentation from the local authority at our partner school"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Respond to individual need	*"Through school, teachers were very good at responding very quickly to situations in terms of….if there was an issue with a child, if there was a concern from a parent then teachers would support with either you know resources, information, sign posting but everyone was doing their own thing"- participant 2-SENCO* *"In one sense we responded quickly, you know to help problem solve some situations. Then from there I think teaching was identified and then a teacher would deliver whatever session they needed to address that issue"- participant 2-SENCO*
Time to learn	*"The barrier of keeping up to date, you know from a teacher's point of view. Barriers keeping up to date, having time to learn, having time to develop our knowledge. I would say it's a barrier making sure we implement what we learn"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 3: staff relationships with pupils

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Hear things they wouldn't in mainstream	*"We recognise the relationship between teacher and pupil or staff and pupils"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"I think you have to remember that a lot of things would go on in mainstream and we would never know about them, teaching staff would know about our young people but that helps us support them"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Nurturing culture	*"I think It's a very much a nurturing culture here, which is lovely"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"I did like the recognition of the good bonds we have with the children here"- participant 3-head of upper school*
Safety, Nature and protection	*"nicely came up with the headlines; safety, protection……with RSE it's protection and safety, feeling safe"-participant 2- SENCO*
Class dynamics	*"Perhaps because we have such small class sizes, because we have such good, close relationships with our children…perhaps we know more"- participant 3-head of upper school* *It's not just the boys and the girls, it's the higher cognition boys and the lower cognition boys" -participant 1-head of middle school*

Pupils open to share	*"The openness of how our children talk to you, I think it's refreshing"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 4: working with parents

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Importance of working with parents	*"We were good at informing parents, so had a legal duty to anyway, but I think that process is really open" -participant 1-head of middle school*
Parents seen as barrier	*"There's also, I think boundaries from the parents point of view, that's there's a very much loving caring aspect but that keeps some of the children quite young"- participant 3-head of upper school* *"I'm very disappointed in the parent's response…..despite my pushing, that again, I think is evidence of a boundary"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Subtheme 5: diverse/complex needs of learners

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Diverse/complex needs	*"because of the diverse needs of our children-obviously we have some who are preverbal and in nappies. Then we've got some who are 16 and have all the hormones floating around"-participant 8-head of school* *"Also the barrier was…complex needs of some of our children"- participant 2-SENCO*
Need to differentiate/adapt resources	*"For mainstream children you know there's that YouTube video that's quite good….but actually our children aren't going to get that, it just doesn't make sense" -participant 5-safeguarding lead*
Lack of appropriate resources	*"It's really hard to make something age appropriate for our kids because it's not"- participant 8-head of school* *"Also the barrier was not having up to date resources to deliver sessions"- participant 2-SENCO*
Responding to individual need	*"It's not just the boys and the girls, it's the higher cognition boys and the lower cognition boys" -participant 1-head of middle school* *"Through school, teachers were very good at responding very quickly to situations in terms of….if there was an issue with a child, if there was a concern from a parent then teachers would support with either you know resources, information, sign posting but everyone was doing their own thing"- participant 2-SENCO* *"In one sense we responded quickly, you know to help problem solve some situations. Then from there I think teaching was identified and then a teacher would deliver whatever session they needed to address that issue"- participant 2-SENCO*
Vulnerability of children with SEN	*"There is a barrier for when they are 16 and they are let out of college and then it perhaps makes them more vulnerable"- participant 3-head of upper school*

Appendix 41: Examples of Codes and Data Extracts from each theme-staff views

RQ 4: What are the views of parents in a special school regarding the implementation of RSE?

Theme 1: Attitudes to RSE

Subtheme 1: Lack of Comfort with Topic

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Innocent Children	*"For children with SEN it is innocent, so keep it innocent"-parent survey* *"Let parents decide on sex related matters. Simples!"-parent survey*
Hard/tough Subject	*" It's a really hard subject"-parent interview* *"But when you are dealing with special needs because there isn't a great deal of understanding"-parent interview* *"It is such a tough subject really to try and get it right in the special needs, is just going to be massive really."-parent interview*
Cover our eyes	*"This is why in this country that we don't we don't do, it's you know, we cover our eyes up and it's very much, well this doesn't happen. It does happen."-parent interview*

Subtheme 2: Normalising

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Typical 'male' behaviour	*"I mean at home, he is a typical male anyway, he always has his hand in his pants"-parent interview*
Start early	*"I think the starting it from an early age is is good."-parent interview* *"This is why I think it needs to go right back from when these children are young"-parent interview* *"must start early - pre-puberty - so that children are prepared for body changes."-parent survey* *"I believe Rse or Phse should be taught from a much earlier age with body changes from age 9 or 10."-parent survey*
Normalise Emotions	*"But when you are dealing with special needs because there isn't a great deal of understanding but yet they are going to have those hormonal shifts and they are going to have those sexual urges, like teenagers and adults do."-parent interview* *"it's Ok and a absolutely normal part of growing up and and developing" -parent interview* *"And I think that the key areas are of it, would be when our thoughts, feelings and hormonal surges are acceptable and also that there is a*

	normal part of growing up these thoughts and feelings are normal."-parent interview

Theme 2: School RSE Practice

Subtheme 1: Resources

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Differentiation and adaptation of resources	*"It has been helpful reading some of the literature on the curriculum as to what has and what schools should be teaching. But from that reading how does that affect the child like Ben who is not neurotypical."-parent interview* *"How is any of that standard and taught in normal schools apply for children like Ben and children who have more of an awareness then what Ben does"-parent interview*
Using PECS/visuals	*"Sometimes like say like with Ben say you don't, how he doesn't really understand words but he's getting there with pictures. If that makes sense. You could have like, are you familiar with PECS? You could almost have a PECS Story book, of you know starting as a young child, all pictures of what your body could look like."-parent interview* *"So it's trying to make, give give them ways of understanding or maybe with visual stuff, with pictures and Story books and things like on how your body is going to change throughout the years"-parent interviews* *"He would very much benefit from looking at things, like PECs"-parent interview* *"You could then integrate the PECS with it, you could have like a naked picture in the bath or when you know getting dressed and when pictures are being outside you have clothes on pictures of inside you have clothes on."-parent interview*

Subtheme 2: Needs led

Example Codes	Example Quotes
consistency	*"Definitely consistency, because we needed to work both ways in both settings where he where he's at."-parent interview* *"then hopefully get the consistency with them as well. When Ben has consistency throughout with everything he responds well with."-parent interview* *"we need to ensure that consistency again. It's understanding how their teaching it so will are singing from the same sheet.-"parent interview* *"Making sure it's consistently taught every year because children forget what they are being taught"-parent survey*

repetition	*"I think that repetition yeah quite key with autism, how he picks up, you know it might take in 20 million times but he will eventually get it."-parent interview*
Each child has different needs	*"it's difficult because each child has different, different special needs, they have a very different way of learning"-parent interview*
Sensory needs	*'Ben is being moved into a class for September that is all about visual, visualisation and sensory. Ben is Ben is very much visual and quite sensory."-parent interview*

Subtheme 3: Experience of Staff

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Inexperienced MENCAP students	*"it is very difficult with Mencap because a lot of what Mencap is over the summer Holidays, it's a lot of people like kids that are on gap years. Yeah you have a couple of members of the staff that are the permanent very experienced people."-parent interview*

Theme 3: Parent Partnership

Subtheme 1: Information sharing

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Hard to find information	*"It's been hard to try and find anything out and at the minute I'm not too sure what they're teaching Ben regarding relationships"-parent interview* *"I feel very unaware of how and when it is taught at school, , i would like be given more information"-parent survey*
Not received information	*"Yeah we haven't really received any literature for home yet regarding at his early stages is he learning anything about relationships. I did speak to the school regarding finding out what they were currently teaching and they pinpointed me to the Local authority curriculum."-parent interview*

Subtheme 2: Links between settings

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Sharing practice/key words with home	*"they also send us the information as well this ends. Also pictures of what Ben's done in the week or what they've learnt in the class and there's also the general messages."-parent interview*
consistency	*"Definitely consistency, because we needed to work both ways in both settings where he where he's at."-parent interview* *"then hopefully get the consistency with them as well. When Ben has consistency throughout with everything he responds well with."-parent interview* *"we need to ensure that consistency again. It's understanding how their teaching it so will are singing from the same sheet.-"parent interview*

Links with other settings	*"he does sometimes going to Mencap in some of the summer Holidays yeah as well then Mencap will be on him as well, about keeping his clothes on."-parent interview*
Use of dojo	*"Have you seen their Dojo?..... like a WhatsApp type thing and I can message the teacher directly .....so you can just say this morning he's had this this is happened. She is then good at getting back to me and also she then contacts us if there's been, if Ben needs anymore nappies, wipes, if you need more snacks."-parent interview*

Theme 4: Key Topics for children with SEN

Subtheme 1: Safety

Example Codes	Example Quotes
consent	*"If you have two people that are consenting that's ok. But if you've got one that's, that's not consenting and then if you've got someone that's then can't control their emotions, is getting quite angry you can then see how, how incidents can happen."-parent interview*
Risk in childhood	*"It's okay when you you know you're one or two years old but Ben is getting bigger it's not okay to be naked."-parent interview* *"I think sex education should be about how to keep themselves safe before getting more complex (with learning difficulties the whole subject needs lots of support)"-parent survey*
Risk in adulthood	*"Because in my line of work, being a midwife, I I see where it leads to. I have seen women with special needs some of those quite significant giving birth. These people some of them that maybe would be mild special needs giving birth and having babies you know some of them can potentially look after these babies but not a lot of them can because and lots of them cannot look after themselves."-parent interview*
Safe implementation strategies	*"It's trying to find ways of ways of helping them to understand that yet those things are okay, but then it is trying to implement those things off safely."-parent interview*
Safe with emotions	*"it's making sure that they can understand these emotions and they can then be safe with these emotions and these feelings and these urges"-parent interview*

Subtheme 2: Understanding emotions

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Controlling emotions	*"The he struggles with his emotions as well because he he can't control his emotions and he doesn't understand those either"-parent interview* *"That it is okay to have these feelings but maybe sometimes not act on his feelings."-parent interview*
Understanding own emotions	*"The he struggles with his emotions as well because he he can't control his emotions and he doesn't understand those either"-parent interview*

	"it's making sure that they can understand these emotions and they can then be safe with these emotions and these feelings and these urges"-parent interview *"and then also the thoughts and feelings that he might have he might have happy ones sad ones and and also you know the about regarding feelings towards towards other people how his feelings might come across."-parent interview*
Understanding other's emotions	*"He doesn't, especially with autism as well, he doesn't get, he doesn't understand other people's emotions. He doesn't understand if they might be sad, if they might be angry, if they might be upset."-parent Interview* *"Especially when they get into relationships because going back to say like that people like Ben, where they don't they can't judge other people's emotions."-parent interview*

Subtheme 3: Appropriate Behaviour

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Appropriate Behaviour	*"it's then trying to find ways that is okay then to have no clothes on like when you're having a bath or when you're getting dressed. That's perfectly fine but we need to keep our clothes on because it's acceptable up to a certain age"-parent interview*
inappropriate Behaviour	*"It's been trying to make Ben understand that when you're sort of at school you're out in public that that's not really acceptable."-parent interview* *"It's okay when you you know you're one or two years old but Ben is getting bigger it's not okay to be naked."-parent interview* *"You know somethings are appropriate to act upon and sometimes they're not appropriate. Working as well with you know it's not appropriate when you're 14 years old to you know strip naked and go and sit in the park or you know it it's not appropriate to force yourself on somebody else".-parent interview* *"how to behave appropriately and how to deal with inappropriate sexual behavior"-parent survey*
Firm boundaries	*"We are always telling him no hand out, hand out, hand out, yeah so then he is getting better at stuff like that."-parent interview* *"But we are pretty firm with him as soon as he takes his clothes off right there back on yeah don't do this." –parent interview* *"he will generally do a lot more things at school because he knows he won't get away with it."-parent interview*

Subtheme 4: Changes

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Everyday life	*"They need to understand about every day life and how they got here"-parent survey*

Body changes	*"I think the key areas for the children with special needs is ……..and you know their bodies are going to be changing." –parent interview* *'But with Ben you know this could be how his body changes throughout the years"-parent interview* *"learning about their bodies, thoughts and emotions and like saying you know when they are coming to you know 11, 12, they're coming into puberty, is trying to really get that on board that your body you're going to go through changes you're going to have all these these thoughts and feelings."-parent interview* *"must start early - pre-puberty - so that children are prepared for body changes."-parent survey*

Subtheme 5: Relationships

Example Codes	Example Quotes
Difficulties with relationships in adulthood	*" I think the key areas for the children with special needs is trying to make them, as they mature into teenagers and adults that they are going to have thoughts and feelings regarding relationships"-parent interview*

Appendix 42: Pupil Views

Pupil Views of Which Topics Are Important in RSE

Important	Sometimes Important	Not Important
Keeping safe	How Babies Are Made	Pornography
Consent	Pregnancy	Masturbation
Intimacy	Menstruation	Kissing
Gender Identity	Sexuality	Sexting
Online Safety	Kissing	Wet Dream
Rape	Gender	
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	Abortion	
Personal Hygiene	Dating	
Sexual Health	Internet Dating	
Touching	Public Toilets	
Contraception	Body Changes	
Public/Private	Friendship	
Love	Relationships	
Marriage	Girlfriend	
Body Parts	Boyfriend	
	Sex	

Appendix 43: Themes, Subthemes and Codes for Group Members perceptions of being part of the group

RQ 1 What are group members' perceptions of being part of the group?

Codes from Artefacts	Codes from field notes	Codes from interviews	Subthemes	Themes
	02/03/20 openness and trust	Un-Judgemental safe space* 5/8 Support*5/8	Safe space*	Evolving Purpose and function of group
PATH, meeting 2,3, 4-clear next steps	O2/03/20 Next steps identified	Productive/purposeful* 5/6/8 Know next steps 2/3	Planning*	
PATH-What Helps? – training and time-sharing expertise-peer support Meeting 2 discussion of practice	02/03/20 considering practice 03/03/20 staff honesty around practice	Understanding* 2/3/6/7/8 Enforced time and space* 5/6 Espoused theory/considering practice 2/3/5/7	Time to think*	
PATH-What helps? Openness/trust/attunement Co-constructed agenda PATH/Meeting 2/3/4 discussion of stakeholder voice Meeting 2-indepth discussion of practice	20/10/19 pupil agency and advocacy 2/03/20 participatory planning with teacher for pupils co-constructed agenda and next steps	Collective voice*1/2/3/5/6/8 Stakeholder voice*1/2/3/5/7/8 Relationships between staff/pupils*2/3/7/8 Shared experiences 1/3/7/8 Differences in opinion 1/2/3/7/8	Collaboration *	
PATH-The Dream-Centre of Excellence NOW-sharing expertise		Transferability to other practice in school 2/3/4/6/7 Transferability in EP practice 4/7 Transferability to other special schools 4 New ways of working virtually 1/2/4	Transferability*	Positive Outcomes
Meeting 4-curriculum lead shared roadmap		Motivation and positivity* 1/2/4/5/8 Focus 1/2/3/6	A fresh perspective	

		Forming a plan 2/3/5/8		
PATH-The Dream-equipped with knowledge/confidence PATH-The Dream-links with parents/pupils-feedback from survey PATH-NOW-increase family partnership Meeting 2-discussion of policy and practice/planning focus group Meeting 3-sharing training/planning training Meeting 4 curriculum lead been on training Meeting 4-planning for curriculum parent workshop	22/10/19 pupil engagement 02/03/20 planning parent engagement developing practice in school 03/02/20 inconsistency in practice	Filtering to other staff 2/3/5/6 Developing practice in school 2/3/5/6/7 Keeping momentum going 6/7 Engaging parents/pupils 2/3/7 Elevated subject 1/7	Informing practice	
Meeting notes 3/4 with virtual notes	12/06/20 Practice adjusted to virtual working Research adjusted to virtual working August 2020 Virtual training for staff	Focused meeting 1/5 Ability to carry on through pandemic 1/2/3/4/5	Virtual working	Facilitating change*
Meeting 1,2,3,4 all attended by heads of departments	7/10/19 20/10/19 02/03/20 commitment engagement getting sign up 27/01/20 openness and humour	Commitment and engagement* 2/3/4/7 Getting buy in 2/3/7 Importance of subject 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8 Communication*2/3/7/8	Commitment and engagement*	
Meeting 3-EPS support/RSE webinar	20/11/19 researcher timelines 30/03/20	External person to Lead process 1/2/3/5/7 Legislative changes 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8 Ofsted 1/4/6	External change drivers	

	researcher driving process			
Meeting 3-Covid bubble challenges-less opportunity for connection Meeting 4-impact of covid-19 on pupil wellbeing/behaviour/parent engagement	16/03/20-20/03/20 30/03/20 23/04/30 12/06/20 adjust priorities-safety new ways of working pressures on families with SEN rapid change 17/06/20 less connection with parents pressures on families with SEN	Less connection with people/parents 2/3/4 Virtual working not ideal 2/4/5/6/7 New priorities 1/3/4 Adjusting to rapid change1/4/7	Covid 19	Resilience and reasonable adjustments*
Meeting 3-difficulty in engaging parents Meeting 3-planning but little follow up	18/12/19 negotiating accountability 27/01/20 02/03/20 lack of pathways 02/03/20 finding time for implementation 31/03/20 school-limited ownership	Limited Communication pathways with parents 2/3/7 Limited time for purposeful planning 2/3/6/8 accountability 2/5/6/7 Allowing time for adaptation/implementation 2/3/4/7 limited ownership 2/7	Systemic challenges *	
PATH-The Dream-Reduce incidents PATH-Keeping Strong-juggling curriculum	12/09/19 7/10/19 27/01/20 14/02/20 02/03/20 competing demands crisis 16-20/03/20	Always a crisis*1/4/7 A billion demands on your time*1/5/6/7/8 Another thing/meeting 1/2/3/5/6/8 Competing demands 1/5/6/7 Emotional stress 1/4/5	Psychological demands of working in a special school*	

	international crisis emotional stress 12/09/19 28/03/20 staff sickness			

*key theme from participant

Appendix 44: Themes, Subthemes and Codes for Group Members perceptions of the Role of an EP.

RQ 2 What are group members' perceptions regarding the role of an EP in a RSE working group?

Codes from Artefacts	Codes from Field notes	Codes from Interviews	Subthemes	Themes
	12/09/19-systemic authority for work in planning meeting 2/03/20 crisis brought into meeting	EP historically case work focused 1,7 EPs usually used for individuals/crisis 1 Systemic work not expected 5, 7, 8 Systemic work a luxury 1 Systemic work as getting something extra 8 EP as expert 7	Widening of EP role*7	Conceptualisations of the EP role
	12/09/19 gratitude	Respect 2 Appreciation 5 Gratitude 5,8 Valued role 8 Confidence and reassurance 2, 8	Gratitude for EP involvement* 5	
		EP's like gold dust 8 Hard to get hold of 1 Have limited time 1, 4, 8 Luxury 8	EP's as 'gold dust'	
	03/03/20 knowledge of systems	EPs have tools/skill set 4 EPs have knowledge of pupils 2, 3,4,6,7,8	EP's as well placed to support Systemic work*4	

		EPs have knowledge of school 4, 6, 7, 8		
	02/03/20 EP bringing new perspective	New perspective 8 EP as 'court jester' 1, 7 EP as devil's advocate 5 , 6 EP brought up issues 8	EP providing new perspective (outsider)	Value of EP as Group Member
Meeting 2/3/4 shared training and signposted to resources	02/03/20 knowledge of RSE	Signposting 2 Knowledge of RSE 3, 4, 7 Value of external support 3, 5, 8 Expertise of EP 3, 7, 8	EP as providing expertise (outsider)	
Meeting 2 honest and open discussion-humour	12/09/19 27/01/20 02/03/20 relaxed informal style 02/03/20 03/03/20 understands systems in school understands children's needs 12/06/20 EP understands systems	Staff can be open and honest in group 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 Understands the children's needs 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 Understands school as system 2, 4, 7, 8	EP knows the school (insider)	
	27/01/20 02/03/20 relaxed/open meeting	Safe space 5, 8 Nonjudgement 5, 7, 8 Support 5	Creation of supportive Safe Space *6/8	EP as facilitator
PATH meeting shared surveys	27/01/20 02/03/20	Gathering voice of stakeholders-	Empowering others*2	

Meeting 2/3/4 discussed engaging pupils and parents	sharing voice of stakeholder creating shared voice gathering voice of parents and pupils allowing people to find own solutions	pupil/parent/staff 2, 3, 4, 7 Bringing people together 2 Working partnership 2 Allowing people to find answers to their own issues 7		
EP as facilitator for PATH/meeting 2/3/4	27/01/20 gaging mood of room	Planning 1, 2, 3, 8 Unpick ideas 2, 8 Supporting discussion 2, 3, 7 Guiding group 2, 3, 5, 7 Remaining impartial 6, 7	EP harnessing group processes and facilitation	
PATH/meeting 2,3,4 EP arranged and facilitated Meeting 3- sharing webinars/planning training for staff	20/11/19 14/02/20 discussing timelines/ownership	Give timelines and deadlines 2, 7, 8 Leadership/ownership 2, 5, 6, 7 Supporting change in practice 3, 7	EP's as external change agents* 1/4/5	EPs and Change* 4
	27/01/20 knowledge of group psychology 27/05/20 reflecting on models of change	Understanding systemic change 4, 7 Understanding of developmental change 7	EP knowledge of change	
	14/02/20 reflecting with EP on practice 27/05/20 reflecting on EP role	EP reflections on own practice 4, 7 Staff change own practice 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Change to practice	

	03/03/20 reflection on own practice			

*Participant theme

Appendix 45: Themes, Subthemes and Codes for Group Members perceptions of the use of PATH

RQ 3: What are the group members' perceptions of using the PATH tool to plan for a RSE working group?

Codes from Artefacts	Codes from Field notes	Codes from Kolb reflections	Codes from Interviews	Subthemes	Themes
	22/01/20 18/06/20 working together as facilitators 27/01/20 confidence		Professional interest 4 Facilitator experience 7 Facilitator skills 4,7 Building skills 4 Working together as facilitators 4, 7	Facilitator competence	Importance of process and graphic facilitation
		Stay on task	Style supported conversation 2 Stay on task 2, 3 Focus 2,3,6* Taking pressure off group 1,2,6 Positivity about graphic facilitation 1, 6, 7 Guide/unpick 2 Examines options 1 Understand where you are 2	Facilitation benefits	
PATH artefact-pig picture/planning			Visuals provided clarity/supported 6,7 Introductions/explanations brought clarity 2,6,7 Visual brought views to life 7 Clarity 7 Clear vision 8	Clarity*	Setting a PATH for Change*
PATH artefact-the dream/ one year/goals		A good starting point	Moving forward 2 Goal/outcome orientated 3, 6 A good starting point 2 Working back 6 Identified vision 6 Clear end point 4,6	Future thinking	

PATH artefact-goals			Easy wins 6 Realistic 3 Achievable goals 3	Achievable goals	
PATH aritifact		Clear steps identified	Thought out approach 2 A PATH/track to follow 6,8 Action plan 6 Timeline 2 Structure 2, 6	Structure*	
	12/09/19-familiar informal style 27/01/20 use of props/snacks	Open dialogue	Relaxed 6 Bounce ideas 3 Engagement 2,7 Open dialogue 4, 7, 8	Creative	Harnessing Creativity and Energy
		Refreshing to work in SF way	Energy/life 5 Enthusiasm/passion 4, 7 Momentum 7,8 Excitement 2,6, 7, 8	Energy	
PATH-Action plan-only researcher sign up			Taking control of your own experiences*2,7, Needing someone to take ownership/lead 2/7 Need to put name to action 2,7 EP not shaping the work 7	Taking Ownership *	Collective voice
			Collective voice 2 Collaborative voice 7,8 Equal contribution 7 Working partnership 2, 7 Agreement 2, 7	Collaborative working*	
		Voice heard from across the school	Key staff members present 1, 2, 3, 5,6,7,8 Voice heard from across the school 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Key voices	
	25/11/19 17/01/20 22/01/20 developing scripts for PATH and providing information on PATH		Explaining SF practice 7 Providing information 6,7 Understanding process 2	Setting the scene	Practicalities
	27/01/20 laying out room	Snack and drinks	Snack and drinks 1, 6 Setting up the room 4, 7	Room preparation	

	snacks/drinks				
	20/11/19 negotiating time 27/01/20 staff tiredness	Time was too long	Not enough time 2 Time was too long 1, 3 Finding a good time 1	Time limitations	

*participant theme