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# CAPTURING WHAT IS OF VALUE TO CHILDREN: A STUDY EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES, ADVANTAGES AND ISSUES OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITH 5 AND 6 YEAR OLDS

**Doctor of Education**

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**Abstract**

Listening to young children in order to elicit their views, consider their perceptions, and act upon their ideas has become increasingly prominent in policy and research with children. Momentum has gathered in this area since the 1989 United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child and the Children's Act (2004) in the United Kingdom. These documents committed British policy to the inclusion of children's voices in matters and services which impact on their lives. Educational research which promotes children's voices tends to be dominated with projects which include older children, either in the upper stages of their primary education and above, or based in preschool and the transitional phase into schooling. This research gathers perceptions from three cohorts of children in Year 1 (aged 5-6) in England to find out what is important to them and considers the challenges and opportunities which these perceptions present.

Using hand-held video cameras as a method of data collection the children filmed what was important to them. A range of activities were developed to support the children in their filming. These included puppetry, drawing, guided tours, interviewing, play and opportunities for filming at home. The children and their class teachers were invited to review and discuss the video clips with the researcher. A thematic content analysis was used to code and categorise the data. A reflexive approach is woven into the methodological discussion and is followed throughout the analysis and findings of the research.

Findings indicate that the video methods used to capture children's perceptions present ethical and methodological challenges. Despite this, the methods are advantageous in enabling a range of multi-faceted and complex relationships to come to the fore. Issues of personal 'things', space, rules and boundaries, both at home and at school draw attention to the environmental, physical and non-physical 'containment' which impacts on children's lives. Teachers' responses to the children's video footage were influenced by their professional epistemology and experiences.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction to topic and methodology

In England, pupil involvement in education is one aspect of personalised learning and citizenship (Ruddock and McIntyre, 2007). It is also embedded in the Children's Act (2004) which established a legal requirement to '…consult the wishes and feelings of children when assessing their physical, emotional and educational needs' (Greig et al., 2007:96 cited in Fisher, 2011b). This complemented the Every Child Matters agenda (Change for Children: DfES, 2004) which aimed to support the achievement of, 'children's happiness, welfare and achievement'. Roberts suggests these two key documents 'bring listening to children from the margins to the mainstream' (2008: 260).

The project explored in this thesis reflects on the methodological and practical challenges of doing research with children that captures their views, ideas and perceptions. It aims to support children's rights through listening to young children at an age where they are have been viewed as incompetent and are unable to express their views (Smith, 2011). Janzen (2008) in her review of childhood research literature over a period of one year suggests that there is a lack of literature which was child focussed and concluded that a contemporary image of the 'postmodern child as a knower within studies remains limited' (2008:209). This thesis aims to address these two issues.

By gathering children's perceptions as active participants, through reflection of their communication and perspectives it supports the notion that a deeper understanding about their lives can develop with children as active participants. Cosaro (2005) suggests that, 'exploring the ways in which the youngest children show their likes and dislikes should add to the development of a culture of respectfully 'tuning-in' to children' (2005: 4). Their voices are central to the discussions as Underdown and Barlow

(2007) state, ‘we can only really know ‘what is best’ by tuning into a child’s individual preferences and giving these consideration’ (2007:162).

Through active, child-centred approaches to the methods of data collection and a reflexive approach towards the data analysis the value of listening to children about what is important to them is explored. The commitment to reflexivity is central to the research, which Davis (1998) argues is important on both my own role and assumptions within the research, but also on the ‘choice and application’ of the methods used (Punch, 2002:4).

Through active, child-centred approaches to the methods of data collection and a reflexive approach towards the data analysis the value of listening to children about what is important to them is explored. It is from these perspectives that the research was framed.

### 1.2. Chapter outline

This introductory chapter establishes the focus, aims and context for this research project. It introduces the research aims, my own background, and the main research questions as they evolved. It also presents the theoretical and analytical frameworks within which the research is situated. The analytical framework is developed directly from the research questions and has been used to guide the research analysis and discussions about the findings. After briefly discussing the importance and relevance of this research, the chapter concludes with an overview of the remaining sections presented in the thesis.

### 1.3. Research aim and purpose

The aim of this research project is to explore, and thus gain insight from, children’s perceptions about what is important to them in their lives. Through capturing ‘clips’ of their lives on video cameras, three cohorts of Year 1 children (aged 5-6) were encouraged to share what was valuable or important in their individual lives.

The purpose of investigating this aim is to consider the benefits of interpreting the insights of children in this age group and to explore the opportunities and challenges these perceptions may present in informing and potentially supporting their educational provision.

The research draws on the concepts of 'listening to children's views' influenced by contemporary early childhood educationalists (Broadbent, 2003; MacNaughton et al., 2003; Dahl and Aubrey, 2005; Nutbrown and Clough, 2009) and developed from research and philosophies which explore 'children's rights' agendas (Pascal and Bertram, 2009; Santer and Griffiths, 2007). The 'children's rights' perspectives have become increasingly prominent in both British and International policy since 1989, when the United Nations' Convention for the Rights of the Child was signed. The ethos of listening to children and working with their views is one of the key elements of the curriculum for children in England up to the age of 5 (Early Years education).

Early Years education in England is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum developed by the former labour government in 2008 (DCSF, 2008) remains in place by the current coalition government (Department for Education). Within the documentation, there is a commitment to listening and observing individual children's interests in order to inform teaching and learning. This places a responsibility on the practitioner to actively engage with and observe children in the educational setting in order to inform their pedagogy and understanding of the children they work with. In England on completion of the EYFS (DCSF, 2008), at the age of 5, children move from the EYFS (DCSF, 2008) and embark on a new curriculum - the National Curriculum (DfES, 2000). This represents a move from the 'Reception' to 'Year 1' of their primary education. There appears to be a contrast between the two phases in the ways in which children's views are woven into pedagogy and practice. The National Curriculum (DfES, 2000) establishes set criteria, known as 'learning outcomes' as expectations for the children to achieve in specific subject areas. These outcomes are used to plan the teaching and learning within

schools. At the time in which this research began and the data was collected, these outcomes were in place. This was alongside a discourse of 'children's rights' (UNCRC, 1989), 'personalised learning' (DCSF, 2008) and an improved understanding of culturally responsive teaching (Young, 2010). Within the primary curriculum this related closely to the Excellence and Enjoyment documentation (DCSF 2005), which emphasised the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) which remains current policy (DfE, 2012). These were relevant during the Labour government's years. Since a change in government to a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition in 2010, the new government has not changed the focus of the EYFS or the Year 1 curriculum.

Osler and Starkey (2005) suggest that the emphasis is on 'encouragement' for children to be consulted in relation to their schooling rather than an 'obligation'. As a consequence, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that a democratic dialogue has been achieved across the educational system. There is no statutory framework for the participation of children in the decision making processes within schools (Osler and Starkey, 2005). There is no evidence to suggest that there are widespread, systematic and productive processes which enable children's personal views, interests and issues which impact on their lives to be woven into their educational provision within children's first year of their National Curriculum experience. This is in contrast to children's early years experience under the EYFS (DCSF, 2008), which is based around children's holistic needs, taking into account their individuality, interests and personal development. Indeed the EYFS states that 'differences are appreciated, everyone feels included' (DCSF, 2008 para 2.1)

This research is developed within a framework of the rights and participation agendas and the ethos of the Early Year's curriculum. The project questions how the insights and reflections captured by children might be beneficial to their educational experiences in their first year of the National Curriculum. It explores the potential issues which arise from

gathering and interpreting children's views and reflects on teachers' responses to children's perceptions.

### 1.4. Research context

'Early Years' and 'Early Childhood' are commonly used terms within the early phase of children's education, although they can be interpreted in differing ways. Within the context of this thesis, the term 'early years' refers to children and their educational experiences in England, up to the age of 5 years old. This marks the end of the EYFS (DCSF, 2008) and the end of their first year of school, known as the Reception year. 'Early childhood', within the context of this thesis, refers to all children up to the age of 7 years and 11 months. In England, this includes children in Year 1, of the National Curriculum (DfES, 2000) the age group of children participating in this research project. In England, children in Year 1 and 2, in the early childhood phase are grouped together and collectively called 'Key Stage 1'. This first stage indicates the first of the 4 stages of the National Curriculum which they progress through up to the age of 16.

Much of the literature which informs this research, both methodological and theoretical, is drawn from early years and early childhood contexts. It is also beneficial to consider a wider lens from which to view this research, and so there has also been an exploration of policy, curriculum and pedagogical theories and research from England and where appropriate, internationally. This enables understanding of alternative approaches to some of the issues raised by the areas explored within the research.

### 1.5. Researcher's background and interests

My interest in this area of early childhood research has developed alongside a developing career in education. My training as a teacher in 2000 under the new primary National Curriculum (DfES, 2000) meant that Numeracy and Literacy strategies dominated my training as a teacher. In a 9 month teacher training programme I gained the qualification of Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and was eligible to teach all

primary aged children with, in my case, an ‘upper primary’ (Key Stage 2) focus. Within the training programme, there was little time to engage with the theoretical underpinnings of education, or to gain a deep insight into the wealth of early years and developmental theory and research. The course was dominated by a focus on teaching styles, content and knowledge of the core subjects, particularly English and maths (McNamara, Brundrett and Webb, 2008).

At a time when early years teaching was becoming more play-based and learner-centred, teachers of the primary curriculum were being introduced to a ‘prescriptive teacher-centred formula for the education of six year olds’ (Fisher, 2009:133). The undertaking of a Masters course which I embarked upon in my second year of teaching gave me a greater understanding of some key educational theories which had not been explored in any detail within my teacher training. This coupled with further practical experience teaching children in Key Stage 1 and the ‘Early Years’ in school contexts fuelled my interest in the ways in which children learn and how they are taught. A combination of practice based and academic experiences led to questioning my own understanding of pedagogy and practice. I wanted to advance my professional practice by developing a greater understanding of the theory underpinning it, to become confident in knowing *why* particular techniques did or did not work. Jones, Pickard and Stronach (2008) have identified, in the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander 2010), that there needed to be a systematic connection between policy and practice in issues which relate to children’s learning and motivation, rather than what they describe as a ‘naïve’ kind of ‘what works?’ rationale underpinning educational practice. This reflects the transition which I continue to strive to achieve.

Thus, this thesis began, in many ways, as a reflection on the professional tensions which I felt in managing a very prescriptive curriculum with children as young as 5 years old in practice. In response to these reflections, the concept for the project and the key questions were developed.

### 1.6. Research questions

The specific research questions I started out with were:

1. What do children in year 1 present as important in their lives?

2. How do teachers respond to the data collected by children about what is valuable in their lives?

These two key research questions guided the data collection phase of the research project. The findings gathered and evaluated were then considered in order to reflect on the implications for practice. Therefore an additional research question became relevant:

3. What possibilities arise for the benefit of children's schooling from gathering, listening to and interpreting children's views about what is of value in their lives?

In the context of this research, this last question is important as it contributes to discussions which relate to the value of listening to children's voices for supporting and developing provision for children and educational practice.

### 1.7 Theoretical framework: Constructions of childhood and the place for young children in research

Listening to young children in order to elicit their views, consider their perceptions, and act upon their ideas has become increasingly prominent in policy and research with children. Momentum has gathered in this area since the 1989 United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and the Children's Act (2004) in the UK, which both committed to the inclusion of children's voices in matters and services which impact on their lives. This commitment has opened up many opportunities for participatory research with children (Woodhead and

Faulkner, 2011), which has become an important focus of mainstream educational and social research (Christensen and James, 2000; Holmes, 1998; Lindsay, 1999).

The influence of participatory approaches has had a positive impact on research with children in the first years of their education, enriched by children's visual and verbal narratives (Clark, 2011) while also presenting methodological challenges (Burnett and Myers 2002; Carter 2006; Marsh and Thompson, 2011). At the pre-school and transitional stage of children's lives, children's perceptions have been used to support and improve children's educational experiences (Dockett and Perry, 2001) and enhance theoretical understanding (Brooker, 2002, Clark and Moss, 2005) and children's views about their daily lives have begun to be researched (Dyer, 2002).

The increased interest and engagement in participatory techniques have been developed alongside a discourse which considers *why* educational research should actively seek to engage with children in research (Christensen & James, 2008, Dockett et al., 2011, Harcourt et al., 2011), supported by children's rights agendas (Nutbrown, 2011; Santer and Griffiths, 2007).

The development of participatory research is one of the contributing factors which has helped to redefine and readdress what 'childhood' is, not just from external, adult perspectives, but enhanced by work *with* children (Devine, 2003). This recognises a shift from research *about* children, stemming from psychological research which has been described as seeing children as 'objects of study' (Hill et al., 1996) to a children's rights and childhood studies paradigm which 'look up' (Mayall, 2002) at children's lives. 'Looking up' considers children's lives from their perspectives as opposed to 'looking down' from an adult's view.

Dahlberg et al., (2007) suggest there are various traditional constructs of the child. One such construct regards the child as a reproducer of

knowledge and identity. This construction considers that children's worlds are built up from lived experiences. In contrast, an alternative view of the child as 'biologically determined' has been influenced by Piaget's theories of development. This theory suggests that children's development is established through predetermined stages and that learning is a linear process towards the acquisition of logic (cited in Penn, 2004). Piaget's (cited in Penn, 2004) view of the child considers deficits of children's abilities as a starting point, in direct contrast to contemporary views of childhood which begin with what children can do, rather than what they are unable to do. Contemporary constructions and post modern perspectives challenge the traditional notions which compare children according to universal norms (Yelland et al., 2008:82) and do not view childhood as static, but as socially constructed (Smith, 2011).

The study of children which focuses on them as 'active agents' (Corsaro, 2005:4), rather than as passive recipients, has developed from disciplines originating from a sociological background. A children's rights perspective takes the notion of active agents further, as a way of exploring previously unheard stories (Freeman, 2007). These perspectives have informed and supported the development of childhood studies which can be integrated with sociocultural theories informed by work by Vygotsky (1934, 1978) which consider that children construct their own understandings with others (Smith, 2002, 2011, James and Prout, 1990). As Smith succinctly states; 'childhood studies emphasizes the social construction of childhood and its embeddedness in social and cultural contexts' (2011: 16).

Contemporary constructions of childhood are visible in some participatory research, evident through the ways in which researchers work with children (Janzen, 2008). This can be determined through the expectations that researchers, practitioners and society have of children (James and Prout, 1990, Lansdown, 2005). These constructions of childhood are not always overtly stated by researchers (Janzen, 2008), but can emerge, or be interpreted from the assumptions which researchers make about children.

The above perspective supports some of the post modern ways of working with children suggested by Yelland et al., (2008). This moves towards the consideration of collaborative ways of knowing and learning. Taking this stance, the responsibility of capturing children's perspectives becomes the task of the researcher who should seek to find effective ways of communicating with children (Munford and Saunders, 2001). This approach includes the co-construction of knowledge and values the strengths and capabilities that are characteristic of the diverse 'lifeworlds (family and community experiences) of children' (Yelland et al., 2008: 82), which includes acknowledging and working with the uniqueness of individuals.

### 1.8 Analytic Framework for this study

The analytical framework is developed from my research questions on page 14 and was informed and developed through the exploration of literature in chapter 2. The three themes which make up this analytical framework are embedded within the research project.

1. Children's lives

This theme relates specifically to the first research question- '*what do children in Year 1 present as important in their lives'.* It explores what children distinguish as of value in their lives considering both educational and non-educational distinctions such as family, peers, belongings and schooling.

2. The role and impact of the teacher in supporting individuals

This second theme relates closely to the second research question- '*how do teachers respond to the data collected by children about what is valuable in their lives'.* It considers how the role of the teacher can impact on children's lives. It explores issues of educational practice, teachers'

attitudes and interpretations of children's views. It reflects on the challenges and opportunities which arise in practice, relating to the context of this research and other research explored within the thesis.

3. The individual child and the 'community' needs, particularly within school contexts

This final theme considers issues relating to being supported as an individual within early childhood contexts and the emphasis on community and cohesion which was present in educational policy. This theme explores curriculum structures as well as international and British policy emerging from educational and children's rights agendas. It also considers the tensions between supporting both individuals and communities within schooling contexts. This theme can be connected to all of the research questions as it considers children's interests, the place for individuality and the importance of being part of a community, considering implications for teaching and schools in meeting both individual and community needs.

### 1.9. Outline of Chapters within this thesis

Following this introductory chapter which has outlined the principles of the research there are a further 5 chapters. A brief description of each chapter is given below.

Chapter 2, the literature review, offers a scaffold for the key discussions which underpin this project. It explores curricula contrasts and issues which emerge from supporting both individual and community needs reflecting on the role of educators. It considers theoretical and research based evidence to develop discussions about good practice and the value of the teacher's role in supporting and developing children within an educational context.

Chapter 3 of this thesis outlines the methodology and methods used in the research project. It offers an explanation of the participatory methods, techniques and approaches which were used developed through a reconnaissance stage, undertaken in order to inform the design of study for the main project.

Chapter 4 outlines the analysis processes and reflects on issues which emerged from the video data produced by the children and discussions and interviews with them. This is followed by two chapters which explore the findings from the results.

Chapter 5 analyses the children's video work. It explores the key themes from the recordings concerned with relational pedagogy and the non-relational aspects of the children's lives which were captured, such as toys, animals and belongings. The analysis and discussions are presented with transcriptions of video 'clips' in order to contextualise the findings and offer examples of the children's recordings throughout the chapter.

Chapter 6 presents and explores the findings which relate to interviews and conversations held with the children and their teachers participating in the project. It explores two key categories of 'physical space' and 'rules' which emerged from discussions with the children. Through discussions of teachers' responses to the children's video footage key issues are addressed which relate to the complexity of listening to the voices of individual children in a classroom context.

Chapter 7 concludes with a reflection on the research project as a whole. It draws together the debates and discussions which were brought to the fore in the research and draws the key questions to a close. Suggestions are made about the development of the research, stemming from this project and ideas are projected about potential areas of further investigation.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review: Curricula, the role of the adult and the place for the individual in early childhood schooling

### 2.1 Outline of chapter

Key debates within the relevant literature, which informed and developed this thesis are explored within this chapter. These have been organised into three sections. They are:

1. Curriculum structures and transitions in early education
2. The role of the adult in supporting children's early education
3. Supporting community and individuality within curricula frameworks

The first section, 'curriculum structures and transitions' is explored in order to give a context for the construction and context of English schooling for children in Year 1, aged 5-6 years old. It explores the contrasts between the formal, subject driven approach in Year 1 in comparison to the learner centred early year's educational framework experienced in pre-school and Reception classes. The differences between the two curricula provide opportunities for debates to emerge about the ideas and beliefs behind each curricula. This section provides the educational context needed in order to contribute to an understanding of 'children's lives' the first key theme from the analytical framework.

The 'role of the adult' in supporting children in their early education is investigated in the second section within the chapter. It builds on from the curriculum and policy issues which will be explored in the first two sections of the chapter. In addition, it considers the complex and dynamic relational pedagogy which exists between children and adults in early childhood settings explored through the scrutiny of research in this area. This section relates to and informed the second theme of the analytical framework, '*the role and impact of the adult in supporting individuals'*.

The third section of this chapter specifically explores the notion of supporting the needs of an individual within an education system while

also considering the nature of community cohesion and cooperative learning. This is directly connected with the third theme identified in the analytical framework. It considers policy and practice which focuses on supporting the individual child, such as through 'personalised learning' approaches and the tensions between supporting children as unique and as individuals who are part of a wider community. It reflects on the implementation of such policies in practice.

## Section 1: Curriculum structures and transitions

### 2.2 Curriculum structures

In England, when children start formal education in school, they experience the Early Years Foundation Stage (hereafter, EYFS) (DCSF 2008). The EYFS (DfES, 2008) is mandatory in all pre-school settings for children from birth up to the end of the Reception year in school, their first year of schooling. This means that when the children begin school, they are experiencing a continuation of the same curriculum that they had accessed in their pre-school education. The EYFS (DCSF, 2008) curriculum could be described as 'learner centred' (Schiro, 2008) although it is also often more specifically referred to as 'child centred' as it takes a holistic perspective on children's learning and development. Here, teachers are meant to work with children to meet their specific needs depending on their age and stage of development and based on children's interests aiming to create a balance between child-initiated activities and adult-initiated learning.

This pedagogical approach to working with children reflects the open-ended and responsive nature of the current English early year's curriculum. Planning, assessment and curriculum organisation is centred on meeting the children's needs, emphasising the 'unique child', one of four key themes which underpin the curriculum.

In England, the Early Years Foundation Stage (DCSF, 2008) ends when children enter Year 1 (aged 5). This is in contrast to Wales, where children experience the Foundation Stage for an additional year and other European countries such as Sweden where formal schooling begins at 7. Although chronological age is the main factor for children's move into school in England, this varies between countries. Within Northern Europe and Northern America, school starting age is specified but the uniqueness of the individual child and developmental stage determines the curriculum. However, in a review of international early years curricula (Bertram and Pascal, 2002), most of the European countries which held this view also 'chronologically defined the universal entitlement to a standardised curriculum, somewhat contrary to the claims of a developmentally appropriate and individually responsive early childhood provision' (Bertram and Pascal, 2002:7). This conflict indicates that although a particular philosophy or practice may appear to be in place, what is written/verbalised is not necessarily experienced. Thus policy rhetoric and practical reality may differ.

The practical 'reality', as the review (ibid) suggests is largely that the dominance of 'ages and stages' within children's early years education remains in place and guides what happens in educational practice, despite child-centred curricula being established internationally. It is widely accepted that curriculum models reflect the beliefs and values about what is beneficial educationally and developmentally for children (Wood and Attfield, 2005). However many of these beliefs and values are historical and do not necessarily reflect contemporary needs (Duffy, 2002). The influence of 'ages and stages' within the educational system can be traced back to practice established during industrialisation when organisations and institutions needed for the first time, to structure roles according to ages (Rogoff, 2003). The relevance of this approach is contested. Fleer (2008) calls for this assumption about children's development to be reviewed suggesting that children's chronological age is not a reliable criteria for determining a child's ability.

In England, the rhetoric of EYFS (DCSF, 2008) is that the curriculum is flexible and child-centred. Although there are specific and age-related milestones included in the curriculum documentation, this is intended to support practitioners and guide their work, rather than act as a step-by-step approach to teaching. There is some conflict with the child-centred approach to learning and teaching in the EYFS (DCSF, 2008), as there are outcomes that children are expected to meet by the end of this curriculum phase, at the end of their Reception year in school. The outcomes were intended to be a tool for planning curriculum and measuring progress (Tymms and Merrell, 2009) although they are now used to predict future educational attainment. Penn (2008) argues this has put pressure on teachers, by using the outcomes as evidence of the quality of the provision. These outcomes have been campaigned against (Open EYE online) as it has been suggested that the use of outcomes mitigates the holistic and child-centred ethos which it encourages.

The ethos of the EYFS (DfES, 2008) curriculum tends to lean towards a 'student centred' approach to learning, of the kind illustrated by Middlewood and Burton (2001) below. Their 'continuum of pressures' on the curriculum creates an opportunity to consider how the curriculum is structured and offers a tool for reflection about the structure of early childhood curricula in England.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Student centred | ◄----------► | Subject focused |
| Process | ◄----------► | Content |
| Classroom led | ◄----------► | State controlled |
| Open ended | ◄----------► | Target driven |

(Middlewood & Burton, 2001:21)

When children in England complete the Foundation Stage, they move into Key Stage One of the National Curriculum (DfES, 1999). At this stage, in Year 1, children are taught predominantly in subject specific areas and learning is planned from predetermined objectives, thus their education

moves across to the ‘subject focussed’ section of Middlewood and Burton’s model above (2001:21).

The pedagogical approach changes dramatically in Year 1, from a play-based and often child-initiated approach to learning, to an adult-led, outcomes-based approach. In Key Stage 1 learning is planned using prescribed objectives which tend to lead to more teacher-initiated activities and learning. This is an approach which Robinson (2008) argues has no basis in child development research. At 7 years old children have a developmental spurt, which leads to them being able to manage more adult-led ways of learning (Fisher, 2011:33).There is other evidence to indicate that at 7 rather than 5, a change in pedagogy is more appropriate. The Rose review (Rose, 2009) findings indicated that a closer connection between the foundation stage curriculum and Year 1 curriculum is needed. The report also suggested that there should be a gradual move from play based learning into formal learning. This supports one of the proposals from the Cambridge Review (Alexander, 2009), that formal learning should not begin until a child is 6 years old, a year later than current practice in England.

Discussions about how children should be taught and the appropriate time to introduce more adult-directed approaches is much debated (David, 1999; Fearn, 1999). These discussions raise concerns that formal education too soon can have a negative impact on children’s experiences of school (Adams et al., 2004). Moss (1999) suggests that current early years education is underpinned by a rationale for preparation for schooling. This preparation for schooling, it is argued, has led to curriculum content that ‘emphasises subject-related content and has resulted in early years practitioners using more formal teaching approaches’ (Soler and Miller 2003: 64). One such example of this pressure was felt with the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies (in 2000) which introduced formal teaching approaches into a play-based curriculum, which has been described as a ‘contradictory professional context’ (Urban, 2008). This introduction

‘appeared to conflict with the broader curriculum guidance for the foundation stage’ (Bertram and Pascal, 2002: 19), and undermined children’s knowledge through its prescriptive nature (Bennett, 2000).

This debate continues (see Wyse et al., 2010) in relation to the updated Primary National Strategy (DfES, 2006) which is an amalgamation of the previously separate documents, offering additional guidance for teachers. The ‘top down’ organisation of such structured curriculum documentation has meant that the willingness to make change is unable to move beyond an ‘idea’ (Williams, 2010).

It is the ‘top down’ organisation and the learning outcomes and targets which Osberg and Biesta (2009 in Lenz Taguchi, 2010) suggest underpins contemporary education. As a consequence they argue that the educational system has been seen as linear and one dimensional, based on representational knowledge. Lenz Taguchi (2010) suggests that this has an impact not only on learning and pedagogy but also on the needs of the community. He states:

> ‘The more complex things become the more we seem to desire processes of reduction and thus increase control, but such reduction strategies simultaneously make us risk shutting out the inclusion and social justice we say that we want to achieve’. (Lenz Taguchi 2010:14).

The policy discourses which exist suggest that individual children may be constructed by practitioners ‘in terms of the need to raise achievement on one hand and promote inclusion on the other’ (Nutbrown and Clough, 2009:194). Lenz Taguchi (2010) suggests that today’s education system is based on liberal humanist theories which rely on the individual to make autonomous decisions in order to achieve their potential while being a responsible citizen.

The introduction of ‘citizenship’ as a discrete area of learning into primary education was not included in the main publication of the 2000 National Curriculum (DfES, 1999). However the need for understanding individual and community needs and the value of being a responsible citizen is not a new concept. In 1916 Dewey ([1916] 2002) stressed the need for a democratic dialogue and shared values where children and their teachers were encouraged to look beyond the school and country’s needs. He also placed considerable importance on the quality of interpersonal relationships with the school institution. This is echoed in more contemporary theory, such as Osler and Starkey (2005) who suggest that a ‘cosmopolitan citizenship’ is needed which promotes learning that helps young citizens to both common humanity and ‘make connections between their lives and those of others and operate effectively in contexts of cultural diversity and change’ (2005:78).

Relationships are central to teaching and learning in constructivist learning studies (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Smith (2003) suggests that an approach to teaching and learning which takes a centrifugal or rhizomatic logic supports both the individual in being able to make decisions which can also enhance the community’s needs. Such an approach starts at the middle and branches outwards, rather than with predetermined outcomes. Smith (2003 in Lenz Taguchi, 2010:19) states, ‘Such logic forces us to be in a state of affirmation and positivity in the creation and renegotiation of goals and values, relevant to the local context rather than a state of negation about unreachable universal goals’. As a consequence, ‘the learning processes that ensue – processes based on listening, curiosity, openness and willingness to change – concern adults as much as children in participating and negotiating contexts’ (Åberg and Lenz Taguchi, 2005). Such thinking is based on assumptions of being in a mutual state of coexistence and interdependence, both in relation to other human beings as well as in relation to the material world around us (Lenz Taguchi, 2010:19).

## 2.3 Curriculum transitions

The discussion of transitions within the context of this thesis is important as it is an area of research which has been successful in listening to children on issues which impact on their lives. Participatory transitional research is significant as it represents children's views directly before their entry into and in some cases throughout their Year 1. Through the study of young children's transitions into formal education, children's view's about what is important or of value is explored in the context of schooling. Methodological and practice based developments which have had positive impact on the development of theory and practice in early childhood research are also written about in detail (Clark and Moss, 2001, 2005; Brooker, 2002; Fabian, 2002). Such methods have informed and influenced the development of this project.

As children move into Year 1, many of the areas of research explored through transitional based studies remain relevant in Year 1. The conflicts between the pedagogies, school starting ages and the formality of learning is explored in much of the literature which investigates early years transitions. These are all issues which underpin both the rationale of this research project and informed the methodology and the analytical framework.

The transitions within children's lives are seen as increasingly important. Within early childhood research the transitions from nursery to school have been well documented (Brooker, 2002; Ellis, 2002; Fabian, 2000, 2002, HMI, 2004). Successful transitions in the move to formal schooling have been linked to children's readiness for school, which can be associated with their emotional, physical, intellectual and psychological ability to settle into school (Yeboah, 2002:52). The transition has long lasting effects on children's future interests, development and achievement (Ramey and Ramey, 1998). Research by Broström (2007) indicated that transitional experiences may have an impact on children's motivation for learning, as well as a short or long term impact on their development and learning, especially if negative aspects of the transition are not addressed (Ramey

and Ramey, 1998). In the case of some children whose circumstances may be challenging due to their particular needs, then transitions have also been described as ‘traumatic’ (Broström, 2002).

Parents are affected by their children’s transitions and contribute to the impact of the level of success of a transition (Dunlop, 2003). Concerns raised by parents about the differences between the two curricular approaches used in Reception and Year 1 of children’s schooling could have a negative impact on their child’s attitude towards schooling if the change in approaches was too dramatic (Fisher, 2009).

When children move from the child centred approach of the EYFS (DfES, 2008) into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (DfES, 1999) the transition has been observed as both a pedagogical change (Bennett, 2000) as discussed, but also more broadly within children’s schooling experiences, which included environmental changes, a shift in the social relationships and different expectations in addition to the curriculum content (Stephenson and Parsons, 2007).

The discontinuities between the transitions into year 1 remain largely unexplored (Saunders et al., 2005). This is in contrast to the wealth of transition research conducted and reported on children’s move into Reception from preschool and ways of making entry into school a positive experience (see Docket and Perry, 2001 Fabian, 2002). By comparison, there has been comparatively little about the transition from one curriculum to the next (Saunders et al., 2005). This is despite claims by Stephenson and Parsons (2007), that this is an important transition in the lives of children which represents a ‘major shift in children’s experiences of school, but passes almost unnoticed’ (2007, 137).

In 2004 the Office for Standards in Teaching and Education Development (hereafter Ofsted) produced a report into the transitional period between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This report indicated that there was often an ‘abrupt’ transition between the two phases. A similar finding

was reported by research conducted by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in 2002, (Ellis, 2002) which reported that 44% of respondents of early childhood teachers, from a sample of 550, found it difficult to make links between the Foundation Stage Curriculum and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The respondents stated that the differences between the approaches were stark. This supports findings by Fisher (2009), whose research also identified that practitioners expressed concerns with a number of issues around the transition. These included the differences being too 'pronounced' as the two curricula do not expressively allow for a gradual transition. Fisher (2009) reported that practitioners felt guilty about the all or nothing nature of the change.

Views from educators in Quick et al., (2002) also indicated that the transitions between the two approaches were considered, by staff, as too dramatic. This research with 799 head teachers and 752 Reception class teachers found that one of the main issues identified was the different pedagogies used in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 which impacted on the transition between the two phases. In particular, there were concerns about the children who had not met the curriculum 'goals' established by the foundation stage, and concerns that children in key stage 1 were not all able to adjust to the formalised methods of teaching and more academic demands placed upon them in Year 1.

Ofsted's evaluative report (2004) found that while parents did understand and expect their children to undertake more formal learning experiences with the transition, they were concerned about their children's happiness and about them being 'forced' into learning in a more formal way before they were ready. In Fisher's research (2009) parental concerns varied, with responses falling into two categories at the end of a spectrum. One group shared concerns of teachers about the formality of the learning, and at the other end of the continuum, parents who approved of the formal learning associated with Year 1. Fisher (2009) noted that of the 62% of negative responses about learning in Year 1 84% came from parents of boys.

Perhaps, paradoxically, due to concerns that children might not be ready for more formal education in Year 1 or earlier, formal learning begins earlier than intended in an attempt to prepare children for what is to come (Adams et al., 2004). Pressures which exist for teachers to meet targets is suggested as one of the contributing factors which may lead to this shift in pedagogy, 'narrowing the balanced and broad curriculum that is intended' (Nightingale and Payne in Taylor and Woods, 2005:144). This is supported by Wrigley's (2003) suggestions that the curriculum outcomes and structure which are used to compare and measure schools put pressure on teachers to use formal teaching approaches in order for the children to meet school targets.

The pressures on teachers to 'prepare' children for formal learning may also come from other colleagues (Adams et al., 2004). Adams et al., (2004) identified that many teachers working in the Foundation Stage face pressures from Year 1 teachers to develop particular skills such as numeracy, literacy and with school routines, skills which are particularly prominent within the Key Stage 1 curriculum, rather than Foundation Stage to prepare them for the expectations in Year 1.

The strain on early childhood teachers and practitioners to prepare children for formal learning was also acknowledged in transition research funded by the NfER (Saunders et al., 2005) and elsewhere (Bertram and Pascal, 2002, Alexander, 2010). The NfER research report entitled 'a study of the transition from the foundation stage to Key Stage 1' (Saunders et al., 2005), used interviews with children, teachers and parents. It raised concerns from its findings about the formality of teaching in Year 1 and the expectations on the children to sit and listen for long periods of time (Saunders et al., 2005). Similar concerns were also raised elsewhere (Beverton, 2000; English et al., 2002).

Children shared their views on the transitional period in the Saunders et al., (2005) research, and on the changes they perceived in their classroom experiences. The terminology used by the children could be seen as representative of their experiences in Year 1. By the end of the Year 1,

children were able to distinguish what was meant by work and play and for many children, Year 1 represented ‘hard work’. Many children identified a loss of choice in Year 1, a lack of play resources, particularly construction and role play (Saunders et al., 2005). Other research has raised similar concerns about the pedagogical transition in Year 1 and how children view their learning (Bennett, 2000), identity (Fisher, 2009) and self esteem (Yelland et al., 2008).

The transition into Year 1 in Bennett’s (2000) small scale research found that for some children there was regression in previous knowledge and understanding as they moved into Year 1 from Reception. The change in pedagogy and the impact of this on individual children is also explored by Yelland et al.’s (2008) research which, through case studies of individual children, gives insight into their transitional experiences. Yelland et al.’s (2008) research investigated children’s use of technology and multi-literacies within a preschool setting, and moving into schooling (at the age of 6). One particular child, a confident child in preschool and able to work at good standards became, in the school environment, anxious about being ‘correct’, impacting on his confidence and perceived ability. It was noted that there was little opportunity for group, co-constructed learning, with children’s interests (and play) being incorporated into the school day outside of the curriculum. Yelland et al.’s (2008) use of the case study approach provided a detailed profile of the children involved in the research. Although the number of participants was small, the research hinted at the stark differences between their abilities, confidence and opportunities to develop and work from personal interests in a child-centred curriculum compared to a teacher-directed, outcome-based curriculum.

The research by Yelland et al., (2008) exposes the contrast in the pedagogical differences between the curricula. In addition it highlighted how the move from one curriculum to another can impact on the individual at a very personal level, impacting on their own confidence, personality

and performance at school. Similar concerns have been voiced elsewhere (Bennett, 2000; Fisher, 2009).

The case study approach used in Yelland et al.'s (2008) research identified the very personal nature of transition into school as children's experiences differed considerably. They also found that in classrooms with a wider age group of children in which the two curricula approaches were being implemented, the transition was less stark. This environment, according to Yelland et al., (2008), offered the children the opportunity to make choices and work in groups. They considered that this developed children's confidence when working with their peers, through collaboration, problem-solving and creativity. Similar findings were identified in Saunders et al.'s (2005) research. This reported that when play-based learning remained in place in Year 1, it had a positive impact on children's feelings towards their schooling. This was evidenced through their descriptions of their Year 1 experiences. The research also found that when the transition between the two curricula was positive, children tended not to use the term 'hard work' to describe their experiences.

Findings indicate that a continuation of a play-based approach to learning with less formal, teacher-led learning, have positive implications for children's schooling. These are supported by recommendations elsewhere (Ofsted, 2004, Rose, 2009, Cambridge Review, 2010). The Ofsted report (2004) recommended that learning in Year 1 should follow the practical and structured play approaches such as those used in the early years. This would also support the research by Farrell (2009) which identified that successful transition occurred through utilising outdoor play and learning in order to ease the transition between Reception and Year 1.

The focus on play-based learning suggested by the Ofsted (2004) report would create greater opportunities for a student-centred approach towards teaching and learning, away from formal subject-based teaching in Year 1. A child-centred approach could alleviate parental concerns raised in the research, about the formality of learning in Key Stage 1. These concerns

were also identified by class teachers who raised issues about the lack of clear links between the areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage and the subjects of the National Curriculum (Ofsted, 2004).

### 2.4 Subject-based curricula approaches

The need for specific subject areas in education and particularly early childhood education has historic and contemporary echoes. One of the older, yet still relevant arguments is that subject areas are 'of little significance to young children' (Schiller, 1979:3). It is largely accepted that young children's learning is not compartmentalised, but developed through 'making connections between experiences and ideas that are related to aspects of their lives' (QCA, 2000: 45-46). Duffy (2006) further supports this with a suggestion that continuing to focus on knowledge is 'likely to fail both children and us. She suggests that 'we need to move to a person-centred approach' (Duffy, 2006:87). Duffy (2006) argues that a curriculum for young children should reflect what is relevant for them according to their particular stage of development, rather than trying to fit children within a pre-existing framework. She suggests 5 key areas for a curriculum model which offers a holistic and personalised approach to learning. These 5 areas are specified as:

Being social
Being positive
Being a communicator
Being creative
Being healthy and safe.
(Duffy, 2006:90)

A personalised, non subject-based approach, as suggested by Duffy above (2006) would support a more individualised and less prescriptive ethos to learning in Year 1. It would signal a move away from frameworks which have, in the past, 'emphasised standardised testing, effective teaching and effective management' (Soler and Miller, 2003:55). One of

the most recent and high profile reviews of the primary curriculum described the current framework as ‘overloaded’ and ‘prescriptive’, and as a consequence, teachers’ abilities to meet the needs of individuals are hindered (Rose, 2009:10).

The Rose Report (Rose, 2009) acknowledged that subject disciplines should be taught, but particularly in the middle and later phases of children’s primary education. It specifically indicated that continuity between the EYFS and Key Stage 1 needed to be strengthened. This is echoed by The Cambridge Review findings and final report (Alexander, 2010). This suggestion would support aforementioned recommendations stated earlier in this discussion (Ofsted, 2004, Saunders et al., 2005) that an approach which offered a play-based approach to learning based around individuals’ developmental needs and interests would be of great value to children in Year 1.

### 2.5 Children’s views of their schooling

A study conducted by Loizou (2011) which explored individual children’s experiences of their schooling used participatory approaches to gather data about children’s views of their surroundings. This research used a range of methods that can be associated with the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001). Loizou’s (2011) approach to data collection was through a range of experiences and creative activities such as map making and photography. This enabled the children to participate in the research process, through what she describes an ‘empowerment perspective’ (Loizou, 2011).

Through the analysis of the children’s work, Loizou (2011) established a view of children’s schooling which draws attention to both positive aspects of their lives and experiences and the negative perceptions from children. Responses were separated out into two groups; ‘empowering’ and ‘limiting’. Empowering responses identified in Loizou’s (2011) research tended to be connected to curriculum challenges, social encounters,

physical space. Whereas limiting experiences were connected with intense or overwhelming curriculum experiences and the rigidity of the programme of study, such as work being boring, or finding work hard, echoing findings explored above from Saunders et al., (2005). Children suggested that less homework should be given so that more time for play is available, indicating perhaps a loss of 'play' identified previously as children move into formal learning (Saunders et al., 2005) and supporting recommendations to develop play-based learning approaches in Year 1 (see Ofsted, 2004, Rose, 2008, Alexander et al., 2010). Negative experiences also included a lack of play or fun (as indicated in Saunders et al.'s, 2005 research) and several connections to the role and responses of the teacher - that they should not shout, or punish children, instead emphasising a desire for praise, feeling loved, giving help and allowing the children to play (Loizou, 2011).

The request for children to 'feel loved', be given help and support and shown kindness and patience identified by Loizou's (2011) research is also found in research by Farrell et al., (2004) who suggest that children involved in their research project in preschool and Year 1 and Year 2 were more concerned about getting support or help with tasks and emotional support, than children in older primary schooling. This suggests that not only might the emotional and supportive requirements of children in their early childhood be different to older children within the primary phase, but also that the role of the teacher or practitioner may also need to be more responsive to the emotional and intellectual needs of the children they work with.

## Section 2: The role of the adult in supporting children's early education

The role of the adult, as identified by Loizou (2011) and Farrell et al., (2004) is seen as critical in either 'empowering' or 'limiting' children's experiences in school. The second part of this chapter considers the role of the adult within the implementation of the curriculum and with other aspects of support for individual children. The role of the teacher and

other adults working with children is critical, not only as they provide the intellectual stimulation for the children, but also the emotional support needed at this stage of their development (Loizou, 2011, Farrell et al., 2004). Patrick, Hisley and Kempler (2000) summarise their findings from research in this field by suggesting that positive relationships are fostered when teachers provide appropriate structure and autonomy for their students and show them affection and respect.

The quality of relationships between children and the adults who support them has been well documented as a key factor which influences children's experiences in early childhood education. In Dewey's (1987) 'pedagogic creed' he stated his belief that education should start with the child, stating that, 'the child's own instinct and powers furnish the material and give a starting point for all education'(1987:78). However he also firmly believed that the role of the teacher was critical in supporting children. He considered that teachers need to have both a general knowledge of children as well as specific knowledge of individuals in order to be able to support the children they worked with. Thus the role of the adult is an active one. Through observations, planning, organisation and documentation and by building on children's experiences, Dewey's (1897) expectations about the role of the adult suggests the value of what might be called a reflective and responsive view of teaching and learning.

The notion of reflection in educational practice has since been theorised and explored in depth (see Kolb, 1984, Moon, 1999, Schon, 1983) and specifically in early years practice (Reed and Canning, 2010). As (Dunphy and Farrell suggest, 'any consideration of children's perspectives and their implications for teachers' work in classrooms involve deep reflection on pedagogy' (Dunphy and Farrell, 2011:139).

There is a suggestion that a shared reflection, which involves children and teachers reflecting and thinking together, can be empowering. Loizou (2011) suggests that practitioners and researchers need to empower children to 'think, reflect and be critical of the indirect imposition of ideas,

activities and culture by others', such as adults (2011:144). While this approach also supports a rights framework and encourages children to communicate their opinions, it also requires a balance to be met according to Lancaster, between 'emancipation and protection' (Lancaster, 2006:12).

The UNCRC (UN, 1989) categorises children's rights according to the 'three P's: protection, provision and participation'. Within these categories there is recognition, that children in difficult circumstances may need specific provision (Osler and Starkey, 2005). The challenge is to find ways of both protecting children but also enabling all children to be able to participate and have their views heard.

Kjørholt (2005) suggests that research which over-emphasises the child as a rational, autonomous and competent being is at risk of neglecting the support and care that children need. This is a concern reflected by Manion (2007:407), who identified an 'ongoing tension' between participatory rights and rights to have their needs met. With children of a young age these issues relate closely to ethical concerns. Smith (2011) makes the connection between the ethical concerns of being able to protect the children from harm, and their rights to express their views, particularly when dealing with topics of a sensitive nature. If children are not given the opportunities to participate in issues of a sensitive nature which impact on their lives, then policy makers and practitioners will not be able to support children in difficult circumstances (Smith, 2011).

If children are to be at the fore of directing and developing their own learning with adults, then the role of the adult is a critical one in supporting and extending their learning and opportunities. A recent publication by Fisher (2011b) draws together arguments (for example, Hardman et al., 2003, Alexander, 2010) which suggest that the current curriculum requires teachers to comply with legislation and documentation, rather than make decisions. As a consequence, this may impact on children's abilities to 'think for themselves if their teachers are expected to do as they are told' (Alexander, 2010: 308).

Much of the early childhood practice which explores the relationships and construction of learning though adults (and peers) is developed from Vygotsky's theories. Through his development of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' the concept of scaffolding learning has become a key pedagogical tool (Alexander et al., 2010). By scaffolding children's learning and building on what children *already* know, progression in learning and other aspects of a child's life can be made. A social constructivist approach, such as this, which emphasises the value of learning through discussion with others places great importance on knowing and working with individuals. It is critical therefore, that teachers are able to spend time understanding the children they work with as Dewey (1897) advocated. Bowman, Donovan and Burns, (2001, cited in Dunphy and Farrell, 2011) add depth to this discussion as they suggest that children who have more positive teacher-child relationships appear to be better able to exploit the learning opportunities in the classroom and construct more positive peer relationships. This emphasises not only the intellectual development afforded by positive relationships, but also social advantages of these relationships.

The creation of positive teacher–child relationships has been seen as a measure of quality early education. Pramling Sammuelson (2007) suggests that children's' abilities to communicate and opportunities to tell their own stories and share their perceptions can be a reflection of the relationships which the child has with other children and teaching staff.

In order to successfully develop positive relationships with children, adults working in early childhood require specific skills of listening, supporting and challenging the child (Siraj-Blatchford, 1999). One way in which the relational pedagogy develops with young children is through the use of sustained shared thinking (Siraj-Blatchford, 2002). This is a process endorsed by the Cambridge Review (Alexander et al., 2010), in which discussions during activities with children have been shown to develop children's thinking, through a shared dialogue. This approach not only

enhances adult's understandings of children's learning and develops relationships in turn, but has also been attributed with benefiting children's cognitive, linguistic and social-behavioural skills (Sylva et al., 2004).

The importance of 'interactional pedagogy' where children and adults work in reciprocity with each other was one of the areas emphasised as important in an international curriculum review (Bertram and Pascal. 2002). In particular this approach encouraged first hand, play-based, exploratory experiences which provided children with the opportunity to talk and interact, emphasising not only the role of the adults in developing children's learning, but also the value of learning from peers.

The value of positive relationships in an early childhood educational context and the importance of high quality adult interactions have been explored through influential research. In 2003 the UK Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (Sylva et al., 2003) project began. This longitudinal study was funded by the government and included research with over 3000 children in over 140 settings. In its most recent report (Sammons et al., 2008) findings were presented which demonstrated that early (pre school) positive relationships with staff who were well trained had positive, lasting effects on children's educational outcomes at the end of primary school. Although the importance of maternal qualifications and the home learning environment was of great significance, the indication that a quality early years provision has long term effects on children indicates the value of good quality relationships.

The value of developing this quality relationship has been well documented in UK based research such as the large scale Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector report (ELEYS) (2006) and Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). Both reported that where adult's relationships were 'warm and interactive' with a good understanding of pedagogical content and of questioning children and extending their learning through 'sustained shared thinking', the educational setting was more effective.

The Study for Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL) (Moyles et al., 2002) research report indicated specific details about the characteristics of effective practice with young children. These ranged from teaching and learning opportunities such as giving children choices, exploring ideas and interests, engaging with children in open ended tasks and active learning to the importance of relationships. These included establishing and building sensitive relationships with children, perceiving each child holistically and reflecting on their own practice and children's dispositions.

These influential research reports which offer insight into principles of good practice with young children are also echoed in other research (Bertram and Pascal 2002) and international practice. The example of Reggio Emilia, based on sociocultural perspectives (Anning, 2004) has been given much positive attention in recent years for its collaborative learning approaches (DfES, 2006) and emphasis on community, positive relationships between adults and children (Rinaldi, 2006). This model for early years teaching and learning situated in Northern Italy was strongly influenced by the early years pioneer Loris Malaguzzi.

In post fascist Italy, Malaguzzi wanted to create an educational system for young children that moved away from the conformity seen during Mussolini's dictatorship and thus made a direct attempt to move away from national guidelines (Soler and Miller, 2003). Dewey's notion of a learner-focussed view of learning heavily influenced Malaguzzi's ideas and philosophy but also by 'progressive educational theorists and from working with and listening to the views of parents, teachers, children and the wider community of other stakeholders and educators' (Soler and Miller, 2003:63). Malaguzzi articulated a distinctive vision of the child as a starting point for the curriculum - as rich and competent, able to make meaning and express themselves in many ways. This encourages collaboration and interaction between adults, children and the communities in which the children live (Thornton and Brunton, 2005).

Malaguzzi's view of the 'rich child' establishes children as competent, powerful active participants in their own childhoods. Children's agency is central to this perspective. Agency involves 'children's capacity to understand and act upon their world' (Bitou and Waller, 2011:53). This approach regards children as active co-constructors in their lives (Bitou and Waller, 2011) and as such they are powerful in making decisions and should be given the opportunity to express their views and for their views to be listened to. This has been legislated as a right for children within both the Children's Act (2004) and Every Child Matters (DfES, 2004).

The complexities of agency are concerned with enabling children's voice to be articulated. This is addressed in the following chapter (chapter 3). Agency is influenced by the relationships between adults and children which impact on the ways in which children are able to make meaning and create opportunities for change. Woodhead (2005) suggests that respecting the agency of the child 'strikes at the heart' of the conventional relationships which exist between children and the adults who impact and influence their lives in a regulatory way. This could imply that work which supports children's agency crosses over barriers that exist between adults and children. Woodhead (2005) also acknowledges that the nature of research with children involves them seeking support from adults. This might appear somewhat contradictory, but Alderson (2001) indicates that they need not be. Children have both agency and dependency with the adults they have relationships with and Alderson (2001) suggests that researcher's should take into account these needs while respecting their agency.

Christensen (2004) challenges researchers to consider their relationships with children. In her research, sensitive approaches were adopted when working with children. Examples included; observing children before approaching them, waiting for children to initiate conversation and waiting for children to invite the researcher to join in an activity. Despite sensitive approaches to working with the children, the power relationships remained evident. This was demonstrated by the children's cooperation in

discussions with the researcher, even if later they dismissed the conversations or questions from the researcher as ‘silly’. It appears that they felt obliged to participate. Christensen’s (2004) aim was to understand children’s social worlds so that they could dominate discussions. Her sensitive approach appears to be close to enabling children’s needs to be met *and* is respectful of their agency.

Smith (2007) indicates that in order for children to be able to contribute towards decisions they need to be given the opportunity to develop their skills with adults. Adults need to support children in the development of social engagement so that the process of making decisions or taking on responsibility is gradual and progressive.

There is evidence of power relationships in policy, customs, laws and also through personal relationships (Mayall, 2008). For researchers working to support children’s agency, Mayall (2008:124) offers the following advice: ‘it is better not to regard these (the influence of power relations) as fixed structuring influences; rather they are processes in which both sides engage and negotiate towards constantly changing patterns of generational relations’. This would seem an appropriate approach to take. The notion of agency as an evolving developing concept, connects well to contemporary participatory approaches to working with children.

Participatory research with peers is an alternative approach to enabling children’s agency. Kellett (2005:11) suggests that: ‘children succeed in getting responses from within their peer group in ways that would not be possible for adult researchers because of power and generational issues’. Smith (2011) makes a similar suggestion and supports the approach between research with children and others. She considers that, not only is the response different but that research and ability of children to communicate is benefited by the relationships with children *and* others and that children should be given appropriate support to do this. When children work together, their agency may not be influenced in the same way as with adults. There are still power relations between children that need

consideration (O'Kane, 2008) such as the awareness of protecting children and not enhancing hierarchies among them (Hart and Tyrer, 2006).

### Section summary

The educational context that teacher's work within is increasingly challenging with the pressures on teachers to comply with legislation impacting on the autonomy of the teacher (Alexander, 2010). The research explored within this section of the chapter indicates that the relationships that adults create with children are both central to their achievement and engagement with long term impacts (Sammons et al., 2008). The development of the skills needed and balance between offering structure and autonomy (Patrick, Hisley and Kempler, 2000) is necessary alongside a teacher's reflective engagement in their practice (Dunphy and Farrell, 2011).

The findings of this section of the literature review informed the analytical framework (chapter 1) and the design of the research study, discussed in the following chapter, through the identification of the importance of the role of the adult and their influence on the children that they work with. In addition, the value of reflective practice supports the inclusion of the teacher's participation and reflections in the research project.

## Section 3: Supporting community and individuality within curricula frameworks

The emphasis on the individual and the pluralistic approaches and processes used are regarded as key features of the Reggio Emilia approach, as is its opposition to standardisation, outcomes and economic productivity (Soler and Miller, 2003). The approach as it appears, offers a way of supporting individuals and community, through its emphasis on communication, cooperation and interaction between children and adults. However there are concerns that the implementation of key ideas may not necessarily translate easily into other cultures (Papatheodorou, 2008).

The foundations of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education are influenced by the political, philosophical and cultural influences of the region, just as they are in England. These influences can be explored through policy, which attempts to support both individual children and communities through its legislation. This section of the chapter explores some of the tensions between supporting the individual needs of the child alongside the needs of a wider community.

One approach proposed to support children within existing curriculum frameworks has been 'personalised learning'. At the core of personalised learning, teachers and practitioners are encouraged to respond to individual needs in order to enable children to achieve to the best of their abilities (DfES, 2004). This creates opportunities for working with children in different ways, connecting closely with the Every Child Matters framework (DfES, 2003) and with the United Nations commitment to listening to children on matters which impact on their lives (UN,1989: Article 10).

In England, the expectations of the Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) agenda attempted to incorporate both outcomes and economic productivity *with* a commitment to supporting individuals and community cohesion. Within this, the notion of celebrating and acknowledging children's individuality is woven into educational documentation. Prior to this key policy, much of the documentation in this area had been related to inclusion and diversity such as '*Raising Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils'* (HMI, 1999) and '*Aiming high'* (DfES, 2002), with the emphasis on developing social or community cohesion. These directives accentuated the need for a 'common vision' where the diversity of children's backgrounds and circumstances could be appreciated and valued.

This focus on children's backgrounds and circumstances has been associated, in policy, with the creation of greater equality of life opportunities, and the development of strong relationships between communities (DCSF, 2007). The importance of this objective was echoed

in the Rose review (Rose, 2009) which proposed that celebrating 'culture and community' should feature as one of the 12 main aims running through the proposed curriculum structure.

One research project which engaged with children to reflect on their schooling and could be regarded as supporting the 'enjoy and achieve' outcome, of the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2003) was conducted by Hopkins in 2008. The research project which explored classroom conditions with Key Stage 2 children established 8 'classroom conditions *with* children that they considered of value in enabling success at school. The research identified several key points which supported the need for listening to pupil voice in order to understand what makes effective pedagogy and recognised the importance of personalised approaches to learning. In addition, Hopkins (2008) questions whether some of the findings, such as pupils wanting to feel valued or special, reflects the current curriculum which is driven by 'targets, levels and testing' (2008:399). This indicates perhaps, the tensions and conflicts which exist in the current system of teachers and children having to meet targets and outcomes at the expense of more personalised approaches.

This is a relevant discussion, particularly when considering the age group of children and their developmental needs. Bertram and Pascal (2002) remind us that although 'most countries agreed that the socialisation of children into the dominant culture between the ages of 3-6 was increasingly important, there is also great importance in allowing the child to develop individual expression' (ibid, 2002:36). This suggests that with young children there should not be too much emphasis on needs of the culture if it is at the expense of enabling children to explore their individual needs. This is from within a dominant cultural view that itself values independence over community closeness. It is worth noting that not all countries were represented within the report.

## 2.7 Participatory research studies with children impacting on the individual and the community

Other research which considers children's views of learning can be found through participatory approaches, such as Moss and Clark's (2005) research with children in their early year's which found that both individual and group working enabled collective knowledge to be created (2005:105). The value of collective knowledge has been acknowledged elsewhere where pupils were able to share their experiences of similar situations, gaining insight into their different perceptions (Ruddock and McIntyre 2007). Both pieces of research benefited not only the children, but also the practitioners working with them. The 'spaces to play' project (Moss and Clark, 2005) also claims to have contributed to changes at a practical and theoretical level.

At a practical level, the 'spaces to play' project (Clark and Moss, 2005) which collected children's insights and promoted dialogue with parents and practitioners lead to positive changes to the outdoor environment and to children's access to spaces. It demonstrated how the contributions and observations of individuals can benefit a wider community. Clark and Moss (2005) also suggest that enabling the children's views to be captured lead to theoretical change.

At a theoretical level, the practitioners participating in the 'spaces to play' project (Clark and Moss, 2005) raised their expectations of the children and reconsidered ways of rearranging their planning to enable children's capabilities and interests to become more visible. This demonstrates not only how children's ideas and perceptions might be acknowledged and woven into the constraints of a curriculum (Clark and Moss, 2005), but also how through the promotion of dialogue, pedagogical practice also developed.

The curriculum for the Early Years in Norway aims at directly supporting the community and the individual child. In its official curriculum

documentation it states that: ‘It is underlined that children are part of a community along with being individuals entitled to their own opinions’ (Framework Plan 2010:8). While this rhetoric appears to achieve some balance in support for the individual and the community, the delivery of the concept is plagued with issues of interpretation of participation in practice. (Bea, 2010)

### 2.8 Personalised learning

One approach to supporting individuals within the existing curricula in England is through the introduction of personalised learning. The increased emphasis on personalised learning as the ‘future vision’ of the educational system (DfES, 2005) makes a wide range of claims about its advantages to ‘raise standards through focussing on children’s interests and aptitude. It was defined by the DfES (2006 online personalised learning website):

> ‘personalised learning is about tailoring education to meet individual need, interest and aptitude, so as to ensure that every pupil achieves and reaches the highest standards possible, not withstanding their background or circumstances and right across the spectrum of achievement’.

However it also claims not to be a return to child-centred theories of learning which leaves children to work on their own (speech made by Ed Miliband on 26 Jan 2006), but aims to change and challenge teaching which involves listening to teachers for long periods of time, or copying work from books (DfES, 2007). It is interesting to note that just as Bea (2010) found issues of interpretation concerned with participation in practice in the Norway model, the concern with ‘child-centred theories’ of learning leaving children to work on their own is only one of 40 interpretations of the term found by Chung and Walsh (2000). These interpretations of the term included identifying and meeting potential and

participation in decision making, both of which fit into the DfES (2006) model of ‘personalised learning’.

There are references made to stretching the individual, removing barriers, high expectations and broadening personal horizons (DfES, 2006 online personalised learning website). One of the key principles (curriculum entitlement and choice), states that the curriculum should offer ‘personal relevance’ as ‘choice engages and respects students’ (ibid, no page number). The approach aimed to ‘play a central role in transforming and developing England’s educational services’ (DfES, 2006: 5) in its vision for the future. The rhetoric suggests a change in the ways in which curriculum is structured, in how teachers work with children and the outcomes for children. Of interest within the documentation, beyond the rhetoric, is how the curriculum in its current format works alongside this initiative and how children’s participation and voice is woven into the decision making processes.

In addition, past criticisms that too much emphasis on the role of the individual was at the expense of creating a good society (Hargreaves, 1982) and teachers should not assume that good pupils will equate to a good society (Arthur, 2005), must be acknowledged, along with contemporary concerns. Fielding (2008) highlights the importance of rethinking structures and curricula to take account of relationships and human dignity. He suggests that formal and informal opportunities to listen to children’s views where teachers and children work cooperatively to develop an exploratory and personalised pedagogy.

Although these principles offer some support for researchers interested in how to develop educational practice, personalisation and the views of individuals will not always produce neatly presented and positive outcomes as evidenced in Clark and Moss’ (2005) work. Concerns have been expressed that personalisation might offer a narrower curriculum for some children. This is due to apprehension that schools might focus on offering specific skills deemed necessary for the individual child, rather

than offering them a wide range of opportunities. There is also a concern that through such an approach some children might find it challenging to communicate what their needs might be, particularly if they lack self esteem and confidence (Daniels and Porter, 2010). The Cambridge Review also directs attention to wider concerns about the use of personalisation and social exclusion and social justice (Alexander et al., 2010), which would indicate that a personalised and individualised approach needs to be carefully, sensitively and fairly constructed.

The ideas of Dewey, taken from his pedagogic creed (1897) can also be used to support the value of listening to and responding to the needs of an individual. He stated:

> ‘*The child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education. Save as the efforts of the educator connect with some activity which the child is carrying on of his own initiative independent of the educator, education becomes reduced to a pressure from without. It may, indeed, give certain external results, but cannot truly be called educative. Without insight into the psychological structure and activities of the individual, the educative process will, therefore, be haphazard and arbitrary. If it chances to coincide with the child's activity it will get leverage; if it does not, it will result in friction, or disintegration, or arrest of the child’s nature.’* (Dewey, 1897: 77)

There is a suggestion, within this statement , that failure by the teacher to consider the child’s needs is not ‘educating’ the child fully, but that also to ignore the needs of the individual may impact negatively on the child’s well being. This is also suggested in the National Curriculum aims which states that:

> ‘Foremost is a belief in education, at home and at school, as a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development, and thus the well-being, of the individual’ (DfES, 2000).

Research that draws out children's personal and complex lives and which explores areas of emotional development needs to be ethically and carefully considered and is discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis. Higgins (2012) suggests that there is a current shift in education which involves an intentional consideration of children's emotional development. In her research with 9 year old children, the participants were encouraged to tell their life stories and communicate their feelings through an expressive arts intervention. She acknowledged that, 'requiring consideration of a child's inner world in an educational context creates a very delicate situation' (2011:1).

Other research which has captured children's perceptions offers insights into children's complex lives at home and school (Brooker, 2002) and draws attention to what children value at different stages of their education. Research by Farrell et al., (2002) identified that an emergence of social geography when children move into Key Stage 2. This impacted on children's priorities from the need for emotional and intellectual support from teachers to much more pragmatic issues such as time, places, rules, routines and people's names. This suggests a move away from the often emotional issues dominating children's views found in years 1 and 2.

## 2.9 Summary of chapter

Despite the theoretical, developmental and political directives towards listening to children, and curriculum reviews which suggest that a personalised and individualised approach to working with children, particularly in their early schooling is required, there has been little change in the structure of the national curriculum for children in Year 1 since its original publication in 1999. Developments which might have impacted on children's schooling in Year 1, recommended by the Rose Review (2009), were been withheld due to the change of government. This may reflect some of the concerns about the independence of the review, due to its funding (by the Labour government of the time) and the influence of the

government in its conception, development, staffing and publication (Richards, 2010).

With the political changes aside, there is an emerging view of a pedagogy and 'curriculum' for young children, particularly under the age of 7, which is shaped by theoretical and research driven agendas which view children as active, able citizens with their own ideas and suggestions which should be taken into consideration. These are increasingly being supported by legislation and policy. However, the space for these views is not always visible within the existing curriculum structures in England. Influential practice, often from international provision has demonstrated the effectiveness of alternative, and individualised education for young children, with acclaimed pedagogical approaches which meet the needs of individuals and communities. Successful international practice however, cannot always be easily woven into other cultures, particularly if cultural and policy constraints dominate systems.

White and Sharp (2006) remind us that educational practice is shaped by many different factors which individual schools have little control over. In addition to these broader issues they suggest that there is a balancing act required which is also affected by the pedagogical attitudes of the staff and the management of the school. This summarises many of the key issues raised in this review of literature and issues which are central to this thesis. In addition to these factors, the place of the individual child is also woven into this balancing act within this research project, adding further complexity to educational practice.

The following chapter considers some of the challenges, benefits and insights that may emerge from educational research which aims to help elicit children's views. Through a participatory approach, using a range of methods, the next chapter considers the practical and theoretical issues which impact on listening to children drawing on evidence from a reconnaissance study with children in Year 1 of their primary education.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## Exploration of methods (video and interviews) in a reconnaissance study

### 3.1 Chapter introduction

The research undertaken within this project was conducted with children in Year 1 of their primary schooling in England and their class teacher. The children were aged between 5-6 years old at the time of the data collection. A participatory approach was used. A range of practical and age appropriate methods were developed in order to elicit children's ideas and perceptions. The children were asked to capture what they felt was important in their lives and record their views on small hand-held video cameras, which had been individually assigned to them. Through discussions and interviews children talked about their data with me, offering explanations about the recordings they had made. Discussions were also held with class teachers who viewed the children's work, either with the children or the researcher. In addition interviews were held between myself and class teacher to review the project.

There were two phases to the research. The first phase took place in a classroom, made up of 26 Year 1 children and was a reconnaissance study. This phase enabled consideration of the methodological approach used and the development of the methods and approaches used with the children. This phase allowed for practical insight into the structural, organisational and practical issues of working within an unfamiliar classroom environment as a researcher.

The reconnaissance study was critical in informing the second phase of the research and is thus discussed in detail within this chapter due to its value in addressing key methodological issues. The outline of the second phase of the research is also presented in this chapter and this phase was conducted with three cohorts of Year 1 children.

### 3.2 Chapter outline

Participatory methodologies within educational research have increased over the past few decades, creating an explosion of activity and thinking about children's participation in research. Brooker attributes this development to two 'complementary principles' (2001, 163) being brought to the fore of research with children. The first of these principles is the emergence and development of children's rights to be heard, to participate and to have a say in issues which impact on their lives. The second principle is a belief in children's 'competence', reflecting a change in attitude and understanding of children's abilities, even at a very young age to be able to reflect and respond appropriately.

Each of these 'complementary principles' (ibid), is worthy of further explanation as both are central components within the structure of, and rationale for, this research project. This methodology chapter, in the first section (part 1), explores issues which relate to Brooker's (2001) two principles. It explores what is meant by children's participation in research and how children's voices might be woven into research frameworks which support the view of the child as a competent research participant.

Following these discussions the research design for this project is outlined along with key ethical considerations and an overview of the reconnaissance study (part 2). The third part of this chapter explores the methods, approaches and techniques which were used to elicit children's voices and capture them on video. This is explained through 'telling the story' of the reconnaissance study, which was used to inform the structure of the main research project which is outlined in part 4 of this chapter. The final section of this chapter considers my own epistemological and reflective role and outlines my commitment towards a reflexive approach to the research.

### Part 1: An introduction to participatory research

### 3.3 Participatory research – a background

In 1989 the United Nations Convention for the rights of the child (hereafter UNCRC) (UN, 1989), issued guidance in article 12, that children have a right for their voice to be heard on issues which impact on their lives. In the UK, this was included into the Children's Act (DfES, 2004) and Every Child Matters documentation (DfES, 2003, DfES, 2004,). This was in addition to guidance pre-dating this legislation, for people involved with providing services to children created by the Children and Young peoples unit entitled, 'Learning to listen: core principles for the involvement of children and young people' (DfES, 2001). This document provided a framework for involving children in the design, provision and evaluation of services they accessed. These documents supported article 12 of the UNCRC (UN, 1989), by enabling children in education and other services for children, schools and their families to engage in opportunities to have their voices listened to in order to inform and develop policy. During this time the level of children's involvement and extent to which their voice was heard within policy, was largely unknown (Lancaster, 2003). Since this initial period of legislation was developed there has been a wide range of participatory research involving young children, which has evoked many debates about what participatory research encompasses and how it should be conducted.

### 3.4 Framing participation

The terminology of participation needs consideration. Ruddock and McIntyre (2007) suggest that 'children's participation' is a phrase which lacks clarity and substance. Instead, they prefer the term 'consultation', which they suggest enables a dialogue to occur between teachers and pupils. They argue that the term 'participation' does not necessarily create such shared exchanges and opportunities for consultation to transpire. Osler (2010) however, suggests that pupils do have a right to be engaged in consultation and that participation has the potential to support children's engagement in their education.

While consultation suggests the opportunity to engage in dialogue, participation does not necessarily demand this exchange during the research process. Indeed, one of the advantages of participation is that it gives a 'voice' to those who may be otherwise unheard. One of the advantages of participatory research is its ability to realign some of the power balances which may exist as it attempts to be responsive to the needs of 'ordinary people' (Park et al., 1993, in Haw and Hatfield, 2011, 89). Participatory research has also been attributed with the ability to adjust the balance of power, particularly in schools, where power relationships exist between children and all adults. These power relationships also include researchers working within a school setting (Osler, 2011).

The commitment and level of participation in research opens up many debates about what participation involves. Alderson (1995) suggests that traditional approaches to research *about* children tend to use a model of animal research. Although this is regarded as of benefit to understanding and developing children's health and education, it can be perceived as impersonal. She suggests that even 'if children's views are collected, this is usually to atomise and process them through the grid of the adult designed research' (Alderson, 1995, 40). This criticism of participatory research, that it is usually designed and processed through an adult lens, is supported by Christensen and James (2000) who suggest that research is rarely framed around children's agendas. This criticism may imply that children should be involved in research at a much deeper level at all stages of the research from its conception to its analysis. According to Grey, 'participation is more than involvement' (2004, in Greig et al., 2007: 139). 'It means immersing people in the focus of the enquiry and the research method and involving them in the data collection and analysis' (ibid).

Haw and Hatfield (2011) offer a less rigid view of participatory research. They clarify their position by suggesting that participatory research is

defined as ‘systematic enquiry’ and that ‘it is people centred in the sense that the process of critical inquiry is informed by, and responds to, the experiences and needs of the people involved.’ They suggest that there is no ‘correct’ way to do participatory research’. Instead, they consider that participatory methodology is best described as a ‘set of principles and a process of engagement with the enquiry’ (Haw and Hatfield, 2011, 89).

The debates about what participatory research *is* as a set of principles and processes can be deconstructed through Lansdown’s (2004) ‘degrees of participation’. This offers a model for different levels of participation from consultative processes through to participatory and self-initiated processes.

At the most basic level a consultative process tends to be adult-led and managed, lacking any possibility for children to control outcomes. This process offers limited scope in real engagement with children. However it does offer a valuable role in incorporating children’s views in an otherwise adult-dominated agenda (Lansdown, 2004:6).

Lansdown (2004) suggests that a participatory process provides opportunities for children to be actively involved in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects, programmes, research and activities. It is usually characterised as research which is adult-initiated which involves partnership with children and empowers children to influence or challenge both process and outcomes. This level of participation can also allow for increasing levels of self-directed action by children over a period of time. This has the potential to enable children to progress and develop their competence as researchers as they become more experienced in the participatory research approach.

A consultative process can be made participatory according to Lansdown (2006), by:

- Enabling children to identify what are the relevant questions

- Giving children the opportunity to help develop the methodology for the research
- Allowing children to take on the role of researchers
- Involving children in discussions about the findings, their interpretations, and their implications for future developments.

The final level of participation is a self-initiated process which enables children to take action independently of adult-defined agendas stemming from issues which have been characterised by children. Although the children control the process in these projects, the adults do have a role as facilitators offering support such as administration, advisors or fundraisers (Lansdown, 2004:6-7).

This level of involvement is challenging to achieve, particularly for an outside researcher, with limited time and resources and with a wide range of boundaries and protocols needed in order to comply with research regulations. It is debatable as to whether only research which emerges from children's own ideas, designed and driven by the children themselves can be considered to be 'pure participation' and thus the levels of participation suggested by Lansdown (2004) above offers a framework which can accommodate most participatory research.

The process of participation offers opportunities to enhance children's competencies. A higher level of participation indicates an increased level of competence which in turn produces better quality participation (Ranjani, 2000). This could be seen as an almost cyclical or spiral development which would support Lansdown's (2004) degrees of participation. By using his framework to develop children's (and researchers) competencies greater levels of participation in research may occur over time.

Higher levels of participation, where the children have the opportunity to direct, manage and initiate projects would support a shift towards the contemporary view of children, as explored in chapter 2 of this thesis. In

addition, the development of this view of children and the development of participatory methodologies also encourage and support the development of research within a children's rights framework.

### 3.5 A view of children as competent research participants

Brooker (2001) suggests that a commitment towards children's rights has enabled a shift in the way in which childhood is viewed within research. This perspective, supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2005), suggests that childhood and being a child is not simply preparation for adulthood, but that it is an important and definitive phase of life; therefore children's views should be taken into account when considering their education.

This contemporary view of childhood and children's rights has opened up opportunities and possibilities for research with children. Children involved in research became 'participants' rather than 'subjects', reflecting the shift in emphasis of research being 'with' children rather than 'about' them. This role as active participants assumes that children have the ability to participate and contribute to research, often giving insight which would be otherwise unavailable.

This view of childhood aligns itself to research approaches such as Hall and Tisdall's (1997) 'applied approach' and Clark and Moss' (2001) 'mosaic approach', when working with children. The latter offers a range of tools for researchers to use to engage children in participatory research. These include observations, child conferencing, cameras, tours, mapping, role play and parent and practitioner short interviews. This approach and others (Lancaster, 2003, Brooker, 2002, Hill et al., 1996, O'Kane, 2000, Punch, 2002, Loizou, 2011), aim at creating a child-centred approach to participatory methods for research with children. These approaches are distinct due to the dominance of the view that childhood is not necessarily preparation for adulthood, but a phase, worthy of exploration in its own right. This view maintains that children *are* already '*someone'* (Harcourt

and Conroy, 2011:39). This presents a shift in the way in which children are seen and therefore the ways in which they are able to participate. Children are thus viewed as 'competent social actors', (James and Prout, 1997) or 'competent agents' (Clark and Moss, 2001) and experts in their own lives and able to construct and determine their own lives and experiences within social and cultural settings (O'Kane, 2008).

### 3.6 Supporting children's competence in participatory research

In order to support children with these participatory experiences Nutbrown and Abbott (2001) indicate that researchers should consider time, space and choice when researching with young children. Lundy's (2007) model offers further supportive strategies when conducting research with young children by listening to their voices. These are:

> Space: children must be given the opportunity to express a view
> Voice: children must be facilitated to express their view
> Audience: the view must be listened to
> Influence: the view must be acted upon, as appropriate
>
> (Lundy, 2007:933)

The proposed model by Lundy (2007), offers some guidance as to how children's competence in research may be supported. Greig et al., (2007) suggests that due consideration needs to be given to the context of the research for the children's benefit, in order for the children to be confident, competent and effective participants. Other research indicates that when children are given control over content and direction of conversations, their competence increases (Wood et al., 1981) and through involvement in the analysis processes there is 'enhanced learning that occurs through 'motivation and ownership' (Kellett, 2005:2). Through open ended activities which offer freedom for children to support their ability to engage and respond, children as young as 4 years old have been viewed as competent participants with the ability to communicate effectively with researchers in matters which impacted on their lives (Tizard and Hughes, 1984).

There are a range of barriers which prevent children from taking active participatory roles in research. Kellett (2005) suggests that these are usually connected to issues of relating to children's 'age (and by implication competence), knowledge and skills' (2005:1). There is a strong connection between children's competence and the adult's ability to 'hear' what is being said in much of the literature connected with research with young children. Kellett (2010) suggests that a predisposition is needed to be able to listen and to '*hear'* what is being said is needed, but also to value and appreciate children's unique perspectives (2010). Riihelda (1996 in Lancaster, 2003, 6) suggests that every human being has a story to tell, and the telling of it is not dependent on the age of the teller but the sensitivity of the listener. Brooker (2001) makes a strong statement reflecting a similar stance, that 'researchers agree that limitations to young children's competence as responders are generally the limitations of those who interview them and that honest answers are given and if not, then it is the fault of the researcher' (Brooker, 2001, 168). Rinaldi (2006), suggests a 'pedagogy of listening', meaning that adults should listen with intentionality to what children have to tell them, and by creating opportunities which enable the children's ideas and words to be valued and important.

Enabling children to be active participants means that children involved in being listened to, should have different types of opportunities to portray their views. Article 13 of the UNCRC (UN, 1989) indicates that children should be given the opportunity to respond to issues which impact on their lives through a range of creative mechanisms. This research project uses a range of tools to engage children and to enable them to communicate their views, supporting Smith's (2011) view that the 'greater the richness of activities and communications that children participate in, the greater will be their competence' (2011:15). Through open-ended and creative approaches to working with children and the use of video to capture and record children's views and perceptions, a conscious attempt is made

throughout this research in supporting the principles of children's rights and agency.

## Part 2: Design of study and ethical considerations

### 3.7 Outline of reconnaissance stage

The initial exploratory study for this research was based in a Year 1 classroom, with a former teaching colleague in a school which was unfamiliar to myself acting as researcher. The primary school of over 200 children, from Reception to Year 6 was positioned on the outskirts of a large town. The purpose of the initial exploratory study, over a 4 week period, was to consider the most beneficial ways of working with the children and the teacher in order to support the research aims using a range of methods. A range of factors influenced the decisions made at this early stage and throughout the research, including time, access, resources, as well as personal influences such as my own training and goals, and my view of children in this age group (O'Kane, 2008).

The reconnaissance stage enabled me to consider some of the structural, organisational and practical issues of the research which were not always foreseeable in the planning stages of the research. This was partly to do with the 'general oversight of the usefulness of qualitative methods for doing research with children applies particularly to the 5-12 age group. Typically researchers have focussed on pre-schoolers and adolescents because they are presumed critical phases in child development' (Greig et al. 2007: 161). The information on research methods was influenced by Hill (1996). Hill's work specifically focuses on the primary age group, however not all of the suggestions would be appropriate for children aged 5 and 6 years old, that would be acceptable for children in the senior end of primary school. Therefore it was necessary to consider some of the work done with children in early years, often of preschool age, to gain a wider variation and insight of suitable methods. Moss and Clark's (2001) mosaic approach, through its creative participatory approaches was of

particular use in informing the methods. Their approach however, was designed for younger pre-school children and therefore the reconnaissance study was beneficial in enabling the development of the methods used within the schools participating in the main study for older children.

### 3.8 Research conception and design

In the context of this research the initial ideas and design emerged from my experience as a primary school teacher. The research was designed initially without consultation with children, with the 'participation' aspects of the research being the development of the methods, the data collection and in some aspects, of the data analysis. Due to this structure it could be aligned with Lansdown's (2004) consultative process which has been made participatory. So although the design and initiation of the research is adult initiated and managed, children were able to identify the relevant areas to be explored by themselves, given the opportunities to develop the methodology for the research and were given the role of researchers by capturing, monitoring, discussing and prioritising some of the research data.

Preconceived decisions about the research methods and tools used to capture children's perceptions were driven by several factors. The first of these were the research design and the constraints of myself as the researcher and the participants involved in the research. At the research design level, for ethical approval to be granted, a clear and considered view of the design of the study, including risk to the participants involved needed to be constructed. Without this, there would be concerns, not only at university level, in terms of risk and accountability, but at a personal level as a novice researcher, working alone to make decisions which were ethically sound and well considered at the core of the research design and implementation.

There were other pressures too, which meant that a more detailed approach was needed in how children's perceptions might be gathered and the 'types' of areas of investigation that might be opened out from the head teachers of the schools involved in the research. Some researchers consider that the over protective position taken by some gatekeepers may hinder the ability of some 'unheard' groups to be listened to because of gatekeepers' cautions about enabling participation (O'Kane, 2008). Similarly Osler (2010) indicates in her research that participants were selected from school councils or from ambassadors of the school and reminded to present a good image of the school to the researchers. The head teachers, the gate keepers within this research project wanted an overall 'picture' of what work would be done with the children and also wanted to know how the research work done would impact on the children's ability to participate fully with the curriculum. This is an issue also raised by Osler (2010) who questioned the ethical implications of withdrawing children from lessons in order to participate in her research project.

One of the head teachers in this research project wanted written details of links which could be made between the research methods used and the focus of the research, directly to the primary curriculum. Tentative links were made between the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), literacy and communication skills and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). The requirement from this particular head teacher was to evidence curriculum links to my research. These were needed to support objectives within the school action plan and school self assessment framework, required by every school. However this requirement could also have indicated that the head teacher felt she needed to justify time spent outside of usual curriculum activities or as a desire or commitment to ensure that the time spent involved in the research would enrich the curriculum and the children's learning.

Within this research project, the head teachers (and the teacher participants involved in the research) needed and wanted to know what

their role was. This included specifying how my time in the classroom would affect not only what they had planned for the children's learning but also how it might impact on their teaching time within the classroom. It was therefore essential that an organised schedule for the research was put into position at the start of the research and was reviewed accordingly throughout the process with all the teachers involved. When possible, children were involved in making decisions about the activities in the research, promoting a view of the child as competent and able to make choices about their participation in the research process. This view of the child within research, and the methods used posed some particular ethical issues for consideration, at the design stages in the project and throughout.

### 3.9 Ethical considerations and procedures

All those who participated within the research, or gave consent, were given assurances of the commitment to enable non-traceable research. This is preferable to a promise of an anonymous declaration, which is not possible when gathering face-to-face interviews due to the nature of the data collection (Cohen et al., 2000). As a result, where names have been used they have been changed to enable this non-traceable commitment.

Thomson (2008) explores the use of visual research with children as a valuable tool for insight into children's perceptions. In addition, MacNaughton et al., (2001) and Alderson (2008), both explore the value of children as researchers and as participants of research, indicating the richness of the data for analysis and yet the complexities of such an approach and the ethical boundaries of such research. Freeman (1988) indicates that participation should not be placed outside of a framework of protection. It is therefore interesting to consider and reflect on Whyte's (2006 cited in Grey and Winter, 2011) suggestion that researchers working in a participatory approach should have a specific range of skills and experiences before engaging in participatory research with children.

Whyte (2006 cited in Grey and Winter, 2011), suggests that researchers working with all young children and particularly those with special needs, which was evident in each group of participants, should have a range of qualities or qualifications before embarking on research. Given the nature of working with young children and their particular vulnerability due to their age, a coherent and thorough requirement of skills and qualities such as suggested by Whyte (ibid) was a useful tool in measuring my own competencies at the start of the research as well as highlighting some of the basic necessities.

**Table 1: Researcher's responses to Whyte's checklist of qualities for research with children**

| **Whyte's checklist of qualities** | ***Researchers response to checklist*** |
|---|---|
| Police clearance | *A full clear Criminal Bureau Investigation check* |
| Experience of participating in a disability awareness programme | *Experience during training as a teacher and as on-going professional training in mainstream education and higher education.* |
| Qualifications and experience working with children in a general, and also experience working with children with disabilities, in the age group participating in the project. | *Teaching qualifications and experience working with children in a school setting between ages 5-11.* |
| A good information base about child development. | *A solid theoretical basis and on-going commitment to this development.* |
| The ability to communicate with the participating group. | *Met through experience and secure communication skills.* |
| Knowledge of the physical and cognitive impairments and their likely impact on children's experiences and development at different ages. | *At the beginning of each round of the research discussions were had with the class teacher about the needs of the children in the class including those with specific needs.* |
| Knowledge of previous research findings in this area. | *At the beginning and on-going throughout the project.* |
| An awareness of their own biases, assumptions and prejudices in relation to children in general and also in relation to children with disabilities of the age participating in the project. | *A reflexive and reflective approach to my epistemological views and my bias demonstrated throughout the research process and evidenced in this thesis.* |
| Knowledge and familiarity with ethical guidelines from professional organizations. | *This project was undertaken following the ethical guidance indicated below.* |
| Access to supportive committees and a professional network of professionals and experts, including children with disabilities and their parents; and in some cases ad reference group of people/ children with disabilities | *A professional network of early childhood colleagues, through a special interest research group many of whom were specialist in disabilities, or special educational needs.* |

In addition to these guidelines, I consulted and followed the guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and the National Children's Bureau (NCB, 2003) framework for research with children**.** In the organisation of this research the necessary ethical procedures were established at the beginning of the research, but these were also ongoing in the active reflection of both my own role and the work that the children were doing as participants in the research. Thus the ethical considerations were an ongoing process (Robson, 2011). Examples of this ongoing reflection in action can be seen in the discussions relating to the reconnaissance study, detailed within this chapter.

### 3.10 Ethical procedures within this research project

My initial introduction to the schools was via a letter (See appendix 1). This was followed by a meeting with the head teacher of the schools involved, to gain informed consent from them. Following this initial introduction, a meeting was held with the class teacher to discuss the project and gain the teacher's informed consent. Letters were then sent to parents for their consent (appendix 2), with duplicate copies with contact details. The children were asked for their written consent at the initial meeting with them.

The children's consent form (appendix 3) made 4 specific points, as suggested by Coady (2001). These points were, the nature of the research, what would be expected of each group participating, the possible risks from the research and the participants right to withdraw from the research at any time. Coady (2001) also indicates that words that can be understood should be used and this differentiation was made in the children's consent forms compared with consent forms and participant information aimed at the teacher's (see appendix 4).

In addition to children's consent which was formalised at the beginning of the project, there was an ongoing commitment to children's assent in the

research. This began with a discussion about the research project and the legitimate opportunity to say that they did not want to be involved (Cohen and Manion, 1994:353). This right to participate or withdraw was also discussed at regular intervals within the research, with individuals and the whole class. In addition to asking children if they wanted to participate with every activity and respecting their rights if a 'no' was given, I also intended to be sensitive to any unspoken withdrawals from the research process, the first of which was brought to my attention in the first activity with children in the reconnaissance study and is detailed in this chapter. This commitment to looking for other clues about children's willingness represented not only my understanding of some of the power issues that inevitably exist between any adult and child, especially within an educational setting, but also a commitment to the children's right not to participate.

The use of video as a tool for data collection posed many ethical issues which were of importance to myself as researcher, and to parents, children, teachers and the school community. At the time when I carried out some of this research, a news story had emerged about a nursery worker who had abused and videoed very young children in her care. Although my research was school based, with children of an older age group than the nursery children, this story raised concerns among the general public (as evidenced in newspapers during this time), about the use of recording equipment in pre-schools. As a consequence many settings created 'no phone' policies. This incident highlighted for me, as researcher, the absolute need for clarity in the research information given to parents and schools, and an emphasis on my commitment to child protection. As part of the protocol in this project, I asked to be made aware of the nominated child protection officer in each school and any specific protocols relating to this. Having completed safeguarding training previously, I was aware of the initial procedures which needed to occur should an incident arise during the project. As well as a genuine commitment to the safeguarding and protection of the children participating in the research, I was also committed to the wider community,

both within and outside of the school boundaries. Walker et al., (2008) suggest that participants have the right to be heard in relation to research ethics procedures. In this research, there were opportunities for the children to become involved in discussions about the ethical issues raised by the use of the video cameras at home and school.

As the children were given the cameras to take home, it was important to establish boundaries with the children. By establishing ground rules at the beginning of the project there was collaboration between the teachers, children and myself to establish an ethical code of conduct for the research. One such issue was the use of covert videoing. Children agreed that if other people were captured 'on camera' then they had to agree to be videoed. It was also agreed with the children that there should not be any videoing of people who were unknown to the children. Letters which accompanied the cameras home gave instructions to parents about how to delete clips in order to support this commitment. The children also agreed not to use the cameras during any school break times where there would be lots of children 'captured' who would not be in a position to give informed consent. Children were also invited to make suggestions as to what should or should not be included in their videos, many of which were insightful. In addition, children were also reminded of their right to participate or withdraw from the research project. To add formality to this, the children were asked to agree and sign their 'rules' for the video project, creating an ethical agreement between the group.

Those children who did not have parental consent, or did not consent to the project with me participated in the classroom-based activities although their work was not included in the data findings. This was in agreement with the class teacher and head teacher, in keeping with the school's policies on inclusion.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and their schools, names have been changed or omitted. The video data was moved onto DVD directly from the camera once the data collection in each school had

been completed.  One copy was made. The DVDs for each class involved were kept in a locked storage accessible only to myself and stored in a location away from other data included in the research. These will be destroyed after the completion of this thesis. Although the schools' names were omitted, the videos do capture the school logo on several uniforms which make the children's school identifiable, thus within this research or further dissemination of the project no clips from the videos can be shown.

## Part 3: Methods

### 3.11 Introduction to the use of video in research

In order to embrace the principles of democratic participation, Clark et al., (2003) suggest that researchers should set aside their agendas and facilitate children's freedom of expression by using a multi-media approach, such as the use of flip cameras (hand held videos) (cited in Gray and Winter, 2011). This was the equipment chosen for this research project. Each child had their own camera, suitably labelled for the duration of the project with the capacity to record up to an hour's worth of footage. These individual hand held video cameras were roughly the same size as a mobile phone and simple to operate.

Video based methods of research have become increasingly popular in educational research. This is due to the technical developments, affordability (and thus increased availability) and its perceived power to 'democratise the research process' (Haw and Hatfield, 2011:8), thus *potentially* enabling participation. Robson (2011) suggests that video data may be particularly of value with children as video connects readily to their interests in image making, and their position as 'practiced consumers' of interpreting and making meaning from television or video in their everyday lives (ibid:179). This was visible within this research as children enjoyed using the cameras to 'interview' each other spontaneously during practice sessions with the cameras, mimicking a 'news or television reporter' in playful ways. This became more evident with some children actively

‘presenting’ their videos to an unseen audience. One example of this is a particular child who introduced herself before each clip, demonstrating a ‘television presenter’ commentary throughout.

A research project completed by Ramsey et al., (2007),which loaned children cameras to document their lives outside of their early years provision found that the use of loaned cameras often ‘represented a watershed in children’s engagement with the programme’ (ibid: 26). This emphasised the status of video cameras as a tool for engaging children. Within my research, all the children without exception, were interested in using the videos and learned how to use them with enthusiasm. As a tool for engaging them it worked. Perhaps this was because in all the schools which participated, videos had not been used by the children in this manner before, and so it had a novel value and because of its simplicity, was accessible to all of the children.

Video has other advantages as a tool for data collection. It may capture situations which could be too intrusive in other formats (Haw and Hadfield, 2011). This was evident in some of the videos captured by the children throughout this research, with some children using the video to speak privately, or show their lives in very open and often surprising ways, many of which are discussed in depth in chapters 4 and 5. The ability of the cameras to capture a rich sequence of information, which ‘appears to represent the complexities of social life and so lend[s] itself to capturing the ‘big picture’’ (Plowman and Stephen, 2006), however was not as easily demonstrated. Perhaps this suggestion about capturing the ‘big picture’ is dependent on the nature of the filming, where continuous filming can capture the everyday intricacies. In this research project, the short clips captured over weeks offers more of a ‘snapshot’ view of life, rather than the sequences of information that continuous filming might.

There are many ways in which the video data may be used, either during the data collection, or analysis. Exploration of these uses can offer greater and more detailed opportunities for discussion about its value. Haw and

Hadfield (2011) suggest 5 categories in which video based research can be positioned. These are: video as representation; video as an aid to reflection; video that generates participation; video that supports voice and articulation and finally, video that acts as provocation.

These categories are useful in developing a focus for a research project and for considering the type of data collected using video. This particular project used the video data in several ways which crossed over these categories. The video data was used as a tool enabling participation, encouraging children's 'voice' to be captured, through their recordings of places, people and objects that were identified as important to the children participating. The video data was also used as a tool for self-reflection and shared reflection with other children, myself the researcher, and the class teacher.

Robson (2011) suggests that there is a lack of engagement with children in the process of analysis and interpretation, and suggests that research with children and video tends to use video data as a tool for adult researcher reflection. Robson acknowledges there are two notable exceptions (Forman, 1999 and Morgan, 2007), which use video data to consider children's own responses, interpretations and analysis. This research does use video as a tool for encouraging children to reflect and discuss their own work, giving them the opportunity to present themselves as experts and myself, as researcher, as the 'learner', as advocated by Thomson and Hall (2008, 154).

The use of video within educational settings has often been reserved for special occasions and events, however Forman (1999) suggests that we should move beyond this phrase, utilising videos as 'tools of the mind'. He advocates that video cameras enable children to engage with their own actions in a reflective way. The facility of being able to instantly watch a piece of recorded footage enables the child to move their thinking from beyond the physical and instant action to thinking about what the children have done and why.

Video data may be used as a tool for assessment, record keeping, or as an exploratory tool in which teachers may view their own practice through a different lens (see Plowman and Stephen, 2006). This research project explores the video data in several ways reflecting on both children's and adult (my own and teacher) responses and their interpretations, which are explored in more detail in part 3 of this chapter.

### 3.12 Discussion of video methods used in reconnaissance study

The children were given time for 'practising' using the cameras outside without any direction after their initial introduction to the cameras. One of the arguments against the use of video, is that the equipment may cause 'procedural reactivity', inhibiting participants' behaviours and changing their everyday behaviour and activities (Prosser, 1998). Thus it was important to enable the children the opportunity to become familiar and competent users of the equipment and give them the ownership of the resource, and also help to establish the context for the research (Greig et al., 2007).

Initially, these introductory recordings raised an issue about their place in the research project and whether or not they should be included as 'data'. As this was the first day of videoing and consent and had been given that day, I decided that this early data could be used. However, on reflection about the day, it became clear that this decision was not mine to make and that in concluding the session with the children, it was their decision to make. The reflection of the first recording session also drew my attention to the ongoing need for assent with children and the need for a sensitive approach to researching with children (Smith, 2011).

During the introductory session outlined above, the children had been introduced to the basic functions of the cameras. They were given the opportunity to practise recording, playing back and deleting scenes. During this first session, two children working together filmed several scenes outside together, watched them back, appeared to enjoy their viewings

and then promptly deleted them and moved on to the next piece of filming. Initially, I was disappointed that the data had been lost, however as MacNaughton and Smith (2005) describe in their discussion relating to drawing research with children (during which the ownership of a piece of valuable evidence was not handed to the researcher), these initial feelings of disappointment must be replaced with consideration that the children had the power and control in order to be able to make the decisions about what they chose to contribute.

The children who choose to delete all their scenes were, in effect, demonstrating their assent and their withdrawal from the data collection, at this particular stage of the research. My role as researcher, was to enable this, without prejudice. For ethical reasons I felt it was important that the children had the option of deleting scenes they did not want to either be seen, or included in the research project. For many of the children, they deleted scenes that met these criteria. Children were reminded how to use all the function tools of the camera including the delete button at the start of each activity session conducted.

The initial exploratory study enabled me to work through the organisation of the research in more detail than planning for the research had allowed me to do. During the early part of the reconnaissance stage the children were given very little direction in how they might use the cameras and as a consequence there was very little being recorded, which was of quality, in terms of data, (the visual and audio lacking clarity). Support was offered to work with the children to develop these technical skills.

### 3.13 Children ‘interviewing’ each other

I decided that the use of video as a tool would facilitate the data collection. I introduced creative and playful activities into the video work in order to help facilitate the elicitation of children’s views. This included some guided group work, independent work and opportunities for the children to film outside of the classroom activities without any intervention - a suggestion

also made elsewhere (Greig et al., 2007). Both individual and group activities needed to be woven into the research planning in order to support children to think about what was important to them and thus create much stronger connections between the children's work and the research focus.

During this stage I trialled several activities which I felt would enhance the children's work. I became very aware, however, that the participatory work which I had intended to carry out was becoming more directed, as a consequence of initial videos which reflected the need for some structure in the set up of the activities. I was concerned that this 'support' could be considered a 'piecemeal' attempt at participatory research, or 'tokenistic' as Kellett (2005) describes some participatory research. It was a difficult balance to achieve, providing support to enable the children's views to come to the fore, without my own agenda and influence dominating the activities.

In an attempt to engage the children as participants, I offered them the opportunity to think about how they would like to use the cameras and continued to ask children this question and facilitate it throughout the research. However, time with the children in the school setting was limited and in order to help elicit children's views, several approaches were trialled during this phase.

One of the activities I trialled at this stage was classroom based work during which the children interviewed each other. I aimed to provide some structure so that the children were able to focus their work, through set, open-ended questions. In addition, I wanted them to have the freedom to ask their own questions of each other. The interviewing activity had many other advantages. The first was that it introduced the children to the idea of 'interviewing', what it meant and how interviews might be carried out, which was a useful starting point when asking them if they wanted to participate in interviews with myself later in the research project. Secondly, on a practical level, it was a good use of time as the children interviewed

each other individually. It meant that the 40 minutes taken for each pair to be interviewed was achieved in one session, rather than what would have taken several days for me to do individually. Thirdly, when the children, as friends, paired up with each other, they were taking to a familiar peer rather than an unknown adult.

Two very simple questions were constructed in order to encourage the children to think about what was important to them. It was anticipated that these open-ended questions would encourage the children to think in different ways about what was important to them. The following questions were asked:

> 1a. If you could go on a magical bus ride anywhere you wanted where would you go?
> 1b. Who would you take with you?
> 1c. What would you see?
> 1d What would you say?
>
> 2a. If you had a magic wand and one wish with it – what would your wish be for?

This task did not work in this initial format. The majority of the children in this class were unable to remember the questions to ask each other, and although visual clues were put on the whiteboard to remind them, many of the children got confused. They also were confused about which camera they should be using, as they paired up with each other. Some of the children videoed themselves asking rather than answering the questions, which was not problematic in itself other than the interviews consisted of the questions rather than the answers! In order for the approach to work, the activity must match the ability of the participants (Greig et al., 2007:164), and in this activity, although the concept was interesting, it did not match the ability of the children. This also highlighted another issue. Often the ‘interviewee’ of the pair stood too far from the ‘interviewer’ for the audio to be captured clearly. In addition, over 26 children all trying to

interview at once did cause considerable noise, despite some children working outside of the classroom.

During the interviewing time there was also pressure on myself as researcher and leader of the activity to support the children alongside the teacher. The children needed support not only with the practicalities of the equipment, such as new batteries or camera functions, but in addition with some of the social issues that working with each other at this age group inevitably brings. This raised another issue, not only must the research task be planned appropriately to enable the children to participate, but it must also be made manageable for the researcher.

This preliminary stage enabled me to work through structural issues so that the research activities in the 'main' research could be better managed. As Punch (2002) suggests, it takes time to get the design right. In the subsequent classrooms where the research was carried out, this activity was conducted with smaller groups of children and individuals enabling better quality data to be captured. The questions also were adapted as:

1.If you could go on a journey somewhere where would you go and who would you take with you?
2. What is one of your favourite memories?
3. If you were a superhero what powers would you have and what would you do with them?

These questions, it was intended, would give children the opportunity to talk either about the people in their lives who were important to them (living or dead), and would also enable them to explore what they might do, or be, without the constraints of being 'themselves' within an ordinary day-to-day context.

### 3.14 Giving a guided tour

Ideas were also developed in this preliminary research from the Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001, 2005). One activity in this participatory approach to research with very young children encouraged the children to take 'the researcher' on a 'guided' tour of the educational setting. This was trialled with several children, with the children capturing their tours on camera. Clark and Moss (2001, 2005) use the 'guess what I like' game, with my role as 'guessing' what the children like. The children would then answer with a 'yes' or 'no' response. As Clark and Moss' (2001; 2005) research is based with younger children than in this project, I wanted to provide more opportunities for the children to lead the tours, and discussions, if they were able. The tours were a useful way of listening to children's views about what was important to them within the school environment and offered opportunities for other discussions or impromptu conversations based on what the children told me.

This technique was incredibly useful, but presented an additional methodological issue relating to 'audience'. The children were all given the same intentionally brief and open outline of the task, to show me all the places and things they felt were important in the school, thus they were the experts and I, the learner, a position advocated by Thomson and Hall (2008). I accompanied the children around the school while they videoed and asked, when I felt appropriate, 'wondering' questions offering ideas and observations in order to prompt less predictable discussions from the children as advocated by Hutt et al., (1989). These types of questions may help to stimulate rather than lead children's thinking (Brooker, 2001) and enable children to maintain the position of 'expert'.

The simplicity of the task enabled the children to work with the cameras in ways which suited them, their personalities and their competence. From this, three main 'styles' of video recording emerged. The first style was those who were 'independent' (presenting for a 'private' audience). These children tended to want to work individually, were not interested in talking

to me and often used the audio more than the cameras. They spoke directly into the microphones and did not seem to want any support with their tour videos. The second ‘style’ of recording, was that ‘dependant’ tour guide, these children tended to ask a lot of questions. They tended to speak directly to me rather than in their videos and tended (although not always) to use the visual tool of the cameras rather then speak into the microphone. The third ‘style’ that emerged was that of ‘confident’ tour guide. These children were engaged with their video and my questions, as they gave their tours. The latter group seemed most aware that I was the audience, both during the tour in person and in the videos. This was made evident by comments from the children both during the session, who wanted to show me their recordings and asked me regularly about what they had recorded.

These groups are a crude way of organising the children’s responses and it would be naive to indicate that children could be so easily categorised. However, it was a useful initial way of reflecting on how the children interacted and presented to the ‘audience’ or, their disposition which did not engage with the audience in the same way. During the subsequent stages of the research in other classrooms, similar situations arose, such as a reluctance of one child to allow myself or the teacher to review her videos with her, an ethical as well as an ‘audience’ issue. Another example was presented by one child who recorded a comment about ‘toilets’ and then immediately commented that he shouldn’t say such ‘rude’ things on the camera. Such issues reminded me, not only of the complex ways in which the children may have viewed the research and the researcher, but also provided some insight in the wide range of ability of the children, all within this academic age group and their ability to ‘understand’ the project.

### 3.15 Drawing

One of the tasks developed in the exploratory study was a drawing activity, which was set up as a whole class activity. Drawing is an activity promoted by several participatory research advocates (Veale, 2005, Lancaster,

2003, Clark and Moss, 2001). The use of drawing 'provides the opportunity to represent experience, a tangible process and product, within which stories are inherent, or out of which stories are created' (Leitch, 2008:39). The children were asked to draw 'what is special to me' as a tool which could compliment and expand on other methods of data collection, but also to validate, or otherwise, previous comments on issues raised. During this activity, which I introduced with the support of the class teacher the children drew their ideas and then 'videoed' their drawings explaining what they had drawn and why this was important to them. This brought to the fore several methodological issues.

The notes from my field work explain the situation as I recorded it that day:

> *The activity was inclusive as all children could access the resources and were able to select tools for drawing, or writing (although all chose to draw). Different resources supported an element of choice however most children seemed to choose what was 'usual' i.e., white A4 paper and felt-tip pens. As I moved around the first table [Sam] had already began to draw. He had drawn his pet dog and his pet cat. The dog and cat were drawn on their own (no context), I asked about them and showed interest in his drawings and gave plenty of praise about what good ideas he had and what careful drawings he had made to offer encouragement to him. As I moved around the table, I noticed many of the children had also drawn animals. At the other side of the table I asked [Joe] what he had drawn, he told me, his pet dog. Showing interest I asked what the dog's name was. "I don't know" he said.*
>
> *(field notes , reconnaissance study)*

This incident was significant. It brought to my attention the children's acquiescence response bias, the notion that children want to please adults. This has been proven to the extent that research by Hughes and Grieve (1981) indicate that children will produce answers to questions that do not make sense, in an effort to please. This also indicated some of the

tensions which exist between participatory methods, such as this which attempt to enable the child's voice to be heard, and their own agenda, at that time. Similarly, it is not always the 'adult' that the child wishes to please. Christensen and James (2011), found that 'a sense of 'sameness' is important for children and provides them with a feeling of belonging. By working together or copying differences are erased and similarities shared' (Christensen and James, 2011: 163). The importance of the peer relationship was brought to my attention as a small group of children worked on the same table drawing what was important to them. A table of 4 children all drew a 'Nintendo DS' (a small hand held video game machine). This came to my attention by one of the children on the table who told me that one of the children who had drawn this machine did not own one. The child in question looked embarrassed by the situation and insisted that he did, and that it was pink.

Lancaster (2003: 2) suggests that one reason why children may be unheard is due to a lack of reliability or accuracy, even in matters related to their own lives. This activity did indicate that there were some underlying issues that may have been of importance to the children, such as the desire for praise or to please, and to be part of the trends within a peer groups and thus it proved a valuable tool for gaining alternative insights into the children's lives. It also brought to my attention other research issues relating to power, and the power relationships between children. Hart and Tyrer (2006 cited in O'Kane, 2008:126) suggest that these may be related to age, gender, ethnicity, birth order, educational attainment, personality and (dis)ability.

In the subsequent rounds of data collection, where possible, the drawing activity became merged with the interview activity so that children talked while they drew their pictures and questioning focussed on the reasons *why* decisions were made rather than explain the object depicted in the drawing in order to enable the children to engage with the research focus in a way which utilised their skills (Christensen and James, 2008).

### 3.16 Puppets

In order to help children elicit their views and ideas, the children were invited to create a puppet. The use of puppets in research projects with children is used more commonly within therapeutic and medical research. As a tool for communication, the methods and techniques that are used by children or researchers has not been written about in depth. (Epstein et al., 2008). There are many potential benefits of using puppets to help enable children to talk about matters which affect them. As Clark (1999) suggests, the use of a traditional interview and exchange of questions and answers is very unusual and thus the puppets offer alternative, more creative tools to encourage children to share their perceptions. This supports Aldridge's (1998 cited in Epstein et al., 2008) view that using puppets enables children to re-enact their experiences and that using probes such as puppets with questioning can be very effective.

In the reconnaissance study, the children were encouraged to make their own puppets using wooden spoons with the top of the spoon stuffed and covered in fabric to enable the children to draw, paint or collage directly on top to create a face. Bromfield (1995) suggests that the way in which the puppets look is worthy of consideration and suggests that puppets should not have fixed expressions so that they offer the children opportunities to demonstrate a range of emotional expressions. However these puppets, made by the children, enabled the children to choose the expressions and create their own persona for the puppets. This was important as it enabled them to have control of the puppets features, dress and colouring. Thus some of the image issues, which Epstein et al., (2008) suggest, may influence how children respond to a particular puppet may have been avoided. In the small scale research conducted by Epstein et al. (2008), they found that children were able to resonate with puppets and were more communicative when they had some features, such as the same gender or hair, which was the same as their own.

In the reconnaissance study, the children were given little guidance about what the puppet might look like once complete. The open ended and creative opportunities which this enabled had several consequences. For a few children the lack of specific instructions, and the freedom of choosing from a range of fabrics, collage resources and pens, paints, coloured glues was too open ended. They sought support from myself, the teacher and the teaching assistant working in the classroom at the time to help them create their character. Others were influenced by television characters popular to the class. The majority of children however were engaged in the activity and created unique characters which appeared to develop a personality as they were developed. This was evident in one of the puppets in which a girl puppet was adorned with some shiny fabric and became a princess. The princess then needed a crown and various other 'royal' paraphernalia.

The children were then given time to think about the character and experiences that their puppets may have had before using them with the video cameras. The children were encouraged to talk to their puppet and then the puppets spoke to each other, moving around the room. The children visibly enjoyed this task and were all able to communicate through the puppet with some practice and support. Where the children did not initially understand that it was the puppet that was talking and not themselves, other children also directed them, supporting each other. One way in which this was achieved was through using an alternative 'voice' which I demonstrated to the children through the introduction of my puppet made out of the same resources as the children. This puppet was deliberately not shown to the children until their puppets had all been completed. They then were invited to make a story about their puppets and video this on camera. This was an enlightening activity, but as many of the characters were imaginary as a tool to elicit their own voices this proved to be problematic and ineffective as there was such a high level of fantasy involved in their stores. Spencer (2011) suggests that 'where visual records are concerned there is truth in fiction as well as fiction in truth'. The use of the imaginary characters and stories told through the

puppets did open out some interesting discussions and indicates that there were some issues which were very 'real' to the children, but brought out through the imaginary characters. One particularly pertinent example is illustrated below. It illustrates how a fantasy story merges told through the puppets can draw out very real issues:

*Girl 1:* *She pricked her finger…*

*Girl 2:* *…And she died… and she died… (in a light hearted voice)*

*Girl 1:* *…in the end she might die because she's got cancer.*

*Girl 2:* *Cancer?*

*Girl 1:* *(loudly) Cancer!*

*Girl 2:* *What's cancer?*

*Girl 1:* *Cancer is when they get really bald and they are gonna die.*

*Girl 2:* *(pause) Oh! (pause)*

*Girl 1:* *Cancer is that, so if you ever wanna know about cancer come and see me and I'll tell you.*

The use of the puppet and the video together meant that there was no adult intervention or direction in the task – other than the initiation of it and support with encouraging children to talk 'through' their puppets. This was a particularly useful tool in supporting the participatory methodologies as the task was open ended and the power relationships, between myself and the participants was minimized. Nunkoosing (2005) suggests that the use of puppets is one way in which success can be achieved. The choice and creativity provided by the activity also supports the suggestion that craft or arts based activities are appropriate methods in participatory research (Lancaster, 2003, UNCRC, 1989).

Although a puppet making and story telling approach was used in all of the participating classrooms, the activity did change in the final school (school 3), which encouraged the children to make puppets of themselves. This was a direct attempt to engage the children to discuss and tell stories about what was important in their lives and align this method more closely to the research questions, thus removing some of the 'fantasy' element from their characters.

### 3.17 Independent home and school 'recording'

In the reconnaissance study and the main research project the children were given the opportunity to record freely. This occurred at the beginning of the project, as discussed at the beginning of this section and on occasions throughout the project, often if requested by the children and when the cameras were taken home. The cameras were taken home by all the participating children for a week during the project. In the reconnaissance study and subsequent schools, a letter went home with the cameras, reminding parents about the project and inviting them to allow their child to record as 'freely as they felt appropriate' any areas of their life they felt were important and wanted to share with myself and their class teacher. It also informed parents how to use the cameras, including how to delete clips. Ethically this was important, as it gave parents a genuine opportunity to consent information to the research project from their homes. It was interesting to note, that while reflecting on the video data, that many more clips recorded at home were deleted in comparison to clips created at school. It is possible, that parents may have felt that they were required to check the quality of the recordings, either technically or the content within the clips.

The style of 'presentation' of videos varied between children. One series of home videos was 'presented' by the child, but recorded by his mother, during which he gave a series of 'performances' akin to a television style of talking. This transcription reflects this:

*Boy (reconnaissance study): This is my bedroom, sorry it is very messy, this is my bed, these are my toys, this is my tv and this is my Ben 10 watch. I like my room, it is nice. Thank you.*

The other clips from the home videos reflected this 'presentation', apologising and thanking the viewer camera. Also of interest were several children who commented either during interviews looking at the videos, or on camera, were about the house being tidy or clean. Several children commented that recording could not take place inside homes or certain rooms of their house as it was too untidy. This represented to me, some of the issues of censorship or privacy that many parents wanted to manage, but also of a concern that I, or the teacher would be critical or judgemental about the living conditions of the families involved. This did not include safeguarding issues which would be dealt with according to current policy as a separate issue.

Another 'home' recording was the video of a boy reading his school reading book to his mother. His mother was recording while the child read the book from beginning to end. No other data was captured at home. This was intriguing, but on discussions with the class teacher it became apparent that there was an ongoing discussion about the child's ability to read, with his mother insisting that her son should be moved 'up' to the next reading level. This was an example of how the parent's agenda came to the fore in the videoing, rather than the child's.

As well as videoing independently at home, the children were given the opportunity during interview to consider: 'what would they like to record if they were able to keep the cameras longer at home, or if you had your own video? The children were also asked the same question about the use of cameras in school. Where suggestions were given which were appropriate and approved by the class teacher, the children were given the opportunity to film independently. Children opted to use the cameras in the role play area, with the dolls house, in a den made during free play (golden time) and outside.

### 3.18 Interviews and conversations with children with video data as a stimulus

Discussions with children in this research were child and adult initiated. They can be categorised into conversations and interviews. Conversations were the unplanned, spontaneous discussions between myself and the children which may have been initiated by either myself or a child. Interviews were more structured, deliberate opportunities created to talk about the children's recordings on a one to one basis. The interviews tended to last longer than the conversations with children.

One of the key tools used to gather children's views in this research was to encourage their reflection on their video recordings. These planned 'interviews' were very informal, and were (usually) initiated by myself. Advice was sought from texts about how these interviews could be conducted, to be both ethically appropriate and to ensure that the children felt as comfortable as they could be when talking to me. Morrow and Richards (1996) offer a reminder that the researcher has a role and obligation to ensure that the child participant does not suffer any harm whilst undertaking the research, including their emotional well-being. It was therefore critical to ensure that both physical and verbal indications that the children were uncomfortable were carefully monitored and addressed as appropriate. Beresford (1997) suggests that it is possible that the child may feel many pressures from the research and the researcher such as fear of failure, invasion of privacy, guilt, threats to self-esteem and embarrassment. These feelings could have potentially been enhanced due to the very personal nature of the data which the children were sharing during their interviews of their home, school, family and peers.

Brooker (2005) suggests that children may feel manipulated into talking opening and honestly to the researcher and therefore may disclose more of an insight into their personal lives than anticipated. It was important that

the children were, as much as possible, able to refuse interviews and end them when they wanted to. It was also left for the children to decide which clips they wanted to share.

The aim for this approach was that during these interviews the children would be in the position of being the more knowledgeable person. During these interviews the children would, at my invitation, although sometimes at their request, show me their recordings, and then questions were asked, by me in relation to these discussions. These unstructured interviews varied in length.

Some children wanted to show all of their clips, and wanted me to watch the same recordings several times, while others choose to show me only one or two recordings or nothing at all. Sometimes the classroom activity impacted on the children's interest in talking with me. For example, during free play sessions in the classroom, most noticeably with class 3, the children did not want to spend a long period of time with me than at other times when they asked me directly to watch their footage.

Where children did not offer much vocally but demonstrated they were interested in spending time looking at the videos with me, I attempted to create 'openings' for them through 'out loud thinking' (Wood and Attfield), which is regarded as a more productive way of engaging in conversation with children, than direct questions which may lead to children feeling they are being challenged (Wood and Wood, 1983), or being monosyllabic (Tizard and Hughes, 1984) in their responses. Through out loud thinking, I offered my own ideas or responses, in order to engage the children in telling me their views. The reason for this was to enable children to feel and act as the more knowledgeable person in the interview and putting them in a position of power. This was somewhat of a risky strategy, as children may have not felt confident correcting my errors. Greig et al., confirm these concerns by suggesting that 'when using open ended questions or statements nursery and early primary stage children tend to agree with the questioner even if they do not know what is meant'

(2007:91). I would argue that this was not the case for the majority of the children in the research project. A sensitive approach towards the individuals and experience of working with this age group of children in a teaching capacity was beneficial in helping me to assess children's understanding as interviews progressed.

Particular ethical protocols were followed, which involved the termination of any session which was causing distress and enabling the children to demonstrate their choice to participate at a level they established. At signs of boredom, disinterest or body language that indicated that the session should stop, the session was concluded. Each session was concluded with a debriefing, reassurance, thanks, praise or whatever was felt to be appropriate to sustain the self-esteem of the individual child as Brooker suggests (2001, 166), although during 'conversations' this level of detail was not needed. Conversations occurred when the children approached me and wanted to show me something 'quickly' without wanting to engage in a long discussion. These 'quick' moments were often valuable as they were child-initiated. One such example in the reconnaissance study was of a boy, who approached me on the way into the classroom on one of my days in the school to tell me about his recording made at home with his brother. The clip, showed the two of them filming each other and working collaboratively to record some dancing. This excitement and anticipation of sharing information about his life was something that occurred many times in the subsequent classrooms involved in the research. This was important as it supported some of the initial ideas about using video as a tool which would engage children in participatory research. It also supported the notion of participatory activities which encouraged the children to generate and lead discussions, establishing their own agendas.

Tipping the power balance towards the participants is challenging and not always achievable as the 'drawing' activity explored previously in this chapter indicates. The alignment appeared to be more successful was when the discussions were led by the children and offered unpredictable child-led conversations as outlined above. It is important to note that

research which creates different daily events for children, even just with my presence in a classroom environment, it leads to ‘action events and conversations which would otherwise not have occurred’ (McNaughton et al., 2002, 139).

### 3.19 Interviewing teachers: semi- structured interviews and conversations

Discussions with teachers were also differentiated into conversations and interviews. This distinction presents conversations as unplanned and often spontaneous discussions as opposed to interviews which were initiated by the researcher. Three interviews were held with the teachers. The first interview was to capture teachers’ views before the start of the data collection with the children to gauge the level of involvement the classrooms had in gathering children’s views and listening. A mid-project interview was also initiated, during which teachers viewed some of the videos with me for discussion. A final interview was held at the end of the research project once the videos had been viewed. This allowed for key pieces of footage to be shown to the class teacher. This final interview encouraged teacher reflections on the full research project and during which some of the initial findings of the research were discussed with the teachers.

Cohen et al., (2000: 279) suggest that, interviewing ‘is a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise’. In the first round of data collection, the teacher was known to me and the process of interviewing felt very informal. This data was not used in the final study presented in this thesis, but offered me the opportunity to ‘practice’ the types of conversations that might have been held in the final study. This enabled me to use the reconnaissance stage to ‘pilot‘ the interviews and consider the construction of the questions in more detail, a process which Cannold (2001) suggests enables the interview process to be neatened up. Due to the nature of the video data discussed with each teacher, the interview questions were adapted based loosely on the key themes of

children's lives, curriculum and pedagogy, which run through the discourse of the thesis, thus there was little structuring of interview questions. An approach to the interviews was held which encouraged the teachers to reflect on the videos and conversations to develop from what was seen.

Creating relationships with participants, both teachers and children, is a methodological challenge faced by many researchers working in school environments. In the reconnaissance study, the relationship with the teacher was already established, but with the children it was not. Time is needed to create and develop relationships with participants (Fetterman, 1989). From my own perspective, my own lens at this stage in the research was influenced by my 'view' of the children and the ways in which I should work with them as a teacher. This was my craft, and I felt confident in this role, having developed these teaching skills over 6 years. The new position of 'researcher' was a role which still needed to be developed and through this project, including the reconnaissance study, I became aware of my own transitional phase during this study and throughout the research process.

## Part 4: Outline of the main study

### 3.20 Research context

The data collection for the main study, developed from the reconnaissance study as discussed previously in this chapter was conducted in three classrooms. Each classroom had between 26-29 children in it, however not all of these children, or their parents chose to participate. The first two classrooms involved in the study were made up of Year 1 children. The third classroom involved was a mixed age group, with Reception and Year 1 sharing the classroom space and teacher with 13 participants involved. The schools involved were initially recruited through contacts with former colleagues and were based in the same county. The head teachers of the participating schools responded positively to my letter of introduction, (appendix 1). Classrooms 1 and 2 were based in the same school on the

outskirts of a busy town. Classroom 3 was a rural setting with a less ethnically diverse group of children although with a broad age and academic ability range within it. Three classrooms were involved in the research in order to allow for a variation of data to be captured.

The research involved spending between 4 weeks (classroom 1 and 2) and 6 weeks (classroom 3) working with the children and the teachers on the research. During the time in each class there were several issues which impacted on the amount of time I was able to spend with each classroom. Often these were unforeseen, such as staff illness (classroom 1) or alternative sports days due to weather conditions (classroom 1) being held. Others were clear in advance, such as transition days, where the children moved ‘up’ to the class they would be in the following year. In these ‘known’ circumstance the research could be scheduled around these events. In addition, some teachers were able to offer more time to review the children’s work, and participate in the interviewing stages than others. The time spent in each classroom impacted on the relationships developed between myself and the children. Christensen (2004), in her discussions relating to ethnographic research with children aged 6-10 years old considers that time spent observing children and developing trusting, reciprocal relationships can support the research process.

**Table 2: Outline of research activities completed by each class**

| Outline of research activity or tool for data collection | Classroom 1 (4 weeks)<br><br>Town school<br>Diverse group, 29 children | Classroom 2 (4 weeks)<br>Town school<br>Diverse group, 26 children | Classroom 3 (6 weeks)<br>Rural school, mixed age class, 13 Year 1 children |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher profile | Head of 2 subject areas, teaching experience of 6 years | Recently qualified teacher | Experienced senior teacher (30 years of experience) |
| Initial teacher interview | Yes | No | Yes |
| Mid way teacher interview and discussion of children's collected data | No | Yes | Yes |
| Final teacher interview discussion of initial findings (inc looking at data) | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Children's drawings activity | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Children puppet activities | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Guided tours | No | No | Yes |
| Child-led and suggested activities | No | No | Yes |
| Interviews with children | Yes – minimal | Yes | Yes |
| Cameras sent home | Yes | Yes | Yes |

## Part 5: Reflections and developments of the research

### 3.21 Reflections from the reconnaissance study

The initial reconnaissance study described previously in this chapter supported the development of the research design by enabling me the opportunity to work through the methods for data collection and what worked and what did not work, at a very practical level. The process had also been a creative one. I had not anticipated using such a variety of methods when beginning the research, but the variety of methods enabled different views or perceptions to be captured by the children. Fleet and Britt (2011) support the use of a range of approaches as they indicate that: 'gathering data in a range of ways throws light on more facets of the construction of shared understandings of place than may be apparent through linear strategies. In these studies, multiple forms of representation have enabled children of varying ages, abilities and backgrounds to contribute their ideas in ways than might not be accessible through English written text (Fleet and Britt, 2011:158).

These methods and processes used to support the children with their data collection raised issues about the practicalities of working with a large group of children, both individually, and as a whole (as detailed in the section discussing the reconnaissance study above). They also allowed for insights into the processes that needed to be more finely tuned and clearly organised as well as giving me greater awareness of some of the ethical issues I might meet in the subsequent stages of the research.

After some time to reflect on what had been learnt from the reconnaissance stage I designed a more systematic and structured series of activities which would support the research and, it was hoped, would enable the children the opportunity to capture their views on the cameras. The informal feedback from the children and teachers informed the development of some of the activities, such as wanting to have more time to spend on particular activities. There were no formal opportunities which

were used to discuss the development of the methods with the children. Greater opportunities for participation in these early decisions might have enhanced the participatory ethos of the research, however in these early stages, my inexperience of participatory research, personal agenda and my own expectations of a doctoral thesis, including my own view of the 'researcher role' conflicted with acting in a more participatory way in these early stages.

After the reconnaissance study had been completed, I had a clearer view of what needed to be achieved in the final project design. One of the key problems with the initial exploratory study was that there was a lack of structure in some of the activities. One example of this was time spent using the cameras in 'free play', which was trialled during the reconnaissance stage but was unsuccessful as the children became absorbed in their play and the cameras became obstructions. This led to little or no data captured on their cameras. In terms of participation in the research, it was my own agenda which dominated the decisions which were made. In other cases the activities, such as the interviewing task described earlier in this chapter became too structured and produced poor quality data. The strategies developed and consolidated in the main research study attempted (although were not always achieved), were to create opportunities for participation which would allow for the children to take more control with the direction of the research.

The ongoing development of the activities and strategies used to support children's participation were influenced by the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) both in the initial development of ideas and as the research progressed. Their range of age appropriate participatory research tools use a range of approaches such as one to one interactions with children, observations, cameras, bookmaking, tours and mapmaking. The guided tour and some of the drawing ideas were informed directly from this approach, although Clark and Moss (2001) tend to focus their research predominantly on 'space'. As the research focus in this project intended to be broader and the age group of the children older than the participants in

Clark and Moss' (2001) research differences were needed and thus adaptation was necessary.

One of the other key influences on the research design was Lancaster's (2003) approaches to listening to children. As with Clark and Moss (2001), her research was aimed at approaches for eliciting children's voice with younger children, but her principles of using the arts as a way of enabling children to voice their views was influential in constructing some of the participatory approaches used in this study. The ongoing development of the strategies and methods used in this project does not necessarily create the level of validity that might be found in a project which follows a specific framework such as the mosaic approach (ibid), however, the development of these methods could be seen as one of the project's assets; as a commitment to engagement in the enquiry and the principles of participatory methodologies.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000 cited in Haw and Hatfield 2011, 89) identify the key principles in participatory action research. These principles are that participatory action research framework is:

A social process;
Participatory, engaging people in examining their knowledge;
Practical and collaborative;
Emancipatory;
Critical;
Recursive (reflexive and dialectical).

In this study all of these principles apply, however this research does not fit into participatory action research model which these principles intended to underpin. It does not represent a participatory action research model as the specific methodological approach of participatory action research cycle does not occur in this project. Instead, this project is exploratory and reflective (as action research is), but it does not evolve and develop the

‘action’ in the same way, thus this cannot be labelled as participatory action research.

### 3.22 Reflexivity and personal reflections

The reconnaissance study enabled the opportunity for reflection on my role in the research and enabled consideration of the tensions that existed between finding my role as researcher and making the transition from ‘teacher researcher’ as I had previously been. Moving away from the comfortable boundaries of my own classroom environment with positive, established relationships with the children I worked with, to unfamiliar schools, classrooms and teachers had been a personal and professional challenge. As ‘teacher’ I was confident in my role. As researcher, there were skills which needed to be developed and a different context to work within. My decision to be a lone researcher was made early on in the research. I initially made this decision when considering time restraints, both my own and the teacher participants, university ethical protocols and my own expectations of a doctoral study.

One of these key methodological skills crucial to participatory research is the importance of communication skills which include personal style and facilitation skills (O’Kane, 2008). Often the discussions surrounding the methods or activities designed to engage children enable valuable insights into meaning and interpretation to occur (Christensen and James, 2008). As a teacher and researcher I felt that I could communicate effectively with the children and develop good relationships important to participatory approaches (O’Kane, 2008). I became aware during the reconnaissance stage and in the research following the initial study that there were times when the children did not behave in a way which would have been appropriate if I had been their teacher. In these circumstances as researcher, I had to accept and work with the children differently. I had become accustomed to my ‘teacher’ role and the position of authority that this status had afforded me. As the lone researcher in the project, I had to establish relationships with the children that were more democratic. In

addition, I had to adopt a different way of seeing and a more critical, reflexive and reflective role. This was an ongoing transformation and was developed throughout the research, analysis and write up process of the research project.

I was aware that my own internal conflicts might not be visible to others. The children may have considered me in the way that they may have considered any other new adult working with them in their classroom, with varying levels of interest and enthusiasm. These personal and professional perceptions of myself and the ongoing development of my research skills are important in demonstrating my own epistemological position in this study. However in order to offer a reflexive approach it is also critical to consider how my views and bias may have impacted on other aspects of the research. Usher (1993:9 cited in Prosser, 1998, 105) makes clear that, 'reflexive understanding – is not primarily gaining greater understanding of oneself- rather it is the effect of the sociality and the inscription of self in social practices, language and discourses which constitute the research process.' There are challenges in presenting these discourses in an appropriate way, both for the audience and purpose of the research. Reflections need to consider my own influences on the research and also, within this project, demonstrate my position from within the research.

One of the challenges with constructing and engaging in a reflexive approach is that the research may become 'over personalised' (Bassey: 1999:6) and thus may impede rather than support the reader's perception of the research. However reflexive accounts may also enhance the research, and even support its validity. As Prosser (1998) suggests, 'Judgements and claims about validity are best made essentially via *reflexive accounts* but also through *representation.* Reflexive accounts attempt to render explicit the process by which data and findings were produced' (1998:104). Thus, the commitment to a reflexive approach in this research is constructed in order to supports the transparency of the research processes and methods, but also to add to the trustworthiness of

this project. As Kellett (2005) suggests, ‘when doing research we have to be frank, open and critical about what, how and why our research is taking place’ (2005:10). In the context of this very personal journey, the reflexivity and reflection supports my intention of being as ‘frank’ and ‘open’ (ibid) as possible.

### 3.23 Chapter summary

This chapter outlines the key methodological issues related to this research. It explores and sets the context for the participatory framework for this project and indicates the ethical procedures and issues which were met during the reconnaissance study. These issues informed the final design of study. This chapter outlines the strategies used to help elicit children’s views and gives an overview of the three classrooms involved in the main study and the structure of the research project based on the learning gained through the reconnaissance stage and from a reflexive and reflective stance.

# Chapter 4 Data analysis of video materials and interviews

## 4.1 Introduction to data analysis chapter

There were 3 data sets in this research project all of which needed to be analysed according to the nature of the data and in consideration of the research questions. These were, the film clips recorded by the children, interviews with the children and interviews with the teachers. Each data set was analysed separately. An outline of the process which occurred for each data set and reflections about the process are discussed within this chapter. The chapter begins with discussions about the nature of the video data, specifically issues of transcription, representation of the data and interpretations. These discussions are important for both the transparency of the research processes and to support the telling of research story. This section is followed by an exploration of the interview processes with the teachers and the child participants, with particular attention given to the complexities of interviews with young children. Examples from the data are used to illustrate specific issues which emerged from the interview processes.

### Part 1: Video in research

## 4.2 Video data analysis

Haw and Hadfield (2011) suggest one of the key issues with video data is that it is involved in the research process and the product. This is certainly true of this research project.

There are many suggestions about how video analysis might be conducted. Haw and Hadfield (2011) remind us that the use of the video and the analysis reflect the aims and purpose of using the video. In this project as previously indicated, the video cameras were used in a variety of ways. The strategies and approaches used with children to support

them in capturing their views were aimed at answering the first research question: '*what do children in Year1 distinguish as important in their lives?* In order to be able to answer this question the videos were analysed in what Haw and Hatfield (2011) describe as 'extraction mode'

In 'extraction' mode the video footage is considered to be data for analysis. Thus the data is viewed away from the participants, and findings and conclusions are drawn based on the researcher's analysis. Methodologically this presents several issues. The first relates to the position of the researcher within the research and the epistemological views and bias that are inevitably present. This includes making assumptions about the intentions and perspectives of participants. (Haw and Hadfield, 2011: 27). To an extent, these issues can be addressed through the reflexive and reflective approach undertaken. This can also be supported through the use of triangulation, gathering data through different approaches and analysing the data using different approaches. The use of data in this extractive mode, is considered to be primary data, and as with other types of data, can be supported when supplemented with secondary data. In this research, this would include the interviews and conversations with the children to support discussions and offer a context and information which goes beyond the 'visible behaviours'.

Following this 'extraction' approach, there are several ways in which the videos could be analysed. There are numerous suggestions such as following a content analysis approach (Rose, 2008), a case study approach (Walker, 2002) or approaches based on grounded theory analysis developed from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Greig et al., (2007) offer an adaptation of the grounded theory phases to help structure the analysis process integrating these grounded theory phases (1967) with content analysis (Babbie, 1979). They suggest a series of phases which offers a systematic approach to the analysis. Due to the nature of this research project, as a lone researcher on the project I was unable to complete phase 3 of their model which requires a 'quality control check'. This is where other people analyse the research using the same

process in order to ensure that there is consistency and ‘quality’ in the analysis.

Despite this issue several of their other phases and step by step approach to the analysis did support the development of the analysis process applied to this research. An outline of the different stages is detailed below.

### 4.3 Data transcription

**Stage 1: Data transcription**

This stage involved watching all the video clips and writing up a transcription of what was seen, said and descriptions of each clip recorded including length of clip.

A grid for this transcription was developed with several key columns.

Column 1 indicated the video clip number. This was relevant as it was possible to determine how many clips had been deleted and which activities had deleted clips.

Column 2 indicated the duration of the video clip.

Column 3 gave an overview of the video clip, including key information about who was included on the scene, what was said and seen, including any key text.

Column 4 was used to note down initial observations and comments during the transcription process.

Column 5 included additional information. This included notes from discussions with the children and information about who was filming each clip.

Column 6 indicated the ‘activity’ during which the clip was taken, such as camera practice, puppet stories or guided tour.

Column 7 onwards represents examples of the coding.

Examples of the transcriptions can be found in appendix 5.

This stage of the analysis process also included the creation of a grid which contained observational comments and key summaries of features noted in each child’s video work. At this time all the children were given pseudonyms and therefore this served as an aide memoire for myself and also supported the development of discussions once the analysis stages had been completed. An example of the notes made can be found in appendix 6. These notes contained information about dominant features or characteristics of the individual child’s work. The purpose of this was to create an overview of the children’s work and a useful tool for reference. This was particularly helpful in enabling me to recall children, as names were changed during the analysis processes. The grid allowed me to be able to access the pseudonyms and real names of the children with a brief outline of their video work.

**Stage 2: coding**

The next stage of the analysis involved coding. All the videos were viewed again and were coded according to the key information in each clip. Depending on the length and type of clip analysed there were often multiple codes for one small piece of footage. The coding for each child’s video work was recorded on a grid, a copy can be found in appendix 7.

**Stage 3: repeated coding**

In order to create a consistent approach, as far as possible as a lone researcher, the second stage of the process was completed again and checked against findings from stage 2.

**Stage 4: categories emerging from coding**

The coding process was further developed by looking for common and irregular occurrences. Categories and themes were produced which integrated the coding completed in stage 2 and 3.

### 4.4 Transcription, interpretation and representation

It is important to acknowledge that the interpretation of the videos began before any formal coding took place. Prosser and Schwartz (1998), when discussing the analysis of photographs suggest that: 'the interpretive process of the data begins well before viewing a photograph, and takes place, for example, when decisions are made as to what and how the photographs are to be taken' (1998:126). As with photographs, the videos created by the children reflected their interpretations as they made choices, planned and conducted, and in some cases redrafted, or deleted their filming. My own thinking was influenced throughout these processes. The conversations with children and daily interactions and observations within the school setting impacted and influenced my epistemological position throughout the data gathering processes.

During the transcription process, further ideas began to develop, both consciously and subconsciously. In order to keep my ideas and observations not only in the forefront of my own mind, but also as transparent as possible to any potential reader, notes were made on the transcripts as I typed them. These can be seen on the example in appendix 5.

The transcription process involved watching all the clips from 45 children's recordings and transcribing key information from each clip viewed. These ranged from a minimum of 12 clips per child (Georgina) to 612 clips (Christian). The duration of the clips varied between children and between the scenes recorded. Some clips lasted 1 or 2 seconds each, almost representing a photograph rather than moving footage. Other children created clips which lasted longer, with the longest single video clip lasting for 15 minutes and 57 seconds (Morgan). The transcription was a slow but

necessary process, not only as the evidence could not be presented on film for both practical and ethical reasons, but also because of the multi-dimensional nature of the footage (Haw and Hadfield, 2011). The video as a tool was beneficial in capturing insights which may have been 'otherwise undiscovered through other research tools such as facial expressions, interactions and behaviours' (Greig and Taylor, 1999: 66-67). However these layers of data were difficult to transcribe 'fully' and accurately.

From a practical perspective it would not have been possible, with a limited time frame to write every comment heard on the footage or exact details of every scene viewed. Therefore some interpretation and sorting of the data began during the transcription stage. For example, while transcribing, there were several clips which I had commented on as 'error in filming'. These clips contained little visual or auditory detail. These clips tended to last for a short time, often one or two seconds. Typically they included scenes of feet, flooring, or the end of a conversation which could not be contextualised. In several instances it was clear that a child had pressed the record button to end a clip, without having correctly recorded to begin with (one red button is used to start and stop filming on the cameras) and then realised their error. These clips were not transcribed or analysed in as much detail. It is possible that this 'error' label which I had attached may have been incorrect in some circumstances.

There were many other clips which were of particular interest or caught my attention for a variety of reasons during the transcription. In these instances, detailed information and direct transcripts of the footage was documented. This 'selective transcription' often occurred when I had anticipated clips which would support discussions, or offer alternative insights into the research. Without consciously intending to, I transcribed in more detail these clips and given them a higher status than others, an issue faced by other researchers (Wainwright and Russell, 2001). These early stages in the process will have impacted on my interpretation and use of some of the data.

I became aware, while transcribing the clips, that often scenes which caught my attention were the ones which contained evidence to support my thesis discussions. This realisation drew my attention to my own bias and the potential to present a narrow and somewhat blinkered version of the project, if I did not address and consciously monitor this. As Punch (2002) suggests, reflexivity should be a central part of the research process with children, reflecting on the researcher role and assumptions but also on the choice of methods and their applications. To add to this, I would also suggest that reflection on the analysis processes is also critical.

In addition to these concerns, the transcription process also made me aware of how the findings might be shaped by the children who presented their work more clearly than others. Kellett (2011) suggests, 'one must assume that voice does not equate with empowerment' (2011: 231). In the transcription of the data it was clear that some children were able to communicate their views more easily than others, with greater effect, and it would have been easier to use examples only from these children to present ideas within the research. Punch (2002) suggests that key incidents recorded, do not necessarily represent critical issues of importance in children's lives, but may be of interest at the time of the data collection. In this research, a film capturing an unusual incident may not necessarily be particularly important but it might have captured a 'moment'. Such an approach would not work with my intentions of creating an inclusive participatory project and thus there was a conscious effort to use examples from as many children's footage as possible when presenting and discussing the findings.

It was a challenge to try to represent key footage from all the children. There were great differences between the level of engagement, interest and ability of the children involved in the project, evident in duration, quantity and quality of clips recorded. There were also some children who had a large number of deleted clips from their videos such as Tegan, who had a total of 120 clips deleted and 64 stored on the camera. In these instances it was intriguing to consider what had been deleted and by

whom, raising questions about how representative of her views the video data was.

### 4.5 In/accuracy of interpretation

The ways in which the children chose to present their films varied significantly. Several children spoke very quietly on the cameras making it difficult to hear and transcribe with accuracy what was being said. This had implications on the interpretation of the filming. This was evident in Georgie's work. She created a particular clip during which she sang and talked into the camera, talking about the friends who lived near her, who were also filmed in the distance. The filming was outside; the camera unsteady and the audio not clear. It sounded as though she sang, "I don't care anyway, I'm going to kill myself". After several more attempts at listening to this clip, I was concerned enough to take this to the class teacher who interpreted the clip differently. The teacher's interpretation of it was; "I dirty any/every where, I'm going to clean myself". This was an example of how in some conditions, not only could the data be misinterpreted but also misrepresented.

The aforementioned clip was one of several which did not seem to always present a logical or coherent narrative from this particular child. Georgie's films which were accompanied by narrative did not always appear to match what was being filmed and she could be heard copying another child's story in the puppet activity rather than creating her own. Nutbrown and Clough (2009) suggest that children gain a sense of inclusivity and belonging from practitioners ensuring that young children feel good about themselves and feel positive about the differences that they see in other children and are secure in their own sense of place in their community. Georgie's copying of other children's work, rather than independent footage, made me reflect on Georgie's confidence and sense of place and belonging. Her copying could have been an indication of an insecurity, perhaps not wanting to get the work 'wrong', but could also be seen as a desire to 'belong' or be 'the same' as the other children at a time of great

change in other aspects of her life. Georgie did not want to discuss any of her clips with me at any time during the process. She had multiple opportunities to withdraw from the project but did not want to. The complexity of Georgie's footage also drew my attention to the intricacy of the participants' own interpretations and distinctive characters, which I accepted would be beyond my understanding given my position and short time with the children. Fetterman (1989) suggests that it is necessary to spend prolonged or repeated time with children in order to gain a greater understanding of their views and experiences, however although it is important to develop relationships, it is also critical to know when it is appropriate to step away and adhere to Clark and Moss' (2001) advise that 'children's rights to privacy are vital'.

Connolly (1998) suggests that being critically reflective and constantly questioning the researcher role and relationships is important. This is needed not only to consider and reflect on the power relationships, but also to consider ethical issues. Georgie represented an ethical issue of assent in the research. Georgie was happy to be involved in the project and appeared to understand that her class teacher and I would be looking at the clips, but she did not want to talk about them. The reasons for this are unclear. However there are several possible suggestions which might begin to explain her reluctance. Georgie may have created and wanted to maintain a boundary between home and school. This supports one of Higgins' (2012) key findings of her participatory research, that some children did not want the boundaries between home and school blurred. It may also have represented other issues, either to do with her relationship with myself and/or the teacher. It may have been that she did not want to explain or share her footage with anyone else, including a reluctance to show her clips to peers when the opportunity arose, instead preferring to work alone. The personal family circumstances of Georgie could also have impacted on her uncertainty with wanting to share her work. Her parents had recently gone through a separation followed by a house move. The implications of this on Georgie are unknown. It would however, be reasonable to suggest that for most children going through such changes

in their life, this would be both an unsettling and difficult period of time, which may have caused varying levels of withdrawal for some children.

### 4.6 'Others' as camera operators

On each of the video transcriptions, in addition to the initial observations of what was seen and heard on the footage, other key information relating to the camera operator was noted. In several of the clips the person filming was unidentifiable. In some of this footage taken at home, siblings, parents or other family members acted as camera operators while the child participant 'presented' information or was observed through the camera. In some of the children's footage taken at home, nearly all the scenes were recorded by someone other than the participant, for example in the work of Tess, James, Catherine, Jenny. There was no evidence in 14 out of 45 children's videos that 'others' had any involvement in the filming. This represents just under a third of children.

There was evidence in 22 out of 45 children's films that parents or other people such as older siblings and relatives, gave support during filming, amounting to a total of 54 clips. This support ranged from technical support, such as helping the children to use the equipment, to scaffolding or supporting children's recordings. It does not include those who offered direction or told the children what to film.

## Part 2: Interview methods

### 4.7 Interview data analysis discussions

This part of the chapter considers some of the complexities which arose during the interviewing processes. It is appropriate to discuss these issues within this chapter as it provides further contextualisation of the challenges of interviewing the children and some of the environmental, social and practical factors which all impacted on the findings. This first section identifies several of the possibilities (and challenges) which emerged during the gathering of, listening to and interpretation of children's views.

The final section gives a brief overview of some of the interviewing issues connected to the data analysis.

During the interviews with the children and teachers the video clips were used in 'reflective' mode. Haw and Hadfield suggest that 'reflection is essentially concerned with participants either establishing new connections or changing existing ones' (Haw and Hadfield, 2011: 53). The notion of reflection is essentially a thinking process, however it is often enhanced through oral or written support (Moon,1999). The aim was through using the video as a tool, teachers' reflective processes could be enhanced.

Discussions and interviews with children and teachers were captured using a Dictaphone or hand written notes, depending on what was appropriate at the time. The discussions which were captured on Dictaphone were transcribed. Notes taken remained in the format they had been taken in. Once all the video transcription and analysis had been completed the interviews and discussions were reviewed. These discussions were analysed by considering the key research questions and using the analytic framework outlined in the introductory chapter to code and categorise the findings.

The data from the children's and teachers interviews were revealing. Issues and challenges emerged from the process offered new ways of viewing the research and the lives of children who participated within it. In order to meet the commitment of aiming to be as transparent as possible within this research and to sustain a reflexive attitude within this thesis, my reflections are woven throughout the discussions.

The first part of this section explores the interviews conducted with the children participants. It explains some of the contextual issues, the limitations of the interviews and discusses the importance of sensitive listening to children. The second part of the section gives a brief overview

of the purpose for interviewing teachers and the data analysis which relates to data gathered from them.

### 4.8 Interviewing children, contextual issues

The video interviews and discussions were initiated by myself, but were usually child-led, meaning that the children held their cameras controlled which footage they shared with me (or not). This meant that several interviews lasted under 3 minutes, while others lasted for 30 minutes (and could have gone on had time allowed). Open ended questions were asked after clips had been shown which related to the specific clips, or after the children were asked to rank, or find their favourite clips.

The discussions and interviews with children in class 3 were much more substantial and productive than the interviews held with children in classes 1 and 2. The interviews with the children were varied and of a mixed quality. The influence of the environment impacted on these discussions. In class 3 there was a space allocated to me in the school hall, away from the disturbances of the classroom. There was no space outside of the classroom to enable me to do this with the other 2 classes. There was also more time given to me in relation to the time needed to talk to the children in class 3 during interviews. In class 1 and 2 I did not have the opportunity to carry out the guided tours that I was able to conduct with children in class 3. In class 3 I was able to work with and have contact with the children on non-project related tasks. As there were fewer Year1 children in class 3 I was able to familiarise myself with the children, and they with me, in both informal and formal contexts to a much greater extent than the first 2 classes. This would have impacted on the interviewing process. Greig et al., (2007) suggest that different responses may emerge depending on the context and place of interview. It therefore might have been beneficial to offer alternative places or times for interviews, during the research schedule. This would have provided further opportunities for the children to familiarise themselves with the process and allow greater choice in the level of participation.

### 4.9 Factors impacting on interview participation

The ways in which the children responded to the interviewing part of the research differed greatly. Some children appeared to be motivated to share their videos with me and asked to share their work with me regularly, others declined invitations to show me their videos. The children's reluctance to share some of their video footage, could be attributed to many reasons which may or may not have been related to my relationship with the children or environmental issues. It was interesting to note that on several of the children's footage, a confident persona on film did not always translate to a confident child in an interview situation. For example David, Imogen and Anna, gave very confident 'performances' on camera, but were much more reserved, or shy, when discussing their video clips with me. In the case of these children, their video work offered far richer information than was captured during interview. This could be labelled as one of the potential challenges of interviewing children - that they were less able or comfortable in expressing their views verbally, face-to-face with me, compared with other methods for capturing views.

The video work, by comparison, allowed the children to communicate their views in ways which were non-traditional ways of working at school. They showed aspects of their characters or lives that may have otherwise remained unseen, or not communicated. Research interactions between adults and children always contain issues of power and communication (Devine, 2003). Even in approaches through which adults attempt to address this and relinquish control, these power issues remain present. For example, in Warming's (2005) research, which took an approach to working with children which was 'least adult like', she still found that some children were able to skilfully keep themselves from the view of adults.

There were some children (Billy, Mia, Georgia, Natalie, Alison), who choose not to participate in the interviews. These children all indicated that they were happy for me to look at what they had recorded away from them

and the classroom, and write about it. This question was asked in order to establish if consent was still permitted for the inclusion of their data in the research. These children were included in the analysis of the video data.

Although all of the children were given the opportunity to be able to speak about their work, some children tended to be more willing to talk about and share their ideas during interviews. The video work revealed similar issues. Despite the range of techniques and approaches used, there were some children who were underrepresented in this research. This could represent a failing in the research, indicating a lack of methods to empower the children's voices to be articulated. Alternatively, it could also demonstrate, not only Warming's (2005) point about some children's skill at avoiding being seen by adults, but a reflection of the intentional boundaries which Higgins (2012) found were created by some children in her research.

Higgins (2012) indicates that 'a child's personal boundaries are necessarily implicated in a process of potential disclosure and exposure' (2012: 1), when discussing her research which aimed to use art as a tool for discussion. To attempt to overcome some of the boundaries which existed Higgins emphasised that her research was limited and differentiated by many factors that were brought about by previous experiences and relationships' (2012:17). It is therefore possible that the reasons for the boundaries which children put in place within this re are linked to their own histories. These might be related to issues of expectation and conformity, either at home or school, unconscious or conscious attempts to create privacy or not wanting to share, or expose aspects of their lives either from home to school or visa versa. There may have been issues of trust and believability which might have created some barriers.

In addition to these very personal barriers which existed it is also prudent to consider the relationships at play. Research in school will be influenced by many differentials, including the inequalities between pupils, which

Webb (2009) suggests is caused by a reliance on speaking and listening skills (2009: 309). The developmental and communication abilities of some children impacted on the quantity and depth of information gathered during the interviews, just as the children's ability levels had impacted on the video recordings. Greig et al., (2007) indicate that the accuracy of children's responses depends largely on their 'developmental capabilities, including their ability to manage the demands of the research tasks used to pose the questions, to cope with the one-to-one interviews or group interviews, and their understanding of the reason for the interview' (2007:91).

All the children proved able to use the equipment and to manage the tasks within the video work. However despite my confidence in the children's work, they may not have shared this view and may have felt that their work did not meet expectations which could have impacted on their interviews. Despite the open-ended nature of the research work itself and the interviews, the children may have felt a wide range of feelings about the process.

Children who were interviewed and discussed their work with me demonstrated different competencies in their communication skills. This can be supported with evidence from Jake's interview. Jake was enthusiastic and confident when talking to me about his clips, but he was not able to relate much beyond descriptions of what could be seen. His clips were varied and interesting and he was able to portray aspects of his family life through his independent filming. He appeared to take pleasure from re-watching his clips (as many children did), but offered little additional information to extend what was seen or justify why he had chosen to record what was evident. For example, one clip (clip 12) was filmed by Jake showing a neighbour standing, talking with his dad by a barbeque outside. Jake was not able to offer any context to the situation, other than the man was a neighbour and he and his dad were standing next to the barbeque.

The interview did not reveal an inability to engage in the research. Jake understood that he could film what he wanted to record at home (with a few boundaries established by his mother that he was able to articulate to me). He understood that I would watch the video footage to find out about what was important to him. In the example of Jake, I would suggest that the discussions held with him indicated an engagement with the activity at a level that he was able to succeed at. This is different from the views expressed that participatory research with young children is made difficult because of their age (Smith, 2011), or because of a lack of experience, or ability to make a useful contribution (Coram Family, 2004). Jake's videos *did* reveal much about his life and his interviews offered some confirmation about what was important to him, evident through the selection and enjoyment of watching and describing the scenes to me. He was able to access the research at a level appropriate to his capabilities and interests. It would be unrealistic to expect all the children to engage fully with every aspect of the research. It is possible that my own expectations may have been too demanding for many children. It is also probable that a lack of engagement due to the activities being uninteresting to them, rather than their own capabilities.

The interactions with Jake and the other children interviewed, offered opportunities for shared communications with children. In 1997 Hughes' research suggested that there were too few opportunities for children to talk in the classroom, other than in answering questions or following instructions. Since Hughes' (ibid) research, the emergence of 'talk partners' in schools has become more prominent and the focus of 'speaking and listening' forms part of the literacy curriculum for all primary aged children (National Curriculum, DfES, 2000) and is embedded within the Early Years curriculum in England (DCSF, 2008). The value of such communication in the classroom for children's learning and development is well explored and justified elsewhere (see Browne, 2009; Dowling, 2005; Whitehead, 2009). Perhaps greater opportunities to discuss their own lives and issues which are important to them, remains an area which could

support both children's speaking and listening skills alongside children's rights agendas.

### 4.10 Sensitivity in listening to children in research

Alongside the pursuit of quality data, there were also issues which related to working sensitively with young children in research which were considered during the interviews. Brooker suggests that the 'limitations to young children's competence as responders are generally the limitation of those who interview them' (2001:168). This positions the outcomes of interviews with the capabilities of the researcher. This seems appropriate as it is the job of the researcher to engage the children and extract information from the interviewees. In addition, researchers must also be conscious of the sensitivities required towards the children in pursuit of gathering data.

Kjørholt (2005) suggests that research which over emphasises the child as a rational, autonomous and competent being is at risk of neglecting the support and care that children need. Even in research which aims to capture children's perspectives there have been concerns about the ways in which children are listened to (Svenning, 2009). Research which demonstrates sensitivity towards children's feelings, emotions and body language, supports both ethical and children's rights perspectives. In this research there may have been many children who filmed clips with information embedded within them which were sensitive or personal to them. The nature of this research project could have unintentionally revealed some such sensitive data. Therefore it was important that such personal information should be dealt with in a way which allowed the children to feel confident enough to select their own clips to show during interview, or say, withdraw from the process at any time.

Consent, as addressed throughout this thesis and particularly within the methodology chapter, is more than an initial response to participate. Within the context of the interviews, where consent had been given and the

children were willing to share their work, a level of sensitivity and intuitiveness about children's feelings was critical throughout. This included paying attention to body language and non-verbal cues highlighted as important by Kjørholt (2005) and supported by Elfer (2005, 2007) who considers that this can be undervalued and underestimated in work with young children. Adhering to these principles meant that interesting clips which the children had filmed were sometimes left unexplored during interviews. However, in pursuit of children's rights and maintaining good ethical standards, these were necessary gaps within the research.

Good communication and thus good interviewing was from my perspective, in this context, concerned with engaging the children in response to the individual. Rinaldi's (2006) 'pedagogy of listening' encourages opportunities to respectfully listen to children in order to develop their confidence and competence with their communication skills. I would add to this, the 'sensitivity' suggested by Svenning (2009) and my own contribution of being 'intuitive' in the approach. Just as Petrie reminds us that 'listening to children shows our respect for them and builds their self-esteem' (1997:25), so too, does knowing when to hear them when they do not wish to speak.

I considered the engagement during the interview process to be an expression of children's assent in the research and thus as an ethical issue accepted the diversity in the children's responses as part of the nature of the research as the overriding principle during interviews.

# Chapter 5: Presentation and discussion of findings from children's video work

## 5.1 Chapter outline

This chapter presents findings from the data analysis of the video footage. The findings are presented alongside discussions about them. This approach reflects the iterative nature of the data. It enables the voices of the children to be presented, along with interpretations and reflections on them. Key findings are made explicit at appropriate places within this chapter (and the subsequent findings chapter). These are presented in table format and links are made to the potential implications for practice and policy.

The categories which emerged from the data analysis were:

Family relationships, support and interaction
Peer relationships, support and interaction and friendship
Adult support in school
Animals
Objects and belongings
Play, interests and fantasy worlds

This chapter explores these categories. Initially, in the first half of this chapter, the first three categories are explored. Together they develop discussions which investigate the relational support and interaction between the children and their families and other adults at home and in school environment. These relational influences started to become apparent during the transcription of the video evidence, before the data coding and categorisation began. Then, throughout the coding and analysis processes, these relational influences became more pronounced. These influences and the impact they had on the children's work were interesting and problematic. They offered unique insights into relationships

from people outside of school, but alongside these, issues of bias, censorship and control over the children's work emerged.

Following these relational issues (although to an extent these issues are embedded within all of the categories), the final part of the chapter explores the final three categories in turn. These categories offer some insights about some of the areas which the children portrayed as valuable in their lives when analysed collectively. However, it is the individual transcriptions which are embedded within this findings chapter which highlight the unique and very personal nature of the children's work. The film clips provoke discussions about what is of value in the children's lives, some of which is through the explicit, intentional footage of objects, toys and animals. This is in addition to other implicit footage which offers insights into what children show is in their lives, packaged in complex, multi-layered footage.

## Part 1: Relational issues

### 5.2 The role of the adult/parent in home footage

In the video footage recorded at home, there was evidence that a parent, or other adult or older sibling took on the role of camera operator in 22 of the children's films. This was just under half of the children. In this camera operator's role their influence was often heard in the background rather than intentionally recorded. In most cases the adult either recorded their child playing or doing an 'activity' such as eating, giving a tour, dancing or giving a demonstration. On several children's footage, the adult supported the child, by asking questions to extend the recorded scenes. This example, taken from the transcripts, illustrates one such clip.

> Sara is in her bedroom, mum is filming. She explains she likes it because of her cosy bed and her bears. She points to her bed. She then says she has "*a wonderful mum named Maria*". Mum asks if Sara wants to show her friends anything in her room. Sara shows a

> Barbie hairstyle doll which she says she likes to dress up. Mum asks,
> "*What about any other special toys?"*
> *"Oh yes, Mr. Doogie*" exclaims Sara.
> "*Where is Mr. Doogie?"* asks mum. Sara shows a giant bear sitting on top of the dolls' house. She says "*He's the king."* Mum comments that the bear is lovely and asks what he is holding. Sara picks up certificates in the bear's paws and explains one is for hard work and politeness and the other is for doing exercise. Mum says, *"They are good. I had better stop and let you do some filming".*
> She asks Sara to wave, which she does and says 'bye' (Sara, clip: 6).

Without this parental interaction this footage would have been reduced in its duration and possibly, its detail. Sara's mother asked questions to support and extend Sara's discussions. This was done skilfully as the questions encourage Sara to use her own words to describe the toys, with her mother prompting, rather than directing the dialogue. In addition, the affection towards her mother might have not been voiced had her mum not been present or participated in the filming. There were several clips which included Sara's mother scaffolding the filming as well as independent filming from Sara. Her independent footage was clear and well organised. It could be possible that the support given by her mother enabled Sara to work productively alone. Higgins suggests that the relationship with the parents and their domestic situation impacts on their educational experience and affects their 'participation in intimate and explicit ways' (2012:7). In the evidence from Sara's footage the role of the parent impacted explicitly on the footage which was created and seemed to impact in a positive way on her participation in the project.

There were other examples of parental interactions during filming, during which the adults supported their children's filming in other ways. One example of this was from Carl's footage. During filming he could be heard directing his mother to position a toy fire engine while he filmed (clip 16).

Similarly, he recorded a clip of his dad driving the car, so that he could capture both sides of it on the footage (clip 13). Carl's parents both supported his filming, so that he could capture the scenes in a way which satisfied him.

A similar scenario, again with vehicles, was also observed in James' footage from home. The adult in this situation, James' father, demonstrated sensitivity while supporting his son. This transcript demonstrates this support, which followed on from a clip in which James became frustrated with not being able to film his toys exactly as he had wanted.

> James is filming a toy digger, an adult male is heard in the background.
> *"Don't break it!"*
> James responds;
> *"I can do it!"*
> Dad replies (off camera):
> *"Alright!".*
> James moves in front of camera and lays it down next to digger. He asks his dad a question.
> *"Can you see me and the tractor in it?"*
> "No*, but if you give it to me, I'll film it for you*."
> They have a conversation about whether he's supposed to be filming himself or objects. Dad says that if James wants to be in it too, then he'll have to film it for him. James confirms what he wants to film and asks Dad to hold the camera. James instructs his father:
> *"Get me in it and the digger."*
> Dad does this while James goes on to explain what the digger does (James: clip 28).

The ways in which parents supported their children with the footage varied. Only 3 children filmed at home without any parents being seen, heard or described in any of the footage (Phoebe, Mia, Gemma). In

several clips, many parents avoided being seen at all, often moving out of the way quickly if the camera was directed at them. However, not all parents were reluctant to be recorded. One parent even performed a dance and mimicked a song which was playing on the radio while her son (Greg) filmed. There were 38 scenes which included descriptions of or interactions with adults other than parents. Grandparents, aunties, uncles, partners, older cousins, neighbours, older siblings, family friends featured in some of the footage.

Video clips which involved an adult as the camera person (most frequently a parent) often amounted to longer clips being recorded. The influence of the adult as camera operator impacted on the footage in a variety of ways. For example, in one of the recordings, one parent could be heard prompting her child to talk about the importance of the television in the room and the games console that they have in the house (Summer). In another film an older sister could be heard telling her younger brother, the participant (Marcus), what to show in his bedroom. These occurrences were recorded in the coding as ‘giving direction’. This was seen, or heard, in the films from 19 children and accounted for 32 of the scenes.

Parental involvement in filming was often helpful in enabling the children to film what they wanted to record. The scaffolding and technical support given, often enabled the clips to be extended and presented more detail, seemingly ‘enriching’ the data by allowing a more extended or sustained video to be recorded. There were other videos recorded by parents as camera operators, during which parents were giving clear direction to the children. For example, by telling them what to say or do on the footage. Both the scaffolding and interventionalist approaches presented research issues, however they did enhance the children’s communication captured on the videos.

Smith (2011) suggests that support has the potential to ‘enhance children’s capacity to express feelings and articulate their experiences’ (2011:15). Without these interactions the children may not have had the

ability to communicate so effectively. Wood et al., (1976) indicate that scaffolding is the most ubiquitous pedagogical concept in academic and professional writing from a socio cultural perspective. It appears also that the home environment, in these examples also provided the 'sensitive support of adults' which was identified by Bowman et al., (2000) as central to young children's learning. Stephen reminds us that for those who adopt a sociocultural approach that acting and thinking with others relies on 'dialogue and interaction' at the heart of the process (Stephen, 2010:21). The interaction however is not a simple process to analyse as Banks (2001) suggests. He states:

> *'All films, photographs and artworks are the product of human action and are entangled to varying degrees in human and social relationships; they require therefore, a wider frame of analysis in their understanding, a reading of the external narrative that goes beyond the visual text itself'* (Banks, 2001: 12).

The social world which children inhabit cannot be separated from children's lives and thus capturing children's views as stand alone individuals is an impossible and needless task. Woodhead (2005) considers the most 'significant features of any child's environment are the humans with whom they establish close relationships with' (2005:9). The importance of the parents and other family members was prevalent in the children's videos. Woodhead (2005) also suggests that it is the 'cultural history and circumstance' of the parents which impacts on children's lives as the parental cultural and historical experiences influences their lives and in turn, their children's as their 'cultural practices scaffold their (children's) acquisition of skills and ways of communicating' (2005: 9). The findings provide evidence which demonstrate the importance of the relational pedagogy between parents and their children. The key findings and potential implications for policy and practice developed from these discussions are summarised below.

**Table 3: Key Findings 1- Parental support**

| Key Finding 1 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Parental support of children's communication skills and presentation skills enabled the children the opportunity to demonstrate their key interests.<br>Parental support enabled children to communicate their ideas more effectively. | Sara's mum supported Sara's communication through skilful questioning and prompting.<br>Sara's work was enhanced during and following clips filmed with her mother's support<br><br>James' dad used question's sensitively. He offered suggestions which enabled James to make decisions and be in control of the process.<br><br>Carl and James' parents enabled them to film what they wanted. They offered support when needed. | The ways in which parents use questioning to support their children's learning and development is valuable in enabling children to communicate their interests and views.<br><br>Implications for practice and policy are connected to working with parents to explore the value of questioning and scaffolding skills to support their child's learning. |
| Key Finding 1B | Evidence | Implications |
| Some parental support demonstrated strong interventionalist, or 'directed' approaches to the video work at home. | Parental 'interventionalist' support was evident in footage from 19 children. This amounted to 32 clips in total. | Implications for practice and policy as stated above in 1a. |

### 5.3 Sibling interactions

The ways in which the cameras were used by all the children varied and were unique to the individual. No two children recorded the same films, they were individual and distinct. The level of input from adults and peers influenced what was filmed and revealed much about the relationships that the children had. One of the most interesting and varied relationships captured on the footage was between siblings. Footage involving siblings

featured in all but 9 of the children's footage, where there appeared to be no evidence of a sibling. The interactions with siblings and the ways in which they were captured on the footage varied. The relationships observed in the video footage demonstrated a range of complex interactions, some harmonious and cooperative and others descriptive and observant of their siblings.

Harmonious interactions with siblings were evident in 19 children's videos and occurred in 79 clips. A harmonious interaction between siblings was coded where there was evidence of positive dialogue, facial expressions or body language to indicate communication. In most instances this was not too difficult to identify. This was most challenging in the footage where there was a much younger child or baby, where communication from the participant was not always reciprocated by the younger sibling.

On film clips which contained no gestures from or between siblings and no accompanying dialogue this was recorded as 'observation of sibling'. This often represented a participant filming a sibling from a distance or when asleep (evident where a young baby was part of a family). This category was also used when a sibling was unaware that they were being filmed or preoccupied with something else, such as watching the television or playing. This was evident in 20 children's films and accounted for 76 clips.

Where siblings were observed and spoken about, or a discussion was had about a sibling this was coded as 'description of a sibling'. This was evident in films made by 25 children and observed in 64 clips. There were some children who filmed photographs (9 in total), which included siblings. Likewise, many of the children described their siblings in pictures they had drawn which represented something special to them. One participant, David, described his siblings and his family affectionately on a range of clips, in separate contexts. In his drawing of 'special things' he drew a picture of his family and an accompanying dialogue gave insight into the value he placed on them. He described his picture on his video footage as part of the activity. A transcription of one video clip illustrates this.

> David shows a picture of his brother Benjy and explains the purpose of the picture exercise. He also shows a picture of his brother Mark and explains he tried to do it the best he could but is a little disappointed with the result. He shows the Benjy picture again and mentions that he loves him so much. He shows he pictures of his mum and dad, mentioning how his dad really takes care of the family, is so good all the time, and is the best. He mentions the picture is one of his best drawings. He mentions what a good brother Mark is then shows all the pictures and says *"I love you everyone"* and that they are *"all so lovely"* (clip 38).

The affection expressed for his sibling, particularly Benjy is also seen in footage taken at home. Through collaboration, with his older brother, Benjy (acting as camera operator and as a prompt, or skilled 'other') his videos represent some of the most skilful, sustained and varied presentations recorded.

### 5.4 Sibling support and Collaboration

In addition to descriptions or expressions of affection towards siblings, there were other representations of these relationships, for example, through descriptions of their spaces and belongings. One of David's descriptions of his brother is set in the context of Benjy's bedroom lasting 1 minute 22 seconds (clip 31).

> David shows his brother's room. He says it is clear that his brother likes Manchester United as everything in his room is Manchester United apart from the bench which his brother puts his clothes and books on. He says his brother is fond of Teddy Scruff and is eleven. He gets out Teddy Scruff from under his brother's bed. He drops Teddy Scruff intentionally on the floor and says he has been killed (then suggests having a moment's silence). He then shows his brother's Xbox 360 and asks his brother (who can be seen with his

back to the camera looking at the television) what game he is playing. His brother says *"Halo 3".* David says to the camera that his brother likes his new game "*Oblivion*".

This well composed clip adds further support and understanding of the relationship which the two brothers have. The films had examples of each of the sub-categories identified above. A harmonious relationship is evident in 4 additional clips from David's video work. This included one clip which demonstrated collaboration with each other.

David's relationship with his brother was prevalent throughout his footage. Their positive relationship was particularly evident in one clip (clip 29), during which David talks about his chickens while Benjy, given the title of 'assistant', acts as camera operator and offers some prompting.

David shows the 19 chickens which he sometimes has to feed. He says it's sometimes good how they all run towards him to get the food. He says he is going to check for eggs. He moves towards the chicken shed. He says:
*'It's going to be good!"*
He asks the camera operator/viewer to watch him look for eggs. He finds one egg and then says he's going to ask his '*assistant Benjy'* to open something. Benjy states that David has dropped the egg. David wanders to one side and Benjy says he will feed the chickens and walks over to sacks of feed. David points out some white chickens and tells Benjy that they have not been filmed but Benjy says to leave them because they are laying. Benjy then films some places where there are no eggs. David comments:
*'It's annoying when you try to move the chickens and they peck you'*. Benjy says they are going to show how to do the chicken food and David repeats this (for the audience). The film focuses on the opening of a bin and David says they get a hand full of food and "*chuck it in*". The chickens all fly after the food. Benjy says that he wants to go. David continues, goes to give some food to the laying

chickens who Benjy tells him, ‘don’t bother’. David says feeding the chicken is fun but when you drop an egg (Benjy mentions David just did this), it can be annoying.

This short clip from David’s footage represents sibling collaboration well. It gave unique insight into the relationships between the siblings and their cooperation. It also demonstrated an example of how, through this collaboration, a greater insight into what was of importance to the individual child was gained. This clip portrayed, from what was said and seen, high levels of competence, understanding of the project, responsibility in caring for animals, sound communication skills and audience awareness. Just as with the video work where parents supported their children with their film making, there appeared to be some correlation between siblings working together and the production of extended filming.

Sibling collaboration was recorded on footage from 13 children and evident in a total of 37 clips. Where this collaboration was evident it was often accompanied with playful behaviours not seen during filming made with parents or adults. Examples included dancing and singing (Tess, Ashton) or other ‘performances’ for the camera such as a puppet show (Molly, Fran) and dressing up as a dinosaur (Sara). There were 5 children who had films clips which demonstrated some level of dispute between siblings, seen on a total of 6 clips. This is a significant contrast to the harmonious or collaborative clips recorded with siblings which was evident on 147 individual video clips.

The relationships and collaboration between siblings are a key finding of this research project, as summarised in the table below.

**Table 4: Key Findings 2- sibling relationships**

| Key Finding 2 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| The harmonious relationships and level of collaboration between siblings enabled insights into the children's worlds to be captured on camera.<br><br>Through this work some children demonstrated skills and elements of their personalities which were not always evidenced in their other video work. | Collaborative sibling relationships were evident in the work of 13 children. They accounted for 37 clips in total.<br><br>David's footage demonstrated levels of communication, collaboration and confidence with his sibling. This was not evident in his other video footage to the same level of detail or confidence. | Implications for policy could consider the value of sibling relationships in collaborative work.<br><br>Implications for practice could consider relationships that children share with siblings and the skills developed through collaborative work.<br><br>Opportunities for collaboration between children of different age groups could be utilised within educational environments. |
| Key Finding 2b | Evidence | Implications |
| The playful, collaborative and informal nature of the relationships between siblings demonstrated social skills and harmonious relationships | Harmonious relationships between siblings were demonstrated in the work of 19 children and evident in 79 clips. | Children who have no siblings might benefit from the opportunity to experience collaborative activities with children of other ages. |

### 5.5 Peer support at school

As with the footage at home, there were variations in the ways in which children recorded their ideas and the level of support which they utilised during their filming in school. It became apparent throughout the coding of the footage that a significant number of children (20) sought support or advice from their peers (seen in 33 clips).

In many clips, especially in the first few scenes where the cameras were being used for the first time, there was frequent peer support asked for and given, usually of a technical nature. This, as with the collaborative work with the siblings, demonstrated children's ability to cooperate effectively, negotiate, cooperate and work together. These skills had been observed during the fieldwork and the children in all classrooms were encouraged to help each other as part of their every day schooling experiences. It was interesting to observe, from the filming, how the peers supported each other. As Mayall (2008) suggests, peers learn from each other and research which gives insight into these types of exchanges offers greater insight into children's acquisition of knowledge.

Examples of peer collaboration can be seen in Gemma's footage. This first example demonstrates how children developed their conversation while working together on the interviewing task.

> Gemma's partner (unidentifiable) asks an interview question,
> *"What is your special memory?"*
> Gemma answers:
> *"When I got my cat and he was at (from the) RSPCA and he got run over"*
> "*Have you still got your cat?"*
> *"Yes, he got helped by RSPCA, they made him better then we had him".*
> The interview continues with the interviewer asking lots of extension questions about her cat, his colour, age, name. Gemma talks fluently about her pet to her peer.
>
> (Gemma, class 1: clip 19)

Through clear questioning the conversation developed. This gave more insights and also had the advantage of removing some of the power imbalances which might have occurred had an adult been interviewing. This does not necessarily mean that there were no power imbalances at work. Relationships between children are complex and although many of

the clips demonstrated relationships which children supported each other such as Gemma and her peer, there were other clips which demonstrated tensions within relationship which appear towards the end of this chapter. Other, more playful examples were seen on Gemma's footage, which demonstrated how effective the collaborative work was in developing her creative and imaginative story telling. Gemma's independent puppet story is depicted below.

> *"This is my puppet, have a look!"*
> Gemma films puppet lying on the table.
> *"It's very pretty and it has long hair".*
> Film shows wool dangling in front of camera. Gemma speaks:
> *"Very, very long!".*
> A brief pause is followed by more dialogue from Gemma.
> *"Would you like to have a look at my friends? It's very, very pretty too!"*
> Films peer (girl) holding up a puppet. Gemma films other children walking past with their puppets and comments on them.
> Clip ends (clip 20)

> *"…Came from a wonderful world, and she's from a yummy chocolate. You can see she has to do all this work - all with her hat on. It's a very nice hat. Here's some other peoples."*
> She turns the camera around to film other children with their puppets. Turns back the camera to her and says:
> *"It's very nice*"
> She then reverts to filming the puppet
> Clip ends (clip 21).

This description and dialogue with this lone filming offer some insight into Gemma's storytelling and imagination in this instance. When Lily introduces her puppet to the scene, filmed on Gemma's camera the story becomes more complex and reveals some unusual themes.

Gemma holds two puppets.
*"Hello this is mine and my friend Lily's puppet".*
The puppets introduce themselves to each other. Gemma holds them together and says,
*"They are going to have some fun."*
Gemma turns the camera so that she and Lily are filmed. Lily speaks:
*"We think they're lesbians because they really love each other."*
She turns her puppet back to Gemma's and says:
*"Well, we're sisters, of course we do".*
Gemma films the puppets arguing over who's bossy, one puppet hits the other one.
Clip ends. (Gemma, clip 22)

Gemma films Lily playing with the two puppets. Lily says they are going to get married, Gemma comments,
*"She's not getting married, she's too gay. I know who she's going to get married to, she's going to get married to a girl."*
Lily speaks, pretending to be the puppet, she says the puppet is getting married to a boy.
Gemma replies: *"OK, is he gay or something?"* They both laugh.
Lily starts waving the puppets around and singing. Gemma comments, *"Lily is going to do another movie".*
Lily speaks: *"Hello, we're going to do a movie together, we're going to do Cinder."*
Clip ends (Clip 32).

An adaptation of Cinderella is produced by the two friends on the following video clip using the puppets (clip 33). The fast paced developments of the story and interesting content open up many potential areas for exploration. Within this particular part of the discussion however, it is the collaboration between the peers which is being focussed on. The individual filming by Gemma, offered a descriptive outline of the puppet, describing predominantly physical features. The collaborative clip, by contrast,

demonstrated how, with peer support, the story telling developed in to complex unpredictable negotiations between the peers. Through the collaboration, there were a range of circumstances which were opened up, explored and developed and left unresolved. These ranged from discussions about the nature of the relationship between the two puppets (sisters or lesbians), the character of the puppets (one being bossy), a portrayal of violence and a declaration of love for each other. Then, with shared humour, the peers moved on to retell a fairytale story.

The collaborative work demonstrated in the puppet work appeared to demonstrate a different level of engagement for many children. Wood and Hall (2011) argue that through drawings and play, 'children are able to make connections between thought, emotions and actions, between the everyday and the imagined, and across time and space' (Wood and Hall, 2011: 278) creating 'possible worlds' and 'metaphoric transformations' (Bruner, 1986). Through the playful nature of the puppets these play worlds emerged, which offered insight into the complex ways in which the children were able to communicate with each other and demonstrated skills of translation and imagination captured through sustained fantasy narratives.

Many of the puppet videos were longer, faster paced and more eventful, as was also seen in many of the collaborative work done with siblings. These clips demonstrated sustained levels of communication which were not as commonly evidenced in the video work with adults. Christensen and James (2011:163) suggest that collaborative working and a sense of 'sameness' with peers offers a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging may also have given the children the support, or confidence to be able to create, say or do things that they were unable to do independently. The level of collaboration between peers demonstrated positive relationships which gave insights into issues which impacted on the children's lives. This represents the third key finding of the research, presented on the table below.

**Table 5: Key Finding 3 – Collaborative work**

| Key finding 3a | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Collaborative work between peers demonstrated the children's capacity for creative, playful, cooperative behaviours. | Gemma and Lily's shared work demonstrated some of the lively interactions between peers. Exchanges between peers often helped to extend and lengthen the filming. | Teachers and policy makers could consider the opportunities which are available for children to work and play together in Year 1 classrooms.<br><br>Consideration should be given to reflect on what might be learnt from observing peer interactions. |
| Key finding 3b | Evidence | Implications |
| Through playful interaction and collaboration, the children's video work gave glimpses into 'real-life' issues. | Lily and Gemma discuss being 'gay', 'lesbians', and 'getting married'. Anna and her peer (clips 51 and 52) developed a story about losing money, her pet and a friend. | Practice and policy could consider how and when children have opportunities to express their views with their peers on issues which impact on their lives. |

## 5.6 Adult support in school

Many children filmed, either intentionally or not, a school based adult. This included their teacher, a teaching assistant or myself on the clips. The majority of these clips showed adults giving support to the children. This was evident in films from 30 children. There were 16 children who did not engage with or record any footage of an adult in their films made at school. Out of these 16 there were 4 children who did not have footage of themselves giving or receiving any peer support, although they did demonstrate interaction with their peers.

On the film clips which contained school based adults, such as the class teacher, the teaching assistant, or myself, the footage predominantly consisted of technical support or help with structuring the children's work.

The dialogues between the children and school staff (including myself) were often unintentionally recorded. They did not have the same playfulness or pace which was demonstrated in some of the peer collaborative work, or sibling collaborative work.

The ways in which the adults supported the children remained much more consistent and less varied than the ways in which parents, siblings and their peers worked with the children. This might have been to do with the ways in which the activities were organised, with the adults trying to encourage the children to film independently. In addition, the time restraints and number of children who needed support put additional pressure on the ways in which classroom based adults were able to support all the children. It was, to some extent, inevitable that time would be taken up with changing batteries, demonstrating camera functions and solving technical issues when using unfamiliar equipment with young children.

Time restraints and curriculum demands meant that there were few opportunities for the teachers to work with the children in more playful, or creative ways. The project remained very much structured according to the activities which had been developed during the reconnaissance study. It is possible that a longer project, or a project which enabled the teachers to have greater influence over the activities may have created greater opportunities for teachers to work differently with the children and their cameras. Perry et al., (2000) suggest that reflective dialogue which can develop from video taped activities have the potential to illuminate aspects of self regulation and metacognition not readily observable. This is also suggested elsewhere (Forman, 1999).

The school based adults did give support to children beyond technical help and advice. This was seen through their questioning of the children, developing interviews. The following example gives an insight into one such occurrence where the adult, in this scenario a teaching assistant, supported Charlotte. After drawing what was special to her, Charlotte was

asked to describe and film her picture. The first clip demonstrates her footage without adult support, the second with adult support.

> Charlotte films one picture, it shows a woman with long hair. The camera moves towards the play area outside. There is some filming of her classmates outside. Nothing is said, background noise of the classroom can be heard (Clip 46).

Then, the following clip considers the same picture with adult support.

> Charlotte holds the camera close to the picture. An adult can be heard encouraging her to look at the screen to see what is being filmed and asks her what she has drawn. Charlotte explains this is of her "*friendly new dog*". She describes 'Pip' as being one (year old). Charlotte moves on to film a doll's house, which she explains is her favourite toy. The adult gives encouragement for Charlotte to talk more about the house through showing interest in it, she says, "*That sounds lovely, tell me more about it".*
> Charlotte goes on to describes where it is kept and what goes in it in detail. The discussion moves on to the third picture. This is of a Cinderella princess doll and the fourth is of the flowers in her garden which she explains she planted that smell nice. The adult asks Charlotte if she is finished or if she would like to say anything more. Charlotte pauses for a few seconds then says she is 'done' and the filming ends (clip 47).
>
> (*Pip also appears in 4 of the 6 films taken at home and is mentioned in the interview questions*)

These examples demonstrate again how much more understanding and detail can be gained with interaction. Through supporting and encouraging Charlotte, other details emerged which helped to contextualise other data. For example 'Pip' the dog appeared in 4 out of the 6 films taken at home and is also discussed during the peer interviews. This additional

information also drew attention to the potential for misinterpretation of the data. In the first clip above, the lady with the long hair was assumed to be a person. It was evident from Charlotte's comments in following clip that this was a toy doll. These subtle differences highlight not only how the data might be misinterpreted, but also how through adult support, there is a significant change in the nature of the filming and what is revealed.

The nature of this type of footage which has been co-created can open up other, alternative understandings to the children's lives than the footage captured by children on their own. The high frequency of interactions captured indicates not only the inseparable 'child' from his or her environment as socio-cultural theories indicate, but also offers insights into the value that children place on their interactions with others.

What can be learned from these clips specifically relates to the nature of the relationships that children have inside the school context with adults. While there may have been some level of acquisition response bias (Brooker, 2001), wanting to give the 'right' answer, or as Punch (2002) found create a 'good photograph' (in this case, film), it also represented the world in which the children live. In an adult world where children's views are little asked for (Sullivan, 2000) or not taken seriously by adults because of the nature of the society which they live in (Punch, 2000) where adults knowledge is considered to be superior to that of children's (Alderson and Goodey, 1996). The video work which captured adult support demonstrated in some situations, the children taking the lead and offering their views and opinions. It also served as a tool to consider the nature of the relationships at work. The relationships between the children and the adults in the school context represent the fourth key finding of the research.

**Table 6: Key finding 4 – adult support**

| Key finding 4 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Interactions with adults in the school setting were supportive and encouraged independence.<br><br>Time for technical assistance and keeping the children focussed or 'on task' with their video work dominated the time that teachers had during the classroom based work. | Evidence of a supporting adult was seen in 30 video clips. There were 16 children who had no footage of adult support in school.<br><br>As discussed in the work by Charlotte, adult intervention supported and extended discussions captured. | Implications for policy and practice could consider how teachers can find time to discuss children's interests and lives with them in the classroom environment. |

The variation of support, influence and interaction seen or heard on the children's footage made the analysis process challenging. However, it was also the richness of these relationships and the wide variation of interactions between family, peers and educators that offers new insights into the children's lives. In research by Fisher (2009) which investigated children's feelings about moving into Year1, one of the 4 anxieties that children repeated most often were being hurt or bullied. There is evidence in the clips that some of the relationships which the children had were not harmonious although there were no examples of physical aggression, there was some verbal bullying through the name calling observed on the footage.

The connection between the multiple contexts of children's lives, which form children's lives from their home, school, community, personal and social spheres was captured on the video cameras. These findings can be related to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), which views the child as developing within complex relationships that surround the individual. This is often represented through a diagram which represents

relationships as bi-directional and influential to each other rather than seen as ‘separate’ entities.

Influences include the close family and peers (mesosytem), the local communities and environment which surround the child, but often seemingly indirectly such as the influence of the parents work environment and health clinics. The macrosystem represents the laws, values and social and cultural factors which impact on the children’s lives. The outer ring represents the chronosystem which represents the influence of time and personal experiences and histories. There was evidence of these influences throughout the children’s video work, there was particularly strong evidence of the macrosystem as explored above.

Children are located within different social and cultural structures, so we are reminded by Underdown and Barlow (2007) that when working with children, ‘it is important to ensure that all opportunities are used to explore the impact of broader social or cultural contexts on the beliefs or experiences to which they are giving voice’ (Underdown and Barlow, 2006: 157). In many ways the children’s films enabled some of the broader social and cultural contexts to come to the fore and the interactions between the different elements of the children’s lives.  Most prominently, the importance, variety and support from the children’s human relationships were echoed throughout the children video footage.

Part 1 of this chapter attempted to deconstruct and explore some of the relational complexities which were interwoven within the children’s video data. Through the exploration of the relationships and influences which impact on the data, Banks’ advice has been followed, in which he suggests a wider frame of analysis beyond simple examination of the visual and auditory text. The third section in this chapter attempts to continue to explore beyond what is seen and heard, as it explores the remaining 4 categories which emerged from the data analysis in order to understand what is important to children in their lives in more depth.

## Part 2: Categories emerging from video analysis

The remaining categories for exploration identified in the introduction of this chapter are addressed individually, in turn within this section. They are:

Animals
Objects and belongings
Play, interests and fantasy worlds

Findings from the data analysis are presented alongside discussions of these findings. Examples from the data continue to be woven into the discussions in order to understand the contexts and the lives of the individual children in more detail.

### 5.7 Animals

One frequent occurrence on the children's films recorded at home were animals (always pets), which were featured on 25 children's videos. On 13 children's videos the animals were talked about affectionately or were shown physical affection, such as being hugged or stroked. This was demonstrated on 24 of the clips recorded. A greater number of clips were recorded which were either observational or descriptive about children's pets with a huge variation in the number of clips taken by the children of their animals. In total, animals appeared on 25 of the children videos. These were either observed, described or shown affection, featuring on a total of 129 clips.

The high volume of videos featuring animals could be due to several reasons. Animals cannot refuse to appear on camera. Thus, they make captive participants compared with people, who might refuse to participate. In addition Punch (2002) identified that when working with children in a Bolivian study, captured animals as a commonly drawn feature by children, which she considers may represent Hart's (1997) view that this

represented a limited range of objects emphasised by the culture, rather than a specific value placed on animals. It is therefore with some caution that I suggest that the high volume of clips recorded offers evidence that animals were significant in the lives of children who filmed them.

It is possible that in some instances, what is seen and said on the footage is more insightful than the volume of clips recorded. As Loizos (2006) suggests, 'visual records may be more evidential in the forensic sense, but may not be the primary generator of key concepts or ideas. It should be noted that one child in particular (Christian), recoded 40 clips which involved his pet cat, out of a total of 571 clips. This was significantly more in quantity then other children, but not necessarily significant within the profile of all the clips he had filmed. By comparison Bella recorded 8 clips of her animals at home, however her total number of films amounted to13 clips with pet animals featured, making quite a significant proportion of her videos pet focussed compared with Christian. In addition the significance of the animals featured represented a significant role in her life.

There was also a range of the ways in which the children filmed animals. There were more observational clips (125 in total) than clips which demonstrated some type of affection towards the animals (24 clips in total). Some of the clips were short, lasting only a few seconds with little or no accompanying dialogue, while others offered extended information.

The importance of animals was demonstrated in Charlotte's footage which included 8 films out of a total of 14 clips involving her pets. The animals featured across a range of footage, recorded at home and school. This first example features discussions of her pet in the interviewing activity (clip 3).

> I ask if Charlotte has a special memory she would like to share. (The audio is not clear in this early question). Charlotte can be heard saying her special memory is in the car ("travelling in dad's car" with her dog). I move on to the next question. She asks what

superhero powers Charlotte would have if she could be a superhero. Charlotte replies she would like to play with her dogs and be able to talk to dogs. I ask her if she knows the story of 'Doctor Doolittle'. Charlotte says she does not. I tells Charlotte a little about him. Charlotte listens. She does not make any comment. I then asks the third question about where Charlotte would like to go on a magic bus and who she would take with her. She replies that she would 'like to go to the seaside', because she likes it there, and that she has slept at the seaside before. I ask who might go with her, who is special to her. Charlotte looks around the classroom for a few seconds (at her peers?) and then states that she would take her cat.

This clip highlights the importance of this particular child's animals, featuring in all the answers to the questions posed in the interview activity. Many children gave their pets a high status and seemed to enjoy talking about them on the footage. The reasons for the high status of the animals in some children's work appeared, in some instances, to be connected to the children's and families histories. An example can be found in Phoebe's footage (clip 14), recorded during the interviewing task.

The film starts and peer asks Phoebe if she has a special memory. She says yes, "*my dog, what was in Poland*" the interviewer asks what it was called. Phoebe replies; "*Fluffy*" the interviewer asks what colour? "*White, all fluffy".* The second interview question is asked.

In Gemma's and Bella's footage there was evidence that the 'rescue' animals had significance (clip 17). In Bella's footage, there also seemed to be significance in the age of the dog. She talks about him in her home footage.

Bella films the older dog.

"*Here is….this is Gem and she…she is 10years old. She's been with Mummy for...”*
(waits for mother to tell her)
“*10 years…(*waits again for mother to say something) *I love her very much."*
She films the dog stretching.
(Bella, clip 16)

The significance of animals as a member of the family was evident in clips made by a number of children. Matthew, for example, also featured a high number of clips about his dog. The status of the dog in the family was evident, not only demonstrated through his affections and discussions about it, but was also seen in footage with his father, who filmed him saying ‘goodnight’ to his dog and gave him a hug. His father praised him for his affection towards the animal (clip 10).

Harry filmed 4 out of 8 of his home recordings about his animals but without commentary. During the researcher-initiated interviews, he commented on the responsibilities he had in looking after the animals he had at home. He also drew a picture of his pet hamster in the drawing activity, which was not accompanied by dialogue on the footage. It was interesting to observe that during the interviews with the children to review their footage, over 15 children started off the interviews by showing clips which included their animal(s).

The significance of the animals for the children did vary. There were a high number of children who were keen to share their pet stories and information about them during the interviews. This was unexpected to me, possibly due to my own history and a lack of animals as a child or adult. I found it interesting that the animals featured so regularly in the footage and so prominently in the children’s lives. Other researchers, viewing the evidence or interviewing the children may not have considered this as significant as I found it to be. The high volume of clips featuring animals is

important to acknowledge alongside the cultural and epistemological views of the researcher.

The interest in animals that the children showed through their video work represented key finding 5.

**Table: Key finding 5 – Animals**

| Key Finding 5 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Children demonstrated responsibilities, enthusiasm and affection for animals in their lives. | In total, animals appeared on 25 of the children videos. Animals were either observed, described or shown affection. In total animals featured on a total of 129 clips. | Implications for practice or policy could consider how the responsibilities, interests and affections which children demonstrate could be utilised in the school context. |

### 5.8 Objects and belongings

One of the most challenging aspects of coding the film data was the inclusion of objects. Objects appeared in so many different contexts and in a range of forms in nearly all of the scenes, as a background item, or household item as toys, games and electrical equipment. A decision was made early in the coding process to only note down objects which had been given specific focus in the filming rather than as ‘background’ items.

To code and categorise the data which included objects, further groupings were developed to help organise the findings. These smaller groupings, brought together created the category of ‘objects and belongings’

They were:
Household objects/everyday items
Special objects
Cuddly toys
Photographs
Toys (indoor and smaller items)
Outdoor toys

Household objects recorded by the children accounted for a total of 154 clips, with 75 clips being taken by Christian (class 2). They ranged from domestic appliances to ornaments (Tegan), a Buddha and 2p coin (Ashton), and packed lunch boxes (Natalie) to packets of tobacco (Christian). From viewing the video footage alone, very few were accompanied with descriptions. Therefore the significance of many of the items was unknown. It was difficult to understand the reason for the high volume of such objects being recorded. Many of these clips were beneficial in providing context to the children's footage.

During interviews with the researcher, some of the children were able to explain the significance of the objects and belongings in more detail. Fran, during interview described the light fittings which she had recorded in her bedroom in the interview. She explained that they had been made for her by her mother and went on to give details about the metal welding processes. For her, the household objects that she did record, were of significance, but without the context, or ability to explain them, they could have been overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant.

This finding did not necessarily resonate with other examples evident in the research. Not all the objects recorded were as significant as the example given above. This represents a key issue which was apparent in much of the research data. Much of the data, on first viewing can appear to be insignificant or irrelevant, however when a context, explanation or dialogue accompanies the clips they reveal more insights.

It would be unwise to suggest or assume that all clips held significance to the children, or all the household objects filmed would reveal more depth and context once discussed with the children. During the interviews which I conducted with the children, many of them were unable to explain why they had recorded specific items or objects or were unsure about why they had filmed them. One key suggestion about the value of the clips is that some of the clips which were significant to the children may have been undiscovered by the researcher. It is therefore possible too, conversely, that clips which emerged from the analysis and transcriptions which I considered insightful may have not been particularly significant to the children.

The interviews with the children, explored in detail in the following chapter explore the alignment of children's data and address this issue in more depth.

On 34 clips, from 18 children, there were objects that had been identified as 'special'. Most frequently the items were toys. These findings would have been influenced by the drawing activity which encouraged children to draw what was important or special them. It is therefore likely that the number of clips given this label is not necessarily representative of the children's own labelling of items

### 5.9 Soft toys

In footage from 14 children, taken at home there were 29 clips which featured soft toys such as teddy bears or stuffed animals. The animals were sometimes described or played with on the footage. The volume of films does not appear to be particularly high in comparison with other groups of data explored in these findings however the clips often were animated or narrated giving alternative insights into the children's interests and characters.

> Sara is in bed. She explains it's her bedroom and she is holding her bear (who she makes wave). Off screen her brother says *"Kerry's her name"* . Sara repeats this for the camera. Mum asks if she is going to say night-night. She gets Kerry to say ‘night-night’ and then says it herself (clip,18).

Sara’s bear named ‘Kerry’ also made an appearance in her drawing of what is special to her. The appearance of the same item in several clips or in different contexts could be seen as an indication of their importance to the individuals. Another example of the prominence of some of these stuffed toys was evident in Phoebe’s footage.

Phoebe described her stuffed toys affectionately in four clips. Three of these related to television or film characters, ‘sponge Bob square pants’ and ‘Fiona’ from the animated film, ‘Shrek’, which she stated she ‘loved’. The fourth clip related to a stuffed dog which she describes in detail and expresses her affection for.

> “This is my doggy, a teddy one. I love it, love it. It barks. It's so good, it's from Poland."
> She talks more about it, describing it’s features. She says:
> "when I hug it tonight, it makes me very, very happy" (clip 17).

Phoebe is very confident in declaring her affection for her cuddly toys. She appeared to enjoy speaking on the camera and was confident when expressing her views. Not all of the children were as able or willing to verbalise their feelings on the footage as coherently as Phoebe. Some children pretended to be the voice of their stuffed toy. Ashton demonstrated this twice in his home footage:

> Ashton speaks and films;
> “*This is a picture of our teddy*”.
> He films his teddy talking to camera. Teddy speaks in a made up language (Clip 25: 28 seconds).

> Clip 17: Ashton films objects in a corner of a hallway. He speaks:
> "*This is some of our toys, P.E. Bag, shoes, box, Power Rangers, tennis rackets, now let's go and look upstairs."*
> He walks up stairs filming as he goes, into a bedroom, where there is a single bed and bunk beds. He speaks:
> "*Let's say hello to our teddies again".*
> He holds up soft toys saying their names, each one says hello to the camera (clip 17; 2 minutes).

Ashton's bears at home are brought to life as he makes them speak, a feature seen in several children's clips (Phoebe, Sara, Shelly). It was surprising to note that the affectionate and gentle nature demonstrated with his toys at home was not evident in any of his school-based footage as this clip demonstrates:

> Ashton films a peer who is filming him. They film each other. She asks what he would record if he had his own camera. "Nothing" says Ashton. She asks, "What would you do if he had the biggest teddy in the world?"
> Ashton replies "kill it". He makes a choking noise. She asks:
> "What if he had a really big dinosaur in his bedroom?"
> Ashton replies, "I'd do a wrestling slam" puts camera face down *on a table. (Possibly acting out a wrestling slam with the camera)*
> (Clip 40)

The clips show different responses and reactions depending on the context. Ashton revealed very little in his interviews with me and so little further information was gained about his views. What is perhaps most interesting with his clips is how his private affections demonstrated in his room with his toys may have been very different to the persona he portrayed in the clips captured at school. This raises a key issue within the

research about the images which children captured on the footage of themselves.

### 5.10 Play, interests and fantasy worlds

The ways in which the toys were played with or presented on the clips differed between the children. The level and ways in which the children played was interesting and worthy of greater exploration than the constraints of this thesis allow. There was evidence of a range of types of play seen, just as there were toys. The play and toys revealed much about the children's own particular interests and skills. For example, there was evidence of good communication skills, engagement in fantasy and imaginary play and numerous examples of the children working collaboratively and independently. The ways in which children played with toys on the footage may have been influenced by other people, as explored in the second section of this chapter, as well as by the other variables, such as the type of toys used, access to the toys and the time restraints.

There is much which can be gained from observing children through their play which has been well researched both historically (Isaccs, 1930), through therapeutic approaches (Chazan, 2002) and from educational perspectives (Broadbent, 2003; Moyles,1989). The observation of play to inform educational practice is one of the main assessment tools used in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfES, 2008), however does not feature within the National Curriculum.

It was interesting to observe the puppet work which the children carried out in the research project and the ways in which they played with them. In order to reflect on the puppet work in more detail, five groups were created. These were:

- Observations of the puppets (no narrative, no descriptions)

- Descriptions of the puppets (such as features, characteristics)
- Examples/descriptions of the puppets behaving in a positive way
- Examples/descriptions of the puppets behaving in a negative way
- Storytelling with the puppets

These groups helped to sort the data so that the variations between the ways in which the children played with the puppets could be explored. The footage which included the puppet stories offered insights into the children's imaginary and collaborative play. There were 7 children who had no recorded footage with the puppets and 11 children who recorded clips which were observational, which either described the puppet or had no accompanying dialogue. Some of these may have been errors in filming. Chrissie for example, filmed a shot of the playground floor (clip 55) followed by a shot of her puppet with her saying 'stop' and then ending the recording (clip 56). This indicated that she had pushed the record button to stop the filming, having either forgotten to press record to begin with or made an error while attempting to record. There were other examples of children who could be heard on camera realising their errors, such as Claire (clip 52), whose clip films her holding the spoon puppet and saying "thank you", implying that she had finished recording. This was followed by a re-recording of her puppet story.

Descriptions of the puppets were evident in 54 puppet clips. Some of these descriptions developed into stories, others did not. The stories which were told were interesting and revealed much about the children who created them, offering 'doorways' into children's worlds (Drummond, 2003). Several of the puppets had characters which reflected other footage seen in other areas of the children's filming. One such example is of Coleen whose footage at home was full of affection for her family and time spent trying to engage a younger toddler cousin in play on the camera. Her puppet story told of a princess who never wanted to leave her mum, dad and baby cousin because she loved them so much and they felt the same. The puppet went on to say how she did not like leaving her

family to go to school or want members of her family leaving to go to work (clip 53). Singer and Singer (1990) suggest that imaginative play is fun, but also offers some preparation for the reality of the children's lives. In Coleen's example there appeared to be a correlation between the 'reality' seen on the video footage and the fantasy of the puppet play.

There was some alignment seen on James' puppet footage. On his footage of his toys at home, he wanted to appear within the scene, just as he did with his puppet. He wanted to be *in* the play scenarios, not just in control of them. In addition several of his clips and discussions with him reflected him feeling left out at school and not having friends. His puppet story appeared to dip into some of these issues, supporting Paley's (2004) views that stories are a way of enabling children to communicate what is important to them and thus gain a greater understanding of their worlds.

> James films himself lying on the ground next to his puppet. He says: "*This is my puppet and he likes playing games. The games he likes playing is a very noisy game. He likes it, but he don't like it very often. I'm recording him, so puppet say something*."
> James' voice changes. He speaks using a high pitched voice. He says: *"I love the other puppet in an…"*
> (He reverts back to his normal voice) James speaks again:
> *"The lovely puppets he does...'*
> He moves on to telling a story leaving another sentence incomplete. He starts telling a story.
> "*The story is about… Once upon a time there was a puppet going on an island. An island puppet wouldn't allow him to go on it…"*
> James stands up. He moves the puppet to animate the story. He continues:
> *"And then the island puppet said, "Could you play with me?" And then he got lost and then he didn't like it... I want to be in it!"*
> James moves his feet into the shot so that they can be filmed too. He declares:
> *"Now I'm in it!"*

James moves his fingers about in front of the camera*. "That's the end of my story". (clip 50).*

James' filming, as with others, did not follow a clear structure. It had several starting points and incomplete sentences with the story of the pirate island at the centre of the footage. This was not uncommon. Many of the stories were fast paced and developed with speed within one or two clips that it was challenging trying to keep up with the plot. One such example came from Anna, whose footage from the puppets demonstrated a confidence unseen in previous clips. The puppet clips she filmed were longer than any other footage, which could imply a deeper level of engagement in this play activity. The scenes moved quickly and demonstrated complex elements to her story.

Anna is filming her puppet outside speaking in a different voice. She says:
*"Hello my name is Ella and it's very cold out here, I can't believe it…Well, I'm walking home but I really can't remember where my home is…. It's too bad, I don't know where my home is so I think I'll have to sleep out here in the dark, in the cold.*
Anna pauses and then takes a different approach to her story.
*"Before I do that I am going to tell you my name".*
Then, in a lively voice Anna speaks again.
"*Hello! My name's Ella I'm very pretty and I'm very, very, very, very cold! I need something to help me please help me. Goodbye"*
(clip 49).

Subsequent clips (51 and 52) were collaborative, with a peer and included interactions with her peer's puppet. Anna's puppet character, 'Ella' was developed from the scene above to a complex story which involved her losing money, her pet and a friend. It also included references to dinosaurs and a helpline number. It was complex, full of imagination and represented perhaps some of the 'dizzy' (Callios in Kalliala, 2006) elements of play observed.

Many of the stories some explored in other sections of this chapter, such as Georgie, demonstrated imaginative, lively and complex narratives. The nature of the filming process allowed for these stories to be told in ways which could not be recorded in such detail using written methods with children of this age group. The use of the cameras in this way enabled storytelling and communication which was unseen elsewhere.

### 5.11 Negative peer and puppet interactions

The puppet stories were revealing in other ways. The puppet work drew attention to the relationships between children. This type of footage was unseen elsewhere as this clip demonstrates:

> Joseph films his puppet using a different voice. He says:
> *"My name's Joseph*!"
> He walks over to home corner where a group of children are playing with their puppets. Joseph joins in with them. The other children want to pretend one of the girl puppets kisses Joseph's boy puppet. He keeps saying no. One of the puppets wants to look at his camera *"You're not looking at my black one, or I'll kill ya with my sharp knife, grrrr!".*
> The camera gets put on the table children can be heard arguing over breaking something. Joseph speaks:
> *"My dad's stronger than your dad, he's big and fat but he's still strong".* Joseph walks away still filming.
> He walks outside. Someone can be heard talking in a 'pretend' voice, "noooo!". Joseph moans:
> "*I'm going in now*".
> He goes back inside and asks boy if he can film something for him using his camera. Boy shows him a clip on his camera (Joseph clip 29).

Joseph's clip moves quickly between play worlds with pretend characters to the 'present' and genuine feelings. The interplay between the children also crossed over into other videos, creating pictures of the children's relationships. Joseph seemed to have difficulty with another peer. This was evident in Mikey's footage.

> Mikey starts to film his puppet. Joseph comes over to talk to him. Mikey speaks,
> *"No, you have to be in a space".*
> Joseph asks for help from Mikey, telling him,
> *"It won't let him record"*.
> Mikey films both of the puppets. In a pretend voice he says,
> "*Hello this is Joseph he is so dumb, that he didn't listen to Miss."*
> Mikey starts laughing films his puppet lying on the table in a pretend voice.
> *"Hello this is my puppet he's so fat because he lays down all day and all night".*
> He talks to Joseph (cannot be heard clearly), then puts camera face down on table [left there for five minutes]. He then picks up camera and films puppet and speaks.
> *"This is my puppet, he is very pretty and I just made him. He's very cute. He's very nice. He's got googly eyes, brown hair, silver and gold mouth, red arms, green and golden legs, a wooden spoon and a brown cloak".*
>
> (clip 24)

Provocative comments towards peers were also heard in Ashton's puppet work. Using the 'pretend' puppet character, he comments on one of his peers.

> Ashton is filming his puppet speaking in a growly voice. He says
> *"He's stupid, Connor is stupid".*
> Conner is heard in background says
> *"Are you taking the piss or something?"*

Ashton holds his puppet next to a peers puppet and says:
*"This is Connor's girlfriend!"*
He then films his own puppet again and says:
*"This is an alien".*
He films a classmate, a girl and sings.
*"This is Connor's girlfriend. This is Connor's puppet's girlfriend" filming her puppet.*
Clip ends (clip 43)

There were 11 children who made comments of a negative nature towards their peers. Of these, 10 children belonged to class 1 and 1 child in class 2. Although the samples are too small to be able to compare any details of the ways in which the children behaved in the different classrooms it is worth noting that class 1 dominated these pieces of footage. The negative behaviour of the puppets was not always seen as a permanent characteristic as Ashton's clip demonstrates.

Ashton is filming his puppet. He says,
"*This is my alien. He's a naughty alien, he comes from Mars and he's brilliant at hunting and fighting*" clip ends (Clip 41).

Ashton films his puppet he says.
*He's so stupid and he's little, like he comes from a little town called 'Alien Street'. He's very smart and sometimes he can be stupid and he's very naughty so you better watch out"* (clip 42).

The puppet work was interesting and for some children they represented some of the most sustained independent footage captured. The puppet work also created ethical dilemmas where there were examples of children being unkind to each other. These incidents brought the issues of consent to the fore and made me question the level of understanding that children had of the audience. At the same time, these comments revealed the less harmonious nature of some of their relationships which did not emerge from other areas of the data collection. They are therefore valuable in

revealing a less ‘sanitised’ version of their interactions and so do tell us something about the ways in which some children communicated with others, when perhaps they had not been so conscious of the ‘audience’.

The interest and engagement the children demonstrated through their puppet work enabled different aspects of the children’s characters, fears and concerns to come to the fore. The puppet work was of value as it enabled children to ‘play’ with a character. Drummond suggests that stories are ‘doorways into children’s lives’. The puppets appeared to enable the children the opportunity to test out characteristics or roles through their puppet stories. The puppets also revealed some of the complexities of children’s thought processes, fears and anxieties as well as their interests, friendships and the complexities of their relationships with others. This finding supports key finding 3. Collaborative work demonstrated by children opened up opportunities for real-life issues emerge. This is summarised in key finding 6.

**Table : Key finding 6 - puppets**

| Key Finding 6 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| As an approach to helping elicit children’s voices, the puppet work was successful. The stories told during the puppet work revealed much about children’s fears, complex thoughts and relationships. | During the puppet work children explored a range of emotional and social behaviours. These included fears (loosing money, pets, friends, dinosaurs), harmonious and unharmonious relationships (Mikey, Ashton, Joseph) and the ‘dizzy’ side of play (Coleen, Gemma, Lily). | The use of puppets could be utilised to support children in discussing matters which impact on their lives. |

### 5.12 Audience awareness

In addition to the examples of negative comments towards peers there were also several very personal comments which were recorded which caused me to reflect on the children's understanding that myself and the class teacher would be looking at their films. Some children demonstrated a clear understanding of the 'audience' throughout their video work, for example Fran, introduced herself, people or objects at the beginning of a large proportion of her clips (30 out of a total of 47), and often ended the clip by saying 'thank you, goodbye'. Molly also demonstrates some audience awareness and some element of 'performance' as the following example illustrates:

> Molly is filming in her bedroom, she shows her cuddly toys. There is a pink desk and chair with a cat on it. She shows what is in the draws (paper) and says that her sister has the same desk in her room. She finishes the clip, by saying, 'that's really good isn't it? Do you think so? Bye! (clip 12)

There were 21 children in total who 'presented' one or more of their clips to an unseen 'audience'. This was evident on a total of 131 clips. Some children were made aware of the 'audience' by siblings or family members, as is demonstrated in Ashton's footage.

> Ashton is filming teenage girl/adult sitting on sofa singing to music on the TV, "I'm recording you Rochelle" he says. She takes the camera and films Ashton dancing and pulling faces. Another boy comes in and starts dancing and singing. Ashton takes the camera back. Rochelle asks, "Is that for school? You don't want to take that" (clip 23).

One anomaly was Jake, who demonstrated audience awareness, but presented some clips commenting that he was reporting for 'five live', so

although he demonstrated an awareness of audience, this was not necessarily an accurate understanding.

Some of the very reflective comments made by the children may not have represented a lack of understanding of the audience, or the project. These personal disclosures could have been representative of the very open, unguarded nature of the children at their stage of development. They could also have been a way of indirectly informing or seeking support for the issues which were raised. James, for example made one comment which could be construed in this way as he turned the camera to film himself and said, "I like to be my friend but nobody else wants to" (clip 6).
The ways in which children represented their views on camera varied greatly. The children demonstrated different levels of audience awareness and used the camera as tool for communication in different ways. The table below summarises this key finding.

**Table 9: Key Finding 7 – Audience awareness**

| Key Finding 7 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| A large number of children demonstrated audience awareness. It was unclear how much understanding of this the children had and the impact it had on the children's footage. | 21 children and a total of 131 clips demonstrated an aspect of audience awareness. The work was either 'presented' through communication with the 'audience' or through discussion about who might view the work. | For researchers in this field there are ethical implications about children's ability to understand the nature of 'audience' when participating in research.<br><br>Researchers need to find ways to support children to have ownership and control of the data which is captured and be given the opportunity to amend, edit or retract data. |

## 5.13 Friendships

Discussions relating to friendship was evident in footage from 16 children, accounting for 43 of the clips recorded. These clips varied from James' statement about wanting to have friends to children's confidence in their friendships, as is illustrated below:

> The class teacher can be heard telling Anna how to use the camera. Anna walks about outside girl can be seen in distance. She comments: "*There's my best friend, she is my bestest friend and she makes me laugh every day"* (clip 1).

The combination of wanting peers to laugh and being funny was used as a tool to engage peers by some children. The tone of Ben's voice suggested something contradictory to what he was saying. His comments could be interpreted as wanting to make others laugh.

> Ben says: *"I am stupid… I am stupid"* in a 'silly' voice. Laughing from other children could be heard in the background. Ben lifts the camera to film his face and sings:
> *"Can't you see that I'm stupid?"*
> Clip ends (clip 39)

## 5.14 Chapter summary

The analysis of the video recordings through the coding processes was a necessary and enlightening process which supported the categorising and structuring of the topics explored in this chapter. The video clips also provided evidence to support discussions, using transcripts allowed for examples to illustrate the key points made. This chapter explores what children represented as important in their lives, particularly their relationships and the support systems that they are a part of at home and school. The toys and resources which were filmed demonstrated

belongings which were important to the children as individuals. These belongings may not have represented items of great value for the children in all instances, but may have represented objects which were easily available. Where the children were able to support their videos with discussion greater understanding of what the children valued and felt was important in their lives emerged.

The following chapter explores further insights which came to the fore based on discussions with children in interviews and discussions to uncover more detail about what was of value to the children as individuals within family and school communities. The following chapter also discusses findings from interviews with the teachers involved in the project and considers how they might use the evidence to support the children they work with.

# Chapter 6: Findings and discussions from interviews with children and teacher participants

## 6.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter considers the findings from interviews and conversations with the children and with the teacher participants when viewing the videos in 'reflective mode' (Haw and Hadfield, 2011). To begin, the chapter focuses on conversations held with children and two further categories which emerged from the analysis of interviewing processes – spaces, places and storage, and, rules and regulations. The scrutiny of these two additional categories supports the answering of the first research question concerned with finding out what is important to children, and also offers some reflections about and suggestions for the implications on practice, the third research question.

Interviews with the three classroom teachers were conducted in order to gain their perspectives, not only about the video data itself which was shown to the teachers, but also to gauge what challenges and possibilities might arise from such a research approach for pedagogy and practice. This chapter explores three key issues. The first relates to the finding that the teachers appeared to use the video data as confirmation about what they already knew about the children's lives. The second area of investigation explores teachers' responses to the incorporation of children's interests and perspectives in their teaching and planning. The third part scrutinises how teachers' own perspectives and experiences might impact on their professional role and practice and their view of the research. Through investigation of these 3 areas, the second research question, '*how do teachers respond to the data collected by children about what is valuable in their lives?'* is addressed and the research sub-question, referring to the value of incorporating children's views into children's schooling is woven into the discussions.

## Part 1: Findings from conversations with children

### 6.2 Expansion of insight through conversations with children

The techniques used for the analysis of the video data, transcripts and notes taken from interviews were processed in a similar way. There was one less stage of the process to do – which was the creation of categories as the same groupings were followed through from the video data. The same categories were used in order to track alignment, or not, between the video work and comments made by children.

Many of the films and corresponding interview transcripts indicated an expansion of what was seen in the video footage and the information gained from interviews. This was positive and encouraging from my researcher's perspective, indicating some potential validation of the data sets. One such example was Bella, who captured a large proportion of her clips (8 out of a total of 13) about her animals. During the interview she was able to offer detailed information about her care of, and responsibility for the animals which were otherwise only briefly discussed in her video footage. The interview provided additional, new information relating to which animals had competed in shows, her role within these competitions and the prizes that she had won.

While Bella's interview enhanced my understanding of her life and her interests, this level of synthesis and greater expansion of the data was not present in all of the children's discussions with me. One such example of the lack of consistency between the two data sets emerged in Molly's interview. During her interview, Molly wanted to repeatedly watch and show me the recordings of her bedroom, telling me about the objects, storage, decoration and toys within it. She chose not to show me any of the 7 out of a total of 20 clips which she had filmed which involved dancing with her sister, doing 'performances' to the camera. She seemed reluctant to show me any of these clips, despite them representing a significant proportion of data from the video work. Despite this, the insights gained

from the interview with Molly highlighted alternative interests and aspects of her character which were not seen on the video footage, adding new dimensions to my understanding of her profile.

The children may simply have not wanted to share all of their personal insights with a relatively unknown adult. While reflecting on the interviews and the data collected by children using the videos, several ideas emerged about why this might have occurred. The use of language which would not have been considered acceptable for use at school was evident in a few films, as was negative behaviour towards peers and siblings as discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, there were several examples of 'covert filming' by the children, where they could be heard whispering on the footage, filming something that they had been told not to film, either by a parent or as part of the ethics discussions held at the beginning of the research project. It was possible that the children may have feared being reprimanded for some of this behaviour if they had shown me these types of films during their interview.

### 6.3 Additional categories developed from interview data

The purpose of the interviews was to add to, extend and contextualise the information gathered from video data in order to help answer the research questions. The analysis of the interviews helped to establish two different categories, 'spaces, places and storage' is the first category explored, leading on to the second, entitled, 'rules and regulations'.

The first category came from a number of children who, during interviews discussed where objects or belongings were kept, this has been categorised as Spaces, places and storage. This reflected a range of children's comments (20) during interview, which were noted. It was possible that there were more occurrences than this, which were not recorded.

### 6.4 Spaces, places and storage at home

Coding from the video clips discussed in the previous chapter may have included evidence of this under ‘toys’ as well as ‘outdoor and indoor space’. As this category emerged from analysis of the interview data, it was necessary to consider the video data again in more detail. The additional video analysis found that there was evidence from 16 children who filmed some type of storage for toys amounting to a total of 26 clips (although 8 clips were filmed by the same child). These clips were often just ‘snapshots’ of storage, rather than described or sustained footage meaning that they might have not been filmed intentionally or have been particularly significant. In addition, there was further evidence of an indoor space being the apparent focus of filming, such as a bedroom or playroom. This was evident in 23 of the children’s videos amounting to 74 clips in total indoors. Outdoor environments featured as the focus of the filming in 112 clips from a total of 27 children.

The interviews with the children revealed a more interesting and revealing line of enquiry than the video footage portrayed. The interviews of 3 children in the same class (class 3) focussed my attention towards this category and encouraged the perusal of this topic. The first interview was with Fran. Her clips were interesting and sustained and her interview was one of the most in-depth interviews held. During the review of the clips filmed at home she captured some of the objects and spaces in her house during a ‘tour’. The extract below represents notes taken immediately after the interview.

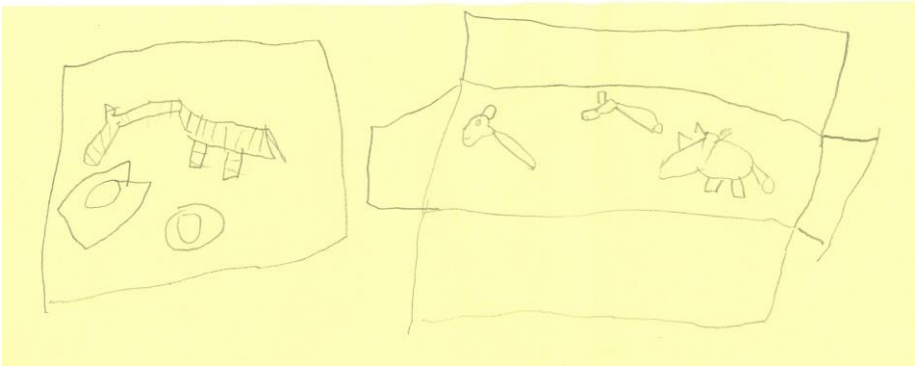
> *Fran showed a range of scenes giving a very detailed tour of the house. She showed in her own room, some of her favourite things, which included curtains that her Mummy had made, a pile of cuddly toys at the top of a bed and her toy box. She went into great detail about the box. It was made of wood. It had a giraffe on it which was carved into the box and it was where all her toys were kept. It was always kept in her room, but the toys could be taken out. The same*

*toys were usually kept inside it. She described the toys kept inside. She repeated on several occasions that this was 'lovely' or 'special'.*

*(Fran, class 3 interview notes)*

During the drawing activity (seen below figure 1) Fran created a replication of the 'toy box' which was described with enthusiasm in the interview,

**Figure 1: Fran's toy box drawing**



This represented a good example of how the range of methods and activities enabled particular aspects of her life to come to the fore. The drawing activity did not provide the same level of description and dialogue as the interview, but it was clear that this was held as something important and of a personal nature to her.

Interviews, video work and the drawing activity with Joseph also revealed the importance of spaces for his belongings and the importance of his baby sister in his life. This collaboration of notes made during and after the interview with Joseph summarises the data.

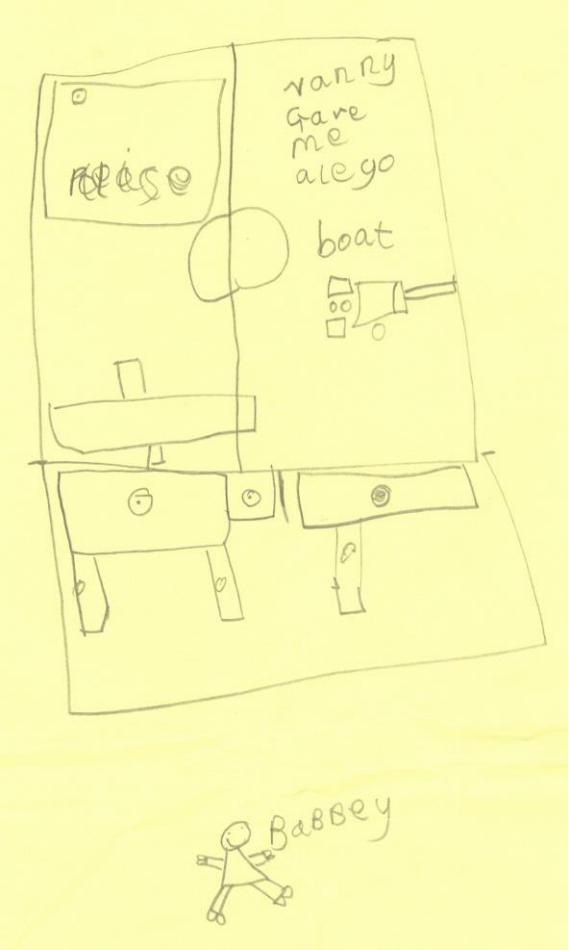
*Joseph included clips from outside the house, in his garden and in the lounge/living room. Much of his footage included his baby sister, (who looked to be about 6 or 7 months old (not quite sitting unaided, Joseph could not remember how old she was, just that she was his 'baby sister'). There was also a toddler sister, who Joseph told me was 2. Adults could be heard in the background, he told me that mummy didn't want any filming to be done anywhere*

*else in the house. He seemed apologetic about this. I reassured him that this didn't matter, that lots of mummies and daddies said this. He spent a long time filming a large cupboard, similar to a welsh dresser in the room. There were a range of items on it, books, toys, trinkets and two shelves underneath. There was no narrative with the clip. I asked him what it was. He told me 'it's the cupboard'. I asked him why he filmed it. He told me about the two bottom cupboards which kept his toys in it. He went on to tell me what was in each one and pointed out the Lego models he had made which were on the shelves. He explained that some things had to be kept in it out of the way of his baby sister in case she might eat them.*

*(Joseph, class 3 interview notes 2)*

There were many other personal images which were captured on the children's drawings. The baby, drawn and named ('babbey') for additional clarification for the 'audience'. Joseph's baby sister featured in much of his footage, providing further emphasis on this particular aspect of his family life. Wood and Hall (2011) indicate that 'symbols in drawings relate not only to things but also to children's identity, agency and power.
As with Fran, in the drawing activity, Joseph also drew the cupboard. Joseph's picture can be seen in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Joseph's toy cupboard drawing**




The connections between the video work, interviews and drawing activities in these two particular children's data was interesting and offered some validity to this unexpected category which emerged. This category was given further status after reflecting on the conversations held with children during the guided tours, of which filed notes were created, which referred to the storage within the school environment in depth. This relates closely to key finding 8 illustrated below.

**Table 10: Key finding 8: Reviewing video work with children**

| Key Finding 8 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| The use of interviews and drawings alongside video footage offered a more in-depth understanding of what mattered to children. | Evidence from Fran and Joseph demonstrated the symbolic nature of every day items and the importance they held for them. In contrast other clips which might have appeared to be significant to an audience, demonstrated little importance in discussions. | Implications for practice and policy should consider the value of discussing children's views with them. A range of communication strategies enables key message about what is important to children to come to the fore. Discussions also enabled insignificant interpretations to be addressed. . |

### 6.5 Spaces, places and storage at school

Combined with information gathered during the guided tours given (by class 3 only), which I was present for and field notes were made (categorised as 'conversations' rather than interviews as the children were filming at the same time), there were many examples in the classroom of children's interests in spaces used for storage. Footage included the shed on the field, where all the outdoor Physical Education (PE) kit was kept, storage for bikes and details about the ownership of the bikes. There were numerous examples of drawers in the classroom being filmed and the objects that the children kept in them. Pegs which were used to hang coats and bags upon also featured in 3 of the guided tours, including one child (Matthew) who filmed each child's peg and the corresponding name attached to it. Several children filmed the labels on the boxes of resources in the classroom and details about where the boxes should be kept.

It is possible that the spaces which were used to store children's belongings in gave them some sense of reassurance in the school environment. Understanding where objects were kept, may have represented an aspect of the hidden curriculum, as part of the routines and expectations necessary to be able to function as an individual within the school community. Some research (Cosco and Moore, 1999 cited in Papatheodorou, 2010) separates out the two words, with different definitions. 'Space' is described as being the physical environment, often unchangeable, such as the size and location. The 'place', however, is something more personal, representing a changeable and inhabited area which is interactive and can be associated with a sense of ownership and pride (Papatheodorou, 2010). This is an interesting idea, when connected with the children's filming of the indoor school environment. The space within the classroom is shared, but the interest in the individual drawers, with personal belongings in and where the children's work was kept and the pegs to hang coats and bags from, may have been important as they represent the space for the individual child within the community.

The notion of being an individual within a community was identified within the literature review of this thesis as an area of tension or challenge. This theme of spaces, places and storage demonstrated the value of children knowing that there was a place which was for them, as individuals, but that it was part of a community space, to which the place also belonged. It is also possible that storage might suggest some level of 'containment' beyond a physical container of belongings. While for some children this may help to represent their belonging within the wider community space, for some children it might not offer the same positive experience. It would be interesting, in further research to consider if the containers and containment were not regarded as such positive elements of the space by some children.

The findings and discussions with the children also suggest that there is some value in knowing where objects belong. This could also represent an understanding of shared ownership, and thus being part of a community.

Fran told me: ‘you have to know where things go, don’t you?’ In order to have this ownership of the space, it appeared that knowing where ‘things go’ was one of the expectations of the classroom community.

The importance of containment for toys might also represent several ways of ‘seeing’ children and their belongings. For example, containers for toys suggest a multiplicity or wealth of toys, creating a view of children’s lives, as wealthy, demonstrating the duplicity of toys and resources. Or, it could be seen as a way of adults teaching children their own values, such as putting things in the ‘right’ place, while simultaneously creating boundaries between resources which belong to children, compared with adults. These boundaries were evident in shared domestic and school spaces.

The importance of shared space and individual space is represented as a key finding of this research.

**Table 11: Key finding 9 – Spaces for belongings**

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| Key Finding 9 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Places for children’s belongings, both shared and individual are important to children. | The children’s drawings, video clips and guided tours (class 3), drew attention to storage facilities at school and at home. | Implications for practice or policy might consider the importance of the environment for young children. In particular, places for personal belongings. |

### 6.6 Rules and regulations at home

The second category that emerged from the interviews rather than the video data itself has been labelled ‘rules and regulations’. This theme emerged from discussions held during interviews, but also in conjunction with the previous category as both appeared to have a connection related to the ownership and personalisation of a place.

Rules and regulations were discussed in the interview relating to both home and school environments. They often emerged when children were telling me about places which they were or were not allowed to film at home, censored usually by a parent, although sometimes by more formal boundaries, such as fences into neighbours gardens or siblings bedrooms. These examples from the interview give an illustration:

> Tess: 'Mummy said that if I'm naughty I will get banned for a week' (from going into the hut in the garden)
>
> Lucas: 'The house was a mess so couldn't record that'
>
> Greg: 'Wasn't allowed to record upstairs because it was too messy'
>
> Anya: 'No snooping in the cupboards, mummy said: "o snooping in the cupboards"'.

These comments from the children reflect some of the boundaries which were established by the adults and impacted on the children's filming. The adults take on the regulatory roles both at home and school, by making the rules to which the children are expected to adhere to. Palaiologu (2012) reminds us that 'there is always a dilemma in participation with children given that the adults are the ones with the power' (2012: 39). The children's views might not simply be able to come to the fore if parents in some ways create barriers to the children filming or discussing what they wanted to. Palaiologu (2012) also reminds us that there are cultural differences between children and that some children may not be used to being invited to participate. Thus boundaries in existence might *not* always be connected to a desire for privacy or some level of containment or censorship of their lives. Rather, it could be a reflection of their inexperience. Similarly, the restrictions which might have been imposed by parents might represent their cultural differences which could also reflect their lack of experience or opportunity at being asked to participate.

### 6.7 Rules and regulations at school

There was evidence of the rules and regulations at school, with a greater emphasis on the consequences of not following the rules than was evident in the discussions of rules and regulations at home in some of the children's responses. The footage seen on the films revealed little about this category, but the interviews and explanations of video clips opened up the opportunity for this discussion in more depth. The following examples taken from interviews illustrate this.

> James: 'you're not allowed in the trees because the grown ups can't see you. If you do you have to stand with her' (the playtime supervisor).

> Fran: 'If you be naughty you go in the special book. If I was to be naughty, like… lets say I climbed up the fence, then you get put in the book. If you go in the book 3 times then you have to leave and that is big trouble.'

> During Claire's interview she told me about the school's playground rules, that if you are naughty then you have to sit in the library and miss out on play. She did not seem concerned by this, although did want to tell me more about it.

> During Catherine's interview she talked about the play house she had recorded when using the camera for practice. She told me about the games which the children were and were not permitted to play within it. She knew the possible consequences of not following these adult established rules. She also talked about the climbing frame and told me that they were not allowed on it because it was too dangerous.

There was one child (Lucas) who talked about the rewards given in school. It was interesting to note that much of the discussions about rules and regulations were dominated by discussion about outdoor ‘playtime’ activities.

Classroom rules were only discussed in relation to the guided tours. The children who offered insights into these rules and regulations were offering me insight into their domains, and also positioning themselves as ‘experts’. Moore (1986, cited in Christensen and James, 2008: 121) calls the areas which children inhabit as ‘childhood domains’, which are suggested as valuable contexts which could lead to ‘potentially detailed knowledge, not known by adults’ (ibid). The children who gave details about the rules and regulations may have known that as an outsider to the school, I would have been unaware of them. These rules included: holding the rail up the stairs to the field, not going in the wooded area, not using certain play equipment, only going in the shed if you were told to, not entering the allotment space unless you had an adult with you, not going near the old swimming pool fence, not to touch the bikes in the bike shed, not to cross over boundaries in certain places in the playground. The children were accepting of the numerous rules and they could usually tell me why there were specific rules in place.

From conversations and interviews with the children the rules outside of the classroom were plentiful, but not necessarily made explicit as they were in the classroom. There was a reduced visibility of the rules outdoors compared with indoors. Within the classrooms, rules and expectations were clear, visible (on posters or written up as classroom rules) with a consistent enforcer as each classroom had the same full time teacher. Outside of the classroom walls, the boundaries between where the children could and could not play were often invisible, not marked by fences or visible play areas. There were no signs to suggest which equipment could be played on and which could not. No reminder to ask the children to put their hands on the stairs up to the field. There were no physical barriers between which sections of the field were accessible and which were not. There was no ‘list’ about rules in the playground as there

was in each of the classrooms. In addition there was a variety of people on 'playground duty' and rules fluctuated according to weather conditions.

Farrell et al., (2002) found that in Key Stage 1 the children's priorities tended to be focussed on emotional and intellectual support, with their move into Key Stage 2, at the age of 8 being more likely to need support with more pragmatic issues such as time, places, rules, routines and peoples names. They suggest a move away from the often emotional issues dominating children's views found in years 1 and 2 (Farrell et al., 2002). The tours conducted with the children in class 3 seemed to contradict this finding. The findings from this research project tended to focus on the rules *outside* rather than inside, unlike Farrell et al. (2002), whose research offers some explanation about the difference in the findings. In research by Moss and Clark (2005) their findings, based on an early years setting indicated a strong interest with the boundaries outdoors, taking photos and drawing the physical boundaries which existed in the setting. The findings from this research indicated as with Clark and Moss' (2005) research that the boundaries were of great interest to children. The dominance of boundaries, rules and regulations is one of the key findings of this research and is presented in summary in the table below.

**Table 12: Key Finding 10: Rules and regulations**

| Key Finding 10 | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Knowing the rules and regulations was important to children. | Knowing the rules appeared to give children the confidence when discussing their school as the 'expert' in the guided tours. Children demonstrated their awareness of the rules and boundaries within home and school environments. | Practice implications relate to supporting children in understanding rules and regulations. |

The interview discussions drew out much more information about the children's school experiences than the analysis of the filming had. Other than the inclusion of the guided tours in class 3, school or learning at school (not including the teacher) was only mentioned in 6 children's footage in classes 1, 2 and 3. Out of these clips, three were prompted by parents (James, Sara and Marcus). It was only Lucas, David, and Joseph who made unprompted comments about school, all of which were positive. The discussions during the interviews tended to focus much more on school. This may have been because they were conducted in the school setting and this environment influenced the discussions.

This chapter has explored in greater depth what children tell us is of value to them, based on interview and conversational responses to children's video work. The two additional categories which emerged from the data of spaces, places and storage and rules and regulations at home and school link closely to some of the discussions developed in the literature review.

These suggest there is some tension between supporting both the unique individual and his or her individual needs and the needs of the community to which they belong and that a balance needs to be achieved between the two.

In the first part of the chapter the importance of space for belongings has been explored. The emphasis on storage for children's personal belongings both within the home community (for example, toy boxes and cupboards) and within the school community (for example, pegs and storage trays) emerged as a prominent category. In addition to these personal spaces for children's belongings the importance for understanding where shared (community) equipment and objects also featured as important and the place of these was communicated as of importance. This information could be added to the balance of personal and community needs to demonstrate how the balance might be achieved.

The responses discussed in this chapter indicate that the children themselves identified the importance of having some individual space for their belongings, but also identified the communal spaces as of importance. The emphasis on rules, boundaries and spaces for objects or belongings indicates that the children placed value on knowing these rules, which by their purpose, aids the functioning of the communities. By knowing the particular rules and regulations they are, as individuals, successfully integrating and contributing to community needs, both at home and at school. This is evident in the comments about the boundaries set about the filming at home such as videos in stipulated places, or knowing the rules of the playground.

The two categories reflect the children's interest in their own spaces and the rules which govern them. A suggestion is made connecting the two categories together, which creates a link between the role they have as a member of a group, knowing the collective rules, but also their position and their space as individuals as important within the places which they inhabit.

A conclusion could thus be drawn from this chapter, that one of the key areas of importance to children is that there is space for them within the wider classroom or school community. In addition, knowing the rules and regulations which exist within these communities allows them to be able to function successfully as an individual within the community.

The tensions which existed appeared not to be related to any need for a tipping of the balance in favour of meeting the needs of the individual child or the community needs. Instead the tensions which emerged came from being able to adhere to the rules and regulations, or in the case of some children, their ability to understand the often unspoken or changeable rules which existed. These uncertainties made it difficult for the children to function as individuals within the community with confidence.

In consideration of these findings there are implications for schooling which could be suggested. That there is value in making specific places for children to store and hold their belongings as is common practice. In addition though, it could be suggested that in order to ensure that both communities function and individuals feel confident within these groups, that rules and regulations are made explicit and should be shared with the children so that they can feel confident in their surroundings. Is there something to be said about children needing to be included in the making of rules themselves? It feels like the positives are discussed here quite well – about children's need to know clearly, the rules by which to live well. But what about when the balance is tipped and children feel overwhelmed by rules formulated in most cases, by adults?

The findings seem to reflect the children's interest in their own spaces and the rules which govern them. A suggestion is made connecting the two categories together, which creates a link between the role they have as a member of a group, knowing the collective rules, but also their position and their space as individuals as important within the places which they inhabit.

## Part 2: Findings from discussions with teachers

The time spent interviewing and discussing the children's videos with the teachers varied in each class. In classroom 1, the teacher Heather, was not always present while I was in the classroom doing the research for a variety of reasons. She had several responsibilities for subject areas and had been teaching for 6 years. Initial interviews with the class 1 teacher indicated that she was committed to 'responsive teaching' in her classroom. Heather told me that this was something that was required on the planning grids in her school. Upon watching the clips from several children's footage, Heather suggested that the information seen on the footage, confirmed what she knew about the children and their lives. In addition to this, she provided additional, unprompted information about the lives of the children.

### 6.8 Confirmation of knowledge about children's interests

Heather made several statements which indicated that the video footage supported what she already knew about the children. Comments such as, 'I'm not surprised', 'I thought she might show that' and 'that is nothing new to me' all arose during discussions. Initial responses from Heather suggested that there was not much to be learnt from the video footage. As an outsider, with no prior knowledge of the children or their lives, all the information gained in the video work was new, interesting and worthy of reflection. I was in a different position from which to be able to view the data. I had not taught the children, had no knowledge of family situations or siblings. I did not know the parents or particular details about the housing estate as the class teacher did. The responses from Heather made me question the value of the video data, as well as my interviewing techniques and also the position that Heather may have been in as 'participant' and the influences or pressures she may have felt in this role and as a professional teacher.

Through the daily involvement and relationships with the children, Heather had a picture, or view of the children, built through layers of different pieces of information developed through her experience with the children and their families. It is possible that the video data might have added to the layers of information and understanding that she had about the children even at a very subconscious level. It is also possible that the views of the children which Heather had were already firmly established leaving little room for adaptations to be made. As Greig et al., (2007) suggest, 'the child is always so much more than it is professionally convenient to believe' (2007 89-90). It could also have been the nature of the interviewee role which also added pressure on Heather. This may have been the pressure felt as a professional, to give a 'teacher's' insight in order to demonstrate an already established firm understanding of the children's lives.

It is possible that Heather did not want to communicate any new insights or information seen on the footage as this might have been that an admission of 'not knowing' could in some way create an impression of her practice which she did not want to construct. This was certainly not the intention. Stengel (2000) has described teaching as being a moral and technical phenomenon and concludes that part of the difficulty with talking about pedagogy is that we have not yet developed a 'language for teaching that combines 'the language of the technique' (what is effective) with the 'language of manner' (what is ethical, moral or caring)' (cited by Stephen 2010: 26).

### 6.9 Incorporating children's interests in their schooling

One of the aspects of the footage which emerged from all the data gathered in class 1 (and in the other data sets) was related to a popular television programme, 'Ben 10', a fictional character of a boy who could turn himself into a range of alien creatures using a special watch. The notes, made after the interview (the teacher did not want to be tape recorded) reflected the conversation as I recalled it.

> Two children Mikey and Marcus, both demonstrated interest in their footage of 'Ben10'. The class teacher noticed this interest on the clips and told me about the character from the programme. I asked if this might be incorporated into the classroom activities in any way as I had heard other children mention this character, particularly several boys. The teacher told me that this was the sort of game they could play at playtime. I asked if there was any particular equipment that they could borrow or make to become the character such as capes or the watch used by the character. 'That's a good idea' she said. She then moved on to discussing another child.
>
> (Heather, Classroom 1: interview notes)

It is difficult to interpret why the inclusion of this character was regarded as a 'playtime' pursuit rather than an opportunity to integrate interests into what was going on in the classroom. Papatheodoru (2002, 2010) suggests that there is an assumption that outdoor activities represent a break from learning, a time for children to exert energy outside of the classroom, so that time spent in the classroom is taken with more valuable pursuits. Within the early years curriculum framework in England (EYFS, DCSF, 2008) outdoor learning is part of the daily entitlement of the learning, with many early childhood educationalists, both historic and contemporary, valuing its learning, health and play benefits (McMillan, 1919; Bilton, 2010). The primary curriculum (DfES, 2000) does not emphasise the same commitment to outdoor learning. Equally, just as the EYFS (DCSF, 2008) places an emphasis on 'play' as a tool for learning and development, the Key Stage 1 curriculum does not.

Dowling tells us that; 'listening and responding to children's interests and concerns is vital; however the practitioner then has to build on this information and use these social contacts to help children gain fresh insights, reflect and move forward in their learning' (2005:31). In order to be able to listen to and then respond to the interests of the children, there

does need to be an opportunity for reflection and a willingness to accept that there is value in such a pursuit.

### 6.10 Training and curricula differences

In early years training and development, there is an ongoing emphasis on observations, informal ongoing assessments and building on the children's learning through their interests. In the teaching standards established by the Department for Education (DfE, 2011) which form the basis for both teacher training and professional practice as a qualified teacher, there is no specific mention of teacher reflection, children's interests or observation as a tool for assessment. It could be argued that these are inferred, but nonetheless, they are not specific. For example, (Teaching Standards, 2011: Point 5) states that teachers must 'Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual awareness of children and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils education at different stages of their development' (2011:7). This point *could* imply the value of reflective practice, taking account of children's interests and observation as a tool for achieving *if* that is how it was interpreted. Or conversely, it could also imply a range of other interpretations, given its construction, such as an awareness of milestones, teaching strategies or an understanding of curriculum outcomes and expectations.

There may have been other reasons for the apparent dismissal of the 'Ben10' interest to playground pursuits. The character linked to the TV may not have been deemed appropriate for school time. It is interesting to consider however, that Carpenter, Huston and Spera found that in 1989, children devoted more time to TV than anything except sleep' (cited in Diaz, 1999). Given the large proportion of children who showed televisions on in the household and personal televisions in their bedrooms in the footage recorded at home, these findings may still be relevant. It was also interesting to note that 18 children filmed footage which included the television as a focus, or a related electrical devise, such as a games console. In addition 13 children showed toys which were related to a

television or film character. This does not include evidence from posters or furniture.

School perhaps, was not considered to be a place where television programmes should be incorporated into learning. Diaz (1999) suggests that adults should continually critically analyse children's television habits. She asks if the interest in television as a reflection of the 'consumer mentality with its pre-occupation for material objects, neglect of human caring experiences, emphasis on psychological manipulation and disregard for environment is benefitting children' (Diaz, 1999: 233). This is a strong view which makes a negative connection with television. Dowling (2005) suggests however, that the influence of television or videos embellish children's stories and that in turn, these stories are a valuable way of 'tuning into children's beliefs and concerns' (2005:188). This view offers opportunities for teachers to use children's television interests as part of their education in school.

### 6.11 Planned opportunities for supporting learning

The teacher in class 1 did demonstrate an example of how planning in advance could be flexible to meet predicted interests. It appeared as though planning responsively to interests was done in advance rather than spontaneously. The class teacher discussed how she had made adaptations to the plans in response to a visit to a farm.

> During the interview with Heather, I had asked about the inclusion of animals in lots of the children's work *(An early observation from the data which developed as the project progressed).* She did not make any comment, other than an acknowledgement that she had heard, by nodding her head. I knew the children were going to a farm for a visit the following week and asked her how the farm visit connected with the work they would be doing in the classroom. It appeared from the data that many of the children enjoyed their pets. Heather told me the links that were made to science, technology,

> literacy and ICT (class 1 teacher) and that these were already connections made with the curriculum.
>
> (Heather, classroom 1: interview notes)

The curriculum links related to a children's visit to the farm the following week suggested that there was some opportunity to move away from directed schemes. The observations from Heather did not suggest that a connection might be made between the children's videos and the outing to the farm. However the example given about the cross-curricular opportunities did demonstrate some flexibility in the planning for learning. The emphasis from Heather was that the learning was something which was planned for in advance.

There is an argument that the emphasis on planning and curriculum has led to the development of schools becoming 'delivery agents' (Young, 2006). This means that more attention is offered to pre-specified targets and curriculum goals than the individual or group needs of the children. It does, as Pring (2004, in Goouch, 2008:96) suggests, 'require a deep commitment and courage to challenge prevailing doctrine'. It is worth considering how the experience, age and skills of the practitioner also influence this. Goouch (2008:95) suggests that teachers need to be relentlessly responsive, intersubjective and interactive if they are to succeed in developing pedagogy appropriate to young children and their needs. These are key skills which require an understanding of the children, their needs and motivations. Such skills are in contrast to those acquired by the 'technical rationalist' (Furlong, 2000) approach which he argues is present in the current theory. It is therefore worth questioning if teachers who have trained at different times and under different political and educational climates all share common values as well as practical qualities or skills in their approach to teaching. Or, if as Pring (2004:68 cited in Goouch, 2008) suggests in the recent climate, that teaching is more about 'curriculum delivery' than 'engagement with other minds'.

There is a link between children's rights and agency and having a role in directing educational activities (DfES, 2007; Alderson, 2008). The three teachers interviewed appeared to have very different views about what the inclusion of children's interests meant in the classroom and placed different values on its inclusion. The teacher in classroom 2, 'Sally', was a recently qualified teacher. She was in her second year of teaching and had made comments which reflected an understanding of the concept of responsive teaching, although found it challenging to put this into practice as this interview fragment indicates.

> "If something comes up in the lesson that is linked to a child's interest then we will include it, but I don't plan for it at the start of the lesson. I don't plan for it because the scheme of work we use is quite structured".
>
> "We should be using their interests much more in the planning. The problem with that is one child's interests that you could focus a whole session around aren't going to be the interests of another child. So do you… just focus on the one child at the expense of the other children? You can't work on a one to one basis. You have to work with groups of children. They won't all have likeminded interests but they will all be at a similar stage, so it's quite a difficult thing to implement… to please everybody".
>
> (Sally, classroom 2: interview transcript)

The notion of supporting the individual through children's interests was viewed by Sally (in classroom 2) as something that could be brought into lessons, if it emerged during conversation, but she demonstrated a concern that this would not meet everyone's interests. This is a valid point as it would be impossible to work with every child's particular interests all of the time. However, it is also possible that learning opportunities could be missed by not following individuals' interests. In many ways this comment reflects the ongoing tension which runs throughout this thesis. How do we support and work with the needs of the individual as well as

meet the needs of the community? Rogoff (1990) suggests that by listening to children as individuals the needs of the community can be met, as she argues that individuals must become interested and aware of the existence of alternative perspectives and opinions other than their own in order for cognitive development to occur.

It could be, as Sally appears to suggest, that the 'structured scheme' does not allow for much room to build on children's interests. This is in contrast to a responsive teaching and learning approach which relies on the ability to move away from a predetermined curriculum. The skills needed for the delivery of more responsive teaching can support the emergence of a 'playful pedagogy'. This means that teachers engage in intuitive practice, which blends together 'explicit knowledge and implicit 'know-how' (Atkinson and Claxton, 2000:3). This is not an approach which is encouraged through structured schemes of work. A 'playful' approach relies on 'appreciating value in what might be spontaneous and unauditable' (Goouch, 2008). If this is not something promoted in the English educational system which Pring (2004) describes as 'utilitarian' then it is possible that, curriculum delivery rather than an engagement with learning dominates some teaching practice.

Responsive, playful or 'intuitive' teaching could be connected to current debates about the lack of creativity within current curricula and teaching methods when content and strategies are managed centrally (Craft, 2003). This debate does not intend to steer towards arguments about the levels of creativity in schools, which have been well documented (See Craft, 2003, Claxton, 2006). However there is an argument that a creative approach can be used to 'sweeten a very traditional content-focused curricular pill' (Claxton, 2006:3). The skills needed by a teacher to work creatively with children are very close to those needed to work from children's interests using a responsive approach. Once again the word 'intuitive' comes to the fore.

One creative teaching approach which specifically works with children's interests and is responsive to their needs can be achieved through 'possibility thinking' (Craft 2006). This is a creative teaching approach during which children are encouraged to ask 'what if' questions. Based on research findings (Burnard et al., 2006, Cremin et al. 2006) Craft (2006) suggests that encouraging children to question, immerse themselves in their work, approach tasks in a playful and imaginative way and through risk taking, children become more self deterministic as well as achieve higher levels of thinking and learning. Such creative approaches potentially enable both the individual and community needs to be met.

It is possible therefore, that one child's interest may not only enable others to learn, but might also support some creative teaching approaches. As with creative teaching approaches, the introduction of more personalised approaches to learning are dependent on the teachers' abilities to adapt to the individual and the groups needs. This is not a new concept. Susan Issacs (1936) over 60 years ago wrote that:

> 'Every teacher has to work out for herself her own technique of dealing with the individual child in her care, as well as the group as a whole. And the wider and deeper her general knowledge of the development of the young child's mind becomes, the more readily will she learn how to adapt to the particular needs which face her in her daily work' (Isaacs, 1936: 87)

Issacs made the connection that not only does a deep understanding of individual children support the ways in which teachers can support the children, but also emphasised the needs of both the individual's and the communities' needs. In Isaccs' view, it was important that teachers should have a deep understanding of all aspects of child development (Willan, 2009). With her vision, the child, rather than the curriculum would inform the teaching and learning.

### 6.12 Teaching experiences

Jane, the third teacher participant had previous experience of working from children's interests in her early career and appeared to be more receptive to a child-centred approach to teaching. Jane reflected on her teaching experiences of delivering a curriculum based around children's interests which met their developmental needs at the same time. This abstract from the interview transcript reflects her comments when discussing children's interests being incorporated into the curriculum. She stated:

> "In a way it's a little bit back to when I first started teaching. In 1978, when I first started teaching in a primary school, I would do things that the children brought in. I can clearly remember, I don't know, 2 or 3 weeks if not more, on dinosaurs just because a child walked through the door on Monday morning with bags of stuff having been to the National History Museum…absolutely full of it, so we all did work on dinosaurs and he could talk about it for hours. And everything we did, we did around that. I certainly hadn't planned it, but that was pre- National Curriculum and to an extent, I planned it as we went."
>
> (Jane, Classroom 3: interview transcript)

Jane, the classroom teacher referred back to her early career when responding to queries about integrating children's interests into their schooling. The period of time during which teachers were trained impacts on their approach to teaching and working with children (Greig et al., 2007). In the 1960s the 'staples of teacher training were psychology, philosophy, sociology, history and child development'. Thus the approaches to teaching would have 'perceived the child as an active player in the development of knowledge, requiring only the provision of an appropriate environment and the biological awareness to learn' (2007: 89). This emphasis on the individual needs of the child placed the child at the centre of the learning.

The role of the teacher was thus to create an environment in order to support the children's learning. In a study of Spanish teachers' approaches to teaching literacy, Tolchinsky et al., (2011) found that the age of the teacher had an impact on the ways of teaching. They found that older teachers tended to increase their use of multidimensional practices, which are defined as 'teachers who pay attention to occasional learning, autonomous writing and classroom dynamics but who also devote time to systematic instructional practices and a concern for the quality of learning outcomes' (2011: 52). The contrast between the studies however, is that while Greig et al., (2007) attribute differences to the initial training received, Tolchinsky et al., (2011) consider that with increasing experience, teachers adopt difference 'ways of doing' from a range of approaches. From Jane's experiences, it appeared as though there was an underlying confidence in knowing her job. Perhaps as Tolchinsky et al., (2011) found, the experience gained over years of teaching enabled her to be work more flexibly with the curriculum documentation.

The teacher in class 3, recognised that, in part, the difficulties with such a flexible educational approach, (the dominant educational philosophy when she originally trained as a teacher), required specific skills to work with children in this way, and not all teachers, at the time were able to do this. Jane stated:

> "I think the problem in those days was that there were teachers who were not particularly able to do that and just go with it and get from it what the children needed"
>
> "The National Curriculum gave people something to hang onto didn't it? And then the QCA came out and everyone was doing the QCA so rigidly". (Looks at TA) "…but we don't stick to it too rigidly do we?" (Both laugh) The TA replies, "We don't stick too rigidly to anything, do we?"
>
> (Jane, Class 3 teacher interview)

This exchange with the teaching assistant working with the class 3 teacher indicated a flexible approach to the curriculum. At the same time she was conscious of meeting the set objectives and being held accountable for enabling the children to meet set objectives. This concept of 'audit accountability' is identified by Goouch (2008) as being one of the key issues which impacts on teacher's engagement and investment in educational practice as teachers 'struggle with the prescriptive curricula and attempts to redefine teacher identity and professionalism' (Goouch, 2008:96). Jane spoke about taking a topic approach to teaching, using the interests of the children to support the planning.

> "We are hoping this coming year that it's the skills that we are looking at, hopefully it will work. It is like literacy in a way, I know if I follow what it (a scheme of work) tells me to do then I am covering what I should be covering. I'm thinking how do I make it interesting? There are resource issues. I fancy being topic-based and going with it, but the worry is covering everything that you have to cover… and being held accountable if you don't."
>
> (Jane, Classroom 3 teacher)

The flexibility and openness to try out new ways of working demonstrated a confidence in practice that may be a combination of experience of working with different curricula approaches. Jane's comments suggest that her values and approaches to teaching are not static, but evolving quite clearly. She indicated that her own views impact on the ways in which she conducts her teaching activities. This is one aspect of a teacher's characteristic identified by Nias in 1989. More contemporary research indicates that the environment connects with the internal aspects of the self and thus teacher's behaviours are described as complex, reflexive and multi-directional (McLean, 1991).

The history of the teacher and her experiences appear to have impacted on her pedagogy. Her own training could have impacted on her values and

beliefs. Greig et al., (2007) suggest that teachers trained with child-centred techniques (as the teacher in classroom 3 was), are different in their outlook to 20th century views of children, who are seen as 'passive recipients of reading, writing and arithmetic.' In many ways these two educational philosophies reflect two different views of the child.

### 6.13 Curricula conflicts

When considering the possibilities which arise for schooling in listening to children's views, the tensions that exist between the two curricula approaches in Reception and Year 1, from the child centred approach to the formal subject driven learning in Year 1 were expressed by Jane in class 3. She expressed frustration, at the challenges which were faced when trying to work with both curricula in the same classroom. She suggested that there were a lack of opportunities for the children working in the Reception stage to work on a sustained project or outdoor activity due to the desk space required by Year 1 children, or the quiet needed to allow the children in Year 1 to focus on their work, suggesting that it would be 'totally different if we only had one year group'. The nature of the small school did not allow for this. In addition, the teaching assistant, who worked predominantly with the Reception aged children also expressed, during a conversation with me, similar environmental challenges and also a concern about the formality of some of the teaching schemes used in the Reception class.

### 6.14 Teachers reflecting on children's videos

There were 2 children in the research who had recently moved into the school and the country from Europe. One child (Phoebe) from Poland in class 1 and one child (Tess) from Norway in class 3, both bringing different experiences with them. These children's videos were shown to the corresponding class teachers and the teachers were encouraged to reflect on what was seen.

The class 1 teacher, Heather viewed the 19 clips which Phoebe had filmed. As with all the teachers during this time, I invited them to comment on anything which was interesting or surprising to them from watching the clips. The class 1 teacher commented on the role play video which Phoebe had recorded. The video involved her using a pretend iron which she used and spoke as she ironed with instructions on how to iron clothes. The clip lasted 55 seconds and was filmed by Phoebe. The teacher commented on the nature of the play. It was the only example of domestic role play in all of the children's work. At the time I did not know this and was unable to tell the teacher this. She commented that she would like there to be more time for play in Year 1, 'this sort of play' and made comments about the lack of these 'types' of play resources.

Phoebe's footage was also unusual as it had no direct or intentional footage of adults. There was some evidence of adults in the background, off camera at both home and school. The teacher told me a little about Phoebe, when she had moved to the school and how good her language was and how quickly she had 'caught up' with her peers. There was evidence in the footage seen that her language skills and communication with peers was excellent and that she interacted well with other children on the footage seen. The class teacher commented that the video work was a good example of her speaking and listening skills and would be a useful tool for assessment with other children too.

The teacher in class 3, (Jane) viewed the clips filmed by Tess, whose family had moved back to the area from Norway 8 months prior to the video project, moving straight into the Year 1 classroom from a play based Kindergarten setting in Norway. She gave some background detail about Tess' early education and her progress since being in the school. She said:

> 'She had done no formal writing other than some capital letters and could 'just about write her name'. She had done no reading at all. She is now absolutely amazing. I did a formal reading assessment

> on her and she has a reading age of, I can't remember exactly, but over 7 years. She writes well…, ok her handwriting is not particularly neat, but she knows what she is writing. She has a lot going for her, she is very bright, and probably the best mathematician in the class. She is bright, but has just lapped up everything that we have given her to do'
>
> (Jane, class 3 teacher)

The teacher commented on Tess' mum's views that the play based learning that had been done previously had made a difference. Following a Norwegian philosophy, play is regarded as central to learning in children's early years, with themes and playful approaches dominating pedagogy (Germeten, 2000).The understanding and interest in the individual child expressed by the class 3 teacher was both interesting and offered further insight into the individual from my perspective. The opportunity for reflection given by the opportunity to watch the clips was also acknowledged by the class teacher. There was no evidence in her viewing of the footage by Tess, that new or deeper insight had been gained which could enhance what was already being provided for in the classroom.

### 6.15 Using video as a tool for reflection

I had anticipated that the teachers might find some opportunities for the integration of children's individual or group interests into the classroom and during the interviews, this is something that I had tried to explore with the teachers. Instead, many conversations which corresponded with the viewings of the children's videos seemed to consolidate their views of individuals rather than open out new possibilities. Initially I had been disappointed with the responses, there was little evidence gathered from the interviews with the teachers which suggested that the video data would impact on their practice or the ways in which individuals' interests were supported in the classroom as described previously in this chapter. On review of the project, however as conclusions were beginning to be drawn, I reflected differently on the interviews with the teachers.

When looking over the interview notes and transcripts it became apparent that teachers were not simply using the video data to confirm what they might have already known. They acted as a reflective tool for the teachers. The teachers, when watching the clips did tell me about the children, their families and their lives. In many respects the teachers *did* already have insight into what was shown on the footage. The discussions about the clips however offered the opportunity to put the children's lives into context, to reflect on their situations and view them as unique individuals away from classroom comparisons and a formal teaching context. It is possible, in this contextualisation, that the teachers' understanding of the social contexts of children's lives may have been developed. Key finding 10 offers suggestions for policy and practice that indicate video could be used as a tool to stimulate teacher reflection.

**Table 13: Key finding 11- Teacher reflections**

| Key finding 11a | Evidence | Implications |
|---|---|---|
| Teachers used the video clips as a starting point for reflection. | Watching the video clips in conjunction with the researcher enabled opportunities for teachers to reflect on the children's work.<br><br>Teachers were able to make connections between the video evidence and their prior knowledge of the children. | Implications for practice or policy could consider how the use of video could be utilised in training or practice to support reflection. |
| Key Finding 11b | Evidence | Implications |
| The teacher's own views and experiences impacted on the ways in which they responded to the videos and the level of reflection they were able to communicate with the researcher. | The three teachers were at different points in their careers, with different training and expertise and with varying views about how children's views might be supported in the classroom. | Implications for policy and practice might consider how teachers at different points in their career and from different epistemological views can listen to children's views.<br><br>Implications for policy and practice should consider the opportunities for teachers to reflect on what children communicate matters to them. Video could provide a useful stimulus for these reflections. |

### 6.16 Researcher's reflections on teacher's engagement

Initially I had anticipated that the teachers would want to spend time discussing and reflecting on the children's videos during the interviewing and see value in doing so. At the same time I appreciated and understood their busy jobs. My own beliefs about the value of listening to children, and learning about them, emerged from my own practice but has been influenced and extended throughout this project through reading, and a developing view of the value of participation in practice. The luxury of such time and opportunity to reflect on my own understanding, was not something that all of the teachers had the time, resources or interest in being able to do.

My own findings and insights gained from watching the videos were gathered over the course of the data collection, throughout the transcriptions and analysis process. My own expectations that teachers would see the children's videos and immediately be able to analyse and interpret the clips during the interview process were somewhat unrealistic. In retrospect, the teachers should have been given the opportunity to look at the films and then discuss them with me on a separate occasion. In addition, an interview with the teachers after the full analysis had occurred would have allowed for a more detailed set of findings to be presented. Timings for the interviews could have been better managed and a group interview towards the end, with the teachers all discussing ideas together may have allowed for more insight into the generational pedagogical differences which started to surface.

### 6.17 Chapter summary

This chapter explores issues of containment which impact on children's lives. The word 'containment' could be interpreted as an oppressive sentiment. It does however illustrate many of the boundaries and restrictions which are placed on children's lives. This includes containment which was seen as a positive and important element of the children's lives,

demonstrated through the drawings and discussions held. Containment, perhaps offers some type of reassurance for the children, knowing where 'things' belong, where the physical boundaries of a space are and the rules and regulations of a shared space, at home and at school. Within these shared spaces and the containment, the children were able to function as individuals within a community.

In addition to the issues of containment, this chapter also explores the findings from the interviews with children and teachers involved in this research project. Anderson and Burns suggests that

> 'One way of dealing with the inconsistencies which arise can be to describe the inconsistencies themselves. What are the major differences between the teachers/ classrooms/ settings? How many children express a particular belief compared with those who do not?' (1989:194).

This chapter explored the discussions and issues which emerged in the different teachers' responses to the video clips. It reflected on how useful the data could be to teachers and how they might use children's interests in their planning and teaching. The discussions serve as a reminder of the differences which exist between teachers and their experiences, philosophies and approaches to working with children. Susan Isaacs had the belief that 'the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled' (cited in Willan, 2009: 151). This suggests that this view of childhood divides the teaching styles that teachers choose to adopt in their classrooms – the transitional or the inspirational. It would be naïve to attribute either label or an alternative to any of the teachers participating in this research. However, it did appear that the teacher's training, experiences and personal educational philosophies impacted on their responses to the video and their reflections on it.

# Conclusions

## 7.1 Outline of chapter

This chapter aims to draw the research project explored within this thesis to a close. A brief overview of the project and the limitations of the study are given. Reflections are made on the ways in which the project could be improved. Following this, the conclusions from the key findings are drawn. Considerations of the methodology and recommendations for further research are given. The chapter closes with the intended contribution to knowledge and the implications for policy and practice.

## 7.2 Brief overview of the project

The aim of the research project was to find out from children, what was important in their lives and to consider the implications of the findings for children's schooling. The research project met its intended aims by examining what children identified as important to them. This was achieved through using a variety of research activities and through the children's independent filming. The class teachers were given the opportunity to watch and discuss the children's work.

This project explored the complexities of participatory research with young children. It investigated the complex nature of video evidence, considering closely issues concerned with the data collection and analysis. Included in these discussions, was an ongoing reflection on the ethical (Robson, 2011) and sensitive approaches needed when working with young children. A reflexive and reflective approach to the research was taken which potentially risked being 'over personalised' (Bassey, 1999:6) and may have impeded, rather than supported the reader's perception of the research. Nevertheless, it was felt that the benefits of a full and reflective discussion outweighed the risks of excessively directing or influencing readers.

### 7.3 Limitations of the study

Within any small scale research project there are both strengths and limitations to the work undertaken. This research project captured fragments of the lives of the children who participated in the project. Although often only brief, they revealed much about the children's lives. The video clips highlighted the complexity of their lives, relationships and families. It would have been beneficial to have captured information at the start of the project about family structures, such as sibling ages and the position of the child in the family. This might have been useful in enabling a profile of each child to be created. This would strengthen the reader's ability to understand the lives of the individual children in more detail, making it a useful point for referral. It is possible that parents may not have wanted to share this type of information, or they might have found the request intrusive. Research of this nature in future will need to consider how best to do this ethically and to assure anonymity.

A second limitation of this research is connected to the inter-rating validity of the analysis. The approach to the data analysis used was developed by Greig et al., (2007). The approach was an adaptation of grounded theory developed from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and content analysis (Babbie, 1979). Greig et al., (2007) suggest that phase 3 of the process should include a 'data control check'. A control check would have involved other researchers analysing the data using the same processes. This was not achieved due to several reasons. As a lone researcher the time taken to view and then to analyse the data was extensive. I did not have the human or other necessary resources to support another researcher to do this. In addition, some of the data was contextual, gathered in the fieldwork stages of the research. A secondary researcher would not have had insight into the individual contexts or ways in which the children worked, which was important for the reflexive nature of the project.

### 7.4 Reflecting on and improvements to the research project

It is my view that the research could have been improved with increased levels of participation and collaboration with the teachers. Having input during the design and development of the project would have enabled their voices, ideas and issues to be integrated into the project. Encouraging and enabling the teachers to make decisions within the project may have given a deeper insight into their perspectives. It might also have given them greater ownership and control. Increased levels of participation may have enabled the teachers to act on the research findings which could have influenced their practice and the experiences of the children. It would have been beneficial, both theoretically and practically to be able to reflect on how the implementation of practice informed by children's views impacted on pedagogy.

Greater levels of participation or co-research with teachers may have enabled the relationships between the teachers and myself to develop. Reframing the relationship, developing a partnership of co-interpretation and co-learning advocated by Mannion (2007) would support the principles of participatory research. The development of relationships might have enabled deeper reflection and critical and challenging discussions to have occurred. Stephen (2010) suggests that these types of discussions can support the development of pedagogy. He indicates that positive relationships can help to prevent critical or challenging discussions being construed by teachers as an 'attack or defence' on their practice (Stephen, 2010:27).

Decisions made early on in the research journey about the design of the project militated against some of the principles of participatory research. It was my own agenda, research design and my expectations of what a traditional 'doctorate' should research, which steered the research to begin with. These early decisions hindered some of the opportunities for greater participation. A greater understanding of these principles gained through

literature and experience will enable a higher level of participation in future research.

### 7.5 Key findings and conclusions

The key findings of the research were explored in chapters 5 and 6. Emerging from the key findings, three conclusions have been drawn. The first indicates the importance relational pedagogy to support children's communication. The second conclusion considers the value of the collaborative working with children and the importance of their social worlds. The third conclusion states the importance to children of the environment and knowing their 'place' within it. .

The children demonstrated that they were all involved in a range of relationships. Each relationship or 'type' of relationship (such as parents, teacher and peers) enabled different 'glimpses' into the children's lives to come to the fore. The ability to communicate, respond and learn from 'others' demonstrated the value of relational pedagogy in the children's lives.

This first conclusion about the value of relational pedagogy is drawn from evidence presented in the key findings, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the research, explored in detail in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. Key finding 1 asserted that parental support enhanced the children's ability to communicate their views about what was important to them. Implications about working with parents and the wider family to support the ways in which children can communicate their ideas emerge from this finding. This point was echoed in key finding 2 which reinforced the important role of the family in enabling effective communication. This was evidenced through work produced in collaboration between siblings. Similarly, key findings 3 and 6 demonstrated the value of peers working together and supporting each other. Support from teachers and other adults in school demonstrated the role that the relational pedagogy has in the classroom context in key finding 4.

The video clips drew attention to the importance of 'others' in their lives. 'Other' people, such as friends, siblings and parents supported children's development and learning as indicated above, but also drew attention to the social nature of children's lives and the importance of collaboration. The findings demonstrated children's ability to respond emotionally to people (and animals) and work collaboratively with them. This second conclusion draws together key findings 1,2,3,5 and 6 (discussed in chapters 5 and 6). These key findings illustrate the centrality of responsive, affectionate and positive emotional and social behaviour to others in children's lives. Children were able to communicate this through the activities such as the puppet shows, drawings and independent work produced. They used language to describe, collaborate with and reflect on their emotions towards 'others'. Through collaborative working, what was important and of value to the children was able to be communicated.

The third conclusion relates to the importance of the environment to children. Knowing the rules and boundaries of the environment and the place for individual belongings within a community was of considerable importance to the children. Key findings 9 and 10 (chapter 6) refer predominantly to the school environment, although the influence and importance of the home environment was also woven throughout children's video work. One of the emerging themes which developed from the exploration of the environment related to issues of containment. Knowing where 'things belong' was represented through drawings and discussions. These representations related to children's belongings within a shared space. At home, this was demonstrated through the storage of toys and belongings. At school, the importance of 'containment' was demonstrated through the status of pegs, personal trays and places for shared resources.

The theme of 'containment' also related to rules and boundaries concerned with the spaces which the children used. Knowing the 'rules' was important to the children. These rules could be connected to

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) macrosystem explored in chapter 6. It is possible too, that by knowing the rules and boundaries, children are able to affirm their own position as an individual with within a community.

### 7.6 Methodological approach

The central challenge of this particular research was the tension between exploring both the insights into what children value in their lives and the methodology of participatory research with children. This tension was present throughout every stage of the research; in its planning, data collection, analysis and throughout the writing process. I have, where possible, through the organisation of the chapters, aimed to separate these two tensions. This has been challenging as the research questions encourage the discussion of both elements of the research, often simultaneously.

A range of methods and approaches were used to engage the children and enhance participation. Some research activities captured the attention of some children more readily than others for a variety of reasons. These were; personal interest in the project or the activities, the ability to communicate ideas and views, the support received the children's confidence and their ability to use the technology successfully. All of the participants were able to access the research project and make video clips.

The methods used and emphasis on participation offered possibilities for the children to communicate their ideas through a range of approaches. The puppet work engaged and interested more of the children than the other activities. Epstein et al., (2007) suggest that there is little written about the use of puppets as a tool for communication in research. They indicate there is little known about the reasons for decisions taken and techniques used when puppets are utilised as a research tool. The fast-paced, playful nature of the puppet work, especially when children worked in collaboration with peers, opened up a range of issues which would be

beneficial in developing and exploring with the children in future research. Issues which emerged related to complex violent relationships, same sex and mixed relationships, fear, being lost, anxiety and cancer. The children's stories gave insight into the issues which impact on children's lives through the lens of the camera, enabling children to move between fantasy and playful worlds.

Conversations and interviews with children were valuable as they contributed to the children's views and created opportunities for the individual interests of the children to come to the fore. Without these conversations to support the work, several key pieces of data might have been misinterpreted or overlooked. It is therefore a recommendation of this approach that adequate time is given to discuss children's work with them, as advocated elsewhere (Forman, 1999, Robson, 2010).

### 7.7 Contribution to research

This project adds to the discourse that explores participatory research with young children, where there is an identified gap in child focussed research in school settings (Janzen, 2008). Janzen (2008) suggests that: 'there is a possible gap in child-focused and youth-focused research in school settings.' Smith (2011) suggests that one reason for the lack of this type of participatory research with children under 7 years of age, is that they are often regarded by researchers as being unable to articulate their views. This research demonstrates that they are able to articulate their views. There is a vast range of research involving early years education (MacNaughton et al., 2001) however, the majority of this research explore childhood up to the age of 5 years old.

Where research does exist with Year 1 children, often it focuses on teachers' practice and programme implementation rather than on children's perspectives (Loutzenheiser, 2002, Powell et al., 2006). The emphasis on this type of research tends to be focussed on the development of teachers' skills in delivering a predetermined curriculum.

The development of the research methods explored in the methodology chapter and the findings chapters, contributes to knowledge by offering practical suggestions and reflections. These relate to both video based research data, alongside creative approaches, to help elicit children's perspectives. This practical information relating to methods has been identified as an area which needs more discussion (Greig et al., 2007; Epstein et al., 2007). Within this project there are a range of methods and approaches used in order to help elicit children's voices. Greig et al. (2007:161) suggest there is an 'oversight of the usefulness of qualitative methods for doing research with children, which applies particularly to the 5-12 age group'. They suggest that pre-school children and adolescents tend to be given most attention due to the link between their age and critical phases in child development theory.

The research offers a contribution to the discourses about children's lives in Year 1 by adding to our understanding and knowledge about what is important to them. It considers the methodological issues and approaches of capturing children's perspectives. The findings from the project are specific to the time, nature and context of the children who participated in the research, with variables that reflect the individuality of their lives. The conclusions which emerged from the findings can be utilised to develop both policy and practice.

### 7.8 Implications for policy and practice

The implications for policy and practice which emerge from this project can be grouped in three distinct areas. The first is associated with the ways in which children work and communicate with other people. The second is concerned with capturing children's views. The third is related to the children's environments.

The support and collaboration between children, their siblings, peers, parents, teachers and 'others' who supported the children, impacted on the ways in which children communicated their views. Practice and policy

should consider how these relationships can be supported to enable the enhancement of capturing children's views and perspectives. The ways in which parents worked with their children differed. There was evidence of some excellent strategies used by parents to support children's communication. These skills and supportive approaches should be valued and encouraged by schools. Similarly, the sibling relationships demonstrated some excellent collaboration. Developing opportunities for collaborative work and play within a school context should be given serious consideration by practitioners and policy makers. Collaborative approaches support children in learning from other and may enable discussions and issues to emerge which could otherwise be missed.

The home and school environment is important to young children. The critical message for policy makers and practitioners is not to undervalue the importance of the environment for children, both as individuals and as part of a community. For practice, there were strong messages from children about issues of containment. This included the importance of knowing the rules of spaces.

If the purpose of educational research is to inform practice and policy, then there needs to be widespread commitment to create opportunities for children and their teachers to engage in the research process. Without these opportunities, children's and teachers' voices, views and opinions remain unheard. This research project explored some of the advantages, challenges and issues faced when capturing children's views about what they felt was important in their lives. The reflective approach and participatory methods investigated within the project will be of benefit to researchers interested in this field. It is hoped that the findings will be a useful tool for reflection and discussion for educational practitioners and policy makers.

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**Appendix 1 : Letter to Head teacher**
Contact details on header provided

Dear (Head teacher)

I am writing to ask permission to carry out some research in your school in (specify months). The project I wish to undertake within (Name) Community Primary School is part of a doctoral study which I am completing and may be published or disseminated to colleagues, researchers and students. When disseminating the information all names and details identifying the school will be made changed so that the school and children remain anonymous.

The proposed research project will take place over 6 weeks, based in your Year 1 classroom. Children will participate in the research by attempting to answer the question, 'what is important to me?' through a range of activities designed to encourage pupil perceptions and reflections about their lives. The main method used for children to capture their ides on will be on handheld video cameras which will be assigned to individual children participating and will be, with parent's permission, taken home for filming.

With your permission I would like for the children to be able to video parts of the school as part of a 'guided tour' where I hope they will highlight the areas of the school they enjoy the most. In addition to the video, I have several other methods for collecting data, creating puppets to 'talk through' to help elicit children's voices. All these activities will be discussed and negotiated with the class teacher to make sure that the activities can be appropriately timetabled.

It is hoped that this project, as well as supporting my research, will also support and develop the children's learning. Through interviews with the class teacher (negotiated outside of the teaching timetable) I hope there will also be opportunities for reflection on the children's work.

My own background is as a teacher, predominantly within lower Key Stage 1 but experience across the early years and primary school age groups. I have been trained in safeguarding and child protection and would follow this guidance if an issue presented itself of this nature. I have a full CRB check which can be shown to you for your records. In addition I have gained ethical approval for the project from the University of East Anglia. No children will participate in the research without parental consent and with the ongoing permission of the children. No photographs or images of the children will be used for the presentation of the research.

In order for the project to go ahead I will need to gain permission from parents, the children and the class teacher as well as from yourself. Please do contact me if you have any questions.
Yours sincerely,
Rebecca Webster

**Appendix 2: Parent letter and consent form**

Dear Year 1 Parent,

Over the next 8 weeks Rebecca Webster, a qualified primary school teacher is coming to work with Year 1 to work on a project which involves the use of small hand held video cameras.

The purpose of the project is to explore the idea that there is educational value in enabling children to be given the opportunity to investigate and discuss matters, spaces, people and objects that are important to them.

The children will be using individual video cameras to try and answer the question; 'what is important to me?' as part of a broader question about the value of including children's views and opinions within their education in Year 1.
This project will involve your child giving a 'guided tour' of the school and grounds using the video recorders, and talking to Rebecca about what is important to them through practical activities to help children articulate their ideas. During the project Rebecca will be also talking to Mrs (name) about the children's work and making observations about the filming work.

With your consent Rebecca would like for your child to borrow the cameras for use at home, to allow the children to capture 'what is important to me' at home. If you do consent to this, then please do allow your child to film as freely as you feel is appropriate.

The project builds on work done already in other classrooms and (school name) is the final school in this project. The research will be written up and presented as a written thesis towards a doctorate in education. The work will also be written about in other publications such as academic journals and educational book chapters and will be presented at research conferences and educational students.

The research project has been approved by the University of East Anglia's ethics committee. Confidentiality and the safeguarding of your child is of the upmost importance. There will be no images of children used. Names will be changed in order to keep the children and the school confidential.

If you consent to your child participating then please could you sign and return the form to Mrs (Name) as soon as possible. If you would like to contact Rebecca before or during the project you are welcome to do so at (email address).

This project links directly with the schools development plan for creating a more engaging curriculum that is relevant to the children and using ICT to promote learning and communication. We hope this project will be interesting, fun and valuable for the children's learning as well as developing their ICT and communication skills.
Yours sincerely (head teacher and Rebecca Webster sign)

Consent form (x2 Per child)

*Researching children's perceptions through the use of video cameras*

Main investigator and contact details: Rebecca Webster, address, phone, email

1. I agree that my child may take part in the above research. I have read the information for parents in the letter sent in May 2011.

2. I understand what the role of my child will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

3. I understand that I am free to withdraw my child from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.

4. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information provided will be safeguarded.

5. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

6. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the parent letter informing me of the research.

Name of participant (print)……..

Date……

You have been given 2 copies of this information. Please keep a copy for your records and for purposes of contact either before, during or after the research.

**Appendix 3 :Pupil consent form**

Hello,

I'm Rebecca  Webster. This is me!

I am a student at the University of East Anglia  in

Norwich.  This is where I go to learn.

I am trying to find out how using a camera with children is a good

way of finding out  about who you are and what matters to

you!

I will want to talk  with you and your 

friends about how you are getting on with your camera work. If it is

ok with you I want to write about your videos and and talk to your teacher about it!

I may even write about some of your work in a book  or magazine. I would also like to talk  about the work you have done with other

teachers and adults if that is ok with you?

You can ask me anything you want to about the project whenever I am in school. You don't have to do the project if you don't want to. 

You don't have to talk about anything that you don't want to.

Do you want to take part?

**YES** ☐

**NO** ☐

If you are not sure then we can have some time to think about it and talk about it too.

**Name……..**

**Date……...**

**Signature……..**
Discussed with teacher/ teaching assistant/ researcher/ parent (please circle and sign)
Parental consent given? Yes/ No

## Appendix 4: teacher information and participation sheet

Participant Information sheet and teacher consent form

Research Project Information

You have been invited to be involved as a 'teacher participant' in a small scale research project which explores what children tell us is important to them and considers how, as a teacher, you might be able to use the children's perspectives.

The project aims to address wider issues about the curriculum and place for individual children's views to be incorporated into their schooling in Year 1.

The project encourages children to explore what is important to them both at home and at school by capturing parts of their lives on video cameras, provided by the researcher. In order to support the children activities have been developed which I would like to carry out with your permission and at a time convenient to you and the children.

The activities include, drawing, peer interviewing, guided tours of the school, making and using puppets. I will provide all resources for each session. I would also like to interview the children and yourself about the children's videos on an individual basis (with relevant permissions). As a participant in the research your views, comments and observations will be incredibly valuable for the research.

Throughout the research, observations or comments may be recorded as part of the 'log' of the research. These field notes will be available for comment or viewing throughout the project.

The children and parents will be asked to consent to the project. All participants, including yourself have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice. In order to maintain confidentiality your name, the schools name and names of individual children will be changed.

This project and the findings from it will be written up and presented as part of a doctorate study currently being undertaken at the University of East Anglia. This university has granted ethical approval for the research. I have a full CRB check and am trained in safeguarding and child protection.

The research will be written up as a thesis and may be published or disseminated to education professionals, students and researchers. Anonymity will be maintained through out these dissemination processes.

You do have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, without prejudice.

You are welcome to contact Rebecca at any time in order to gain further information or with any questions you may have.
Rebecca Webster
Email:
Or by telephoning:

If you do consent, please could you complete the attached form.
You have been given 2 copies of this letter. If you do consent please keep a copy for your own records and my contact details.

Consent form:

I agree to be a participant in this research project. I understand that data collected through interviews, written documentation, video evidence and observations may be included in the research report. I consent to the inclusion of such data to be used in support of this research project.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any time and without prejudice.

Name. …….. Signature
……..

Date……..

School……
….

## Appendix 5 : Example of transcript



Microsoft Excel - sample description year1.xls

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Data Window Help

Type a question for help

Arial 10

Settings

C2

Filming outside, researcher can be heard in background explaining how to use cameras. Girls moves infront of camera "record me now, tell me when to go" G "one, two three, go" girl "Hello, there's our classroom over there and it has loads of toys in, G will show ya" Camera pans over to the classroom. Back to girl who talks about vegetables. G films them "I'm zooming in on them" Girl talks about other things in the garden. Other child come over filming and talking. Girl gets G to turn the camera around and film herself, she turns the camera around and pulls a face. Girl starts to record someone with her camera

| | A | B | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vid. No. | Time (sec.) | Filr | playful use of camera including offering direction - | these early clips with other children. She did | practice - outside | films peers | perfirmace | interactio n | | | |
| 2 | 1 | 1 min 48 | explaining how to use cameras. Girls moves infront of camera "record me now, tell me when to go" G "one, two | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 2 | 3 min 43 | Turns the camera to her face "hello this is our playhouse have a look inside" films wooden house "it's quite messy so I don't think I want to go in" "Here's the woods and here's some others recording other things" walks through wooded area recording. Asks children going past to say hi. Someone bumps into her knocking her to the ground "are you alright?" "yeah" she gets back up still filming "I just fell over" Walks along, talks about the children she goes past "That's M, he's a wierdo" M frowns at her "That's B, he's very funny" There's my friends by the mushrooms" names them all. Films them all looking at their cameras or filming "Hello my name is fat pants" walks about somemore asks a boy "is this fun? I'm getting really bored just walking around showing my camera to everything" Children keep running up to show her their videos | G filming the outside area commenting on things there and the children walking past, when she speaks she turns the camera around to film her face | | Camera practice - outside | dislike of untidy play area | offers comment about other chidren | peers interactio n | | |
| 4 | 3 | 14 | Recording whilst walking towards the classroom, children walking/skipping past "I'm recording us lining up" | | | Camera practice - outside | peers | refers to us | | | | |
| 5 | 4 | 2 min 31 | room. In silly voice "Here is my brother and he's [something indisctint said in high voice] he's watching television he's watching that's so Raven. This is my brother" turns camera bac round to him he waves "hi G flip camerafing again. Hi school, hi miss XXXX, hi XXX hi XXXXX" "my brothers upset so hes watching that's so | film of her brother watching TV, he talks about the things in the living room. G turns the camera around to face her when she speaks | | | Home | brother - audience awarenes s | playful | | | |
| | | | Sitting at outside table holding an icelolly "Hello this is my back garden, I like my trampoline, but my shed is better than my trampoline cause, my shed has got loads and loads of toys in like my bike, my balls, and even this | | | | | | | | | |

Sheet1 Sheet2 Sheet3

Ready

start C:\Documents and Se... C:\Documents and Se... Microsoft Excel - sam... Chapter 4 DATA DIS... 14:59

## Appendix 6 : Overview / Notes for individual children

| Name and gender | Number of videos | Length | Dominant feature 1 | Dominant feature 2 | Dominant feature 3 | Similarities and unique features | Other notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Al(G) | 20/21 | 1sec – 2m 22s | Family life siblings, mums support and encouragement | 'Incident' The milky way chocolate bar | Rehearsals with siblings – wants siblings to perform for camera (banging or ) | Only 2 clips taken without other people involved (of toys- possibly accidental filming ) | |
| Am (G) | 52/70 | 1sec – 1m 8s | Family life siblings pets | Self - films self on own unprompted on 3 occasions without dialogue | | Amys birthday on day of filming – says it was 'fine '. Unwrapped presents filmed with interview to unseen person/toy | Many deleted scenes at beg of recording Lack of explanation about some of the clips |
| Ca (B) | 21/22 | 1-58 s | Toys inc fireman Sam (puppet and superhero) Vehicles dominate | Class teacher supports | Mum supports and plays with Cameron (unseen elsewhere) | Mum and dad both support Cameron to develop the video clips inc moving the car for different shots and playing with him | Short but revealing clips not much data but lots to explore |
| Ch (B) | 571/612 | 1-2m1s | Interest with the cat – Lone scientist – Piaget – observational filming without dialogue | Household objects | Toys – predominantly vehicles and vehicle related games such as scaletrix, buses, | Interviews cat and brother (with friend mum prompts) – looking for direction or trying to meet expectations ? Highly observational – unique in this group<br><br>TV on background – interest in some tv and film characters appears<br><br>Interaction with parents in a supporting capacity films predominantly on own. | Wants to take photos – many clips are 'snapsnots' lasting 1 second Inc objects more than people – interactions with people tend to be in a supportive role.<br><br>Friends do not appear – sibling only 3x Photos of self |
| Cha (G) | 15/47 | 6-1m40 s | Dog (features in 7 clips inc picture, superhero and home videos) | Bedroom obs – pink ! | Belongings Nintendo ds Cinderella doll | Lots of deleted scenes<br><br>Would like to | No influence of TV |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 mention of cat | | | be able to talk to dogs as a superpower- links to what has been portrayed | |
| Chi (G) | 20/55 | 2- 1m36 | Performance<br>Sings<br>Push ups | Photos of family members described to audience | Good example of potential misinterpretation of question – 'magic' powers – 'what sort of magic powers?' | Awareness of audience<br><br>Describes photos to audience - ie granddad<br><br>Performs for an audience | No influence of TV |
| Co( B) | 38/54 | | Interactions with cousin who is reluctant to be filmed video. | Affectionate responses to parent and photos when describing the people in them. – very unusual<br>Puppet also features this | | Affectionate responses – physical and verbal caught on camera with mum – hugs and I love you. | Dad appears reluctant to appear – says camera is annoying.<br>Book features<br>No TV |
| Da (B) | 29/39 | 2- 7m45 s | Interactions with siblings throughout – working together to create films | Animals – chickens 'presents' his responsibilities to audience | Wants to share his house with the audience – has a predetermined idea of what should be shown? | Affectionate responses towards brothers and school<br><br>One of the most sustained, mature and interesting footage. | Some very long footage<br>Engages with an audience |
| Ha (B) | 17/36 | 1- 1m3s | Siblings feature in background | Animals including commentary that they are nice | Bedroom shown – no audio | | |
| Is (G) | 32/36 | 4- 2m20 s | Affection to mum and animals (loves them) | Audience awareness – presentation of video | Talks about family photos | No 'tours', toys or objects | TV (peppa pig)<br>Hairdressers (unusual) in puppet story |
| Le (B) | 28/55 | 4- 1m7s | 'sets up' home scenes with parents support. Only 4 short snap shots filmed by Leyroy – others by mum or dad with leyroy in them – the films done by leyroy are very short | Toys feature regularly in home footage | Demonstrates playing, opening a yoghurt, and audience awareness | Needed support with filming for puppet and picture | Lots of support from mum with the recording – audience awareness<br><br>Spiderman |
| Sh(G) | 18/49 | 2- 37sec (short films ) | Family<br>Expresses affection, tells story of sister, Films baby sister | Pets<br>Fish<br>Dog<br>Photo of dog<br>Fish food and explanation of care | Belongings<br>Toys stuffed toys<br>Doll<br>Blanket | Support given by mum – holds camera for one film. Otherwise independent filming – explains items | Audience awareness<br>No Tv characters<br><br>Short clips<br>Strong visuals |

## Appendix 7: Analysis grid

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | Positive Interaction with siblings | Negative Interaction with siblings | Observation of siblings(no narrative) | Description of siblings | Sibling support / Collaboration | Interaction with parents | Support from parents | Parent/sibling filming | Parents seen on footage No info | Parents Direct | Parents described | Other Family Described |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 1 (19 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Billy | | | | **2** | | | | **2** | | | | |
| James | | | | | | **4** | **4** | **7** | **2** | | | |
| Catherine (39) | | | | **3** | | **1** | | **7** | | | | |
| Coleen | | | **1** | **1** | | **1** | | | **2** | **3** | | |
| Anna | | **1** | | **9** | | **2** | **2** | **2** | **7** | | | **2** |
| Amelia | **1** | | **3** | **1** | | **1** | | **6** | | | **1** | |
| Franc | | **2** | | | | **2** | **2** | **2** | | **2** | **1** | |
| Gemma | **3** | | | **3** | **1** | | | | | | | **1** |
| Jenny | **1** | | **1** | **1** | | **1** | | **6** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** |
| Joseph | | | **1** | | | **3** | | **9** | **2** | **1** | **1** | |
| Lorna | | | | **3** | | **1** | | **3** | | | **3** | **1** |
| Marcus | **5** | **1** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **11** | **6** | **21** | **4** | **3** | **1** | |
| Milly | | | | | | **1** | | | | | | |
| Mikey | | | | **3** | | **3** | **1** | **3** | | **1** | **3** | **1** |
| Summer | | | **4** | **1** | | **3** | **1** | **8** | **2** | **1** | **1** | |
| Phoebe | | | | | | | | | | | | **2** |
| Lilly | | | | **4** | | | **1** | **11** | | **1** | | **1** |
| Ashton | **5** | | **2** | | **2** | | | | **3** | | | |
| **Occurrences** | **5** | **3** | **7** | **12** | **3** | **13** | **7** | **13** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **7** |
| **Totals** | **15** | **4** | **16** | **34** | **5** | **34** | **17** | **87** | **24** | **13** | **12** | **9** |

| Name and number of clips taken in total | Other family members Interact | Pets affection | Pets descriptive or observed | Hobbies/ Interests | Friendship | Peer OBS or description | Peer Interactions | Peer Support | Peer Negative | Musice/ Dancing/ Singing | Presents (Words} | Space indoor focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 1 (19 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Billy | | | | | | 11 | 1 | | 2 | | | |
| James | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | | |
| Catherine (39) | | | | | | 15 | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| Coleen | 1 | | | | | 6 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | |
| Anna | | 2 | 4 | | | 1 | 5 | | 1 | 5 | | |
| Amelia | 1 | | 5 | 1 | | 5 | 4 | | | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Franc | | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 2 | | |
| Gemma | | 2 | 3 | | 2 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 2 | | 5 | |
| Jenny | | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Joseph | | | | | | | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| Lorna | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | 15 | |
| Marcus | 2 | | 5 | | | 7 | 3 | | | | | 2 |
| Milly | 4 | | | | 6 | 3 | 5 | | | 2 | 3 | |
| Mikey | | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Summer | | | 3 | | | 6 | 1 | 3 | | | 4 | 3 |
| Phoebe | | | 1 | 2 | | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | |
| Lilly | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 7 | 5 | |
| Ashton | | | | | | 2 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 8 | | 2 |
| **Occurrences** | **5** | **3** | **10** | **5** | **5** | **15** | **17** | **8** | **10** | **9** | **9** | **6** |
| **Totals** | **9** | **5** | **34** | **7** | **12** | **71** | **54** | **13** | **13** | **31** | **48** | **12** |

| Name and number of clips taken in total | Space outdoor focus | Toys indoor | Toys outdoor | Toys soft/cuddly | Toys Tv or film based | Toys Storage space | Self no narrative | Self with comment | Electrical Items incl. TV | Money discussed | Photographs | Special Objects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 1 (19 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Billy | | | 4 | 1 | | | 4 | | | | | |
| James | | 17 | | | | | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | |
| Catherine (39) | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Coleen | | | 3 | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| Anna | 3 | | 2 | | | | 1 | 5 | | 1 | | |
| Amelia | 3 | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Franc | | | 3 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Gemma | 4 | | 7 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Jenny | | 3 | 4 | 1 | | | | | 4 | 1 | 1 | |
| Joseph | 4 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | | | | 4 | | | |
| Lorna | 11 | | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Marcus | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | 5 | | | 1 |
| Milly | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 5 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Mikey | 2 | 6 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | | 4 | | | 5 |
| Summer | | 3 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 6 | | | |
| Phoebe | | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | 1 | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Lilly | 3 | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| Ashton | 2 | | 1 | 2 | | | | | 5 | | | |
| **Occurrences** | **9** | **8** | **15** | **7** | **5** | **6** | **8** | **4** | **10** | **5** | **2** | **5** |
| **Totals** | **35** | **40** | **38** | **13** | **12** | **6** | **11** | **14** | **34** | **5** | **2** | **11** |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | School adult on Camera | School adult supports | Household objects | Food | Journey | Puppets Obs | Puppet describes | Puppet Postive behaviour | Puppet Negative behaviour | Puppet storytelling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 1 (19 children)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Billy | **1** | **1** | | **1** | **3** | | **1** | **1** | **1** | |
| James | **3** | **3** | | | | **1** | **2** | | | **1** |
| Catherine (39) | | **1** | | | **1** | | **1** | **1** | **1** | |
| Coleen | **4** | **1** | | | | | | | | |
| Anna | **1** | **1** | **3** | | | **2** | **2** | | | **5** |
| Amelia | **1** | | **1** | **2** | **5** | | **1** | | | **3** |
| Franc | **2** | | | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | | | |
| Gemma | **1** | | | | | | **3** | | **1** | **4** |
| Jenny | | **2** | | **1** | **2** | | **4** | | **1** | |
| Joseph | | **3** | **2** | | | | | | **1** | **1** |
| Lorna | | | | | | | **2** | | | **2** |
| Marcus | | **1** | **2** | **4** | | **4** | | | | |
| Milly | | | | | | | **4** | | | **3** |
| Mikey | **3** | **2** | **3** | | | | **1** | | | |
| Summer | | | **5** | | | | **1** | | | |
| Phoebe | | **1** | | **1** | | | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** |
| Lilly | | **1** | **3** | | | | **2** | | | **2** |
| Ashton | **1** | **1** | **7** | | | | **3** | **1** | **3** | |
| **Occurrences** | **9** | **12** | **8** | **6** | **5** | **4** | **15** | **4** | **7** | **9** |
| **Totals** | **17** | **18** | **26** | **10** | **12** | **9** | **31** | **4** | **9** | **22** |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | Positive Interaction with siblings | Negative Interaction with siblimgs | Observation of siblings(no narrative) | Description of siblings | Sibling support / Collaboration | Interaction with parents | Support from parents | Parent/sibling filming | Parents seen on footage No info | Parents Direct | Parents described | Other Family Described |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CLASS 2 (17 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lee 28 | | | **2** | | **1** | **1** | **3** | **7** | | **2** | | |
| Shelly 18 | | | **2** | **1** | | | | **2** | | | | |
| Mia 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anna 23 | **1** | | **4** | **1** | **1** | **3** | **1** | **3** | **1** | | **2** | |
| Sara | **2** | | | **4** | **2** | **6** | **3** | **5** | | **2** | **7** | **1** |
| Tegan | **8** | **1** | **26** | | **6** | **3** | **1** | **13** | **7** | **2** | **1** | |
| Natalie | | | | | | | | **3** | | **1** | **1** | **1** |
| Alison 20 | **3** | | **6** | | | **1** | | **6** | | | | |
| Abi 52 | | | **3** | | | **4** | **1** | **3** | **1** | | | |
| Carl 21 | | | **2** | | | **1** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **1** | | |
| Christian 612 | **4** | | **2** | | **2** | **8** | **7** | **2** | **4** | **1** | | |
| Charlotte 15 | | | | | | **1** | | | **1** | | | |
| Chrissie 20 | **3** | | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **3** | **1** | | **1** | **1** |
| Claire 38 | **11** | **1** | **7** | **2** | | **8** | **3** | **5** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **1** |
| David 29 | **6** | | | **2** | **5** | **2** | **1** | **5** | **2** | | **2** | |
| Harry 17 | | | **1** | **1** | | | | | | | | **2** |
| Imogen 32 | **1** | | | **3** | | **2** | | | | | **4** | |
| **Occurrences** | **9** | **1** | **11** | **8** | **7** | **13** | **10** | **13** | **9** | **7** | **8** | **5** |
| **Totals** | **39** | **1** | **52** | **15** | **19** | **42** | **24** | **59** | **20** | **10** | **20** | **6** |
| (without Christian) | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Name and number of clips taken in total | Other family members Interact | Pets affection | Pets descriptive or observed | Hobbies/ Interests | Friendship | Peer OBS or description | Peer Interactions | Peer Support | Peer Negative | Musice/ Dancing/ Singing | Presents (Words} | Space indoor focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CLASS 2 (17 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lee 28 | | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 1 | | | 3 | 1 |
| Shelly 18 | | | 4 | | | | 3 | | | | | |
| Mia 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anna 23 | | | | | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Sara | | | | 1 | | | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Tegan | 2 | | | | | | 3 | | | | | 5 |
| Natalie | 3 | 1 | 6 | | 1 | 9 | 10 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Alison 20 | | | | | | 2 | 5 | 1 | | | | |
| Abi 52 | | | 4 | | 3 | 5 | 7 | | | 2 | | |
| Carl 21 | | | | 3 | | 8 | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| Christian 612 | | | 40 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | | | 2 | 5 | 17 |
| Charlotte 15 | | 1 | 8 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| Chrissie 20 | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 5 | | 2 |
| Claire 38 | 1 | | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| David 29 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 4 | | | 3 | 4 |
| Harry 17 | | 2 | 6 | | | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Imogen 32 | | 2 | 2 | | | 7 | 11 | | | 2 | | |
| **Occurrences** | 3 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 15 | 8 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| **Totals** | 6 | 8 | 73 | 11 | 15 | 50 | 63 | 13 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 37 |
| (without Christian) | | | 33 | | | | | | | | | |

| Name and number of clips taken in total | Space outdoor focus | Toys indoor | Toys outdoor | Toys soft/cuddly | Toys Tv or film based | Toys Storage space | Self no narrative | Self with comment | Electrical Items incl. TV | Money discussed | Photographs | Special Objects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CLASS 2 (17 children)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lee 28 | **2** | **4** | **5** | | **2** | **1** | | | **3** | | **1** | |
| Shelly 18 | | **2** | | **1** | | | | | | | | |
| Mia 23 | | | | | | | | | | | **3** | |
| Anna 23 | **1** | **5** | **2** | | **3** | | | | | | | |
| Sara | **3** | **15** | **3** | **8** | | | | | | **1** | | |
| Tegan | **9** | **4** | **15** | **4** | **1** | | **2** | | **11** | | **4** | |
| Natalie | **5** | | **5** | | **2** | | | **1** | | | | |
| Alison 20 | | **2** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Abi 52 | **3** | **2** | **4** | | | | **4** | **2** | | | | |
| Carl 21 | **4** | **6** | **3** | | **4** | | **1** | | | | | |
| Christian 612 | **29** | **77** | **3** | **1** | **66** | **8** | **5** | **6** | **52** | | **27** | |
| Charlotte 15 | **1** | **3** | **1** | | | | | | **1** | | | |
| Chrissie 20 | | **1** | | | | | | **1** | | | | |
| Claire 38 | **2** | | **3** | | | | | | | **1** | | |
| David 29 | **2** | **3** | **3** | **2** | **1** | | **1** | **2** | **3** | | | |
| Harry 17 | **1** | **1** | **1** | | | **1** | **1** | | **3** | | | |
| Imogen 32 | **6** | | **2** | | | | | | | | **2** | |
| **Occurrences** | **13** | **13** | **13** | **5** | **7** | **3** | **10** | **5** | **6** | **2** | **5** | **9** |
| **Totals** | **68** | **127** | **50** | **12** | **79** | **10** | **14** | **12** | **74** | **2** | **37** | **12** |
| (without Christian) | 39 | 50 | | | 13 | 2 | | | 22 | | 10 | |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | School adult on Camera | School adult supports | Household objects | Food | Journey | Puppets Obs | Puppet describes | Puppet Postive behaviour | Puppet Negative behaviour | Puppet storytelling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CLASS 2 (17 children)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lee 28 | **1** | **1** | **1** | | | | | | | |
| Shelly 18 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mia 23 | **1** | **1** | | | | **1** | **1** | | | |
| Anna 23 | | | | | | | **1** | | **2** | **2** |
| Sara | | **1** | | | | | **1** | **1** | | |
| Tegan | | **1** | **7** | **1** | **2** | | | | | |
| Natalie | **2** | **1** | | | **1** | | **1** | | | **1** |
| Alison 20 | **2** | **1** | | **2** | | | | | | |
| Abi 52 | | **1** | | **2** | | **1** | | | | **3** |
| Carl 21 | **2** | **3** | | | | | **2** | | | **1** |
| Christian 612 | | **1** | **75** | **8** | **1** | | **1** | | | **1** |
| Charlotte 15 | **1** | **1** | **2** | | | | | | | |
| Chrissie 20 | **1** | **1** | | **1** | **1** | **1** | | | | |
| Claire 38 | **2** | | | | **1** | | | | | **2** |
| David 29 | **1** | | | **2** | **1** | | **1** | | | **1** |
| Harry 17 | | | **2** | | | | | | | **1** |
| Imogen 32 | **3** | **2** | | | | | **2** | | | **2** |
| **Occurrences** | **10** | **12** | **5** | **6** | **6** | **3** | **8** | **1** | **1** | **9** |
| **Totals** | **16** | **15** | **87** | **16** | **7** | **3** | **10** | **1** | **2** | **14** |
| (without Christian) | | | 12 | | | | | | | |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | Positive Interaction with siblings | Negative Interaction with siblings | Observation of siblings(no narrative) | Description of siblings | Sibling support / Collaboration | Interaction with parents | Support from parents | Parent/sibling filming | Parents seen on footage No info | Parents Direct | Parents described | Other Family Described |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 3 (9)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jake 16 | | | | **3** | | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | | | |
| Molly 20 | **7** | **1** | | | **7** | **1** | | | **1** | | | |
| Greg 32 | **8** | | **4** | **3** | | **5** | **2** | | **1** | | **3** | **5** |
| Fran 47 | **6** | **1** | | **5** | **2** | | | | | | | |
| Matthew 22 | | | | | | **3** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | |
| Tess 15 | **4** | | | **2** | **5** | **1** | **5** | **5** | **1** | **5** | **1** | **1** |
| Lucas 22 | **2** | | **4** | **2** | | **1** | | | **2** | **1** | **2** | **1** |
| Bella 13 | | | | | | | **2** | | | **2** | **1** | |
| Georgina 12 | | | | | | | | **1** | **1** | | **2** | |
| **Occurrences** | **5** | **2** | **2** | **5** | **3** | **6** | **5** | **9** | **7** | **4** | **6** | **3** |
| **Totals** | **25** | **2** | **8** | **15** | **14** | **12** | **13** | **4** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **7** |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | Other family members Interact | Pets affection | Pets descriptive or observed | Hobbies/ Interests | Friendship | Peer OBS or description | Peer Interactions | Peer Support | Peer Negative | Musice/ Dancing/ Singing | Presents (Words} | Space indoor focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 3 (9)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jake 16 | | | | | **4** | | | | | **4** | **2** | **5** |
| Molly 20 | | **1** | **1** | **2** | | | | | | **7** | **9** | **2** |
| Greg 32 | | | | **2** | **4** | | | 1 | | **2** | **7** | **4** |
| Fran 47 | | **2** | **3** | | | | **1** | | | | **30** | **6** |
| Matthew 22 | | **3** | **4** | **1** | **2** | | | 1 | | | **11** | **4** |
| Tess 15 | **1** | **1** | **1** | | **2** | | **3** | 2 | **2** | | **6** | **3** |
| Lucas 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | **2** |
| Bella 13 | | **4** | **8** | **1** | **1** | | **3** | 3 | | | **3** | |
| Georgina 12 | | | **1** | **1** | **3** | **3** | **2** | | | **2** | | |
| **Occurrences** | **1** | **5** | **6** | **5** | **6** | **1** | **4** | 4 | **1** | **4** | **7** | **7** |
| **Totals** | **1** | **11** | **18** | **7** | **16** | **3** | **9** | 7 | **2** | **15** | **68** | **26** |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | Space outdoor focus | Toys indoor | Toys outdoor | Toys soft/cuddly | Toys Tv or film based | Toys Storage space | Self no narrative | Self with comment | Electrical Items incl. TV | Money discussed | Photographs | Special Objects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 3 (9)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jake 16 | | **8** | | | | **1** | | | | | | **3** |
| Molly 20 | **2** | **3** | **3** | **1** | | **1** | | **3** | | | | **3** |
| Greg 32 | | **3** | | | | **1** | **1** | | **3** | | **5** | |
| Fran 47 | | | | **3** | | **4** | | **1** | **3** | | | **4** |
| Matthew 22 | **3** | **1** | **1** | | | **1** | | | | | | **1** |
| Tess 15 | **2** | **1** | | | | **1** | | | | | **2** | |
| Lucas 22 | **1** | **5** | | | **1** | **1** | | | | **1** | | |
| Bella 13 | | **1** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Georgina 12 | **1** | | | | | | **1** | **3** | | | | |
| **Occurrences** | **5** | **7** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **7** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **4** |
| **Totals** | **9** | **22** | **4** | **4** | **1** | **10** | **2** | **7** | **6** | **1** | **7** | **11** |

| **Name and number of clips taken in total** | School adult on Camera | School adult supports | Household objects | Food | Journey | Puppets Obs | Puppet describes | Puppet Postive behaviour | Puppet Negative behaviour | Puppet storytelling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Class 3 (9)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jake 16 | | | **4** | **2** | **1** | | **1** | | | **3** |
| Molly 20 | | **2** | | | | | | | | **2** |
| Greg 32 | **1** | | **1** | **2** | | | **3** | | | **3** |
| Fran 47 | **1** | **4** | **15** | | | | **3** | | | **3** |
| Matthew 22 | **1** | **1** | **2** | | | **1** | | | | **3** |
| Tess 15 | | **1** | **5** | **2** | | **1** | **1** | | | **2** |
| Lucas 22 | | | **2** | | | **1** | **1** | **1** | | **4** |
| Bella 13 | | **1** | | | **1** | **1** | | | | **3** |
| Georgina 12 | **2** | **4** | | **3** | **1** | | **4** | | | **1** |
| **Occurrences** | **5** | **6** | **6** | **4** | **3** | **4** | **6** | **1** | **0** | **9** |
| **Totals** | **4** | **13** | **29** | **9** | **3** | **4** | **13** | **1** | **0** | **24** |