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What can Teachers do to Embed LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practices in Schools?

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology

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Abstract

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Teachers are well positioned to positively influence the school experiences of the young people they work with, which has known connotations for young people's social, emotional and academic outcomes. Indeed, teachers' direct interactions with pupils, the formal and informal learning opportunities they provide, and the classroom climate they create culminate to influence the school experiences of their pupils. How teachers navigate their practice may be of particular value to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexual and gender diverse identified (LGBTQ+) young people whose school experiences are known to be challenging relative to their peers, and who often experience adverse outcomes related to these experiences. However, research shows that teachers do not regularly practice in ways which make LGBTQ+ young people feel supported or included in the school environment. Teachers are not always aware of their own capacity to facilitate LGBTQ+ inclusive practice and may feel limited in doing so, constrained by restrictive school systems, wider community resistance, and limitations in guidance as well as their own confidence in adopting such practices. The aim of this thesis was to shift the focus away from barriers that restrict teachers' practice towards understandings of how they may be overcome. While the contexts and systemic constraints within teachers' schools cannot be disregarded, the individual teacher has the potential to positively influence the young people they directly work with and it was the aim of this thesis to explore how this may be done.

With this endeavour in mind, two research enquiries were undertaken. Using a three-stage thematic synthesis approach, a review was conducted to explore: what can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity? This placed the emphasis on teachers' position to de-construct dominant discourses within the school environment that typically position heterosexuality and binary models of gender as the norm. Alongside this, an empirical research project was undertaken to explore teachers' beliefs regarding gender identity, their beliefs about their own abilities to support trans-spectrum young people, and additional supports and barriers that influence their practice. The

targeted focus on gender identity was chosen due to a notable gap in the research base, in which LGBTQ+ identities are often amalgamated, despite evidence that trans-spectrum young peoples' experiences differ from others in the LGBTQ+ community. Through the course of each research enquiry, implications for teachers' practice were developed with consideration to the relative facilitators and barriers that might exist in different schools. This included suggestions for teachers to integrate non-normative representations throughout the curriculum, role model inclusivity and acts of social justice, and facilitate co-constructive learning environments with pupils. It was also suggested that teachers can work strategically in their schools, engaging in relational work with parents to co-create possibilities for LGBTQ+ inclusive practices. To support teachers in their own professional learning journeys, possibilities for training and reflection are also suggested. Strengths and limitations of each research enquiry are discussed.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Beckett Markland

Title of thesis: **What can Teachers do to Embed LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practices in Schools?**

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: .... Date: ....

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Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Aims and rationale of the thesis

The overarching aim of my thesis was to explore what teachers can do to embed practices that support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexual and gender diverse identified (LGBTQ+) young people in school. My choice to focus on school practices that support LGBTQ+ young people was made based on a wealth of research indicating that LGBTQ+ young people navigate challenging experiences in the school environment, including peer rejection, isolation, sexuality-based discrimination, physical victimization and fears around their safety (Kosciw et al., 2014; Murphy, 2012; Steck & Perry, 2018). Such experiences are known to adversely impact young people's social, emotional and academic outcomes, including reduced feelings of belonging, higher rates of suicidality and school absenteeism (Hatchel et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2019; Kosciw et al., 2013). The emphasis on the role of the teacher stemmed from research indicating that teachers can have a positive impact on young people's school experiences by facilitating interpersonal classroom environments (Anderman, 2003) that promote connectedness (Kosciw et al., 2010), improved feelings of safety and lower levels of victimization (De Pedro et al., 2018). Supportive educators have also been identified as having a positive impact on LGBTQ+ pupils' academic outcomes and attendance (Kosciw et al., 2010).

While teachers have been firmly established as influential to pupils' school experiences and outcomes, research suggests that they do not typically practice in a way that makes LGBTQ+ young people feel supported or included (Kosciw et al., 2014; Snapp et al., 2015; Stonewall, 2014). Reasons suggested for this include teachers' own beliefs, their awareness of their capacity to support LGBTQ+ young people and their willingness to do so (Kurian, 2019). Teachers' confidence in their capacity to provide support has also been identified as a key barrier to their practice (Collier et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2016), as has the presence of systemic influences, including a lack of administrative or colleague support (Taylor et al., 2016), fears of parental resistance (Steck & Perry, 2018; Warwick et al., 2001), fears of professional repercussions (Taylor et al., 2016) and limited guidance within school policy (Warwick et al., 2001).

The school settings in which teachers work vary greatly, both nationally and globally, inevitably shaping teachers' opportunities and capacity to work inclusively. However, my hope in carrying out this research was to shift the focus away from reasons why teachers struggle to enact LGBTQ+ inclusive practice towards considerations of how these barriers can be overcome. The value of the

individual teacher cannot be underestimated; while individual teachers may not be well positioned to instigate broad systemic changes within their school environments, the evidence tells us they can positively influence the young people they themselves work with. As such, I aimed to conduct research from which implications for educators' practice could be discussed. In doing so, I conducted two research enquiries, including a systematic literature review (Chapter 2) and an empirical research project (Chapter 3).

Within my systematic literature review, I explored the research question: what can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity? Heteronormativity is a dominant discourse that situates heterosexual orientation and binary models of gender as the norm (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Through challenging heteronormative assumptions within the school environment, teachers can in turn normalise LGBTQ+ identities and facilitate a classroom culture in which these identities are better included. I conducted this research enquiry using a three-stage thematic synthesis approach, drawing upon data across 14 qualitative papers identified through a systematic search. From this, I drew out implications for teachers' practice, recognising possibilities for implementation within the context of potential barriers and constraints.

I conducted my empirical research to explore teachers' beliefs and how these shaped the support offered to trans-spectrum young people. I use 'trans-spectrum' here as a collective term for transgender individuals whose gender differs from their gender assigned at birth, including trans-binary identities (female, male) and trans-non-binary identities (genders that do not fall into these two categories). The reason for focusing on teachers' practice with trans-spectrum young people in particular arose from a notable gap in the literature, as LGBTQ+ identities and experiences are often amalgamated in research. As the school experiences and outcomes for trans-spectrum young people are typically worse than other queer-identified young people in the LGBTQ+ community (Day et al., 2018; Jones & Hillier, 2013; Ullman, 2017), it was important to understand teachers' beliefs and practices working with trans-spectrum young people specifically. Within this research, four focus groups and one individual interview were conducted with 15 school teachers in four secondary schools across South East England. Again, implications for teachers' practice were developed.

As detailed above, I focussed on the role of teachers within both studies. It should be acknowledged that non-teaching staff in schools, such as teaching assistants and pastoral support staff, are also likely to have a contributing role to play in the school experiences of trans-spectrum young people. However, there is currently a gap in research relating to non-teaching staff practice. While I chose to build upon the research base relating to teachers, the role of non-teaching staff in supporting trans-spectrum young people is an area that should be considered in future research.

1.2   Ontology and epistemology

Within both papers, I employed a qualitative methodology, with my methodological decisions underscored by an interpretivist epistemology. Interpretivism holds that knowledge is formed through interpretations, social interactions, and shared consciousness (Berryman, 2019). Meaningful interpretations are often referred to as 'constructions', reflecting the notion that they do not simply represent a given experience (Hiller, 2016). Rather, "interpretivist knowledge comprises the reconstruction of inter–subjective meanings, the interpretive understanding of the meanings humans construct in a given context and how these meanings interrelate to form a whole" (Greene, 2010). Within an interpretivist paradigm, the researcher brings their own preconceptions, beliefs and knowledge to the research enquiry, as do research participants, leading to co-created, inter-subjective knowledge (Chowdhury, 2014; Hiller, 2016).

While an interpretative paradigm encompassed my thesis as a whole, I considered the more specific nature of my interpretivist epistemological position within each of the two research papers and how this guided the enquiry. Within my systematic literature review, I held a position of constructivism. Constructivism has been described as a form of perspectivism in which an individual observes a given phenomenon through a particular lens, shaped by their own experiences and understandings (Schwandt, 2003). Human reality is constructed by individuals through their interactions with and interpretations of the world around them, including their interactions with others (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The secondary nature of the research review meant that I did not directly interact with participants within this work. However, my synthesis was built from my interpretations of the research papers, which included multiple authors' own construal and perspectives of the qualitative data they had collected, as well as direct quotes and data from their participants. In this way, I constructed knowledge through my engagement with the work and interpretations of others that came before me. Within the empirical paper, I held a social constructionist position, which emphasises that knowledge is created through social interaction (Miller & Brewer, 2003). As this research entailed focus groups and an interview, knowledge was constructed between myself and participants, and more prominently between participants themselves. This was extended further when, through a process of member checking, participants were able to continue constructing their knowledge through reflection on synthesised data across all focus groups and the interview.

From an interpretivist perspective, knowledge is subjective and grounded in our particular experiences and the contexts in which we live, and as such is ontologically relativist (Greene, 2010; Hiller, 2016). This also means it is not generalisable as it cannot be readily applied to persons in differing contexts (Hiller, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that this is not a limitation, as

interpretation is a valuable and necessary component of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2019). While researchers holding a positivist epistemology might seek generalisability, researchers taking an interpretivist approach may instead consider transferability, the extent to which the interpretations of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). This positions the responsibility of applying interpretivist knowledge in the hands of those to whom it holds most relevance, and it is the role of the researcher to provide detailed descriptions of contextual information associated with the study setting and participants (Hiller, 2016). In consideration of this, I sought to provide detailed and relevant contextual information within both papers and endeavoured to be transparent regarding the audience to which the implications held most relevance.

1.3   Reflexivity and axiology

Integral to interpretivist and qualitative research is reflexivity, broadly defined as the examination of one's own perspectives and assumptions, and considerations of how these might influence the research process. Inherently linked to this is axiology, entailing an examination of the values held by a researcher and their influence on the research enquiry. In consideration of reflexivity and my axiological position, I reflected on my own experiences, beliefs and values throughout the research process and sought transparency in detailing the impact these may have had.

My own queer and non-binary identity was highly relevant to my interest in this research area, as were my values of inclusivity and respect for all identities within both education and society as a whole. I hold a specific belief that educational practices that challenge heteronormative assumptions, and facilitate representation and inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities are necessary. This is relevant to my awareness of the potential for adverse outcomes in LGBTQ+ young people when navigating school environments in which they do not feel included. My belief in the explicit inclusion of LGBTQ+ young people at school is further situated within my broader belief that educational settings have a responsibility to set a precedent of acceptance and appreciation of diversity. Additionally, my previous experiences working as a teacher and my continued pursuit of a career within educational psychology has shaped my belief that change is both needed and possible within schools. I hold empathy for teachers who I believe have a demanding role, imbued with multiple responsibilities, and who often face barriers regarding changing the status quo. However, I also believe there is capacity and opportunity to enact this change. Indeed, I recognise that my overarching thesis enquiry into how teachers can support LGBTQ+ young people is underscored by my belief that it is possible.

It was important throughout my research to consider the impact of my own identity, beliefs and assumptions on the research process. It was necessary to be transparent in communicating this impact and to make methodological decisions reflexively. For example, at the outset of the focus groups and interview, I shared with participants my non-binary gender identity and my previous work as a teacher, and how this linked to my research interests. My overall position as someone with a personal and professional interest in embedding trans-spectrum inclusive practice was therefore evident to participants from the outset of the study. However, when conducting the focus groups and interview, I did not want my own identity or specific views to directly shape or de-rail how teachers shared theirs. As such, at the outset of the discussions, I also shared my hope that participants would feel comfortable speaking openly and emphasised that the space was not one of judgement but to gain an understanding of their views. I addressed this directly as I was conscious that teachers may feel concerned about saying something that would cause offense and I wanted to create a space for open discussion. I also aimed to facilitate the conversation without explicitly imparting my own views, acting as an active listener by receiving, clarifying and paraphrasing what was shared. I further considered my values and assumptions when constructing my interpretations and reporting these within the research papers. I sought to establish transparency in the generation of my themes within both papers, providing detail to the reader as to where my interpretations came from. This included the inclusion of transcripts, illustrative quotes and detailed descriptions of the analytic processes taken.

1.4   Dissemination plan

I have written the two research papers in this thesis with an intention to publish in peer-reviewed journals. As such, the papers have been written in the style required for submission to the journals I am currently considering. The journal I am considering submitting my systematic literature review to is the 'Psychology of Sexualities Review'. This is a peer-reviewed journal with a focus on understanding issues of sexuality with regards to psychological theory, knowledge and practice, both in the UK and internationally, making it an appropriate choice for the focus and scope of my review. Indeed, the studies included in my review were conducted in England, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, and the developed implications hold relevance for teachers working internationally. The journal I am considering submitting my empirical paper to is 'Teaching and Teacher Education'. The focus of this journal is on educational practice from early years to secondary education, and on teachers' professional development, making it an appropriate choice for my empirical paper. Furthermore, the open access nature of this journal is promising when considering the relative ease of access for teachers interested in this area of work.

Chapter 2 What can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity? A systematic literature review

2.1 Abstract

Research indicates there is a gap between teachers' positive beliefs about LGBTQ+ inclusive education and how they demonstrate this in their practice. Teachers often feel limited in their capacity to implement inclusive practices, constrained by dominant heteronormative narratives in schools. Through a three-stage thematic synthesis approach, a review was conducted to explore: what can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity? The developed themes indicate that teachers can work strategically within their community context, integrate non-normative representations throughout the curriculum, role model inclusivity and acts of social justice, and facilitate a co-constructive learning environment. These themes are discussed in the context of facilitators and barriers around LGBTQ+ inclusive education, leading to a discussion of implications relevant to educators across a range of settings.

2.2 Introduction

Heteronormativity is a dominant discourse that positions heterosexual orientation and binary models of gender as the norm (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). People are often assumed to be cisgender, identifying with their gender assigned at birth (either female or male) and to be attracted to the opposite, as this characterizes the majority of people (van der Toorn et al., 2020). It has been argued that within heteronormative societies, this binary heterosexual gender order underpins knowledge systems and social relations, which can lead to the privileging of those who adhere to sexual and gender norms (Ansara & Hegarty, 2012; McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Consequently, non-normative gender and sexual behaviours can often be met with discriminatory reactions from others (van der Toorn et al., 2020). This has ramifications for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexual and gender-diverse identified (LGBTQ+) persons. The term 'queer' is used here as a collective term for those who have sexual and gender identities other than heterosexual and cisgender. 'Transgender' refers to those whose gender identities do not align with their assigned gender at birth. Although the term encompasses both trans-binary identities (female, male) and trans-non-binary identities (genders that do not fall into either of these categories such as agender,

bigender, genderfluid etc.), research often uses 'transgender' exclusively for trans-binary individuals. For clarity within the current article, the term 'trans-spectrum' will be used as a collective term to indicate all transgender identities.

It has been argued that the structure and ethos within educational settings often perpetuates a binary gender and heteronormative order (Bragg et al., 2018). Adherence to uniform policies that reinforce gender norms (Mitchell & Natcen, 2009), curricula that negate the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity (McBride & Schubotz, 2017), and the implementation of inclusion and anti-bullying policies (Kurian, 2019) culminate to reinforce heteronormative values. Linville (2011) argues that such practices may inadvertently marginalise LGBTQ+ young people and legitimise homophobic and transphobic bullying. Indeed, LGBTQ+ pupils are more likely to experience peer rejection and isolation, sexuality-based discrimination and physical victimisation than their cisgender and heterosexual peers (Kosciw et al., 2014; Murphy, 2012), and report feelings of isolation, helplessness and fears around their safety (Murphy, 2012; Steck & Perry, 2018). Reduced feelings of safety have been found to have a negative impact on academic outcomes and absenteeism for LGBTQ+ young people (Johns et al., 2019), while victimisation has been associated with suicidality and reduced feelings of school belonging (Hatchel et al., 2018). Amongst LGBTQ+ populations, victimisation is typically more pronounced towards those with non-normative gender expressions (Gordon et al., 2018), with trans-spectrum youth reporting greater homophobic abuse and cissexism (bias against trans-spectrum identities) than their queer, cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Jones & Hillier, 2013; Ullman, 2017).

Teachers play an integral role in young people's school experiences, in particular shaping pupils' sense of school belonging through the promotion of interpersonal classroom environments (Anderman, 2003). LGBTQ+ young people with supportive school staff report increased feelings of school connectedness (Kosciw et al., 2010), improved feelings of safety and lower levels of victimisation (De Pedro et al., 2018). The presence of supportive educators has also been found to positively impact LGBTQ+ pupils' academic achievements and reduce absenteeism (Kosciw et al., 2010). Educators can enact inclusive practice in a number of ways, such as intervening in bullying, being an advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in schools and incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into their teaching (Greytak et al., 2013). However, research indicates that teachers do not regularly intervene in LGBTQ+ based bullying and miss opportunities to teach about LGBTQ+ identities or issues (Snapp et al., 2015). It has been argued that there is a tension between educators' roles as protectors of young people's rights and their capacity to put this into practice, underscored by their own beliefs, unawareness or reluctance to intervene (Kurian, 2019). For instance, in a Stonewall survey of English

teachers, 42% of primary school teachers and 55% of secondary school teachers reported that they did not always intervene when pupils used 'gay' as an insult, while over 30% of both primary and secondary teachers reported not always intervening to pupils calling one another 'poof', 'dyke' or 'faggot' (Stonewall, 2014). In a large-scale USA-based survey exploring the school experiences of LGBTQ+ young people, over 50% of participants reported having heard homophobic comments and negative remarks about gender expression from their own teachers and other school staff (Kosciw et al., 2014). Such research indicates that teachers might both directly and indirectly legitimise prejudice by not recognising the presence or significance of LGBTQ+ phobic behaviours, sometimes engaging in prejudiced behaviours themselves.

Lack of intervention might also be underpinned by teachers' confidence in their capacity to respond, with teachers who have stronger beliefs that intervening will bring a positive outcome being more likely to respond (Collier et al., 2015). Confidence also appears to play a role in teachers' engagement in affirmative, proactive approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusivity. In a study with over 3,400 teachers in Canada, Taylor et al. (2016) found that 96% of teachers believed LGBTQ+ rights are human rights and 84.5% approved of LGBTQ+ inclusive education. However, fewer than half of teachers had included LGBTQ+ identities in discussions of human rights or in topics of sexual health. Fewer than 20% of teachers had included LGBTQ+ themed stories or information about LGBTQ+ historical figures in their lessons. Only half reported challenging homophobia, with fewer still challenging transphobia.

The gap between teachers' beliefs and their practice indicates the presence of additional barriers that infringe on their work. Such barriers are often systemic in nature, including a lack of administrative or colleague support (Taylor et al., 2016), fears of parental resistance (Steck & Perry, 2018; Warwick et al., 2001), concerns of disciplinary action (Taylor et al., 2016) and limitations in school policy (Warwick et al., 2001). There is an ever-growing research base providing insights into the systemic and cultural shifts that can be made to create an LGBTQ+ inclusive environment, with suggestions for whole-school training programmes, development of explicit policy and guidance, creation of safe spaces for LGBTQ+ pupils and whole-school implementation of an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum (Luecke, 2018; Steck & Perry, 2018). However, such practices entail coordinated efforts at the whole-school level which are not easily applicable to the individual teacher working within the boundaries of restrictive school systems. Overhauling entire school systems and effecting social change within them is an aspiration not to be disregarded, yet it is an aspiration over which many teachers will have little autonomy. As the importance of teachers in young people's school experiences has been firmly established, the focus of this research is to understand what actions

individual teachers can make to challenge heteronormativity that transcend the barriers of the contexts in which they work. While an individual teacher's actions alone may not lead to systemic advances, the impact on the pupils they work with is well evidenced and might act as the first stepping stone towards greater LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

A systematic literature review was conducted in response to the question: what can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity? A process of thematic synthesis was applied to develop analytical themes that answered this question, in turn providing implications for teachers' practice.

2.3   Methodology

2.3.1   Selection and search strategy

A systematic search strategy was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) approach (Moher et al., 2009) as depicted in Figure 1. Five electronic databases (PsycInfo, ERIC, SCOPUS, CINAHL and Web of Science) were chosen based on their relevance to Psychology and education. An initial search was conducted on PsycInfo using the terms: teacher* OR "school staff*" OR educator* OR "school community" AND lgb* OR lesbian OR gay OR homosexual OR bisexual OR queer OR "sexual minority" OR "gender non-conforming" OR "gender nonconforming" OR "gender-nonconforming" OR transgender OR trans OR non-binary OR "non binary" OR "gender fluid" OR genderfluid OR "gender minority" AND attitudes OR perceptions OR beliefs OR knowledge OR "professional development" OR practice OR action or actions OR "school climate" OR "school environment" OR cisnormativ* OR heteronormativ* AND accepting OR non-discriminatory OR inclusive OR affirming OR supportive OR responsive* OR advocat* OR "anti-oppressive" OR interrupting OR challenging.

All database searches were conducted between May and July of 2020. Search terms and Boolean operators were adapted as necessary to each database used. Searches were conducted to exclude books. No limits were applied for date of publication. Overall, the search yielded 1,414 papers of which 533 duplicates were removed. A further 831 articles were removed following title and abstract screening using the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1). The remaining 50 articles were further assessed for eligibility through full text review. Thirty-six articles were removed, leaving 14 qualitative articles for synthesis.
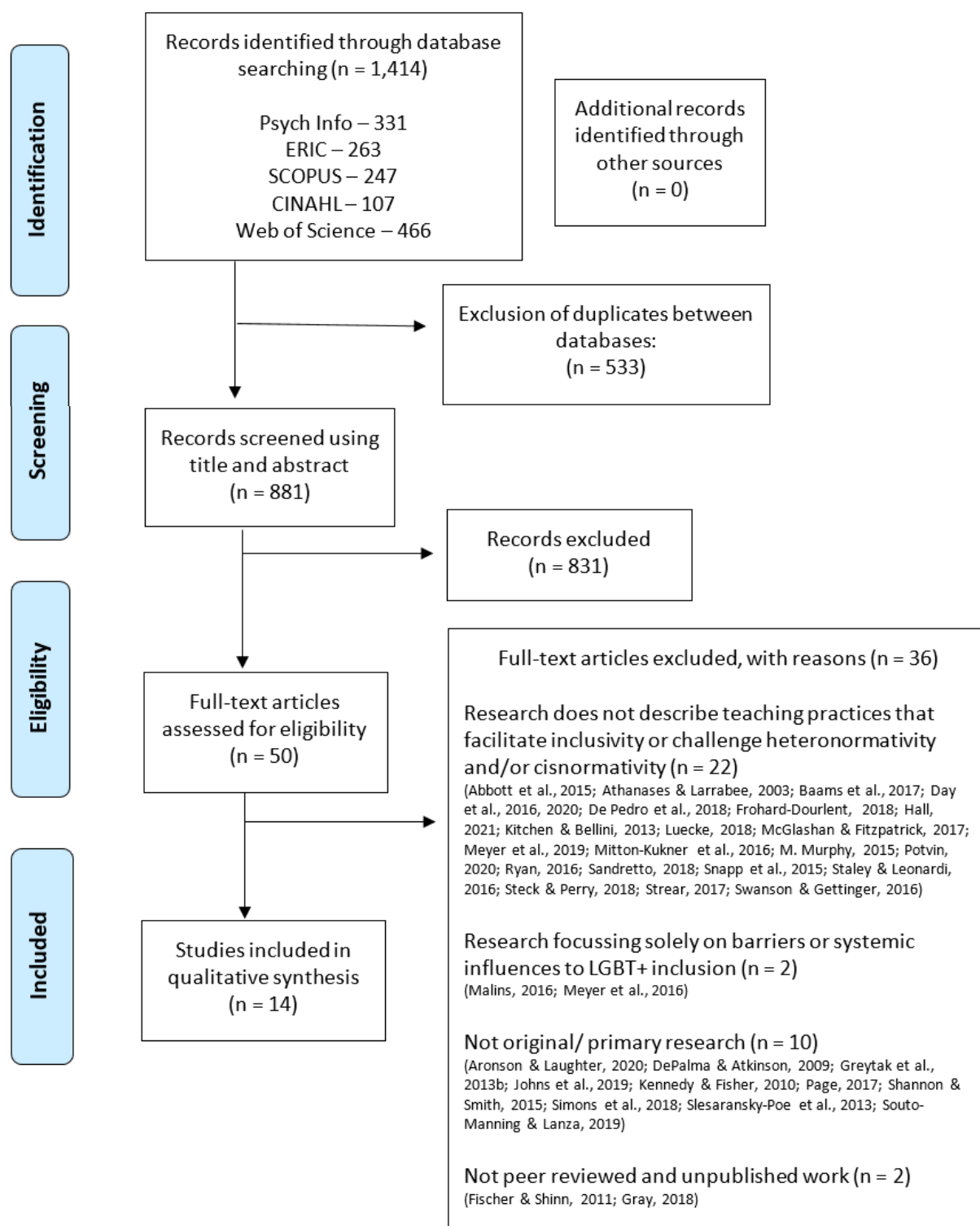
Figure 1   Systematic search strategy using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) approach (Moher et al., 2009).

Table 1   Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
- Primary research - Published in a peer-reviewed journal - Published at any time - Text available in English - Research related to teaching practices that facilitate inclusivity or challenge heteronormativity - Research relevant to teaching practices in school settings, e.g., primary and secondary schools	- Non-primary research, e.g., review articles, conference presentations, reflective commentaries - Book publications - Non-peer-reviewed and unpublished work e.g., dissertations - Text not available in English - Research that does not describe teaching practices that facilitate inclusivity or challenge heteronormativity and/or cisnormativity - Research focusing solely on barriers or systemic influences to LGBTQ+ inclusion - Research exclusively related to teaching practice in further and higher education settings, e.g., universities

2.3.2   Quality assurance

All 14 articles were quality assessed using the Manchester Framework for qualitative studies (Bond et al., 2013), detailed in Appendix A. Studies could score a maximum of 14 and were broadly categorised as low (0-4), medium (5-9) or high (10-14) in their rating, as detailed alongside the characteristics of the included studies (Table 2). The primary purpose of this process was not to exclude articles based on a set score but rather to gain insight into their relative methodological rigour. Had the quality assurance process brought to light clear methodological problems or issues of interpretative quality within an article, exclusion would have been considered and the reasons for this made explicit. The score alone was not utilised as a reason for exclusion and did not affect the weight given to each article during the synthesis. Indeed, the weight given to articles was organically shaped by the process of thematic synthesis in which data that helped to answer the research question was naturally prioritised in the development of analytic themes.

Table 2   Characteristics of the reviewed studies

Study number	Author and date	Country	Site setting for data collection	Sampling approach	Participant details	Data collection methods	Analysis approach[1]	Quality Assurance rating
1	Bentley & Souto-Manning (2016)	USA	Pre-school classroom	Collaborative research study between a teacher-researcher and researcher	Teacher-researcher working in a pre-school class	Observational data (written reflections)	Unspecified	Low (3)
2	Carlile (2019)	England	Various	Convenience sampling (via established contacts)	Six school staff members (teachers, senior leaders and support staff) working across four primary schools serving faith communities	Two interviews per participant First interview: post training of 'Educate & Celebrate' teaching programme Second interview: post implementation of 'Educate and Celebrate' programme in class	Inductive coding	Medium (9)
3	Cullen & Sandy (2009)	England	Various	Convenience sampling (via wider research project)	26 teacher-researchers, nine university researchers and one diversity trainer	Teacher-researchers' written reflections, web-postings, focused discussions and classroom observations	Unspecified	Medium (8)
4	Evans & Rawlings (2019)	Australia	Various	Convenience sampling (via	Three transgender young people aged 17-25	Recorded semi-structured interviews with each participant	Thematic analysis	High (10)

[1] As reported by study authors.

				established contacts)			
5	Fredman, Schultz, & Hoffman (2015)	USA	Various	Snowball sampling	16 Midwest educators working in middle and/or high schools	Semi-standardised interviews. Nine conducted via telephone and seven conducted face-to-face	Thematic analysis	High (12)
6	Helmer (2016)	USA	Public regional high school in Western New England	Unspecified	One teacher and 24 pupils aged 17-18 enrolled on a Gay and Lesbian Literature course	Observational data; interviews with teacher and pupils; two questionnaires completed by pupils; and course materials	Analysis of empirical materials following a grounded theory approach	Medium (5)
7	Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan (2019)	USA	Two school sites in fourth and fifth grade classrooms	Unspecified	Two fourth and fifth grade teachers	Observational data of participants in class; interview transcripts with teachers; and written reflections from teachers	Unspecified	Medium (6)
8	Kelly (2012)	New Zealand	Kindergarten classroom with 21 children	Unspecified	Four teacher-researchers	Teacher-researchers' written logs detailing observations and reflections; semi-structured interviews with the teacher-researchers	Interpretative analysis	High (10)
9	Martino & Cumming-Potvin (2016)	Canada	Elementary school (Kindergarten to grade 5)	Snowball sampling	One teacher (part of a wider research project)	Teacher's written reflections on using the storybooks provided with her class and a semi-structured interview	Case study analysis	Medium (9)

10	Meyer & Leonardi (2018)	Canada	Various	Convenience sampling (via established contacts)	26 educators (Elementary and secondary teachers, and diversity mentors) from different schools	Semi-structured interviews conducted in person or remotely	Ongoing exploratory analysis	High (10)
11	Pearce & Cumming-Potvin (2017)	Australia	Various	Snowball sampling	Nine English teachers working in government and independent high schools	Semi-structured interviews	Inductive approach	Medium (9)
12	Ryan, Patraw, & Bednar (2013)	USA	Kindergarten to grade eight school	Purposive sampling	One elementary school teacher	Observation, informal interviews, and document analysis	Topical / thematic analysis	Medium (9)
13	Tompkins, Kearns, & Mitton-Kükner (2018)	Canada	Various	Unspecified	Nine teachers who had completed the 'Positive Space' training programme	Focus groups	Thematic analysis	Medium (9)
14	Ullman (2018)	USA	Various	Purposive sampling	31 educators (teachers, headteachers and assistant headteachers) from nine different schools teaching from kindergarten to grade 12	Focus group or individual interviews	Thematic coding	Medium (9)

2.3.3   Data synthesis and extraction

The 14 studies were analysed using thematic synthesis, chosen due to its suitability for inductive and interpretative analysis (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017). The current study's research question was such that there were not clearly defined concepts or themes from existing literature to draw upon for analysis, making an inductive approach most suitable. Additionally, the research aims and designs of the included studies were disparate, warranting an interpretative lens in order to link together concepts relevant to this study's research question. Thematic synthesis entails interpretation and thus resonates with the constructivist epistemological position held by the researcher. Constructivism is a form of perspectivism in which knowledge is constructed through the interactions a person has with the world around them and their interpretations of this (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Schwandt, 2003). Within this review, the researcher had a key role in interpreting and synthesising data, constructing new knowledge by interacting with the data and the interpretations of study authors.

All text within each articles' results or findings sections was included in analysis, including participant quotations and author interpretations. This data was stored and coded using NVivo 12. A three-stage thematic synthesis approach was conducted, drawing on Thomas and Harden's (2008) work. Stage one involved line-by-line coding of the data. Each sentence was given at least one code to capture its meaning and content although most sentences were given multiple codes. This was an iterative process; codes were re-visited and re-named in order to translate concepts between studies, an integral aspect of synthesising qualitative research (Britten et al., 2002; Thomas & Harden, 2008). This process resulted in 47 initial codes. Stage two involved identifying similarities and differences between the initial codes and grouping them accordingly, resulting in 11 descriptive themes. The process of moving between stage one and stage two of the thematic synthesis is exampled in Figure 2 and detailed in full in Appendix B. An overview of the studies from which descriptive themes were most evident is shown in Table 3, with additional illustrative quotes for each of these provided in Appendix C. Thomas and Harden (2008) describe stage three as 'going beyond' the content of the original studies by using the descriptive themes developed from inductive analysis to answer the review question. Within the current research, this entailed inferring from the descriptive themes what teachers could do to challenge heteronormativity.

⊟ ◯ A. School context influences inclusive practices

   ⊞ ◯ 40. Presence of wider school support

   ⊞ ◯ 33. School context shapes practice

   ⊞ ◯ 9. Gate-keeping and systemic barriers

⊟ ◯ B. Heteronormative values are a dominant discourse

   ⊞ ◯ 13. Unwritten rules underpinned by heteronormativity

   ⊞ ◯ 26. Heteronormativity as the default

   ⊞ ◯ 20. Homo-normative constructions of LGBTQ identities

⊟ ◯ C. Challenging dominant discourses

   ⊞ ◯ 44. Normalising LGBTQ identities

   ⊞ ◯ 25. Challenging sterotypes

   ⊞ ◯ 37. Actively disrupting heteronormativity in class or curriculum

⊟ ◯ D. Teachers as role models beyond the formal curriculum

   ⊞ ◯ 15. School staff influence LGBTQ pupils' sense of safety and belonging

   ⊞ ◯ 29. Care for pupils is of central importance

   ⊞ ◯ 36. Teachers have a professional and ethical responsibility

   ⊞ ◯ 28. Teachers model and teach an invisible curriculum

   ⊞ ◯ 11. Personal vs professional views

Figure 2   Thematic synthesis stage 1 to stage 2: Example of descriptive themes developed from initial codes. Numbered items indicate initial codes developed during stage 1 of the thematic synthesis. Lettered items indicate descriptive themes developed from the initial codes during stage 2 of the thematic synthesis.

Table 3   Descriptive themes identified in each reviewed study

Descriptive Theme:	Bentley and Souto-Manning (2016)	Carlile (2019)	Cullen and Sandy (2009)	Evans and Rawlings (2019)	Fredman et al. (2015)	Helmer (2016)	Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2019)	Kelly (2012)	Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2016)	Meyer and Leonardi (2018)	Pearce and Cumming-Potvin (2017)	Ryan et al. (2013)	Tompkins et al. (2018)	Ullman (2018)
School context influences inclusive practices	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Heteronormative values are a dominant discourse	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Educators challenging dominant discourses	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Teachers as role models: working beyond the formal curriculum	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Weighing up professional risks	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
Teacher confidence engaging with LGBTQ+ content	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Learning from and with pupils	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Young people are capable of understanding and respecting LGBTQ+ experiences	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Strategic implementation of LGBTQ+ content	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Working with the community	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y

Note. Y indicates that the descriptive theme was evident in the study. N indicates that the theme was not evident in the study.

2.4   Synthesis

2.4.1   Synthesis overview

A total of 14 qualitative papers were included in this synthesis, published between 2009 and 2019. Six studies were based in the USA, three in Canada, two in England, two in Australia and two in New Zealand.

Five analytical themes were developed from the descriptive themes, depicted in Figure 3. Four of these were developed in response to the research question: 'what can teachers do to challenge heteronormativity?' and included: working strategically within the school and community context; integrating non-normative representations throughout the curriculum; role modelling inclusivity and acts of social justice; and facilitating a co-constructive learning environment. The inductive nature of analysis during the descriptive coding phase provided insight into the contexts in which teachers in the reviewed research worked and how this shaped their LGBTQ+ inclusive practices. Although not directly answering the research question, these insights provide a contextual backdrop within which the themes are situated and were therefore further synthesised to form a fifth theme: facilitators and barriers to LGBTQ+ inclusive practice. It is from this theme that this section will begin. The papers from which the themes were generated are referenced throughout the synthesis, along with illustrative quotes from the included studies.
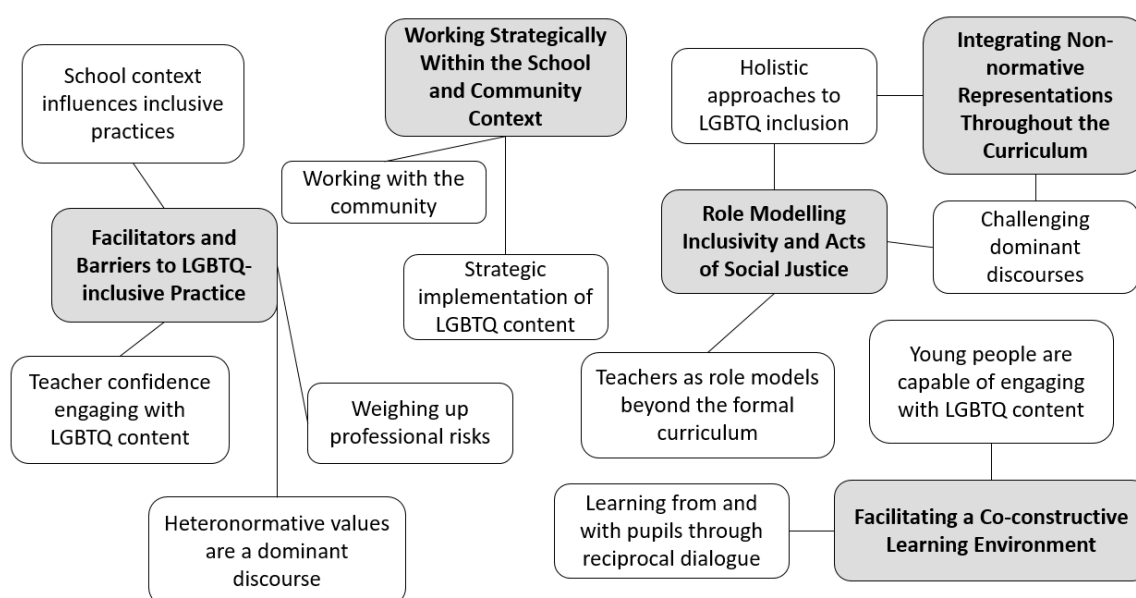
Figure 3   Graphic representation of how descriptive themes contributed to the development of analytical themes. Analytical themes are represented in bold on a shaded background to distinguish them from the descriptive themes.

2.4.2   Analytical themes

2.4.2.1   Facilitators and barriers to LGBTQ+ inclusive practice

Within the reviewed research, teachers' capacity and willingness to challenge heteronormativity was shaped by the context of the schools in which they worked. Embedding LGBTQ+ inclusive pedagogy was perceived as easier when celebrating diversity was inherent to the school culture and the surrounding community (Kelly, 2012; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). Conversely, educators working within conservative school contexts felt pressured to scaffold pedagogical practices to minimise potential issues of parental disapproval and community resistance (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017). For some teachers, their fears of community backlash had not been actualised (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019). However, there were many examples given of resistance towards mentions of LGBTQ+ identities in lessons, such as parents requesting their children be removed from class when such topics were being addressed (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016) and complaints that children would be harmed through exposure to such learning content (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019). One teacher recalled an incident involving an "Imam from a mosque in the region sending out 'a traditional family values letter' to the community in which concerns were expressed about homosexuality being addressed in schools" (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019, p. 814). Another educator recounted how after discussing the life experiences of a transgender woman with her class as part of a 'Day of Silence' event, there was "school and community uproar, leading to statewide media attention, and a disciplinary letter being placed in her file" (Fredman, Schultz, & Hoffman, 2015, p. 67).

Variation in the structure and operationalisation of school systems and procedures shaped the parameters within which teachers could work (Fredman et al., 2015; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017; Ullman, 2018). For example, some teachers worked in contexts in which administrative approval was needed before they could discuss LGBTQ+ issues in the curriculum (Fredman et al., 2015) whilst others felt the rigidity of their school's curriculum made it difficult to adapt what was prescribed (Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017). Furthermore, administrative expectations regarding teachers' practice were not always explicit within policy, with educators reporting implicit messages not to cause waves or promote LGBTQ+ identities as the norm (Fredman et al., 2015; Kelly, 2012; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016). While some school administrations were "not simply supportive of [gender and sexual diversity] but demanding of it" (Ullman, 2018, p. 506), others acted as gatekeepers, limiting flexibility in teachers' practice (Fredman et al., 2015; Ullman, 2018).

In the reviewed studies, the climate of support for LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools not only shaped teachers' confidence in challenging heteronormativity, but left them balancing their professional ideals of inclusive education against the risks of working against the grain. Indeed, teachers felt vulnerable to community and administrative backlash and made pedagogical decisions in consideration of these fears (Bentley & Souto-Manning, 2016; Carlile, 2019; Fredman et al., 2015; Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Ullman, 2018), as operating outside of prescribed guidelines might have left them unprotected and their job security in jeopardy (Fredman et al., 2015; Ullman, 2018).

2.4.2.2 Working strategically within the school and community context

Within the constraints of the school context in which they worked, educators in the reviewed studies worked strategically to include a focus on LGBTQ+ identities in their practice, including drawing upon anti-bullying discourses (Carlile, 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019) and values of pupil safety (Carlile, 2019; Fredman et al., 2015). Pupil welfare was noted to be "the highest shared value among educators, administrators, parents and the public, regardless of other belief or value systems" (Fredman et al., 2015, p. 74). Educators used this shared value to encourage their school communities to consider that mentions of LGBTQ+ identities were important. Arguing that homophobic and transphobic bullying could be targeted towards all pupils helped teachers gain support from their school communities to include discussions of LGBTQ+ identities with pupils, as did emphasising the importance of teaching pupils not to bully others (Carlile, 2019). These discussions were considered by educators to be gateways for more nuanced conversations (Carlile, 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016).

Some educators reported that limitations in policy could be used strategically, with educators "using the lack of specific curriculum and policy to incorporate less overt, but still important, aspects of inclusive pedagogy" (Fredman et al., 2015, p. 47). In this way, policy or lack thereof was freeing for some educators' capacity to challenge heteronormativity. Indeed, many educators drew on other pedagogical frameworks and policies used by their schools to justify the inclusion of LGBTQ+ representation within practice (Carlile, 2019; Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017). For example, teachers in English schools reported the 'Fundamental British Values' framework set out by the UK government (Department for Education (DfE), 2014) as a route to including LGBTQ+ content due to its emphasis on equality (Carlile, 2019). Teachers in Australian schools utilised the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) guidance to similar effect (Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017), while a teacher in Canada drew on equity policies in the Toronto District School Board as a justification for

her activist work (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016). Educators gained a sense of security in their practice when they could justify their curricular choices through their school's policies (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017).

Another aspect to strategic incorporation of LGBTQ+ content within practice involved relational work with parents, thereby mitigating potential resistance (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Ullman, 2018). There was recognition that many parents would have had limited exposure and education around LGBTQ+ identities and should be engaged in reciprocal conversations about what this would entail in their child's curriculum (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Ullman, 2018). Within this dialogue, the vulnerability of sexual and gender minority pupils and families could be explained, facilitating empathic-ally building by emphasising the importance of inclusive pedagogic practices for pupils and families in the school (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019). Engaging parents in these conversations enabled educators to explain the rationale for LGBTQ+ representation in school. Although parents typically had the option to opt their child out of lessons that directly addressed LGBTQ+ content, commitments to an LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum with the wider class could still be upheld (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016).

2.4.2.3 Integrating non-normative representations throughout the curriculum

The reviewed research indicated that there was space within the curriculum for teachers to make "use of possibilities for 'slipping in' texts, activities or items for discussion in which [LGBTQ+] young people or their families [are] represented" (Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017, p. 84), thereby challenging heteronormativity by normalising a range of identities. Examples given within the reviewed studies included diverse family representations being included in written maths problems (Carlile, 2019), and the acknowledgment of queer oppression in relation to broader learning units (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019) and in discussions of historical events (Fredman et al., 2015; Tompkins et al., 2018). Indeed, one teacher gave an example of discussing the Holocaust with their pupils and including that LGBTQ+ persons were also targeted within this time, saying, "Do you have to teach a 45 minute lesson? No. You could just say that. So baby steps get people to realise that it can be integrated, but it is controversial" (Fredman et al., 2015, p. 75). Teachers acknowledged that while overt inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities within curricular content can be challenging, integrating representation into existing learning topics is one way around this.

Literacy was identified as a subject in which non-normative representations could be explored with pupils across a range of age groups (Helmer, 2016; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017; Ryan et al., 2013). Introducing children's books featuring LGBTQ+ characters

and families reinforced to children the existence of alternative family dynamics and identities beyond their immediate experience (Kelly, 2012). For example, through class readings of 'And Tango makes three', a children's book about two male penguins who fall in love and adopt an egg together, 10-11 year old pupils were able to re-conceptualise family structures and think through the wider social reactions towards queer identities (Cullen & Sandy, 2009). Although some teachers missed opportunities for in-depth conversations around diverse family structures and relationships when reading such books with their pupils (Kelly, 2012), there was a general consensus amongst teachers that these books could be used to engage young people in critical reading practices, encouraging them to reflect and discuss their interpretations and assumptions (Helmer, 2016; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017). Alongside introducing LGBTQ+ specific books, there were opportunities for teachers to queer narratives within other texts and stories. For example, one teacher reflected on a literacy writing unit in which children were tasked with writing alternative versions of well-known fairy tales (Cullen & Sandy, 2009). While the focus of the task was not LGBTQ+ specific, the teacher was able to integrate queer representation by using the example of a lesbian Cinderella and role-playing this character as an introduction to the pupils' task (Cullen & Sandy, 2009). As well as integrating LGBTQ+ representation directly within lessons, many teachers reported making LGBTQ+ themed books accessible within their class or school libraries (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016; Tompkins et al., 2018), in turn normalising queer identities by having these available alongside other school books.

2.4.2.4   Role modelling inclusivity and acts of social justice

Teachers in the reviewed research were identified as providing an invisible curriculum through their actions and words, positioning them as role models to their pupils (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Tompkins et al., 2018). Simple actions such as adapting the language they used to address the class or emphasising that all activities and resources were available for all pupils were reflected on by teachers as providing subtle messages that challenged heteronormativity (Tompkins et al., 2018). Teachers' actions informed pupils' understanding of acceptable ways to interact with one another (Evans & Rawlings, 2019; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). Indeed, one teacher described being conscious of emphasising with her class that a character's gender expression in a story called 'My Princess Boy' was acceptable, knowing this held relevance for a pupil in her class:

> I was just more conscious of the fact that it was important for this student to hear that that's
> okay from the teacher. And I was also more conscious of the fact that other kids would be
> hearing me say, this is okay so that when they responded to or interacted with the student,

there would hopefully be less of an impulse to be mean or, that kind of thing (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018, p.453).

Equally, in the reviewed research it was argued that teachers' inaction, such as ignoring homophobic behaviour, taught implicit messages that such behaviour was acceptable (Fredman et al., 2015). An adolescent describing his high school experiences after coming out as transgender shared that "if a teacher's calling them the wrong name, it's unlikely that the year group's going to follow up on it" (Evans & Rawlings, 2019, p. 10).

Being a role model entails actions of social justice and proactively challenging heteronormativity by stepping into opportunities as they arise and seizing teachable moments. Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2019) described how a teacher responded to pupils using 'gay' as a negative word by opening a conversation about homophobia, language meaning, and introducing her class to a children's book with queer characters. Similarly, Tompkins, Kearns, and Mitton-Kükner (2018) shared an example of an educator who tackled transphobic comments from a pupil directly, setting a precedent and ensuring such expressions were not tacitly accepted. Engaging young people in these conversations encouraged reflection on their own and others' assumptions and experiences, paving the way for developing a classroom culture in which inclusivity is positioned as a whole-class responsibility. Teachers' capacity to role model an inclusive class culture is important as "an open and affirming [classroom] community doesn't just evolve on its own" (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019, p. 94).

2.4.2.5   Facilitating a co-constructive learning environment

Within the reviewed research, children and young people were identified as being capable of engaging in discussions around LGBTQ+ identities and experiences (Bentley & Souto-Manning, 2016; Carlile, 2019; Cullen & Sandy, 2009; Kelly, 2012; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019; Tompkins et al., 2018) and had developed their own understandings of gender and sexuality. While this often included heteronormative constructs (Cullen & Sandy, 2009; Kelly, 2012), young people showed a willingness to engage in reflective conversations that challenged their assumptions (Bentley & Souto-Manning, 2016; Ryan et al., 2013) and when introduced to non-normative identities, were able to assimilate this into their understanding (Kelly, 2012; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019). Children and young people were also able to connect with discussions of LGBTQ+ identities through their own experiences or the experiences of those they knew (Cullen & Sandy, 2009; Ryan et al., 2013) and could challenge norms of sexuality and gender (Carlile, 2019; Ryan et al., 2013; Tompkins et al., 2018). Young people's readiness to engage with LGBTQ+ content suggests that teachers can

build on pupils' existing knowledge and experiences, and use this as a platform to challenge heteronormativity by facilitating mutual learning experiences. In this way, the pressures teachers might feel to have expertise or specific knowledge around LGBTQ+ identities may be reduced, leaving in its place a reciprocal learning environment. Questions asked of the teacher can be "turned back to the class, encouraging children to seek answers from peers and regard each other as knowledgeable" (Bentley & Souto-Manning, 2016, p. 199). Through such reciprocal dialogue, teachers can act as critical educators, engaging in a learning journey with pupils and positioning them as capable of shaping classroom discussions. As well as fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership in young people, this approach was also considered a protective strategy; the non-directive and child-centred style of pedagogy "protects you and gives you license to talk about a subject that might be considered taboo or unacceptable…" (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2019, p.815).

2.5   Discussion

The aim of the current review was to answer the question: how can teachers challenge heteronormativity in schools? This research question was formulated with an awareness of the systemic and context-based constraints teachers might experience with regards to implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive practice. While it was understood that practice cannot be disentangled from the context in which teachers work, the intention was to explore what incremental steps teachers could take regardless of these barriers, with a view to closing the gap seen between teachers' positive beliefs about LGBTQ+ inclusive practice and their own actions (Taylor et al., 2016). Barriers identified within the reviewed research resonated with previous literature, including concerns of parental resistance (Steck & Perry, 2018; Warwick et al., 2001), lack of administrative support and potential professional repercussions (Taylor et al., 2016), as well as lack of clarity in policy and guidance (Warwick et al., 2001). However, despite the constraints of their school environments, teachers in the included studies were able to enact or conceive of ways to challenge heteronormativity, the synthesis of which has informed implications for educators.

2.5.1   Implications for educators

One implication involves teachers working strategically, drawing on shared values pertaining to anti-bullying and pupil welfare, utilising wider school policies flexibly, and relational work with parents. These actions are not without their drawbacks. For example, representation of LGBTQ+ identities through an anti-bullying discourse alone can inadvertently pathologise them which does not sit

comfortably with a culture of inclusion. However, such a discourse acts as a starting point for LGBTQ+ representation and might well evoke kindness and tolerance between pupils. Further, if taken in unison with other implications, such as integrating non-normative representations into the curriculum, this discourse will cease to sit in isolation. Although teachers' capacity to implement activities with a direct LGBTQ+ themed focus will vary across school settings, dependent on the various barriers or facilitators underpinning their practice, this synthesis suggests that incidental representation may be a possible approach for many. Furthermore, integrating representation throughout the curriculum may act as a protective approach due to its indirect nature, and also moves away from a position of tokenism, avoiding 'othering' LGBTQ+ identities by positioning them outside of ordinary curricular practice. However, this approach also has challenges. While parents are typically able to opt their children out of LGBTQ+ focused lessons, this would not be possible within a curriculum in which diverse gender and sexual identities are integrated. Administrative support may also be a barrier, with gatekeeping regarding the type of resources that teachers are permitted to use. This may be where strategic use of wider school policies comes into play, drawing on schools' broader values. Although these policies and frameworks do not typically address LGBTQ+ identities explicitly, teachers in the reviewed research were able to draw upon statements of equality within these frameworks to justify their work. Such openness to interpretation might be freeing for educators yet might not provide a high level of security for teachers concerned about professional risks and parental complaints. Arguably, this is where relational work could be of benefit. Discussing inclusive practice with parents and administration within the context of such policies invites collaborative interpretation and implementation. Although a level of compromise might be inevitable, this openness in dialogue may go some way in mitigating resistance and alleviating teachers' fears of professional repercussions.

This synthesis also shows that teachers have the capacity to enact LGBTQ+ inclusive practice through more subtle actions, role modelling inclusivity through the language they use, responses they give to LGBTQ+ based bullying and enabling a classroom culture in which understanding can be co-constructed. While teachers may be met with administration or parental resistance toward overt LGBTQ+ inclusive practices, instilling tolerance amongst pupils is unlikely to be argued against. Through these subtle supportive actions, teachers may promote allyship in the young people they work with, facilitating an interpersonal classroom environment in which LGBTQ+ young people can feel safe and connected, and in which victimisation and adverse outcomes may be reduced (Anderman, 2003; De Pedro et al., 2018; Kosciw et al., 2010).

2.5.2   Strengths and limitations

The implications for teachers' practice developed through this review are intended to be feasible across a range of school contexts. However, teachers' implementation of such approaches will be reliant on their own awareness of heteronormativity and their beliefs in challenging it. As a result, the implications may be limited in scope for teachers' characterised as unaware or reluctant, or for those holding prejudiced beliefs (Kurian, 2019). Many of the educators in the reviewed studies appeared to be invested in challenging heteronormativity. For example, several were involved in delivering an LGBTQ+ inclusive programme as part of the research process (Carlile, 2019; Cullen & Sandy, 2009; Tompkins et al., 2018), others had expressed or demonstrated a commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusive education (Bentley & Souto-Manning, 2016; Helmer, 2016; Pearce & Cumming-Potvin, 2017; Ryan et al., 2013) and several were queer themselves, which may have shaped their perspectives on LGBTQ+ inclusive education (Cullen & Sandy, 2009; Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019; Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2016). As such, it is to the aware teachers who wish to enact LGBTQ+ inclusive practice that these implications may hold the most relevance. For teachers less aware or confident, systemic-based actions supported through whole-school initiatives will be more likely to influence uptake of practices that challenge heteronormativity. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the synthesis means the review has been shaped by the voices of participants involved in the included studies. Although specific demographic information of all participants is not known, the majority of participants were teachers across England, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, suggesting a predominantly white, educated participant group whose views and contexts of working may not be representative of the wider world.

Thematic synthesis was selected as an analytic approach within this review due to the qualitative and disparate nature of the included studies. This enabled an interpretative synthesis that suited the research question. However, a potential criticism lies in understanding the extent to which each study contributed to the developed themes and how the inclusion of individual studies might have shaped the findings. Sensitivity analysis is one approach often used in research to evaluate the impact of including or excluding data, but there is debate around its merit within qualitative syntheses (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). Indeed, the feasibility of conducting sensitivity analysis in an interpretative synthesis is unclear; once a study has been incorporated into the development of themes, simply extracting this is not a straightforward process and there is little guidance in the area (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). Within the context of this research, sensitivity analysis was deemed unnecessary. Studies were selected for inclusion due to meeting the eligibility criteria, developed to ensure included studies could answer the review question. The relative contribution of each study is

of less importance to the research question than the synthesis in its entirety. However, in order to facilitate transparency, actions were taken to demonstrate where the findings arose, detailing which studies contributed to the descriptive themes at stage two of the thematic synthesis (Table 3) and referencing relevant studies in prose within the analytical themes.

2.5.3   Conclusion

Prior research has focused predominantly on barriers around LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching practice and the adverse outcomes experienced by LGBTQ+ young people in non-inclusive school environments. It was the intention of this review to shift the focus towards the individual teacher, whose actions hold weight for young people's school experiences. In doing so, this review has provided insight into the actions individual teachers can take to challenge heteronormativity within school. While contextual and systemic barriers may influence much of teachers' practice, it has been argued that small steps can be taken within the context of these constraints, moving incrementally towards school practices that facilitate inclusivity for LGBTQ+ young people.

Chapter 3 Teachers' beliefs: how they shape the support offered to trans-spectrum young people. An empirical research project

3.1 Abstract

Teachers have been identified as important in pupils' school experiences, influencing their sense of belonging and associated social, emotional and academic outcomes. In this way, teachers may be well-positioned to provide support to trans-spectrum young people, who often experience greater challenges and adverse outcomes throughout their schooling compared to their peers. However, evidence indicates that trans-spectrum young people do not feel supported or included by their teachers. While LGBTQ+ research indicates teachers' beliefs, self-efficacy and systemic barriers influence their practice, research is limited regarding how this shapes their practice with trans-spectrum young people specifically. As such, this study sought to explore teachers' beliefs regarding gender identity, their beliefs about their own abilities to support trans-spectrum young people, and additional supports and barriers that influence their practice. Focus groups and one individual interview were conducted with 15 secondary school teachers in four schools across South East England. Through a process of reflexive thematic analysis, six themes were developed. Within these, a gap emerged between teachers' beliefs to support trans-spectrum pupils in school and how this was actualised, with lack of confidence, fears of community resistance and implicitly held views of gender identity underscoring their hesitancy. However, teachers expressed a strong desire to develop their knowledge and through reflection within their focus group or interview, began to construct ideas of how to build upon current practices. Implications for educational professionals and limitations of the study are discussed.

3.2 Introduction

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexual and gender-diverse identified (LGBTQ+) young people are more likely to experience victimisation than their peers, which has been associated with adverse outcomes such as suicidality and reduced feelings of belonging (Hatchel et al., 2018; Kosciw et al., 2013). Trans-spectrum young people in particular navigate a high level of hostility in the school environment, experiencing greater victimisation and the negative effects of this than their queer, cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Jones & Hillier, 2013; Ullman, 2017). 'Trans-spectrum'

is used here as a collective term to describe transgender identities, in which a person's gender differs from their assigned gender at birth. This includes trans-binary identities (female, male) and trans-non-binary identities (genders that do not fall into either of these categories). 'Cisgender' refers to those whose gender aligns with their assigned gender at birth. 'Queer' is used as a collective term for those who have sexual or gender identities other than heterosexual and cisgender.

The challenges experienced by trans-spectrum young people in school suggests a need for increased support. Teachers may have a role to play here, having been identified as an important influence in young people's school experiences. Indeed, positive relationships between teachers and pupils are associated with a greater sense of school belonging (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Anderman, 2003), and can influence pupils' behaviour, peer relationships, attitudes towards school, attendance and academic achievement (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015). Teachers have a further role in promoting an interpersonal classroom environment (Anderman, 2003), in turn encouraging positive relationships amongst peers and a more inclusive school climate. However, while teachers are arguably in a position to mitigate young people's negative school experiences, research indicates that trans-spectrum young people feel unsupported by their teachers, perceiving a lack of teacher positivity towards trans-spectrum identities (Ullman, 2017) and reporting experiences of rejection from school staff following disclosure of their gender identity (Jones & Hillier, 2013). Similar findings were reported in a UK government survey exploring the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals; of the trans-spectrum respondents who had disclosed their gender identity whilst at school, only 13% reported having had supportive teachers (Government Equalities Office, 2018).

Possible reasons for the limited support trans-spectrum young people feel they receive from teachers include teachers' lack of knowledge regarding trans-spectrum identities (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2015) and a lack of awareness around their own capacity to provide support to LGBTQ+ pupils (Kurian, 2019). Teachers' confidence may also be an obstacle, with research indicating that school staff's actions are influenced by their beliefs in their own skill-set to provide effective support to LGBTQ+ pupils (Collier et al., 2015). Indeed, although research suggests educators are broadly in favour of LGBTQ+ inclusive educational practice, this does not always translate into action (Bartholomaeus et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). The gap between belief and practice appears to be underpinned in part by fears of backlash from school administration, parents and the wider community (Smith-Millman et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2016). Arguably, educators' lack of confidence and fears of community resistance are founded on their own uncertainties about what is and is not appropriate practice, linked to their own conceptualisations of gender identity. For example, Smith

and Payne (2016) found that educators felt uncertain with logistical considerations, holding concerns around bathroom use, use of pupils' chosen names and pronouns, and concerns around biological changes during puberty. Smith and Payne (2016) argued that such concerns reflected "the idea of a biological and fixed relationship between the characteristics of the sexed body and gender" (Smith & Payne, 2016, p. 40). Decision-making was therefore underpinned by gender essentialist beliefs that gender is binary and biologically determined.

Decisions and processes built on a foundation of gender essentialism may restrict possibilities for the inclusion of trans-spectrum young people, leading to their needs and experiences being overlooked within the school environment. This has been evidenced in educators' conceptualisations of inclusion (Smith, 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). Indeed, Taylor et al. (2016) found that while educators were aware of homophobia and transphobia occurring in the schools they worked in, 97% described their schools as being safe. One possible explanation put forward for this contradiction was that participants were characterising safety as the absence of physical assault when thinking about safety in general terms, and only considered more implicit school climate indicators when thinking about LGBTQ+ pupils specifically (Taylor et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Smith (2018) identified a pattern in which teachers, when pressed to discuss how they included LGBTQ+ pupils in their practice, defaulted to broader statements about their commitments to caring for all students. While positive in intent, such broad conceptualisations of inclusion do not recognise or address the specific needs and experiences of these pupils.

While the discussed literature provides insight into teachers' beliefs and practice, the broad focus on LGBTQ+ identities creates a challenge in ascertaining its specific relevance to supporting trans-spectrum pupils in schools. This is problematic considering the different school experiences trans-spectrum pupils encounter compared to their queer, cisgender peers. As has been established, teachers are well-placed to support trans-spectrum pupils in their professional practice, yet there is limited evidence that this is being actualised. To understand how this gap can be bridged, and in light of the literature discussed, the following research questions were explored:

- What beliefs do teachers hold around trans-spectrum identities?
- What do teachers believe about their own ability to support trans-spectrum pupils?
- What supports or hinders how teachers approach supporting trans-spectrum pupils?

3.3   Methodology

3.3.1   Participants

Participants were 15 secondary school teachers from four schools in the South East of England (see Table 4), recruited through convenience sampling via the researcher's existing professional connections. A research incentive was offered to participating schools, inclusive of training around gender identity and resources for the school. Focus group interviews were arranged within participants' school groups as well as one individual interview for a participant who was unavailable on the date of their school's focus group. To mitigate potential issues of hierarchy within the focus groups, participants were not part of their school's senior leadership team. Demographic information such as age and gender was not directly sought as it was not purposeful for the data analysis plan. The researcher's epistemological position of social constructionism entailed that findings would be generated through interaction with participants during interviews; unless shared by participants as relevant to their views during interview, personal demographic information could not be assumed as relevant to the research findings.

In consideration of transferability, discussed in detail in chapter one, information regarding school context was gathered (see Table 4). There was variation across the four included schools in terms of school size, location, specific school characteristics and the diversity of the schools' communities. For instance, three of the schools had a predominantly white British school community, two of which were in rural locations while one was city-based. One of these, Tenant School, was a Protestant and Catholic school. The fourth school, Whitaker School, was a single-sex girls' school in an urban location with a multi-cultural and multi-faith community. Pupil population across the schools ranged from 400 to 1500 pupils.

Table 4   School, participant and focus group details

School pseudonym	School contextual information	Participant details	Focus group and Interview details
Eccleston School	Secondary comprehensive, pupils aged 11-16 years, fewer than 400 pupils, predominantly White British pupil population, rural location	N = 5 (4 in focus group and 1 individual interview) Pseudonyms: Blair, Kai, Hadley, Nolan and Frankie	Focus group with researcher via video on Microsoft Teams. 3 participants located together and 1 in separate location. Individual interview via video on Microsoft Teams

Tennant School	Secondary comprehensive, pupils aged 11-18 years, over 1500 pupils, predominantly White British pupil population, rural location, mixed Protestant and Catholic school	N = 3 Pseudonyms: Mason, Winslow and Avery	Focus group with researcher via video on Microsoft Teams. Participants in separate locations.
Capaldi School	Secondary comprehensive, pupils aged 11-16 years, 800+ pupils, predominantly White British pupil population, inner city school	N = 3 Pseudonyms: Cameron, Rowan and Tristan	Focus group with researcher via speakerphone (audio only). Participants in the same location.
Whittaker School	Secondary comprehensive school, pupils aged 11-18 years, 400+ pupils, urban location, single-sex girls' school, multi-cultural and multi-faith school community	N = 4 Pseudonyms: Emmett, Rayne, Darby and Laurel	Focus group with researcher via video on Microsoft Teams. 3 participants located together and 1 in separate location.

3.3.2   Design

The research was conducted by a trainee educational psychologist from the University of Southampton as part of their doctoral training, under the supervision of two course tutors from the same doctoral programme. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Southampton's Ethics and Research Governance Committee.

A qualitative approach was employed using semi-structured focus groups and one individual interview. Focus groups were the preference for this study, befitting the researcher's social constructionist epistemology which positioned knowledge as being constructed though social processes and interactions (Miller & Brewer, 2003). A decision was made to permit an individual interview alongside the focus groups. As a focus group was being conducted in the individual interviewee's school, it was felt that data collected from this interview may still be indicative of collective narratives inherent to that particular school community. Individual interviews were not pursued in schools where focus groups were not conducted.

3.3.3   Measures

Articles and topic guide: Four articles were used to provoke discussion (Appendix D). Articles to use were searched for online, and the researcher shared and discussed these with their research supervisors. Within these discussions, article relevance and the potential for presenting a one-sided, limited or highly emotive narrative were discussed. The final articles were chosen based on their

relevance to the three research questions and were intended to provide a platform from which participants could reflect on their own practice within school. Highly evocative content or articles that may have derailed conversations away from participants' own practice were avoided. Articles were shared with participants via email to ensure access at the time of the focus group or interview. The first two articles were discussed in turn, followed by the final two articles which were shared as a pair. Topic guide prompts and questions (Appendix E) were used flexibly by the researcher to guide discussion.

Transgender inclusive behaviour scale: The Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale (TIBS) is a published and validated measure that provides a baseline measurement of an individual's transgender-inclusive behaviour (Kattari et al., 2018). The questions on the TIBS were adapted to better reflect the educational context. The adapted-TIBS was completed in a 15-20 minute conversation between the researcher and a staff member at each school who was not a part of their school's focus group. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale and discussed flexibly, allowing additional comments relevant to the school context to be noted down. This process was helpful for understanding the context in which participants worked and the extent to which schools shared or differed in their practices. This information was used to facilitate triangulation and reflection during analysis. The adapted-TIBS and ratings for each school are detailed in Appendix F.

3.3.4 Procedure

Three focus groups and the individual interview were conducted via video using Microsoft Teams or via audio using speakerphone (see Table 1 for details). Focus group interviews lasted 47 to 55 minutes and the individual interview lasted 39 minutes. Data were audio or video-recorded using Microsoft Teams or a Dictaphone. Focus group and individual interviews were transcribed (Appendix G), omitting personal identifiable information. Gender neutral pseudonyms were allocated by the researcher. Names typically incur assumptions and connotations such as the age, gender or ethnicity of a person, usually related to their origins and use across societies. While no name can be void of such assumptions, pseudonyms were allocated with the intention to avoid reflecting demographic information of individual participants, such that individual names would not stand out from the set of names used.

At the outset of each focus group and interview, the researcher provided a brief overview of the topic as well as a statement of group rules. The researcher disclosed how their research interest related to their own non-binary gender identity and emphasised their hope that participants would feel comfortable speaking openly or asking questions. This was to enable participants to feel

permitted to discuss their views openly. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions before recording began.

3.3.5 Member checking

Following initial data analysis, participants had the opportunity to respond to an early summary of themes (Appendix H), shared with them via email. Participants were able to reflect on themes generated from their own and other schools' focus groups or interview and provide feedback using the response form provided. Member checking using synthesised analysed data resonated with the researchers' social constructionist epistemology in which knowledge is co-constructed and new information is integrated into existing networks of understanding (Birt et al., 2016; Harvey, 2015).

Three participants, each from a different school (Eccleston, Tennant and Whitaker School) responded (Appendix I). On a 5-point Likert scale, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the theme summaries reflected the discussions in the focus group or interview in which they were involved and resonated well with their own views. Comments made in response to open-ended questions were integrated into the final analysis.

3.3.6 Process of analysis

A process of reflexive thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2019), was undertaken due to its emphasis on researcher interpretation, reflection and recursive analysis. The personal and social position of a researcher is inherent to studies built on the foundations of a social constructionist epistemology and was therefore integral to the analytical procedures used within this research. Reflexive thematic analysis entails the researcher actively engaging with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Within this study, this engagement began at the point of data collection in which knowledge was co-constructed through the researchers' interactions with participants, and continued through to analysis whereby a recursive process of reflection and interpretation was undertaken.

Regarding the analytic process itself, Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis were used as a general guide. In practice, this entailed reading and re-reading transcripts and noting down initial ideas, followed by the development of initial codes across all transcripts. This was an iterative process in which codes were re-named, re-coded or merged together as new ideas developed. Codes were then collated into early themes and subthemes which were shared with participants for member checking. Further analysis continued, shaped by member checking feedback, information gained through the adapted-TIBS and ongoing researcher interpretation. Theme labels were re-

formulated throughout the analytic process and finalised to reflect the interpretative patterns developed from the data set.

To aid the quality and transparency in detailing the analytic methods used, Braun and Clarke's (2020) tool for evaluating thematic analysis was drawn upon as a guide (Appendix J).

3.4   Analysis

Six themes were developed, as depicted in Figure 4. The interconnected nature of the developed themes necessitates a narrative overview with which this section will begin, followed by a discussion of each individual theme in detail.
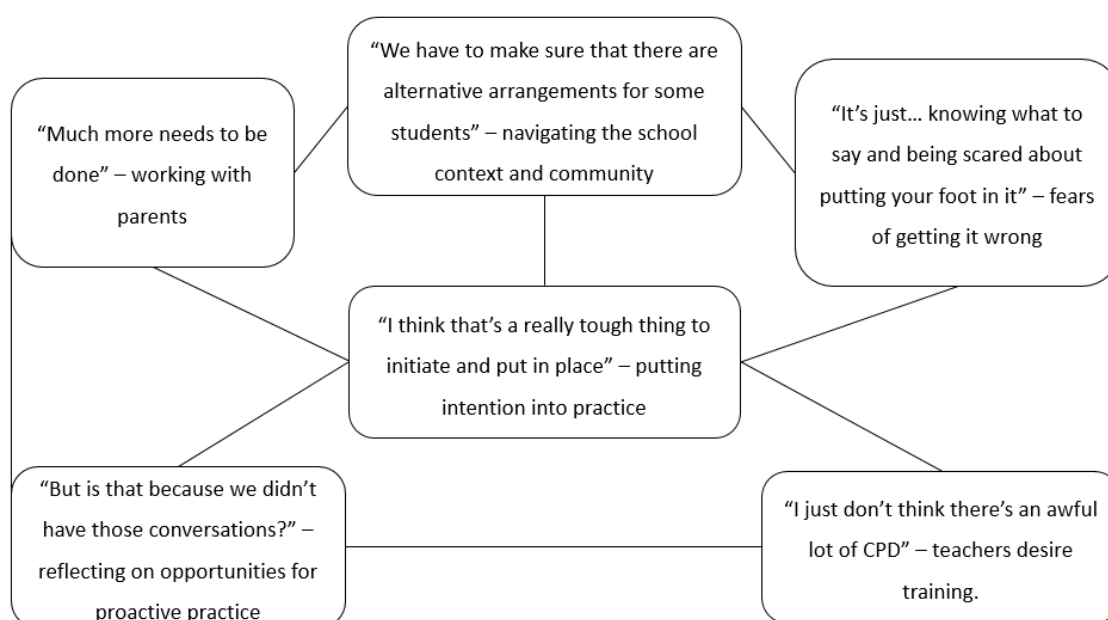
Figure 4   Thematic map. Lines indicate where themes are connected.

3.4.1   Narrative overview of the developed themes

Teachers expressed a desire to develop their skills in implementing trans-spectrum-inclusive practice. Such practices were largely characterised by teachers as being able to support individual trans-spectrum pupils, although as the discussions evolved, teachers reflected on the scope for further work at a whole class or school level. However, they also reflected on current barriers and limitations to putting such practice into action. Indeed, when reflecting on the context of the schools they worked in, teachers raised concerns around parental and wider community resistance. These concerns were underscored in part by their own beliefs around gender identity, with gender essentialist beliefs leaving them uncertain about what constitutes appropriate practice and fearful of

making mistakes. Teachers appeared further constrained by current school systems, limited knowledge of school policy and guidance, and restrictive narratives of inclusion. However, through the discussions that ensued, teachers began to reflect on current approaches and the scope for moving towards practices that could facilitate trans-spectrum inclusion at a wider school level. Indeed, although teachers felt they were not yet well-equipped to enact this practice, they expressed a desire to engage in training opportunities to develop their skills and confidence, and a desire to work with their school communities to facilitate this change over time.

3.4.2   Themes

3.4.2.1   "We have to make sure that there are alternative arrangements for some students" – navigating the school context and community

School context influenced teachers' perspectives around introducing discussions of trans-spectrum identities in school. The diversity of schools' local areas was a specific issue raised, with some teachers reporting that a lack of diversity in the area would make introducing non-normative representations difficult:

> Nolan: No and like Blair was saying, we're not, *(location name)* is not a particularly diverse area.
>
> Hadley: In any respects, not just gender. It's not very diverse.
>
> Nolan: No. And you're right it wouldn't be a very welcome conversation for some people which I think is the problem. (Teachers from Eccleston School, Transcript 1, Line 409 [T1: L-409]).

Meanwhile, teachers from schools with multi-cultural and multi-faith communities felt that the high level of diversity in their school community was a barrier: "we're quite a diverse school in so far as cultures are concerned and I think we would have massive barriers from some of the cultures that attend our school around that subject area" (Laurel, Whitaker School, T5: L-121). Both the presence and absence of community diversity was regarded as a barrier and created an uneasiness in teachers who felt discussions of gender identity would be met with resistance.

Participants also felt there were tensions between trans-spectrum-inclusive practices and their schools' specific characteristics, such as being a faith school: "I raise that question because of, we are a church school… because I'm struggling with the idea of you know we're mixed, we're a mixed Catholic and Protestant school" (Avery, Tennant School, T3: L-196). A similar tension was experienced by teachers in Whitaker School, who felt that the combination of being a single-sex

school with a diverse community raised challenges for integrating gender-diverse-inclusive practices: "I think for us it's probably difficult because we are such a diverse school you know around culture, different religions… I think because we are all girls all those religions all come into play don't they". (Darby, Whitaker School, T5: L-287).

Arguably, teachers' concerns regarding community resistance reflected their own uncertainties in what appropriate practice should look like, influenced by implicitly held views of gender identity. For example, when discussing use of school facilities, teachers' concerns around parental resistance were constructed through a gender essentialist lens, focusing on biological differences between trans-spectrum pupils and their cisgender peers, and underpinned discussions around the safety of cisgender girls in the school:

> …also we actually have to have a duty of care to all those other students, and if there were vulnerable young girls in there and parents found out that there was a trans [girl] using the same toilets, so because there's year 7 vulnerable student girls … to kind of keep them all safe and you know all supported we have to make sure that there are alternative arrangements for some students. (Cameron, Capaldi School, T4: L-381).

While the transgender pupil discussed was a girl, her assigned gender at birth (male) appeared to be the driving force behind decision-making in the school, leading to a perceived need for 'alternative arrangements' as opposed to allowing her access to the same facilities as cisgender girls in the school. The narrative around cisgender girls' safety and vulnerability suggests that trans-spectrum identities are being constructed as not only different, but potentially a cause for concern regarding other pupils' safety. Overall, the beliefs held by the teachers in the current study and the associated fears of parental resistance culminated into an uncertainty around how to move forward in accommodating trans-spectrum pupils in their school.

3.4.2.2 "Much more needs to be done" – working with parents

Teachers felt that integrating mentions of gender identity subtly within broader curricular practice was a more effective approach than giving it an explicit focus in school, as this could lead to conflict from parents and "turn into an us versus them" situation (Kai, Eccleston School, T1: L-420). It was felt that parents might perceive schools as "encouraging our children to be this way" (Blair, Eccleston School, T1: L-422) if discussed overtly. As such, mentions of LGBTQ+ identities would typically only arise through Physical Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education, a curriculum area

taught in English schools, usually encompassing relationship, sex and health education, and discussions of citizenship and social justice issues. It was felt that integrating mentions of trans-spectrum identities into the PSHE curriculum "would reduce the fear for parents about them covering some sensitive topics" (Mason, Tennant School, T3: L-370). This was further reflected in information gathered from the adapted-TIBS; while staff largely agreed that teachers facilitated discussions with pupils around gender-based discrimination and privilege, it was shared that this was in the context of broader curricular content and rarely discussed as a topic in isolation.

Despite these concerns, teachers felt that "we absolutely should" (Hadley, Eccleston School, T1: L-427) have these conversations to allow a space for trans-spectrum young people to better understand their identities, as "if these conversations don't happen earlier on and the kids start having those thoughts or start questioning their gender identity without those conversations you get some like muddy waters and potentially repression and uncertainty" (Kai, Eccleston School, T1: L-132).

Through the focus group discussions, teachers reflected on the support that parents might need in order to accept discussions of gender identity in school. It was felt that "much more needs to be done" (Winslow, Tennant School, T3: L-375) to help parents understand trans-spectrum identities. This stemmed from an empathetic position in which participants recognised that parents "haven't got huge experience" (Winslow, Tennant school, T3: L-375) regarding gender diversity and they did not want to "alienate [parents] and make them feel difficult, you know because you can't make them feel guilty for their beliefs" (Cameron, Capaldi School, T4: L-100). Teachers' empathy for parental viewpoints was further reflected in member checking, with Avery sharing: "I do understand the fear factor as when young people talk about being non binary or gender fluid, people jump to the conclusion that they will be thinking about gender reassignment and this is a very frightening concept for a parent and the whole topic is poorly understood" (Avery, Tennant School, member checking feedback 2 [MC-2]).

While teachers recognised the potential to support parents in this area, it was felt that currently there was not "enough of a conversation between the school community and the wider community at all - I don't think that there is anything in place for those conversations to happen or to facilitate that type of conversation." (Nolan, Eccleston School, T1: L-406).

3.4.2.3   **"It's just… knowing what to say and being scared about putting your foot in it" – fears of getting it wrong**

While teachers expressed a strong desire to engage in trans-spectrum-inclusive practices, they held fears around enacting this successfully. A common fear expressed was around making trans-spectrum pupils feel worse through not knowing "enough about it or what's the right thing or wrong thing to say" (Hadley, Eccleston School, T1: L-290), and through not being able to guide them "where to go next or who to talk to… or their next steps" (Nolan, Eccleston School, T1: L-293). Teachers were concerned that inadequate responses from them could worsen how trans-spectrum pupils might feel about disclosing their identities:

> Nolan: Yeah same, in the worst case scenario if they come to me and I don't have the right information so then they bottle up and don't talk about it again.
>
> Blair: Yeah and then they don't go and tell anyone else because you've given them like really crappy support. (Teachers from Eccleston School, T1: L-323).

These feelings made teachers feel "scared about putting [their] foot in it" (Winslow, Tennant School, T3: L-113) to the point they would "almost rather not say anything at all" (Blair, Eccleston, T1: L-304).

Teachers' uncertainties around appropriate practice were exacerbated by their concerns of parental perspectives, particularly regarding how to support trans-spectrum pupils whose parents were not supportive or aware of their child's identity. One teacher shared an example of a pupil who did not want to share their non-binary identity with their parents but wanted staff to use their chosen name. This created tension amongst teachers who did not know how to navigate the situation with sensitivity to both the pupil and their parents: "that line is really difficult and it's just knowing how far, and without coming across to that young person as being dismissive of it" (Laurel, Whitaker School, T5: L-43).

Further concerns were expressed around introducing discussions of gender identity as part of the curriculum. Emmett reflected on their experiences discussing LGBTQ+ identities within a previous school they worked in, sharing:

> It was still quite daunting I suppose, so even as an LGBTQ… member… it was good to have that opportunity really yet I still felt quite uncomfortable with it…and just feel the pressure to kind of get it, like oh God I've got to get this right (Emmett, Whitaker School, T5: L-105).

3.4.2.4 "I just don't think there's an awful lot of CPD" – teachers desire training

Teachers felt that specific training around supporting trans-spectrum young people would be helpful as "using common sense sometimes isn't even the right way and we definitely need training" (Winslow, Tennant school, T3: L-114). This was felt to be particularly important in the context of varying knowledge and experience amongst teachers, and a feeling that equity in skills is necessary to enable all teachers to support pupils effectively:

> I do think we need something, not because we're not accepting of it, it's because everyone has had different life experiences and if you've been sheltered from it, that's not really fair, just because you've been sheltered from it…we shouldn't then just not know about it for our students (Frankie, Eccleston School, T2: L-204).

Indeed, teachers reflected on how training was important in relation to their personal gaps in knowledge:

> I just don't think there's an awful lot of CPD [Career and Professional Development]… so in the article it said 50% of people didn't know what trans was, I mean I'm not in that camp, but I absolutely don't know enough, especially with all of the new information that is available (Nolan, Eccleston School, T1: L-283).

The views expressed by teachers are unsurprising in light of the contextual information gained through the adapted-TIBS, with all schools reporting that teachers had not received training around gender identity. Although Eccleston and Tennant school staff shared there had been some training, this had been directed to pastoral or senior staff members but not to the wider teaching body.

Although training needs were not discussed in the focus group at Whitaker School, it was reflected on within member checking, with Emmett sharing:

> The final theme on confidence resonates the most strongly with me. I think this is because I have never experienced any CPD or training on how to handle the topic of gender and so would greatly benefit from training to make me feel more confident. This is turn would stop me feeling scared to approach this topic should it arise in the school environment (Emmett, Whitaker School, MC-1).

3.4.2.5 "I think that's a really tough thing to initiate and put in place" – putting intention into practice

Knowing how to facilitate trans-spectrum-inclusive practice was a key concern raised, with uncertainties around how discussions of gender identity should be approached with young people:

> How do the school actually, how do we explain to people that a child has changed sex and is now a boy rather than a girl? That for me is the question needs help and you know we all need the same standards and we all need to be saying the same thing for it to be you know supported in the community, in our school community (Winslow, Tennant School, T3: L-277).

This was re-iterated via member checking, with Emmett reflecting: "I would also add the element of huge uncertainly surrounding how we implement practices and even how conversations should run" (Emmett, Whitaker School, MC-1).

As discussed in the first theme, there were some practical concerns regarding facility use, with reflections that "toilets and changing rooms are obviously our biggest issue with transgender students" (Cameron, Capaldi School, T4: L-356). However, this concern was not shared widely with teachers in the other schools. This is unsurprising in light of information gathered in the adapted-TIBS, as both Tennant and Eccleston School had specifically built gender neutral toilet facilities, while Whitaker School, as a single-sex school, did not have limits on which toilet facilities pupils used.

Alongside environmental considerations, teachers felt that guidance around supporting trans-spectrum pupils was limited as there was not "much specific advice for schools in how to manage it" (Rayne, Whitaker School, T5: L-270) and formalising guidance to suit the needs of the whole school community was felt to be a challenge "as where there's policy it's difficult to generalise" (Tristan, Capaldi School, T4: L-440):

> I mean we don't have specific policies do we. I think that's a really tough thing to initiate and put in place would be my personal opinion, in terms of knowing, yeah or wanting to know what the ramifications of that would be for you know, individuals, the wider group, the parents and yeah I think it would be really tough to come up with a policy that works for all of those groups of people (Emmett, Whittaker School, T5: L-253).

Despite these comments, when gathering information using the adapted-TIBS, the involved staff members at Eccleston and Whitaker School agreed or strongly agreed that staff at their school were aware of policies and procedures for supporting trans-spectrum pupils which did not resonate with

the views shared by the teachers themselves. Indeed, while teachers in Eccleston School knew their school had guidance relating to trans-spectrum pupils, they did not feel confident about its contents:

> To be honest no, yeah I haven't seen a school, I don't, I know we've got one, yeah it's coming back to the whole CPD thing isn't it that we just don't, it's just another policy and we should, we should be informed on it and know it better (Blair, Eccleston School, T1: L-443).

3.4.2.6 "But is that because we didn't have those conversations?" – reflecting on opportunities for proactive practice

Teachers felt that their school environments were generally inclusive as "people tend to take people on face value and are really easy-going… I don't think there's ever been an incident where, like I said we have odd students that tend to go down that route and everybody accepts them" (Darby, Whitaker School, T5: L-189). Teachers felt there was a general culture of acceptance and support because "our students seem quite happy, they're accepting of each other - if they're not sure about what's going on or they need extra support they know where to ask… we've worked hard to make sure that all the students are included" (Cameron, Capaldi School, T4: L-388). Despite this, there was recognition that trans-spectrum pupils may not experience school in the same way, as demonstrated in the interaction below:

> Laurel: I definitely don't see them having any animosity shown to them but I do think that there is a link between those students in different year groups … they know each other, like they've sought each other out … they do have a dialogue between them where they feel, I wouldn't say they feel they need to protect each other-
>
> Rayne: They feel victimised.
>
> Laurel: Yeah they do, they do feel-
>
> Rayne: Even though there's nothing there.
>
> Laurel: Yeah they do feel there's a, not an acceptance of them but we don't ever see any, and they don't ever come to us with any like specific incidents towards them where anything's said to them or done to them or they're ostracised, that doesn't happen, but I do feel that they feel very vulnerable.
>
> Rayne: I think it's because we don't do enough forward work around it. (Teachers from Whitaker School, T5: L-193).

Teachers recognition that trans-spectrum pupils in their school feel victimised stands in contrast to their conception that 'there's nothing there' to warrant this feeling, and might indicate a divergence

in teachers and trans-spectrum pupils' perceptions of the school environment. However, Rayne's reflection that there is not enough "forward work" indicates that even within an environment that is otherwise safe and inclusive for most pupils, there may be more work needed for trans-spectrum pupils to feel included. Similarly, teachers at Eccleston School reflected on the experiences of a transgender pupil who left the school and wondered whether there was more they could have done to prevent this:

> Nolan: maybe that was part of their decision to withdraw her, and that made us really sad because she had such a supportive year group and actually it might have been better for her and the cohort to have that experience together.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.
>
> Kai: But is that because we didn't have those conversations?
>
> Hadley: Yeah
>
> Nolan: Yeah is that because we didn't have those conversations early enough so she didn't feel comfortable to say? (Teachers from Eccleston School, T1: L-175).

As demonstrated in the above interaction, teachers engaged in a reflective process during the focus group discussions, considering current school practices, the impact this may have on trans-spectrum pupils specifically and the scope for further work towards trans-spectrum-inclusive practice.

Reflections on the scope for more proactive work continued through discussions of anti-bullying approaches. Teachers initially expressed their schools' strength in responding to homophobic or transphobic language as "staff are very good at kind of calling people out if they do say 'oh that's so gay' or whatever because it's pretty clear in our policies that that language is not going to be tolerated" (Rowan, Capaldi School, T4: L-225). However, they subsequently raised wonders around the long-term impact of reprimand and whether it would be more effective to engage pupils in broader conversations of why the language we use is important:

> I think it's really important as well with bullying that when it's picked up you're actually educating that child, it's not just a case of, you're getting you know you're having a punishment, there's nothing then, there's you know what have they learnt from that? (Blair, Eccleston School, T1: L-357).

Indeed, teachers felt that pupils often did not understand the weight of their words and are "saying it out of habit rather than actually targeted bullying towards a single group or person." (Tristan, Capaldi School, T4: L-245) or due to a lack of awareness or understanding: "like every other bully for whatever reason it's often to do with ignorance, fear and you know it's that lack of knowledge" (Mason, Tennant School, T3: L-212).

Teachers' discussions of current practices opened a space for them to reflect further on the scope for proactive action, considering educational opportunities they could undertake to promote acceptance and understanding in their pupils. Indeed, at the end of the focus group discussion at Eccleston School, the teachers reflected on next steps they would like to undertake:

> Hadley: I think I will look through our school information, and I think I need to have a conversation with our team leaders to say actually there's a massive gap missing in our policies and we need to do something.

> Nolan: Yeah and in the PSHE programme, I'm going to take that forward into the year team and try and make that change happen (Teachers from Eccleston School, T1: L-523).

3.5   Discussion

Previous research has established that trans-spectrum pupils encounter more challenging school experiences and adverse outcomes than their peers, including their queer cisgender peers (Day et al., 2018; Jones & Hillier, 2013; Ullman, 2017). Having identified the positive impact teachers can have on pupils' school experiences and outcomes (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Anderman, 2003; McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015), this study sought to understand why teachers are not yet actualising practice that supports trans-spectrum young people (Jones & Hillier, 2013; Government Equalities Office, 2018; Ullman, 2017). Building on the foundations of LGBTQ+ research, three research questions were explored, focusing on teachers' practice regarding trans-spectrum pupils specifically: What beliefs do teachers hold around trans-spectrum identities? What do teachers believe about their own ability to support trans-spectrum pupils? And what supports or hinders how teachers approach supporting trans-spectrum pupils?

In keeping with LGBTQ+ research, teachers believed that supporting trans-spectrum pupils through inclusive practice was important yet struggled to put this into action (Bartholomaeus et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Resonating with previous literature, this gap was underscored by teachers' lack of knowledge and confidence around supporting trans-spectrum young people (Collier et al., 2015; Kurian, 2019; Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2015), with teachers concerned that they would make mistakes in their practice and more specifically, that their limited knowledge would negatively impact trans-spectrum young people looking to them for support. Concerns around community resistance to trans-spectrum-inclusive practice were perceived as hindrances to teachers' practice (Smith-Millman et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2016) and appeared to be related to teachers' own conceptualisations of trans-spectrum identities and uncertainties in what would constitute appropriate practice. Indeed, echoing Smith and Payne's (2016) findings, gender essentialist narratives and a focus on trans-

spectrum pupils' biological characteristics crept into teachers' considerations of school procedures, such as the use of school facilities. These uncertainties and concerns left teachers feeling unsure how to navigate their practice with trans-spectrum young people. Additionally, contextual features of the schools in which participants worked, such as faith status, being a single-sex setting, and community diversity shaped their perspectives about possibilities of gender-inclusive practice. Furthermore, as identified in previous research, teachers had broadly defined conceptualisations of inclusion (Smith, 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). In the absence of overt discrimination, they felt there was a general culture of acceptance towards trans-spectrum young people, yet acknowledged that this was not necessarily how trans-spectrum young people themselves felt. Through the discussions that took place, teachers reflected on their capacity to engage in more proactive, targeted work, and felt that this would be important to help trans-spectrum young people feel included. Indeed, teachers articulated a strong desire to build upon their existing practice, and felt training would help them develop their confidence, knowledge and skills and enable them to be responsive educators for trans-spectrum young people.

3.5.1   Implications

The findings of this study suggest that teachers would welcome training around gender identity, which could in turn enhance their confidence in enacting trans-spectrum inclusive practice. This holds implications for professionals who work closely with teachers and schools, such as educational psychologists, who may be well-positioned to work systemically with schools, and with their own within-service reflection and engagement with trans-spectrum related professional development, may be able to support schools with such training. As well as providing discrete knowledge, such as gender identity terminology, training should encourage reflective dialogue and critical thinking. Through the focus groups themselves, teachers began to construct new understandings and ideas about how to move beyond their current working practices. For example, they considered moving beyond anti-bullying discourses towards educating pupils on the meaning and implications of their words. They considered the limitations in current school policy and environmental constraints. They further considered the need for working with the school community as a means by which to include discussions of trans-spectrum identities in school. While the purpose of the focus group was not set out to be educative, it provided a reflective space for teachers to discuss trans-spectrum identities and inclusion in a way that they had not done before. Discrete training around gender identity could similarly act as a catalyst for teachers' ongoing reflection on school practice.

Reflective practice will also be important for how schools choose to work with the wider community, which teachers felt was necessary in order to move towards better supporting trans-spectrum

pupils. School contexts and school communities vary considerably; what works for one school will not be a successful avenue for another. Indeed, knowledge of their school's context and community shaped participants' views and will be necessary to consider when developing trans-spectrum-inclusive practice. Educators should work transparently with their school communities, inviting them into an open dialogue in order to understand their needs, beliefs and concerns. In this way, moving towards new practices can be done at a pace that feels comfortable for the school community as a whole.

3.5.2 Strengths and limitations

The recruitment of 15 participants across four schools was a strength of this study, offering insight into the perspectives of teachers working across a range of settings. The use of the adapted-TIBS to provide supplementary contextual information about the schools enabled triangulation with the views shared by teachers, and provided insight when perspectives differed between schools. Further, the adapted-TIBS was a transparent way to understand the contexts in which the data was collected. This is important in regards to a possible limitation around the applicability of the discussed implications to all schools. Although the teachers involved in the study were not part of their school's senior leadership teams, involvement in the study necessitated agreement from those in positions of authority. This means participating schools were likely ones with an existing interest in developing their approaches to supporting trans-spectrum pupils, and it will be to schools such as these that the implications hold most relevance. While the adapted-TIBS does not mitigate the issue of implication applicability, it aids transparency in understanding the participating schools' practices regarding trans-spectrum pupils at the outset of the study.

A further strength is that of member checking, which was undertaken to ascertain the extent to which themes resonated with participants' own views and those expressed in their focus group or interview. It also provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on data arising from focus groups or interviews other than their own. The information gained from member checking was then integrated into the overall analysis. However, as only three of the 15 participants responded, insight into how the themes resonated with the wider participant group may be limited.

The researchers' epistemological positioning and related methodological decisions were made transparent, including the active role of the researcher regarding the co-construction of knowledge and interpretation of the data. Further transparency and epistemology-centric decisions were evident in the choice to include an individual interview. This was argued as justifiable as a focus group was taking place in the interviewee's school and their views could still be considered in

relation to collective narratives arising in their colleagues' discussions. However, with continued transparency in mind, it is necessary to acknowledge that the researcher's voice was more present in the individual interview, which in turn shaped the interaction more so than in the focus groups. In this way, knowledge constructed between the researcher and participant will have differed from that constructed amongst participants.

The role of the researcher was reflexively considered, with awareness to their own non-binary identity which was shared with participants. While the researchers' personal positioning could not be removed from the research process and indeed, was an inherent aspect of its social constructionist underpinnings, the impact this may have had on the views participants shared must be acknowledged. At the outset of each focus group, the researcher emphasised their hope that participants would feel comfortable speaking openly or asking questions. However, it is possible that participants may still have felt increased difficulty expressing perspectives they felt would counter those of the researcher or indeed of other participants. Within future research, alternative methodologies with differing epistemological underpinnings could be used to mitigate feelings of social desirability, such as gathering views through written feedback.

3.5.3   Conclusion

Building on the foundations of LGBTQ+ research, insight has been gained around teachers' beliefs of gender identity and how this influences their work with trans-spectrum pupils. While teachers felt strongly that trans-spectrum inclusion was important, they felt challenged knowing how to implement this in their practice and perceived several barriers in doing so. However, through the research process, teachers reflected on their capacity to work around such barriers and expressed a strong desire to build upon their work in this area, welcoming possibilities for training. Teachers' capacity to reflect on their practice and wider school systems was a notable strength that enabled them to conceive of ways forward, and is a skill worth harnessing. Indeed, ongoing professional reflection will be important for educators considering how to navigate trans-spectrum-inclusive practice within their specific school contexts.

Appendix A   Quality assurance tool: Manchester framework for qualitative studies (Bond et al., 2013)

Criterion	Score	R1	R2	Agree coeff.	R1	R2	Agree coeff.	Comment
Appropriateness of the research design *e.g. rationale vis-à-vis aims, links to previous approaches, limitations*	1 0							
Clear sampling rationale *e.g. description, justification; attrition evaluated*	1 0							
Well executed data collection *e.g. clear details of who, what, how; effect of methods on data quality*	1 0							
Analysis close to the data, *e.g. researcher can evaluate fit between categories/ themes and data.*	2 1 0							
Evidence of explicit reflexivity *e.g. impact of researcher, limitations, data validation (e.g. inter-coder validation), researcher philosophy/ stance evaluated.*	2 1 0							
Comprehensiveness of documentation *e.g. schedules, transcripts, thematic maps, paper trail for external audit*	1 0							
Negative case analysis, *e.g. contrasts/ contradictions/ outliers within data; categories/ themes as dimensional; diversity of perspectives.*	1 0							

Clarity and coherence of the reporting *e.g. clear structure, clear account linked to aims, key points highlighted*	**1** **0**							
Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation of meanings, *e.g. member checking, empower participants.*	**1** **0**							
Emergent theory related to the problem, *e.g. abstraction from categories/ themes to model/ explanation.*	**1** **0**							
Valid and transferable conclusions *e.g. contextualised findings; limitations of scope identified.*	**1** **0**							
Evidence of attention to ethical issues *e.g. presentation, sensitivity, minimising harm, feedback*	**1** **0**							
Total	*Max 14*		Mean coeff.			Mean coeff.		

Note. In quality assessing studies using the Manchester framework, the researcher used the criterion to attribute a 'score'. The R1 and R2 rating columns which refer to inter-rater reliability were not used.

Appendix B   Thematic synthesis stage 1 to stage 2:

descriptive themes developed from initial codes

A. School context influences inclusive practices
- 40. Presence of wider school support
- 33. School context shapes practice
- 9. Gate-keeping and systemic barriers

B. Heteronormative values are a dominant discourse
- 13. Unwritten rules underpinned by heteronormativity
- 26. Heteronormativity as the default
- 20. Homo-normative constructions of LGBTQ identities

C. Challenging dominant discourses
- 44. Normalising LGBTQ identities
- 25. Challenging sterotypes
- 37. Actively disrupting heteronormativity in class or curriculum

D. Teachers as role models beyond the formal curriculum
- 15. School staff influence LGBTQ pupils' sense of safety and belonging
- 29. Care for pupils is of central importance
- 36. Teachers have a professional and ethical responsibility
- 28. Teachers model and teach an invisible curriculum
- 11. Personal vs professional views

E. Weighing up professional risks
- 19. Teachers consider risks and repercussions
- 46. Considerations of queer teachers

F. Teacher confidence engaging with LGBTQ content
- 10. Appropriateness concerns
- 6. Avoiding content or conversations perceived as tricky
- 3. Leaning into discomfort
- 43. Knowledge, training and skills
- 38. Fear of getting it wrong
- 27. Space for staff reflection

G. Learning from and with pupils through reciprocol dialogue
- 17. Open and honest dialogue with students
- 22. Following children's lead
- 41. Building on children's own experiences
- 34. Teachers can learn from pupils' knowledge and experiences
- 4. Adult vs child lens

H. Young people are capable of engaging with LGBTQ content
- 1. Children are capable of understanding and accepting LGBT identities
- 12. Making LGBTQ content and materials accessible to YP
- 21. Books, media and literature as gateway to discussion
- 24. Children can generalise new understandings
- 31. Children can relate and empathise
- 47. Young people have built understandings through media and popular culture

I. Strategic implementation of LGBTQ content
- 14. Minimising overt displays of LGBTQ content
- 32. Curriculum as pathway to LGBTQ focus in schools
- 7. Drawing on shared values to integrate LGBTQ content
- 35. Positioning inclusion of diversity as good for everyone

J. Working with the community
- 18. Fear of community backlash
- 39. Balancing different groups' needs
- 45. Communication between all involved parties
- 42. Engaging proactively with parents and the community

K. Holistic appraoches to LGBTQ inclusion
- 16. Bullying discourse to LGBTQ inclusion
- 2. Universal approach to diversity and inclusion
- 23. Pedagogy of exposure
- 30. Using inclusive language
- 5. Integrated approach vs tokenism
- 8. Reactive vs proactive inclusivity

Figure 5   Thematic synthesis stage 1 to stage 2 - descriptive themes developed from initial codes using NVivo12. Items numbered 1-47 indicate the initial codes developed during stage one of the thematic synthesis. Items lettered A-K indicate the 11 descriptive themes developed from the initial codes.

Appendix C   Descriptive themes identified in each reviewed study with illustrative quotes

Table 5   Descriptive themes identified in the reviewed studies 1-7 with supporting quotations

Descriptive Theme	Reviewed studies 1-7						
	Bentley and Souto-Manning (2016)	Carlile (2019)	Cullen and Sandy (2009)	Evans and Rawlings (2019)	Fredman et al. (2015)	Helmer (2016)	Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2019)
School context influences inclusive practices					"Nathan, also reported feeling curricular restraints from administration, explaining 'I mean, there's certain plays that I'd love to do that deal with sexuality and gay issues and stuff like that . . . but the administration would never let me do it.'" (Page 74)		
Heteronormative values are a dominant discourse	"The prince wasn't married, his mother wanted him to marry, and so all of the princesses came before him. And then he saw	"Whilst Poppy School's approach to maintaining personal boundaries could be seen as homonormative, it does suggest that LGBTQ-inclusive	"Within the set of cultural discourses open to the children, the sissy ducking cannot be read as a gender-transgressive character within the	"The correct use of gender neutral pronouns such as "they" was an area that Liam identified that many students initially	"The hesitation that educators expressed may be related to the fact that in a heteronormative society, avoiding talk about LGBTQ issues in not considered	"Here, students clearly distinguished between acceptable gay people who perform in normative ways	

	the right one…. 'Wait! That's not a princess!' was the first cry. 'No, it's not,' I said, 'Look carefully at who the prince chooses.' The class watched and murmured, the peace of the expected story disrupted by its departure from the traditional." (Page 195 – 196)	education programmes could potentially include materials on marriage and similar relationships between LGBTQ people specifically to support schools serving faith communities." (Page17)	heteronormative space of the primary school classroom. The 'racialised' discourse of hypermasculine 'coolness' of the sissy duckling as a 'pimp', as heterosexually desirable and successful, somewhat blunted Fin's initial reading of the duck as a strong characterization of a potentially feminized lead character." (Page 147)	struggled with." (Page 10)	controversial." (Page 68)	and the 'less socially acceptable' ones who transgress gender norms." (Page 42)	
Challenging dominant discourses			"'I found it difficult to decide what kind of Cinderella I would be. I didn't want to be completely feminine because the children see loads of very feminine fairy tale characters all the time and yet they also seem to think that all lesbians look like men so I wanted to challenge that in			"This experiential learning activity created a powerful queer moment through which common sense notions about sexual identity and the illusion of the 'straight' classroom were productively disrupted." (Page 45)	

			them too. So I decided to be definitely female but not pink and pretty. I wore boots and a sparkly wig and a skirt and a leather jacket.'" (Page 150)				
Teachers as role models beyond the formal curriculum				"Liam identified the teachers as strong role models in this process, stating 'if a teacher's calling them the wrong name, it's unlikely that the year group's going to follow up on it.'" (Page 10)	"As a result of following the rule of not talking about LGBTQ issues, educators, either knowingly or unknowingly, reproduced the existence of this heteronormative rule, which involved passing the rule of silence on to their students." (Page 66)	"This is reflected in Sara's approach to her curriculum design as documented in her master's degree thesis: Curriculum is more about teachers fully educating their students – intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally – than it is about educators following a script." (Page 39)	"It is the adults' responsibility, she argued, 'to help children navigate these difficult topics and to help them process the feelings that come up for them, in a positive way.'" (Page 94)
Weighing up professional risks	"There are questions that plague me every day, every time I gingerly dip my foot into political work with pre-schoolers. Are they ready? Are	"'I think that teachers do have a great deal of fear over the sort of hangovers from Section 28 and just thinking 'can I say it, can't I say it, do I need to check with	"For Laura, as the teacher, the process was both 'fun' and 'scary' as she enjoyed the engagement of the children in this piece of drama, and yet remained acutely		"As educators described the substantial power of school systems, they explained that they evaluate risk in two main ways: (a) by identifying a personal threshold		"Nevertheless, the potential for parental resistance to their LGBTQ-inclusive teaching and their fear of what might happen if it occurred informed

	their parents ready? What is the general temperature of the administration these days? Will I lose my job?" (Page 196)	the parents first, will I get in trouble, am I trampling on their religion, is it going to just open up a whole can of worms that I just . . . haven't got time to deal with?' and 'oh maybe it's just best not to say it'". (Page 12)	aware of the blurred lines between her identity as the class teacher and of Cindy." (Page 150)		in regard to their personal lives and energy capacity; and (b) by measuring threats to their job satisfaction and security." (Page 69)		Linda and Fern's choices at many points in their separate pedagogical processes." (Page 91)
Teacher confidence engaging with LGBTQ content		"Perhaps this reluctance to go beyond reactive 'tolerance' … was because staff felt it was inappropriate to mention LGBTQ people in a primary school as they could not detach this from the idea of an adult sexual relationship" (Page 8)	"Yet the very depiction of the two men sharing a bed created some concerns that the text was 'too smutty'. Indeed, as one teacher-researcher's colleague commented: I was decidedly uncomfortable reading this book. The illustrations were off-putting, particularly the older man who was portrayed as a 'stereotypical gay'". (Page 146)		"Natalie expressed a similar desire for training as she described her feelings of inadequacy at times in addressing LGBTQ topics, saying that while she worries that she will not know what to say, she has determined that saying something is better than not saying anything at all." (Page 76)		

Learning from and with pupils through reciprocal dialogue	"It is this environment that sustains political work, creating spaces whereby children can ask challenging questions, challenge their own biases, and most importantly, feel secure in bringing their whole selves into the conversation. The connections with and between the children will carry and shape the conversation." (Page 197)	"'I think the thing that's created the change more than anything is teachers having the opportunity to actually hear children's opinions and hear just how sensibly and how sensitively and respectfully children can talk about LGBTQ issues.'" (Page 10)	"Here, we have an 'adult parental response to a text that is aimed at children. Yet, it is clear throughout this project that there can be disparities between the readings by the adults in the project and the children in the participant schools." (Page 146)	"However, the positive examples, where supportive and safe learning environments had been created, were when teachers had collaborated and listened to students views and heard their experiences." (Page 11)		"For Sara, this means 'opening up' and 'integrating personal voice and experience into the classroom' while also 'moving beyond the self' through open dialogue." (Page 39)	"Linda's answer reflected her beliefs about how classrooms are not meant to be protective bubbles that shield children from the real world, but spaces where diverse people can engage ideas with the help and guidance of more knowledgeable others." (Page 94)
Young people are capable of engaging with LGBTQ content	"The class understood exactly what the story was about. They had processed it and deemed it perfectly acceptable, 'as long as they are both grown ups, and somebody asked first.' These were the major	"'We were looking at poetry . . . about cold and . . . it was like "cold as a woman, she is soft snow, she kisses your lips. Cold as a man, he is hard and cruel" and this was to year 6's [aged 10 to 11] last year . . . and one boy . . . went "so, basically, the cold used to be	"For example, in one session a pupil, unprompted, suggested the inclusion of a bisexual character, bringing new insights and characterization that did not exist in the original book. Indeed, a 'real-life' postscript to the Roy and Silo romance			"In the Gay and Lesbian Literature class, students not only encountered texts that served as counter-narratives by providing positive representations of same-sex desires, relationships and identities but they also produced their own counter-	"Linda also recounted how a grandmother of another student came into the classroom to observe and left feeling 'impressed with [the students'] ability to have a deep discussion about an issue, as

	parameters of concern, not same-sex marriage." (Page 199)	a woman and then became a man", and then another girl . . . went, "what you mean, the word is transgendered" and all the class went "yeah Aisha!"-fantastic!'" (Page 13)	would include the dissolving of the partnership, and the subsequent partnering of one of the penguins with a female bird." (Page 145)			narratives." (Page 43)	opposed to just sitting and listening to somebody just lecture about stuff.'" (Page 91)
Strategic implementation of LGBTQ content		"A bullying approach was also seen by some as a strategic way to get an LGBTQ focus agreed by school governors … 'they don't want to really say "yes or no" [to starting the LGBTQ inclusive education programme] and I was like 'thing is they're the people most likely to get bullied are going to be straight kids because there's just more of them, and we don't want your children being in a school where they're going to get bullied.'" (Page 8)			"Kate, a middle school health educator, described the way in which she uses curriculum to support her conversations surrounding LGBTQ topics in her classroom: 'When we do have the conservative parent raise the question, we can say, "This has been approved by our advisory panel," and all of us, as educators, are using the same language and the same lessons so that it's uniform, it's consistent, and that then they don't really have wiggle		"Linda also chose to explicitly share these frameworks and units with parents at the beginning of the year to inform them of the kinds of texts and approaches she would be using, but she was particular about the words she used to describe them." (Page 92)

					room. Like we've done our appropriate steps, and there needs to be representation of all people, going back to the foundation of respect.'" (Page 67)		
Working with the community				"This relational work between students, teachers and the broader school community proved important to the participants' experiences of school and the initiatives that schools put in place to support them." (Page 10)			"When responding to parents who objected to their LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, Linda and Fern invited parents into dialogue, rather than responding from a place of defensiveness. In this way, the teachers reframed parental concern and resistance into a genuine inquiry about her enactment of curriculum." (Page 94)
Holistic approaches to LGBTQ inclusion		"' and I'm really pleased that they answer in that way because it shows me that . . . they're			"Darla encouraged these small marks of progress, promoting 'Just baby steps. It doesn't have to be a		"For example, Linda and her gradelevel team members often used a larger unit,

| | | not seeing it as standing apart, and when [student 1] said 'maths is maths', that's completely him, all he cares about is maths so if it had two women or two men in the word problem they wouldn't even notice because all he would focus on is the maths, and that's the only thing that was important to him is getting the right answer, you know that's the thing that would matter to him.'" (Page 11) | | | full lesson.' She gave an example of talking about the Holocaust and groups of people who were killed by Hitler, including gay and lesbian identifying individuals. 'Do you have to teach a 45-minute lesson? No. You could just say that. So baby steps get people to realize that it can be integrated, but it is controversial.'" (Page 74 – 75) | | frequently a year-long inquiry, to frame their curricular choices. Linda, for example, used an exploration of 'being problem solvers' as an opportunity to read LGBTQ-inclusive books alongside books about other issues of oppression, such as racism, classism, and sexism." (Page 92) |

Table 6   Descriptive themes identified in the reviewed studies 8-14 with supporting quotations

Descriptive Theme	Reviewed studies 8-14						
	Kelly (2012)	Martino and Cumming-Potvin (2016)	Meyer and Leonardi (2018)	Pearce and Cumming-Potvin (2017)	Ryan et al. (2013)	Tompkins et al. (2018)	Ullman (2018)

School context influences inclusive practices	"The other significant ingredient in the smooth progress and perceived success of this research is the inclusive culture of this urban kindergarten where diversity in various guises has always been celebrated although not necessarily reflected in curriculum resources." (Page 297)	"It is important to emphasize that she felt that she had to navigate how to deal with explicitly deploying texts that introduced topics such as same-sex families and relationships, given the specific context where members of the broader community were raising objections to teachers addressing heterosexism and specifically non-normative sexuality in the classroom." (Page 815)	"Another elementary educator, explained that in his large urban district it is easier to proactively address gender and sexual diversity topics because of the diversity that is inherent in being situated in a large urban area." (Page 453)	"Homophobia was reported to be particularly widespread in the boys' schools mentioned during interviews, with the normalisation of homophobic bullying (T1; T7; T8) and a 'blokey' culture (T9) limiting possibilities for teachers to explore issues of gender and sexuality with students." (Page 81)		"Virginia, another teacher candidate, also spoke of how important it was for her to be nested in a supportive environment as her sense of social justice was developing." (Page 691)	"'Because, as I said, the statement of equity and diversity comes from the board, as a classroom teacher I was never worried to have the conversations I felt I needed to have, or to introduce the lessons that I felt were appropriate.' (Teacher, School C)" (Page 506)
Heteronormative values are a dominant discourse	"Nevertheless not everyone positioned same gender relationships similarly, as Sarah's comments highlight: My husband actually said	"Thus, we see how Janice's frames of intelligibility are mediated by her particular heteronormative context, and specifically by the disciplining and regulatory effects of parental moral	"This approach places the focus of the problem on the transgender body, not on the teachers or schools embedded in a culture of cisnormativity." (Page 454)	"The misogynistic environment of many schools, particularly (but not exclusively) of all boys' schools, further entrenches stereotypical ideas about sexuality, such as	"Students remained confused throughout the episode about whether being transgender meant that you were gay, especially since they were reading about a gender-nonconforming gay		"…educators externalised the source of the difficulty (e.g. conservatism, silences, marginalisation) in the households and local communities that shaped the student body,

	'you need to be careful that you don't portray it as being the norm'. Which I thought was really interesting because he's not a teacher and [yet] this is one of his main concerns and worries." (Page 297)	authority and disapproval that were communicated indirectly via the children's comments in response to her pedagogical interventions." (Page 819)		women with short hair must be lesbians and men who are gentle must be gay (T7; T8), and constrains possibilities for exploring issues of gender and sexuality (T9)" (Page 86)	character and many of the slurs they had heard used against people crossing gender boundaries were homophobic slurs. One student even wondered if it would be possible to change genders to partner with a person you liked—a hypothetical scenario that allowed him to think through why some individuals would want to change their gender…" (Page 97)		without acknowledging how the schooling environment itself might reinforce and socially reward those attitudes." (Page 504)
Challenging dominant discourses	"During one storytelling, a child argued that one of the mums was really a dad. Bella returned to an early page where it stated these were two mums to clarify the confusion." (Page 294)	"Janice then was careful to disrupt such bifurcated gendering practices by presenting her grade 2 students with "a whole bunch of different pictures" including representations of girls playing soccer, girls playing with trucks which she juxtaposed with representations of boys playing with hula hoops and			"Maree responded to this story by saying, 'Maybe they're still living between both lives.' While Maree's 'still' reinforces an impending transition between two gender options, the student's story and the idea of having more than one option for one's gender presentation highlighted the idea that gender is not	"In another instance, when giving students a choice of books, some that may be "stereotypically" characterized as male, female, or neutral, Rosemary was sure to say to the students, 'none of these books are specifically for girls or boys. You can pick whatever book you want to pick.'" (Page 686)	"Instead, these educators tended to work for visibility and normalisation of trans/gender-diversity both with respect to individual students but also, more broadly, for the enrichment of the whole school community, since the identity-work central to children's and adolescents' conceptualisations of gender were

			playing with dolls." (Page 819)			singular and that a person can embody various gender expressions." (Page 97)		perceived as relevant to all." (Page 504)
Teachers as role models beyond the formal curriculum			"'So as an example, before Day of Pink, we were reading My Princess Boy (Kilodavis 2010), and we were having the discussion about that and I was reading that – I was just more conscious of the fact that it was important for this student to hear that that's okay from the teacher.'" (Page 453)	"Many teachers had become allies of LGBT students, or made a point of being role models to students and colleagues (T2) by 'not being bystanders' and 'calling out' pejorative language (T7), 'being vigilant' (T8), and helping students 'feel normal' by choosing texts that reflect a spectrum of genders and sexualities (T2)." (Page 84)	"Her unsensationalized and empathetic statements modelled for her students the way she expected them to contribute to the discussion when she opened the floor to their comments." (Page 97)	"Rosemary's comments seem to suggest that she understood the influence of informal curricula upon children's understanding of gender and that it was important for her to emphasize inanimate items, like books, as un-gendered." (Page 686)	"Because individual student need was positioned as both the catalyst and the rationale for inclusivity of trans/gender-diversity, educators within this cluster failed to see themselves as complicit in the social marginalisation of GSD students." (Page 503)
Weighing up professional risks		"Given the context of her specific board where these prohibitions against homosexuality (Rasmussen, 2006)				"Although Kathy explained that she 'never said that I had a girlfriend. I never said that I was gay or straight' in the	"'What we know in this district (and it's true in many districts) is, again, that minefield. It only takes one. It only

		were being endorsed in the broader community, Janice acknowledged her intensified awareness and need to protect oneself from being implicated in "pushing a gay agenda"". (Page 815)				classroom; in fact, Kathy explained that she 'talked…a lot about [her] cat.' Kathy said that she did this consciously, as she 'didn't want them to define me as the gay teacher teaching gay stuff.'" (Page 689)	takes one parent to – and maybe something else goes on in the classroom that's kind of circumstantial but coincides and ends up being a kind of a – ends up being a wedge for removal – especially [for] untenured [teachers]'. (Principal, School G)" (Page 505)
Teacher confidence engaging with LGBTQ content		"Janice openly acknowledged that she chose to employ 'teachable moments' rather than direct approaches which might involve teacher-initiated definitions of 'gay'". (Page 815)	"'And I remember as a student myself feeling very intimidated, surrounded by all these equity people, being like I'm going to offend someone by saying the wrong thing.'" (Page 457)	"While the teachers agreed that English potentially provides a unique context in which to explore risky or difficult ideas such as gender and sexuality, not all participants had actually taken steps to introduce LGBT issues in their English classrooms." (Page 84)		"Witnessing her cooperative teacher's creation of inclusive moments appears to have increased her confidence in this area." (Page 690)	"'We often talk about leaning into discomfort. We have those really hard conversations and we are willing to – and we want families and students to be willing to – have those kinds of conversations'. (Director of Admissions Outreach, School D)" (Page 506)

Learning from and with pupils through reciprocal dialogue		"As already pointed out, she spoke of being 'strategic' in her pedagogical approach in drawing on student comments, such as 'you're so gay,' to open up conversations about homophobia and to build knowledge about the reality of same-sex desire, and to introduce her students to both its recognisability and avowal." (Page 817)			"Overall, Maree established a particular learning environment, but it was the students' own experiences with gender that provided the impetus for their in-depth conversations, including some initial, surface-level recognition of the existence of gender-nonconforming and transgender people." (Page 92)	"'I had planned to only spend a period on LGBTQ issues, but my students just got so into it, so we spent two and a half periods on it.'" (Page 687)	"'It's a good opportunity for the teachers to kind of see that work being done, see those lessons, hear the language, and then kind of extend that into their own classrooms. That's something that works really well … [for teachers] to see their children being okay with it and understanding it. (Teacher, School C)'" (Page 502)
Young people are capable of engaging with LGBTQ content	"Edith relayed a story about role allocation in a tiger game: Child X: I'm the daddy tiger. Child M: I'm the baby tiger. Child S: I'm the daddy tiger. Child X: There are two daddy tigers. Edith: There are	"'This kid had one of the books open and was sitting with her buddy and pointing to two women and saying so this is a lesbian couple and then they would turn it … and this is a gay man couple, and I was sitting there going yay and it is just so matter-		"One teacher (T3) reported their perception of an increased acceptance by their peers of those students who are openly exploring their sexuality, and of greater 'tolerance' of students with diverse	"This discussion led some students to connect their learning to gender-Non-conforming children they knew, including ones at their school. One child indicated knowing a boy who 'acts like a girl' and wears dresses. Another student offered, 'I know a	"'It was nice. There was a boy in the front and he said "well a girl wrote it, so it has to be about a boy." And one of the kids that usually just sits there and doodles shot their hand up and they were like "No, it can be about anyone; it can be about a boy and a boy, a girl and a girl or both or neither, anything you want it to be, it is just	"'The other thing we have is called 'town meetings', once a week, which is led by us. … The kids come together in multi-grade groups to talk just about social justice, and to talk about whatever the word of the month is. It's a good opportunity for the teachers to kind of

	two daddy tigers in your family… (Edith's journal)" (Page 295)	of-fact.'" (Page 822)		sexualities. Another participant spoke of how students are becoming 'more accepting' of each other (T6)" (Page 81)	girl who acts like a boy and she wants to be a boy.'" (Page 92)	two people"…I thought it was so great that a 12-year-old is getting it.'" (Page 688)	see that work being done, see those lessons, hear the language, and then kind of extend that into their own classrooms. That's something that works really well … [for teachers] to see their children being okay with it and understanding it.' (Teacher, School C)" (Page 502)
Strategic implementation of LGBTQ content		"Overall, Janice identified her distinctive pedagogical approach around strategically orchestrated homophobic utterances by students and officially sanctioned events such as the Pink Shirt Day as a means by which to consciously weave and integrate LGTBQthemed literacy resources into the curriculum." (Page		"The teacher interviewees appeared well aware of ACARA's curriculum goals and rationale statements, and utilized them explicitly to justify the educational goals of acknowledging the needs of individual students and of encouraging an accepting and safe classroom			

		822)		environment" (Page 83)			
Working with the community		"Janice openly acknowledged that she chose to employ "teachable moments," rather than direct approaches which might involve teacher-initiated definitions of "gay." It is important to emphasize that she felt that she had to navigate how to deal with explicitly deploying texts that introduced topics such as same-sex families and relationships, given the specific context where members of the broader community were raising objections to teachers addressing heterosexism and specifically non-normative sexuality in the classroom." (Page 815)					"'A lot of them have never even thought about this idea of gender in terms of a spectrum so just even getting them to think that way might be totally new for them. This idea that, yes, your orientation isn't – it's different from your gender and your expression so … even to think about their families in terms of maybe educating them in that area is something.' (Teacher, School F)" (Page 504)

Holistic approaches to LGBTQ inclusion		"…she worked indefatigably to normalize same-sex desire and gender variance, particularly in terms of the matter of factness with which she introduced and sustained a pedagogical focus on both sexual and gender differences, inserting them at every opportune teachable moment into the social imaginary of her students so that they could be incorporated into and conceived, through their reiteration, as just an ordinary part of the diversity of everyday lived experience." (Page 821)	"We argue that schools need to … create spaces that assume gender, sexual and family diversity are always present and therefore make efforts to recognise and affirm a diverse population of students and families through curriculum, norms and everyday practices so that ongoing efforts are not 'blamed' on or land on particular students more intensely." (Page 455)	"Teacher participants agreed that there is space in Australian Curriculum to be colonised for social justice purposes (T9), with teachers making use of possibilities for 'slipping in' (T2) texts, activities or items for discussion in which LGBT young people or their families were represented." (Page 84)	"It was through these new sets of relations that students constructed a deeper awareness of the multiple and varied connections between gender expression and gender identity. This depth of learning did not develop from one lesson but had to be built and deepened over time." (Page 101)	"Carl explained that he used 'case studies' in his class and 'went through different justice issues with the civil rights movement…women's rights…[and] Aboriginal rights." Later, Carl noted, "one of the issues that we talked about was LGBTQ issues and [its] history.'" (Page 687)	

Appendix D   Articles shared during focus groups and interview

D.1   Article 1: Online news article from The Independent

Top London girls school allows pupils to identity as male of gender neutral

Rachael Pells Education Correspondent @rachaelpells

Monday 20 February 2017 14:02

A top London girls' school has introduced a "gender identity protocol", allowing pupils to use boys' names and wear boys' clothes should they wish to.

St Paul's girls' school in west London will now consider requests from students from the age of 16 to go through a formal process to be known within the school either as boys or gender neutral.

The move is said to be in response to increasing numbers of young people asking to change the gender they are identified by, headteacher Clarissa Farr told *The Sunday Times*.

LGBT campaigners have praised the school's decision as a "sensible and smart" move.

A Stonewall spokesperson said: "This move signifies St Paul's Girls' support for a world where all people are accepted without exception.

"We welcome all efforts to support young people on trans and gender identity issues and ensure that they feel happy, welcome and accepted at school."

As many as 10 girls in St Paul's sixth form have already gone through the formal process within the school either as boys or gender neutral.

Pupils aged 11-15 "can have discussions at any time" to explore their gender identity and will receive help and support to prepare for an application "at the right time".

The private school, whose former pupils include Harriet Harman and Rachel Weisz, states it "takes a neutral stance, neither encouraging nor discouraging" the decision.

Students who wish to be known as male or gender neutral within the school must send a written request, setting out their wishes and reasoning, before receiving counselling and pastoral support "to help them debate and reflect".

Ms Farr added: "We have had an LGBT society for a long time. The school is very relaxed about sexual orientation but this is a different issue. This is about gender reassignment. That is a new thing for us.

"We consulted the pupils to find out what the issues were. Their main preoccupation has been to look after people who don't want to identify as one gender or another."

Under the school's charter, the parents of those girls who apply to change identity would "ordinarily" be expected to know about the request and "preferably" would be "fully involved in such discussions".

While new names are used on sports team lists, with families abroad on exchange visits, in assemblies and lessons, the charter makes clear that pupils' original names as stated on their birth certificate must still be used in public exams, on the school website and in letters to parents and school reports.

If a pupil had fully transitioned and become legally male they could no longer be a pupil, the protocol states, because St Paul's is a girls' school.

Ms Farr added that no pupil had yet come forward to be counselled on whether to embark on medical procedures to change sex.

"We are only able to educate students who are legally and physically female," the document says.

"The school will not admit pupils who are physically and/or legally male, nor therefore will it normally be able to continue to educate anyone who has transitioned fully and become physically and/or legally male."

Sue Sanders, chair of Schools Out UK, called the new protocol a "sensible and smart" move.

"The gender fluidity of young people has become more pronounced in the last three to four years; there is a growing confidence in young people to challenge binary constraints," she said.

"This is really about organisations keeping up with how people are perceiving themselves – this is part of the whole process of exploding those gender boxes."

D.2   Article 2: Online news article from The Guardian

'I know what it's like to be a trans teen at school. Here's how to deal with the bullying'

Aimee Challenor

27th June, 2017

A new report shows 64% of trans pupils are bullied for their gender identity. But some small actions can help change lives.

'When I was in school, I wasn't taught about LGBT issues, aside from one half-hour lesson on same-sex marriage.' Photograph: Jonathan Cherry/The Guardian

Bullying and hate speech daily affects how pupils perform – it seems obvious, right? So why are we still failing LGBT+ pupils? During my time at secondary school I felt anxious, isolated, lonely and depressed; there were no adults at school I felt like I could talk to about being trans. Turns out I'm not alone.

According to the School Report, released today by LGBT charity Stonewall, 53% of LGBT young people said the same. In fact, more than 40% of trans students said that teaching staff at their school don't even know what the word "trans" means. This is a huge issue, particularly as 64% of trans pupils are bullied for being transgender. For lesbian, gay and bi young people who aren't trans, this bullying figure is 45%.

 When LGBT young people are bullied and teased at school, or receive inadequate support from teaching staff, it has a direct impact on our mental health. The Department of Health needs to work with the Department for Education to encourage greater awareness of mental health issues, especially those that affect the LGBT community.

School Report found that more than 80% of trans young people have self-harmed. For lesbian, gay and bi young people who aren't trans, this figure was about 60%. These figures are extremely worrying, and the bullying and isolation that can lead to this behaviour must be addressed. But this goes further than the classroom, corridors and playground: social media and the internet can also be dangerous places for LGBT young people. Some 40% of LGBT young people say they've been the

target of online abuse, and a staggering 97% say they see homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic content online.

Schools must do their bit too in helping to create an inclusive curriculum where LGBT issues are included and visible. When I was in school, I wasn't taught about LGBT issues, aside from one half-hour lesson on same-sex marriage. Even then, the impression given by teaching staff was that this was a lesson we were having because they "had to" teach it, not because they wanted to or believed in what was being said. With little information or support available at school, I used the internet, and it was online that I was able to find the resources to come out. But that same thing that helped me to tell people who I was today leaves me upset, anxious, and sometimes scared for my safety.

We can start with getting the basics right – making sure we're preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying in our day-to-day lives. If you see it, call it out. It's important that we show clear leadership to younger people, setting an example by working to put a stop to bullying and hate speech in our wider communities.

Schools must do their bit too in helping to create an inclusive curriculum where LGBT issues are included and visible. A huge part of that involves relationships and sex education (RSE) and ensuring that it is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people and their relationships. I was pleased to see the previous (2015–2017) government put personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE) into the national curriculum, but we need to make sure that it is inclusive, so that young LGBT pupils can have the education they need.

And things are getting better. Over the past five years, levels of anti-LGBT bullying have decreased, as has anti-LGBT language. More schools are ensuring lessons include different families and identities, and young people are seeing more teaching staff condemn anti-LGBT behaviour.

This progress is encouraging, and demonstrates the strides being made by some fantastic teachers, young people and MPs across Britain. It must continue.

D.3 Article 3: Extracts from the 'Transgender Trend' group's web page and resource pack

Transgender Trend – Who are we?

We are a group of parents based in the UK who are concerned about the current trend to diagnose children as transgender, including the unprecedented number of teenage girls suddenly self-identifying as 'trans' (Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria or ROGD). We are also concerned about legislation which places transgender rights above the right to safety for girls and young women in public toilets and changing rooms along with fairness for girls in sport. We have no religious or political affiliation. We come from diverse backgrounds, some with expertise in child development and psychology, some who were themselves extreme gender non-conforming children and adolescents, some whose own children have self-diagnosed as 'trans' and some who know supportive trans adults who are also questioning recent theories of 'transgenderism.'

Introduction

We have developed this guidance in partnership with teachers, lawyers and child welfare staff to help primary and secondary school professionals navigate the challenges raised by new transgender schools guidelines and to help teachers develop the confidence to manage these issues in day-to-day school life, so that all children feel supported and safe.

Policy, good practice and school rules

- Policy development - ensure that your equality, anti-bullying and safeguarding policies reference the needs of transgender children.

- All policies must be in line with a school's overarching safeguarding, equality and anti-bullying policies and in line with your Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board.

- Schools should be cautious of giving a transgender child rights that are not afforded to other children. For example, the right to wear trousers for only girls who identify as boys or the right to wear make-up or high heels for self-identified girls where these things are prohibited for other girls.

- School rules should adopt a consistent approach to interests and personal style (clothing, hairstyles, footwear) without having special rules for a transgender child.

Sex-segregated facilities

- Decisions made about use of sex-segregated facilities such as changing rooms and toilets can be challenging. Where schools are able to offer additional gender neutral facilities in addition to sex segregated facilities then everyone is able to access appropriate provisions while maintaining privacy, dignity and safety for all.

- Society operates on the basis of sex-segregation of facilities where people undress and use toilets. If schools remove this right then many girls and boys will be unable to participate in sports, swimming and other aspects of school life.

Talking with other children

- The school should aim to avoid any transgender child becoming a 'cause celebre' through the actions of the school. Schools are a learning environment and for children experiencing emotionally challenging situations, routine and boundaries are important.

- With young children it is a challenging task for a school to explain a biologically impossible situation (e.g. that a child has changed sex and is now a boy rather than a girl) to young children. To date there is no evidence as to the psychological impact on other children of presenting this confusion between sex and gender. The school should agree on as straightforward as possible an explanation, ideally in the form of a script, which must be shared with and used by all adults in a school.

- Bear in mind a pupil may disclose to their peer group. If this happens schools may need to consider how to discuss the issue with small groups of peers and possibly the wider school community where appropriate.

Transgender, gay, lesbian, ASD or troubled teenager?

At secondary school age, teenage girls have overtaken and now vastly outnumber teenage boys (in referrals to gender clinics adolescent girls are the fastest growing group).This suggests that girls may experience greater problems with adolescent changes than boys, which may be connected to discomfort with bodily functions like menstruation, sudden sexual attention, pressure to look 'hot' and the unrealistic expectations of girls due to a sexualised porn culture.

Secondary school teachers need to pay special attention to 'humanising' girls who are waking up to the fact that women are routinely objectified and dehumanised throughout the media. A unisex uniform of trousers for all may help take some pressure off girls of this age. Teachers should also be aware of the risk of 'social contagion' from celebrity trans internet vloggers who glamorise medical transition. Teenage girls are the biggest users of social media platforms online.

The majority of teenage girls identifying as 'trans' are lesbians. Children and adolescents of both sexes on the autism spectrum also tend towards gender non-conformity and are over-represented at gender clinics. There is concern in some areas that these young people may be vulnerable to interpreting their non-conformity as a sign that they are transgender.

D.4   Article 4: Extracts from Northern Ireland's Education Authority

Guidance for Schools

Guidance for Schools, EOTAS Centres and Youth Service on Supporting Transgender Young People

5. What does the law say?

5.1 Schools should ensure that transgender young people, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other young people. In particular, schools should take care when employing blanket policies and consider whether an exception can be made to reduce any disadvantage that the transgender young person may face. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland recommends that schools adopt a best practice approach to the treatment of particular groups of young people, more specifically that:

'Good practice extends beyond the mere letter of the law to include pupils who are disadvantaged because they are transgender, or because of their religious belief and political opinion'.[9]

6. Transition

6.1 Not all transgender young people will want to change how they express their gender identity. However, some may wish to *socially transition*. Social transition usually involves a young person wearing clothes, adopting a different name or using the facilities which corresponds with their gender identity.

6.2 Some young people socially transition as a way of alleviating gender dysphoria (the discomfort or distress that is caused by a difference between a young person's gender identity and their sex assigned at birth) or as a way of exploring life in another gender role. Social transition does not have to be an all or nothing approach and should always be led by the young person, taking into account their age, developmental stage and understanding.

7. Developing support plan – specific issues

7.1 There is no formal evaluation or diagnosis that a young person needs to provide to have their gender identity recognised and respected. However, where a young person requests to transition at school or other educational setting, it is good practice for the designated person to develop a support plan, in consultation with the young person and their parents. This will help clarify expectations and avoid any misunderstandings or breaches of confidentiality. The support plan should establish the extent of the transition (where requested) and clarify arrangements around the sharing of information and how to handle potential common challenges. 7.2 During the meeting, staff are expected to address issues regarding gender identity in a 'sensitive, non-confrontational and reassuring way'[10].

7.5 In all decisions, the safety and well-being of the young person must be the paramount consideration. Staff should adopt a case by case approach to the assessment of risk, weighing concerns around safety and victimisation against benefits including the alleviation of psychological distress and improved self-worth of the young person concerned. Assessment of risk should be accurate and not used to unnecessarily delay social transition. However, where appropriate, a phased approach may be adopted.

7.6 Schools and other educational settings are not required to take any decisions regarding the appropriateness of medical treatment for a transgender young person, but should have regard to advice given by those medical professionals who are providing support and/or treatment for the young person. They may also need to allow them time off for medical appointments, in the same way as they would for any other child who needs to access medical services.

Appendix E   Topic guide for focus group and interview

Key Research Questions:

1. What beliefs do teachers hold around gender-diverse identities?
2. What do teachers believe about their own ability to support gender-diverse pupils?
3. What supports or hinders how teachers approach supporting gender diverse pupils?

Item 1: News article – girls' school protocol

- When is/ is it appropriate to discuss gender identity in school?
- How and when should this be approached?
- Responses to name changes and pronouns
- Discussions of gender identity at whole school/ curricula level

Item 2: News article – bullying in schools

- Current knowledge/ confidence of gender-diverse identities, e.g., gender-identity terminology
- Prior experience, training or discussion opportunities
- What actions could be taken in response to gender-based bullying? What might the outcomes of these actions be?
- Tackling types of bullying (physical, verbal, relational)

Item 3: Extracts from Transgender Trend
Item 4: Extracts from Northern Ireland education Authority guidance.

- o Systemic/ organisational influences
- Policies and processes in place to guide gender-diverse inclusive practice
- Influence of school values/ ethos
- Government support and clarity in guidance for schools

- o Community influences
- Values in the wider community – what are these? What might their influence be?
- Managing of relationships with parents
- Differences of perspectives amongst staff – how could this be managed?

- o Anything else?

Appendix F   Adapted Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale (Adapted-TIBS): completed for each school

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Staff members ask for pronouns when meeting new pupils or co-workers.	W T	E C			
Staff members share their own pronouns when meeting someone new.	C W	T E			
Staff use gender neutral language to refer to people whose pronouns are not known.	W		C E	T	
Staff use the terms "non-transgender" or "cisgender" to refer to people whose sex they were assigned at birth matches their current gender identity.	W E	T		C	
Staff are aware of acceptable language to use when referring to transgender individuals.			W	C T E	
There are gender neutral toilet facilities in school.				C W E	T
There are gender neutral changing facilities in school.		E	C	W	T
The school is well informed about transgender communities.		T	C W E		
Staff facilitate discussions with pupils in class around issues of gender-based discrimination and non-transgender privilege.			T	C W	E
Staff are aware of policies and procedures for supporting transgender pupils in school.			T C	W	E
Staff are aware of local resources and services that offer support to transgender young people.			W T E	C	
Staff have received training around gender identity.	W	C	T E		

Note. Items have been adapted from Kattari, O'Connor & Kattari (2018)'s Transgender Inclusive Behavior Scale (TIBS). Letters indicate school's self-reported ratings: E - Eccleston; T - Tennant; C - Capaldi; and W - Whitaker.

Appendix G   Focus group and interview transcripts

G.1   Transcript 1: Eccleston School focus group

School name pseudonym: Eccleston School

Interview details
Date, time, location: 23.11.20, 3.30, TEAMS
Running time: Approximately 47 minutes

Interviewer: I
Interviewees (pseudonyms)
Blair
Nolan
Hadley
Kai

Interview Transcript
1   I: Okay so I've got one article to begin with. Item 1 is the one called erm is the news article from the
2   Independent with the title 'girls school allowing pupils to identify as male or gender neutral'. So if I
3   just give you guys a few minutes to have a quick read, skim through erm and then I'll start asking
4   questions when you're ready. Does that sound okay?
5   ALL: Yeah
6   I: Brilliant. If you maybe just sort of give me a nod or a thumbs up when you've finished skimming that
7   would be great.
8   *(Participants read for approximately 2 minutes)*
9   Hadley: Yep
10   I: You done?
11   Hadley, Nolan and Kai: Yep
12   Blair: I'm done too
13   I: Great. So now you've read the article, what kind of comments or thoughts or reflections come to
14   mind?
15   Hadley: I really liked it
16   I: Yeah?
17   Hadley: I think that they have shown a level of understanding that it's something that's new but
18   something that they are- they are accepting and allowing students to make their own decisions but
19   putting the right things in place to help them and support them making those decisions, so I really like
20   what the school is doing.
21   I: Okay. So you think that they're being quite proactive in what they're sort of doing in response to
22   that and how they're handling it.
23   Hadley: They're being in my opinion very inclusive.
24   Kai: yeah and I- I think that's what I quite like it's the um the idea that everything is a discussion and
25   the dialogue seems open throughout the whole process I think.
26   Blair: Yeah and the counselling – I find the whole idea of counselling through it, and working together
27   rather than it just being a process you go through on your own because for a student that's actually
28   quite important to have people that are having those discussions with them.
29   I: Yeah

30   Blair: My only thing is I just think 16 is a bit- it's a bit of an arbitrary number, that was the only thing I
31   just thought of, you know I know that there are students that are quite mature earlier on and you
32   know I don't like, get why- why the 16 being the age. So it's almost like you can make the decision but
33   then you've got to wait until you're 16 before you can do something about it.
34   I: Yeah yeah. It's a good point
35   Blair: That struck me as a bit, I don't know, I just think there are some pupils that maybe would have
36   made that decision sooner and then they would feel kind of like what now you know they've got to
37   wait a year or two years before anything can actually happen, erm, that could be difficult.
38   I: Hmm
39   Nolan: That's a good point.
40   Kai: And educationally I guess if the school are aware that some pupils are going to make the legal
41   transition, which then the school acknowledge but they don't teach legal kind of legally erm, legal
42   males – there's the clunkiness you were talking about (*everyone laughs*) erm so if they know a pupil
43   is going to do it when they are 16 and they are aware of the intentions then educationally I'm thinking,
44   would that be (audio cuts for approximately 1 second) anyway because we have pupils that turn 16
45   and they haven't even started *Nolan: yeah* exams but I mean just from an educational point of view
46   I'm thinking, I think the school what they're doing is really inclusive and it's really open in terms of
47   transgender identity I think it's really positive, but educationally I'm like, should they just sort it out
48   before that happens *Nolan: my- my* but is that-
49   Nolan: My question is that generally, should there be all girls and all male schools anyway? Hadley:
50   Yeah
51   Nolan: Because it makes me question the tradition of that (phone starts to ring in background) and
52   where, where that plays in the future, because if this is how we're going and we're going to be more
53   inclusive I think it's really difficult because the school might agree but you're telling someone they
54   can't make a decision about themselves if they want to stay there. I just think that's a lot of pressure
55   I: Yeah
56   Nolan: So sorry that's my phone
57   Kai: In the future we won't have-
58   Nolan: Gender specific schools
59   Hadley: yeah yeah
60   Nolan: Yeah
61   Blair: yeah I agree. I was just wondering as well how pupils who identify as male would feel being in
62   an all female school and a girls school, would they feel you know that they didn't fit in because it is
63   *Nolan: yeah* you know I think it would be easier in mixed gender schools
64   Nolan, Hadley and Kai: Yeah
65   Blair: Than them being the only sort of person identifying as male within the school you know *I: yeah*
66   that could be quite hard.
67   I: yeah no that makes sense so then obviously, there's a lot that they're doing in the sort of mechanical
68   way I guess *Blair: hmm* in terms of how they're including them but in terms of how they're actually
69   then feeling included within what is- *Blair: yeah*
70   Blair: Yeah realistically that's in a class of 30 girls and you're the only one that is identifying as male.
71   I: Yeah. Okay. And you said about erm, educationally how they, how that's impacting them as well,
72   would anyone like to sort of jump in and say a bit more about that? What was the sort of educational
73   impact you were talking about? I didn't mean to put you on the spot there Kai, I said I wouldn't do
74   that (I and Kai laugh)
75   Kai: Well it's just the kind of logistics of that because they acknowledge that we won't teach, what's
76   the quote, yeah we won't teach students who are legally and physically male, so I'm just thinking from
77   a logistical educational point of view, do they keep, I guess they would have a responsibility to keep
78   teaching them but when, is there a fine line, because I know there's a process, I'm not well versed,
79   but I know at some point like it's a processs *Nolan: at what point-* is it like well from this date, the
80   first of you know January-

81   Blair: Yeah – you've got to go
82   Hadley: And if it's a good school as well, it's almost as if they're making that decision of well what's
83   more important my education at a very good school or my identity as who I am, because it's almost
84   saying you have to make a choice of if you want to stay at this school, you have to stay female
85   regardless of whether you feel male, and have to wait until you've left school.
86   I: Yeah yeah
87   Hadley: You have to think they're 19 now as well so.
88   I: Yeah. I guess it's a question sort of about how- how they're accommodating that and is it okay to
89   sort of say well now that you've made this decision this is what has to happen to you *Hadley and
90   Blair: yeah* or is it about taking that inclusivity a little bit further.
91   Hadley: I think also would someone who wanted to identify as male want to go to an all girls' school
92   *Nolan: yeah* would they want that anyway?
93   I: Yeah. Yeah. Interesting, thank you.
94   Kai: And just coming back to Nolan's point of, let's get rid of gendered schools.
95   Nolan, Hadley and Blair: Yeah
96   I: It's an interesting point yeah, and I get- *Hadley: and I-* sorry – you go
97   Hadley: And I think what Blair was saying about the age of 16, I wondered if that had something to do
98   with the idea that children can be quite hormonal and they can go through phases, like we've had a
99   student who has identified as- who was born male who identified as female and then later changed
100   their mind and re-identified as male and then changed their mind back and identified as female (*phone
101   rings in background*) so whether it's a erm, the idea that it's to allow them to go through that hormonal
102   change and talk it through of is this actually how you're feeling in the long run or is it something that
103   you're just feeling at this moment in time, you're a bit lost in your identity because of the discussions
104   that people are having, let's talk it through and see if it's a longer process.
105   I: Yeah
106   Kai: Yeah
107   Blair: And also from an educational point of view I just think 16, you're making those decisions like
108   bang in the middle of your GCSEs and that you know they're expecting you to deal with your GCSEs,
109   everything that comes with that, and then also having to make this decision of well what are you
110   identifying with are you going to leave the school, it's a lot of pressure at an age that is already very
111   difficult, erm so you know they're trying to do something but it's still very pressurised you still have to
112   make those decisions.
113   I: Yeah definitely. What do you think about erm, sort of like the age at which we start talking about
114   gender identity with young people generally?
115   Blair: I think the sooner the better to be honest. I've got a young daughter who's (*age given*) and you
116   know she's asked me questions and you know, we've had quite open discussions about you can have
117   a mum and a mum and a dad and a dad and I think that the sooner that you have those conversations
118   that people are different, and not just gender identity but any differences and then those kids will
119   grow up knowing that, rather than you know, as a mum I'd rather my child grows up knowing that you
120   accept people for the person rather than what they identify as I: Yeah
121   Blair: I think anyway.
122   I: Yeah. It's kind of having that exposure to a range *Blair: yeah* of identities
123   Blair: And especially somewhere like (*local area stated*) which is very, erm, very small community, you
124   know you don't have erm, everything you know quite, I don't know how to explain it but it's not very
125   diverse, you know you go somewhere like London and you have a lot of diversity, like in our school
126   you don't get a lot of diversity you don't get a lot of differences and I think it's important to kind of
127   like open their eyes a little bit and make them aware that not everybody is the same and it doesn't
128   matter, not just with gender but with anything.
129   I: Yeah
130   Blair: I'd like her to be inclusive of everybody, erm, despite what they like and don't like. What does it
131   matter?

132   Kai: Yeah I agree with all of that I think the earlier the better, otherwise if these conversations don't
133   happen earlier on and the kids they start having those thoughts or start questioning their gender
134   identity without those conversations you get some like muddy waters and potentially repression and
135   uncertainty *Nolan: yeah* which is not ideal
136   Nolan: Without the correct guidance *Kai: yeah*
137   Hadley: I also think here, and I don't know whether it's because we're starting to have conversations
138   with children more early now, but I've noticed that in the Key Stage 3 building, they don't care about
139   gender neutral toilets, they'll just use them, however in the Key Stage 4 building, they won't use them
140   because of the idea of what it represents and I'm wondering if these are the students that we're not
141   having the conversations with as early as we should be, which is why they feel like if I use the gender
142   neutral toilet, I must *Nolan: I must identify as this* I must identify as gender neutral
143   I: Right okay
144   Hadley: Whereas Key Stage 3 students just don't care they just use it, they-
145   Nolan: Because it's a toilet (laughs)
146   Hadley: Yeah they seem more accepting and more erm, things have seemed more normalised for
147   them.
148   Kai: Yeah
149   I: Yeah. So they're kind of seeing it as I guess an inclusive space for everyone
150   Hadley: Yeah yeah
151   I: Whereas the other students are seeing it as specifically for gender-non-conforming young people
152   and they don't necessarily want to be identified with that if that's not where they're sitting.
153   Blair: I think maybe also that came from the fact that we didn't always have that one student and we
154   haven't always had those toilets, and the older years only had them later on so that could be a reason
155   why, erm, because they might, they would have noticed those changes in the toilets whereas the year
156   7s and 8s have always had those toilets. That could be the difference.
157   I: Yeah. That sounds like another example of where early exposure and talking about it has been quite
158   a powerful influence and how they have then sort of navigated that space afterwards. Okay. Cool. And
159   then, erm, I guess in terms of sort of, so we talked about, you know you said the sooner the better in
160   terms of having discussions around gender identity, what does that kind of look like at your school at
161   the moment?
162   Nolan: At the moment it's very much part of our PSHE programme so the first thing we look at is
163   identity, but that's in all sorts of things so for year 8 it's erm a focus on things like organ donation and
164   who am I as a person and it's sort of year 9 that those conversations around gender identity become
165   a little bit more in depth, erm but maybe it's a conversation we need to start having earlier.
166   Blair: Earlier
167   Hadley: We have that student – who came last year-
168   Nolan: So we have a year 8 student who has recently erm, they didn't come back to school after the
169   lockdown and we are, we were really really sad because there were very few people in the year group
170   who knew that they identified as – what was it?
171   Hadley: She, it was a she, but she was born male and identified as female
172   Nolan: Yeah, yeah. But the only people that knew in her year group were the people that she chose
173   to tell and they were very very inclusive and we were wondering at the time when they made the
174   decision to home school, whether the fact that she was about to go through puberty and those
175   hormones are going to start kicking in that maybe that was part of their decision to withdraw her, and
176   that made us really sad because she had such a supportive year group and actually it might have been
177   better for her and the cohort to have that experience together.
178   I: Yeah. Yeah.
179   Kai: But is that because we didn't have those conversations *Hadley: yeah*
180   Nolan: Yeah is that because we didn't have those conversations early enough so she didn't feel
181   comfortable to say.

182 I: Interesting. I guess it's hard as well they wouldn't necessarily know the school- where the school
183 stands on it and what it would look like and without those conversations it's kind of hard for both
184 parties I guess to sort of know insn't it. Okay. Cool. Right I'm going to move us on now to have a look
185 at article 2, that's the one about bullying. It's an online news article by the Guardian. This was written
186 by Aimee Challenor from the Green Party, who writes about all sorts of things. So I'm just going to give
187 you a few minutes to have a skim through that again, and again just give me an indication when you're
188 done.
189 Kai: Thank you.
190 *(Participants read for approximately 2 minutes)*
191 Kai: Yep ready.
192 I: Lovely. Good skimming, gang. So having skimmed, have you got any sort of comments or like
193 reflections that jump to mind in the first instance?
194 Blair: I just think it's mad that 50, over 50% think that they have no one they can talk to, that is, like
195 that is failing pupils big time. I'd be mortified you know if any kids at our school said that. Maybe you
196 have to look at the kind of school, maybe we're in a school where there's always somebody you know
197 who, we've got all sorts of things in place and I just think as a school if your students are saying that
198 they can't, they don't feel that they can come up and tell someone about something like that I just
199 think it's really failing the students. Probably not – not you know across you know, for all sorts of
200 reasons and that 40 something percent don't even know what trans means-
201 Nolan: That's horrendous
202 Hadley: Yeah that is
203 Blair: Yeah that is really, it just really shocks me because you just wouldn't think that that happens.
204 I: Yeah
205 Kai: Also with like raising awareness in schools and things, in today, in today, during today I was
206 teaching my year 7s, so my youngest lot, about concentration camps and we were saying how it wasn't
207 just Jews, it was LGBT, and that phrase was on the board and I had a range of them saying what does
208 that mean-
209 Nolan: What!
210 Kai: And I was telling them and then they were saying what- what does bisexual mean, what does
211 pansexual mean and then others were also saying, so it's like there was a big separation in the class
212 because you had some that didn't even know what the abbreviation meant and then others were
213 saying oh there are even some letters that aren't there, like that's not all of them.
214 I: Right okay
215 Kai: I think there is still a conversation to be had but even in our year 7s there's some awareness of
216 what that means nowadays, yeah, so I think there is progress.
217 I: Yeah. It sounds like there's quite sort of an expansive range of awareness so some people knowing
218 very little and other pupils maybe knowing more, erm, and another question I guess might be sort of
219 like, where's that inequity coming in terms of sort of what they're learning and is it you know different
220 things that they're engaging with at home and so on erm-
221 Kai: It might be how are they having that input
222 I: Yeah. It's interesting as well that you said it's, it's shocking I guess you seem to have picked up on
223 that there's that high number of pupils who feel they are not able to er go to teachers or have that
224 support at school, erm and equally it's shocking maybe how little is known by other pupils around
225 LGBT issues and so on. Erm, what is it that sort of like surprises you the most about that in those
226 percentages?
227 Kai: The bullying I think.
228 Blair: Yeah I mean you just wouldn't as a teacher to allow, almost to allow it to happen, erm, because
229 if you don't know what something means go and find out, don't let that pupil feel that they've got
230 nobody to talk to, you know like pupils might come to me with something and I don't know what
231 they're talking about but I will try to help them. *I: hmm* or at least educate myself on it.

232 Hadley: I also think that the children feel that when they do have those small sessions about it that
233 they feel like the teachers are ticking a box and meeting a requirement so it was almost emphasising
234 the fact that they're not important because there's no, it doesn't sound like the teacher is enthusiastic
235 in trying to encourage the children to learn about it they're just taught it as like right we have to do
236 this and put an hour aside, let's fit it in when we can, it's really sad that they feel like they're almost
237 being put into a checkbox rather than-
238 Blair: Hmm yeah like we've covered it and that's it now, let's move on now.
239 I: Yeah
240 Blair: I also think you need to look at the context of, like the context of the school, so like where I went
241 to school, because I'm from (*country name*), it's very Catholic and I, like my school was Catholic and
242 we all were taught sex education by the head of RE and it was just like it was ridiculous. It was you
243 know, it was you know it was basically Adman and Eve you know, you're here to procreate, like
244 contraception is wrong you know, and it was very much like that and I think you need to look at like,
245 those schools still exist, and you know like that school's not here but you know if we're talking about
246 UK or (*country name*), you know so there are erm, people with those sorts of beliefs still around.
247 I: Yeah, yeah
248 Blair: But I'm just thinking like in my school, if I had thought well I'm not, I couldn't have come and
249 said, spoken to some of those teachers about anything like that without judgement, and I guess
250 teachers like that are still teaching. I mean I'm old but I'm not that old (*everyone laughs*) but you
251 know those people are still there.
252 I: Yeah
253 Hadley: And what is sad is that I believe as a teacher erm, we shouldn't, our personal beliefs and our
254 views shouldn't be in the way of helping children *Blair: hmm* so we're supposed to be-
255 Nolan: neutral
256 Hadley: Yeah neutral and biased, no the other one – unbiased (*laughs*) in our opinions so that children
257 can have, like regardless if I was a Catholic, my students could come to me if they had a problem *Blair:
258 yeah* or if they wanted to come out to me and just because I don't necessarily – I'm not saying that I
259 have those beliefs, but if hypothetically, *Nolan: yeah that's not yeah your-* they should still be able
260 to talk to me
261 Blair: Yeah they should still be able to discuss things you know like
262 Hadley: and I really don't like the fact that some people are so within their own beliefs that they won't
263 allow students to express themselves.
264 I: Yeah. So it kind of sounds like you've kind got, people have got their personal beliefs but then there's
265 also sort of your professional beliefs and how you navigate those I guess
266 Hadley: Yeah
267 I: And for you guys it's to be inclusive regardless of what those personal beliefs are and kind of
268 following that, that trajectory. Okay. Cool. And then in terms of, so I guess this article talks about you
269 know pupils not feeling supported by teachers and not being able to go to them for support. In terms
270 of the teacher role, do you think there are any kind of er barriers or hindrances that would sort of
271 prevent them from either being able to support or maybe being aware of how to support and so on.
272 What would some of the barriers be do you think?
273 Blair: I think sometimes it's just time, it's having the time to notice, that somebody needs a bit, you
274 know because you're going at a hundred miles per hour and you might, unless that person, unless
275 they actually come and say like can I have a chat with you they could just quietly be struggling. So I
276 think it's just being, like trying to notice and being aware of what is going on without maybe somebody
277 actually coming up to you and saying something but again you've got a lot to cover in a very short
278 space of time where you see some classes. But then I guess that we've got our mentor group so that
279 we, and you would hope that that mentor, so it's kind of like structuring so like we have lunch with
280 them every day but we've got opportunities to have chats and conversations that I'm guessing not
281 every school would have, would have the luxury of that.
282 I: Oh okay.

283 Nolan: I just don't think there's an awful lot of CPD so- *Hadley: no, no* *Blair: no* so in the article it
284 said 50% of people didn't know what trans was, I mean I'm not in that camp, but I absolutely don't
285 know enough, especially with all of the new information that is available, I don't feel like I'm in the
286 best place to guide pupils if they were to come to me, I – I think there could definitely be more CPD.
287 Hadley: That's what, not that I would worry about it, but if the student came to me with this, I don't
288 think I have the…
289 Nolan: I could be accepting and listen
290 Hadley: Yeah, but I don't know how to help them through because I don't know enough about it, or
291 what's the right thing or wrong thing to say, erm, the actual logistics of talking them through it, I could
292 absolutely sit and listen but I don't think I know enough about it to be a guide for them.
293 Nolan: Or guiding them where to go next or who to talk to or you know *I: hmm* or their next steps.
294 Hadley: And whilst we do have people like (*staff member name*) for that, if a child's come to you,
295 they've come to you for a reason *Blair: yeah* I don't like the idea of palming them off onto someone
296 else. *I: hmm* I do definitely think we need to have more in school for the teaching staff to really
297 understand.
298 I: Yeah it's almost something like you want to-
299 Blair: And I think like, I think a lot of the time we worry about not getting it right and maybe sometimes
300 we just need to have a conversation, either there is no wrong or right thing to say, so long as we're
301 understanding and caring, it's like with any problem isn't it or with any issue, you just talk about it and
302 you're just caring and kind, no one is going to say oh you said the wrong thing or, if you're trying to
303 help, erm, I think, but it's a bit, it's worrying when there's so many, you know when you're worried
304 about you know getting into trouble for saying or doing the wrong thing and then you'd almost rather
305 not say anything at all and then that's not the right thing, erm, so yeah training would definitely be a
306 good thing.
307 I: It's a difficult balance isn't it between obviously you've got you know the good intentions *Blair:
308 yeah* versus the practical knowing what to do next and then *Blair: hmm* merging those two things
309 together isn't it. Erm, I just want to pick up where you said obviously you know that there's that worry
310 about doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing or maybe not feeling skilled enough to sort of
311 handle that process, what would be the erm, what would be the concern, so you know say you got
312 something wrong, what would be the fear behind, I guess kind of the repercussions of that and sort
313 of where your, what you would worry about in that.
314 Blair: I wouldn't want to make them feel any worse.
315 Nolan, Hadley and Kai: Yeah
316 Blair: I wouldn't want to say something that would make you know, if they came to me you know not
317 feeling great or, I wouldn't want to say the wrong thing and kind of like make the situation worse for
318 them and I wouldn't be worried about in terms of like maybe getting into trouble job wise or
319 professionally because I don't think I would, you know I wouldn't be unprofessional, erm, but I would
320 want to support and I'm not sure that I would be able to support in terms of like oh you can get
321 information here or, I wouldn't erm, I wouldn't have that knowledge to hand where maybe I would
322 have with other aspects.
323 Nolan: Yeah same, in the worst case scenario if they come to me and I don't have the right information
324 so then they bottle up and don't talk about it again.
325 Blair: Yeah and then they don't go and tell anyone else because you've given them like really crappy
326 support.
327 Nolan: Yeah, yeah.
328 Hadley: Yeah.
329 I: Yeah. You want them to sort of be able to come to you and feel sort of kind of like contained within
330 that space and that someone will be able to carry it forward and continue.
331 Blair: Yeah.
332 I: Okay. Brilliant. Okay. And then in terms of erm, I guess kind of like tackling bullying, erm, like bullying
333 in school, whether it's kind of physical, verbal or so on, erm, what would your thoughts on that be in

334   the school environment, is that something you see, is that something erm you're aware of, how does
335   it manifest itself?
336   Nolan: We had an incident in year 8 where a boy called a girl a tranny. We put him in isolation for the
337   day and treated it the same way we would swearing, because it's not something that we hear around
338   the school and actually the conversation we had with this pupil was that, it wa- he used the word not
339   really understanding what it was, and it didn't relate to the pupil he was using it with, but actually
340   that's, that could be a barrier for someone else, you don't know what's going on in someone else's life
341   so we treated it really seriously within the year group to kind of set a precedent that we don't do that,
342   but also are those other conversations happening to give them the education in the first place *I:
343   hmm* and would he have used it if he really understood what it meant and the impact that it can
344   have.
345   I: Right okay. So you're trying to think about the sort of reactive practice and the proactive practice
346   side by side.
347   Nolan: That's it.
348   Kai: I had a moment where er, I can't remember how this conversation started but we were talking
349   about self-identifying and one of the, a pupil said in my class they went down the whole oh what if I
350   identify as a helicopter – that classic line, and I very quickly like dismissed it, because like what Nolan
351   was saying, yeah he's trying to make a joke whatever but someone in that class might be sat there
352   thinking I want to talk about my identity, I want to talk about how I identify and then you have people
353   like that who don't think, and you see it in like LGBT as well like if you hand out a piece of homework
354   like I've had a pupil's reaction going like oh this homework's gay and it's like well there might be a
355   child in your class who is in the closet and you know comments like that set them back.
356   I: Yeah
357   Blair: Yeah I think it's really important as well with bullying that when it's picked up you're actually
358   educating that child, it's not just a case of erm, you're getting you know you're having a punishment,
359   there's nothing then, there's you know what have they learnt from that *Nolan: yeah* you know
360   there's some sort of education behind it, like saying why that is not acceptable, because a lot of these
361   kids will have a parent that don't set the best example, erm sorry just plugging my laptop in.
362   I: That's alright. Yeah It's trying to give them a deeper understanding as well rather than it just being
363   a reprimand and understanding why it was a reprimand.
364   Blair: Yep yep, exactly, exactly, yeah.
365   I: Brilliant. Er and then, so just moving on a bit, I'm very conscious of time I don't want to make you
366   late for your staff meeting so we've got the last two articles, erm and my aim of this really was to sort
367   of look at them side by side. I've done that kind of purposefully, so one of them is er what's it called,
368   it's from Transgender Trend, and the other one is guidance from Northern Ireland, so the Northern
369   Ireland guidance is from an education authority and it was erm, it was kind of government approved
370   for schools, er the Transgender Trend guidance erm, that was kind of created by a parent group who
371   erm, I suppose have quite different views on gender identity. I'm not sure if we've still got Kai, Nolan
372   and Hadley at the moment they've frozen on my screen.
373   Kai, Nolan and Hadley: We are here.
374   I: Oh perfect good – you've frozen but as long as you can hear me that's fine. Erm yeah so they are a
375   parent group who feel quite strongly about what they think is a transgender trend and are trying to-
376   yeah they've got very different views I guess, I don't want to say too much about it but that's why I'm
377   giving them side by side. So yeah just have a skim through those, they are quite long but again just
378   skim through and then we'll have a chat.
379   *(Participants read for approximately 2 minutes)*
380   Blair: The one with the parent thing is the thing with the diagnosis, it's almost like it's some kind of
381   medical like a disease or something, like you've been diagnosed.
382   I: Yeah. Yeah it takes a much more pathologising approach that group I think.
383   Nolan: Yeah I think the main difference for me is the guidance from Northern Ireland is very much
384   erm, based on individual experiences, whereas the Transgender Trend one assumes that everyone is

385 going through a trend and they're not taking it seriously and they're not considering it on a case-by-
386 case basis, and not everyone is going to have the same experience.
387 Kai: It's also very much a straw argument kind of approach, sorry can I just have a look again, where it
388 says about erm sex-segregated facilities, 'society operates on the basis of sex-segregated facilities and
389 many girls and boys will be unable to participate in those aspects', the straw man argument is where
390 they've taken an idea and manipulated it and been like well if we accept this then kids can't do sports
391 *Nolan: (*laughs*) where does it end?* like how did they get to that conclusion? And also, it looks so
392 professional.
393 Nolan: Yeah, and that they've worked with teachers to create this document.
394 Blair: Yeah that's what got me as well, I was like hmm.
395 Hadley: I hate that they use the term self-diagnose.
396 Nolan: Yeah it's a very loaded term isn't it.
397 Blair: And it talks about it being a problem like gender problem like is it a problem? Erm.
398 I: Yeah. And it's, I think as well it's, there's almost like an element of fear within that article as well as
399 opposed to like the Northern Ireland one it's quite proactive in guiding schools and they've obviously
400 got a different view, and you did say it looks like quite a professional document, it's not a document
401 that local authorities would suggest to give out, but this parent group have created it with that regard.
402 Erm, and just thinking about erm I guess kind of thinking about community influences and parents and
403 so on, what are your thoughts on that in relation to talking about LGBT issues and in particular gender
404 identity in schools?
405 Nolan: I don't think there's enough of a conversation between the school community and the wider
406 community at all. I don't think that there is anything in place for those conversations to happen or to
407 facilitate that type of conversation.
408 Hadley: And I don't think that conversation is going on in certain areas
409 Nolan: No and like Blair was saying, we're not, (*location name*) is not a particularly diverse area.
410 Hadley: In any respects, not just gender. It's not very diverse.
411 Nolan: No. And you're right it wouldn't be a very welcome conversation for some people which I think
412 is the problem.
413 I: Yeah. What kind of issues do you think you would have from, you know you said the community in
414 (*location name*) isn't particularly diverse, it's obviously quite a small area as well.
415 Nolan: I think the response would be similar to this parent group.
416 Hadley: Yeah
417 Kai: It would, because it's so, in (*location name*) we don't, like we said it's not diverse, as soon as this
418 conversation would happen, it would be like, well I don't really know many kind of non-binary people
419 or anyone who's kind of self-identified as a different kind of erm *Nolan: gender* gender – thank you
420 *Nolan: (*laughs*)* so it's like if it happened now it would turn into an us versus them, like a difficult
421 thing.
422 Blair: It would almost be like you're encouraging our children to be this way, I can imagine you know
423 those views, rather than being quite open and inclusive I think. I mean saying that we've got some
424 lovely very supportive parents that I'm sure *Nolan: yeah*, you know, but there's also the other side
425 you know.
426 I: Yeah.
427 Hadley: And when having these conversations, which we absolutely should, children will become more
428 comfortable *Nolan: oh yeah* but then that would I think start a, have a negative connotation in the
429 community saying now you're talking about it more children are doing it because *Blair: yeah, yeah*
430 a whole trend has come in, and people will start to need these conversations because you're talking
431 about it, and then it then becomes difficult so which kids are the ones who are really struggling with
432 their gender identity and which ones are the ones who are just struggling for some, some attention,
433 who don't actually mean it and then that becomes another conversation.
434 I: Okay, yeah. And there's definitely that fear of parents wondering if you talk about it then it will
435 become a snowballing thing or children will be persuaded into thinking that they have a different

436   gender identity as opposed to just accepting that other people have. Okay. And then in terms of, so
437   you noted already that the resource pack it looks quite professional, so I've just taken snippets from
438   it, erm and then obviously you've got the guidance from Northern Ireland, what are your sort of
439   general thoughts about policy and guidance from I suppose the UK government and I suppose the
440   policies and systems in place for schools?
441   Kai: I don't-
442   Nolan: I'll be completely honest I've not seen it.
443   Blair: To be honest no, yeah I haven't seen a school, I don't, I know we've got one, erm, yeah it's
444   coming back to the whole CPD thing isn't it that we just don't, it's just another policy erm, and we
445   should, we should be informed on it and know it better.
446   I: Yeah that makes sense.
447   Blair: But again it comes back to that CPD because when you're given like 30 policies to read, erm,
448   you're going to think oh yeah I've read it or skimmed it, you know it's there, you know it exists but
449   actually maybe we should sit down and look at these things a lot more carefully.
450   I: Yeah.
451   Kai: That comes back to what was said earlier about barriers and how I would, yeah, I would love to
452   be someone that my pupils come to if they had an issue like this.
453   Nolan: Me too
454   Blair: Yeah me too
455   Kai: But with all the competing priorities and all the things we have to do at the moment, like yes I'll
456   rush out of the class at the end of the lesson because I've got somewhere else to be.
457   Blair: Hmm
458   I: Yeah, it's almost like it, it sounds like it almost needs to be actually put on the agenda at a more
459   whole-school level because obviously as teachers you've got so many other conflicting demands
460   pulling you.
461   Blair: Yeah
462   Kai: Yeah
463   I: Yeah. Okay, great.
464   Blair: I think maybe it should be something like in the same way we have someone who is in charge of
465   safeguarding, we should have someone who is in charge of, who is, this is the area that they you know,
466   they inform us about erm, because yeah and where there are people like (*staff members' names*) who
467   deal with this, but actually maybe there should be a person assigned to give information and to make
468   it even more well known.
469   Nolan: Yeah
470   I: Yeah, so almost like there's more of a connection between that pastoral support and teaching staff
471   *Blair: yeah* that it's kind of easier to integrate I guess and you've got more access to that *Blair:
472   yeah* It's more of a link. Great. Cool, thank you for that. Erm, so we've got about, we've only got a
473   few minutes left really. Have you got any final comments or thoughts or anything that's sort of sprung
474   to mind? Either related to the articles or just general things about gender identity in schools that you'd
475   like to comment on.
476   Hadley: I was just thinking about general policies in schools and uniform and things like that, you want
477   the students to feel supported but also you don't want to give them preferential treatment, because
478   then you're highlighting to other students that they are different and while we should celebrate and
479   we should accept that they are different, it's also you don't want to allow, you don't want to give them
480   too many allowances that other students don't get because then they're being treated differently and
481   then that's not fair for them either.
482   I: Okay
483   Kai: Yeah
484   Hadley: You want to be inclusive but you don't want to almost highlight the fact they are different
485   because they identify erm-
486   Nolan: It needs normalising.

487   Hadley: Yeah exactly it needs normalising, otherwise that's where there's problems with things like
488   bullying.
489   Nolan: I think it's going to, it will take time.
490   Kai: Yeah
491   I: Yeah. No, that makes sense, it's kind of like an integrated inclusivity as opposed to-
492   Hadley: This person is different – let's highlight the fact that they're different by making them different
493   *Nolan: (*laughs*)* it's just how every other person would be treated, because they're a person
494   Kai: This might come across sort of a really personal question then, feel free not to answer it, like I said
495   earlier, I don't know any non-binary people and we were talking about if a pupil approached us and
496   talked about that type of thing, if you had to give us as teachers one piece of advice for a conversation
497   like that, what would you say to us, *Nolan: (*laughs*) what would you say to us?* because I- I don't
498   know, I mean I could be open and honest and compassionate but what would be the one piece of
499   advice you would give?
500   I: I think from my perspective I think I would say there's an element of taking the pupil's lead on it as
501   well erm, so I'd sort of want to know from them is there, I'd ask them you know, is there anything I
502   could do to support you in this, erm, because there might be specific things you could do within your
503   teaching role that would help, so it might be for instance that they want to be known by a different
504   name or like a nickname or something to start-off, that might be something they want to talk about.
505   You might ask them if they've got preferred pronouns they'd like to use. Erm, you might want to have
506   a conversation with them about whether it's something they want other staff members to know.
507   Because it might be that they're just confiding in you. It might be that you're that point of entry where
508   they're thinking you could help me kind of distribute that to the school. Erm, there's definitely an
509   element of kind of taking their lead and finding out what they're comfortable with. Erm, it might be
510   they just want to have that conversation now and then leave it at that. Or they might want it to go
511   further. Erm, and also kind of checking in with them, you know is, because it might not be something
512   the parents are aware of and you don't want to then disclose information about them to their parents
513   that they wouldn't want them to know. Erm, but yeah, I guess the take home really would be just to
514   be quite open and listen and ask them what you could do. That would be my advice if that helps at all.
515   Kai: Thank you very much.
516   Nolan: Thank you very much.
517   Blair: Yeah thank you.
518   I: That's alright. Right, I'm aware that I've taken up quite a lot of your time. I'm really thankful for you
519   taking the time it's been really helpful hearing from you.
520   Hadley: Thank you it's been interesting.
521   Blair: It's been really interesting – really interesting.
522   Kai: Thank you very much
523   Hadley: I think I will look through our school information, and I think I need to have a conversation
524   *Blair: yeah* with our team leaders to say actually there's a massive gap missing in our policies and
525   we need to do something.
526   Nolan: Yeah and in the PSHE programme, erm, I'm going to take that forward into the year team *Kai:
527   yeah* and try and make that change happen.
528   Hadley: Because we already have (*inaudible speech*) and actually if you look at this stuff on paper we
529   don't seem to cater for it at all.
530   Nolan: Which isn't quite true
531   I: Oh brilliant. It's good to hear, and also because you guys have participated in the research as well, I
532   will be able to work with your school, and I'll be doing some gender identity training with you guys I
533   think most likely in the Summer term, but I'm liaising that with (*staff member's name*) so hopefully
534   there'll be more time at that point to ask more questions and do more kind of planning and thinking
535   around it, er sort of more specifically to your school I guess, so yeah I look forward to that and it was
536   nice to speak to you all today as well.
537   Nolan: It was lovely to meet you.

538   Kai: Nice to meet you.
539   Blair: Thank you
540   *(Everyone says goodbye*

G.3   Transcript 2: Eccleston school individual interview

Interview details

Date, time, location: 24.11.20, 8am – 8.40, TEAMS

Running time: Approximately 39 minutes

Interviewer: I

Interviewee (pseudonym): Frankie

Interview transcript

1   I: Okay cool. So er I sent you some articles which I hoped we could kind of use as a bit of a prompt

2   for the discussion really

3   Frankie: Okay.

4   I: Erm there was no requirement to read it before this time, we've got this time to read them if you

5   need to, but have you had a chance to look at them at all just so I know?

6   Frankie: I did last week so I'm not like fully fresh.

7   I: Okay cool: Awesome no that's great, erm yeah so the point of the articles is not to sort of know

8   them verbatim you know and rehearse them or anything it's just kind of a bit of a prompt just to sort

9   of get ideas going, erm so if we kind of sort of take them one at a time, the last two we're going to

10 look at together, erm and then, I'll sort of give you a few minutes maybe just to skim read it and

11 then we'll kind of go from there really, just sort of get your thoughts on it and ask a few questions

12 around it and *Frankie: yep sounds alright* yeah. So if you take a few minutes looking at – have you

13 got access to it?

14 Frankie: Yeah I'll just get it up now.

15 I: So the first one should be the article from the Independent er about the London girls school so it

16 says 'top London girls' school allows pupils to identify as male or gender neutral', and er if you just

17 give it a bit of a skim read, I won't be quizzing you.

18 Frankie: Where are these articles… there we go, erm yep 'top London girls allows pupils to identify'

19 yep fine.

20 I: Just take a few minutes and then just indicate to me when you're, when you're ready.

21 Frankie: Just out of curiosity, so for the, the top London girls' school allowing pupils to use boys'

22 names and wear boys' clothes have they allowed that the other way?

23 I: Er so, yeah so it's an all girls' school so I think they-

24 Frankie: Oh yeah.

25 *(Both laugh)*

26 Frankie: You can tell it's early, well done, well done.

27 I: It too- it took me a second, I was like did they, oh no

28 (*Both laugh*)

29 *(A few seconds pause for reading)*

30 Frankie: What do you reckon the formal process is?

31 I: Hmm that's a good questions erm, they don't give a lot of detail about that erm *Frankie: hmm*

32 just that there is one, erm yeah.

33 Frankie: Interesting (*continues to read for approximately 30 seconds*). Ah so where they were like

34 saying where they become full- fully legally male they could no longer be a student because it's an all

35 girls' school.

36 I: Hmm. Yeah I think this one because it's a private school, I think it goes up to the age of, what was

37 it 18 or 19, well they've got a sixth form anyway so they'll get beyond that age.

38 Frankie: So where is, so the, ah so the non-binary would be different because you don't identify as

39 male or female, so is that the problem there arising, because it's an all girls' school, should non-

40 binary be allowed then, is that, or have I missed the point?

41   I: I don't think so I think they're just saying that students at the school who want to identify as male
42   and gender neutral can *Frankie: okay* erm I think they're essentially saying if they're undergoing,
43   they're calling it a legal transition *Frankie: hmm* so I guess if they were to er get some sort of
44   gender recognition certificate or change their birth certificate or have a medical change *Frankie: oh
45   okay* erm that's what I got from it anyway *Frankie: yeah* so if they say at that point well then
46   you're legally male therefore you shouldn't be in the school anymore, but they seem to be allowing
47   pupils from the age of 16 it seems to have other names and pronouns and things like that and wear
48   erm what they would describe as I guess male clothes erm yeah. So what are your thoughts
49   generally, what sort of thoughts pop out about the article or things that they've sort of mentioned?
50   Frankie: Erm to be hon- I think for me erm it's hard isn't it because I suppose I've only, I've only had
51   really two erm experiences with it from when I taught in (*location name)* erm and it was, it was
52   weird because it was, there was erm a boy there who used to be a girl and there was no issues
53   because it was, that was fully transitioned you know there was the binding, shaved her head –
54   shaved his head, erm and that, a boy, completely, but then we had problems on the other side
55   where it was a girl who said she wanted to be a boy but wanted to change in the female changing
56   rooms and came in with make-up, still kept her female name but then was arguing that no I want to
57   be a boy.
58   I: Right okay.
59   Frankie: So there was that, like a real confusion there *I: hmm* within herself as well, that was like
60   saying, but coming in with jewellery as well and nails, but then you're like well just because she
61   wants to be a boy does that mean boys can't do that, so I think where teachers really got confused
62   there, was whether was she being serious, was it something, was there something else going on
63   erm, but from my point of view of it, I don't really have a, I've got no issues with it like, as long as the
64   child's happy, it doesn't, it sounds like in that way it doesn't, it doesn't register on my radar as
65   something as like a, a thought process if that makes sense *I: yeah yeah* and I suppose like that
66   where there was really conflicting issues and then there was a lot of, of home issues going on where
67   there was lot of *right* faultering and things like that and it was really hard to understand what was
68   going on, whereas the oth- other boy erm, who had transitioned, happy, the parents were happy like
69   it was, there was no issues surrounding it if that makes sense.
70   I: Yeah, yeah so it sounds like that, for that pupil it was a bit more blurry for sort of staff to
71   understand *Frankie: yeah* where the pupil was coming from erm, and I guess there was a bit of a
72   mix over er like behavioural presentations and what you would expect for kind of gendered
73   categories.
74   Frankie: Hmm yeah and there was a lot of like behavioural issues in itself *I: right* do you know
75   what I mean like fighting and everything else so yeah it was quite, it was a real tricky one from that
76   side of it *I: yeah* erm but I've seen like both ends you know where one where it was I want to be a
77   boy, always want to be a boy, I'm going to get changed in the gender neutral and do what I want to
78   do, no problems like *I: yeah* yeah so that's really my own experience of it if I'm honest.
79   I: Yeah no that's fine, that's, no expertise required (*laughs)*
80   Frankie: Yeah yeah that's literally my only experience.
81   I: Yeah yeah. So in the article they mention about, they've got like different ages for doing things so
82   different ages for what they call the formal process which I don't think I'm much more aware than
83   you are about what that would look like specifically, but lots of different ages in terms of when
84   pupils can use different names and so on erm, but they also say that pupils can talk at any point
85   about gender identity, so what, what would your views be about talking about, I guess the
86   appropriateness of talking about gender with young people, erm, within school and how that relates
87   to ages and so on.
88   Frankie: Erm, my er, like my erm form room, I'm pretty open with it and I'm, you know I don't say do
89   you know what I mean, I'd never present myself as like a professional about it, but when anything's
90   cropped up like we would, like I remember when last gay pride like we were doing things about that
91   and erm you know questions were asked and if I didn't know we'd like you know we might google it

92 or research it, so I'm, I'm pretty open in that sense with them and saying you know it's not
93 something I know a great deal about but we'll have a look into it and sometimes the kids would be
94 like oh miss have you heard this story and things like that so, from a personal point of view there,
95 like again you know I've had a lot of like, erm, gay, lesbian friends erm, my cousin is non-binary, erm
96 so although I'm not you know, deeply researched in it it's something I'm pretty comfortable around
97 like *I: yeah* I'm very much like a, I don't care what colour you are, who you fancy, who you don't
98 fancy like you know it's literally chill as long as you're happy *I: yeah* like (*laughs*) chill, you know
99 we're all good so with erm, in school as long as you don't pretend to be you know, you know
100 everything and then give the wrong information, I think that's, that's good to have an open
101 conversation and be like oh like actually that's something I don't know a lot about, maybe that's
102 something we can look into together kind of thing.
103 I: Yeah definitely. It sounds like you- you're quite comfortable to sort of be open and also be honest
104 about things you maybe don't know and obviously the kids they kind of step in and they ask you
105 more questions erm around that and you know you can sort of build your understanding together it
106 sounds like.
107 Frankie: Yeah, they're quite, you know the kids are curious and where we are in (*location name*) erm
108 I don't obviously, I don't, you'll notice from my accent I don't come from (*location name*) and you
109 know I've lived in (*location name*) and erm like I said a lot of my mates from school erm I had more
110 gay friends than I had straight friends *I: right* erm so you know in that sense I was really
111 comfortable and then obviously going to (*location name*) your very diverse and the kids here, it is
112 very like, it's not very diverse (*laughs*) it's not very diverse but they have access to the internet and
113 things like that so they are aware of it just not necessarily surrounded by it so they're curious which
114 is good.
115 I: Yeah, no it's definitely its own kind of context isn't it really (*location name*).
116 Frankie: Oh yes.
117 I: (*Laughs*)
118 Frankie: It's got its own way of thinking and doing (*laughs*).
119 I: Yeah yeah sure. Cool. And then should we have a look at er the second article, so that's the er, so
120 the news article from the Guardian about bullying so it says 'I know what it's like to be a trans teen
121 at school, here's how to deal with the bullying'. Erm, so this is written by Aimee Challenor who, I
122 forget her exact position but she's on the- in the Green Party and is very open about talking about
123 her own gender experience. Again it's a slightly longer article so do feel free to sort of skim a bit.
124 (*Participant reads for approximately 1 minute*)
125 Frankie: It would be interesting to know how old she is *I: hmm* because I reckon, and by no means
126 I don't think this is everywhere but erm even from when I was at school, so I'm (*age given – early
127 20s*), so what (*number*) years I left sixth form when I was 18, and bearing in mind I'm from a very
128 erm like a small countryside town and I had more, by the end of school, there was, we had a lot of
129 erm gay students in my friendship circle erm and it sounds, I- I don't remember any direct bullying, I
130 remember there would definitely be some of the children who were from the farming mindset who
131 were, by no means like erm, (*sighs*) I suppose it is homophobic do you know what I mean, they
132 don't, they didn't really understand it, they wouldn't be outright you know *I: hmm* shouting
133 horrible things across the room or do you know what I mean, we would have all got involved, erm,
134 but you know there's definitely a bit of a oh like ooh that's odd or jokes about it do you know what I
135 mean *I: hmm* where now when I think about in school, not saying that all kids would be
136 welcoming of it but there was definitely a more consensus of who cares, like from those who would
137 be deemed homophobic would probably be more the isolated ones.
138 I: Oh okay.
139 Frankie: If that makes sense.
140 I: Yeah.
141 Frankie: That's from our school perspective I suppose I don't know in other city schools what that
142 would be like.

143   I: Yeah yeah but again it sounds like where you've got erm, where there were more sort of pupils
144   who were er open in their identities that became more of the norm and it was normalised *Frankie:
145   yeah* whereas in other schools, such as Aimee Challenor's school maybe it wasn't so much *hmm
146   hmm* what do you thi- *Frankie: yeah I don't know* yeah, so she talks a lot about erm, she talks a
147   lot about the number of young people who feel bullied in schools and again I'm not completely sure
148   where that data has come from but it's obviously been gathered from somewhere, erm what are
149   your sort of reactions to that, those percentages and those numbers.
150   Frankie: Erm, saddened really, that's quite high erm, (*sigh*) quite- a, honestly I find it weird because
151   like I said from my experiences and from what I've seen, do you know a lot of, a lot of children even
152   in our school who erm are gay and like I said we don't have any erm, that I'm aware of at the
153   moment, any non-binary, erm but any erm, any children who do identify as gay from what I know of,
154   they're very encompassed in friendships, but that doesn't mean that we don't know of, do you know
155   what I mean of people saying, but I've never had any homophobic erm problems *I: yeah* that have
156   been presented to me yet, which is great but doesn't mean it doesn't necessarily happen.
157   I: Yeah.
158   Frankie: They, it's mainly the older children that, like I don't know any year 7s or year 8s, so 9s, 10s
159   and 11s, if they have had any erm, homophobic bullying, none has been reported so I don't know if
160   they, if that's something they deal with themselves or if it's just not happening, which I hope it's not
161   happening but.
162   I: Yeah yeah.
163   Frankie: But yeah.
164   I: Okay. How do you, how do you feel erm, er so I guess, within this again she talks about young
165   people maybe not feeling that they can talk to their teachers or maybe feeling that they haven't
166   been supported by their teachers, erm, do you think there are any kind of particular barriers for
167   teaching, particularly thinking about gender diverse and transgender young people *Frankie: hmm*
168   erm, so you know if a young person wanted to come out to a teacher in the school what might be
169   some of the barriers that would affect the teachers do you think?
170   Frankie: Erm personally for me I take it down any route as sort of, maybe like a safeguarding issue as
171   in you know, a child is distressed and it's something you know they feel like they need to get off their
172   chest, for me it would be a case of you know how you deal with any other problem, you would take
173   them to a safe area, erm, a quiet area, ask them you know, speak to them about it and if it's you
174   know something that's really distressing them then maybe look at going down the safeguarding
175   route of okay we need to monitor this erm, it's not, it's only a problem because they're distressed,
176   it's not the issue of the, the thing itself that's the problem if that makes sense *I: yeah* erm so you
177   know and then would you get the parents in if it was something you could see that was distressing
178   them, yes we' have a conversation with the parents and make it kind of a let's make it more of a
179   support bubble which would be for me like any issue, that's not me saying it's an issue do you know
180   what I mean like, you know if there was a bullying issue or an anxiety issue you know you use is as a
181   we try and get home and school to work together to support the child so I don't think in that sense, I
182   think the only barrier might be you know if there's some older staff members I don't think, you know
183   if you asked them what non-binary is they might not know what that is so when a child comes to
184   speak to them and goes oh I'm non-binary and they go hmm what's that it's like that would probably
185   for a kid be like okay this isn't the right person to come to *I: Yeah* so, that's the only issue I can
186   think of.
187   I: Yeah so sort of like the knowledge about that world and the skills and understanding to know what
188   to then do with that I guess because it must *Frankie: yeah* be difficult if someone uses a term that
189   they don't know and are obviously telling you something personal
190   Frankie: And you're like.
191   I: Yeah, and I wonder if the pupils would, if that would be their kind of, would they assume that
192   teachers might not know that you know if that's not something they've heard the teacher talk about
193   before they might not know if that's someone they can speak to potentially.

194   Frankie: Yeah.
195   I: It's interesting. Erm, linked to that I guess, so I guess in terms of, obviously you know, you've
196   obviously touched a bit upon older staff and feel that may make a difference and I know you said
197   you went to school not that long ago and that might have been a different experience to this person
198   from the article, erm but yeah so in terms of like training and discussion opportunities, what does
199   that kind of look like in schools, I guess your school but also just thinking about teaching more
200   broadly.
201   Frankie: Erm, if I'm honest I don't, I've not really received any training on it, erm I don't know if
202   that's, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing as in do we need training because, do you
203   know what I mean because we just accept that this is our society and you know we should know
204   what non-binary is and being homosexual and LGBT and all the different avenues, erm personally I
205   do think we need something, not because we're not accepting of it, it's because everyone has had
206   different life experiences and if you've been sheltered from it, that's not really fair, just because
207   you've been sheltered from it that then, do you know we shouldn't then just not know about it for
208   our students so I do think it is something that should be brought it, it's not any training I've
209   personally received that I remember, erm, but it's also I suppose it's never come up to be needed
210   training *I: yeah yeah* if that makes sense.
211   I: Yeah no that makes sense, and it's an interesting point you make as well about almost, kind of
212   creating equity amongst teachers so that where there have been different experiences they're all
213   still in the same place to then offer that support and know erm, yeah know what they need to know I
214   suppose.
215   Frankie: Hmm, and there's you know, there's always opportunities to learn so even people who do
216   know about it you know, we might learn something new so *I: yeah* so I don't think it would be a
217   harm to do it.
218   I: Yeah. Cool. And then finally then, so we've got item 3b, 3a and 3b, erm, I'm kind of putting these
219   ones kind of as a pair erm, it doesn't really matter which one you read first necessarily, but they're
220   both, they're both kind of guidance documents I would call them more broadly *Frankie: hmm* er
221   the first one is from a group called Transgender Trend *Frankie: hmm* so it's not an official resource
222   that's been sent by the government or anything it's a parental group who erm, they've got personal
223   concerns about er how we discuss gender identity with young people, erm, and I suppose their
224   stance is they, they feel that it's erm something that we shouldn't encourage is kind of the word that
225   they would use, so they kind of developed their own sort of resource pack and they've got their own
226   website and so on. And the one next to it is guidance from Northern Ireland's education authority
227   which is more of a government document that is just sort of summary of some of the suggestions
228   that they might give. So if you just want to take a bit of time to skim through both of those then it
229   would be interesting to get your thoughts.
230   (*Participant reads for approximately 25 seconds*)
231   Frankie: Oh so they're trying to say almost like don't segregate them, so where they said about you
232   shouldn't give transgender rights but then not to other children because then you're segregating
233   them is that right, so where they said about transgender girls, you shouldn't give them the option to
234   wear trousers and then not the other girls.
235   I: Hmm.
236   Frankie: I agree with that.
237   I: Yeah.
238   Frankie: Because I, to be honest I think where, erm, I think, I don't understand where it comes from
239   that girls should wear skirts *I: yeah* like you know what I mean like I really, that, it really winds me
240   up that one because I'm there like well it's 2020, like (*laughs*) I remember like so vividly in PE, I used
241   to take off my skort and make a point of it like no I'm not wearing it *I: yeah yeah* and they were
242   like Frankie you have to because you're a girl and I was like and what, I literally said and what, make
243   me, like, and I was a pretty good kid but I really like used to get really angry about that one *I: yeah*

244   erm and they'd be like well that's the uniform *I: yeah yeah* and I was like I don't care (*laughs)* I
245   used to run around in shorts.
246   I: Yeah, uniforms are definitely an interesting thing in school and I think erm, there's a lot of schools
247   that have kind of moved to the point of sort of saying there is more equity there, but you still get in
248   most schools I think this sort of boys uniform and girls uniform and there's always a question of why,
249   why do we have that necessarily.
250   Frankie: Yeah I don't really get it, personally but.
251   I: Yeah.
252   Frankie: Erm (*reads for approximately 20 seconds*) yeah so we have boys and girls changing rooms
253   and then erm gender neutral, so there, if there is somebody, well you just get some people who are
254   uncomfortable changing around people which is fair enough erm so they can use them toilets or like
255   I said, if we did have somebody who was non-binary, like I said we haven't had that as of yet, that
256   I'm aware of erm, so that's quite good and I do think that is quite, you know you're taking out of
257   there a fight that doesn't need to be there you know there's no reason for a child to feel
258   uncomfortable getting changed at all I don't think.
259   I: Yeah. Yeah no for sure.
260   Frankie: (*Reads for approximately 1 minute*). Okay so I've done erm 3a
261   I: Awesome.
262   Frankie: Right, 3b Northern Ireland (*reads for approximately 30 seconds*) Okay.
263   I: Cool. So yeah, any initial thoughts, wonders?
264   Frankie: Erm, no I think it's good from the, the sounds of it you know where they're trying to by the
265   looks of it, especially the Northern Ireland one they're trying to, from what I've gathered from it
266   from the skimming erm, that they're trying to basically erm, help non-binary students but by also not
267   singling them out so it's just, they're just trying to make it a part of everyday life, it's like normalising
268   it if that makes sense.
269   I: Yeah, yeah so sort of making it like including them in a more holistic way rather than *Frankie:
270   yeah* erm I guess singling them out to include them which is not quite the same thing I guess.
271   Frankie: Yeah like just incorporating it so this is now normal school life.
272   I: Yeah, yeah. And obviously so this, the Northern Ireland was obviously developed specifically for
273   schools to kind of give them tips on how to work with young people, erm, yeah, and then I guess in
274   terms of systems and kind of policies in place erm, where do you think schools are with that at the
275   moment, in terms of direct instruction of supporting erm, gender-diverse and trans young people?
276   Frankie: It's bad, I don't really know a lot about it, just because I'd say from our side of it you know
277   with our school you know, personally I think they take a very, quite a holistic approach where it
278   would be a, like with any child er, you know we have a behavioural policy but we also have children
279   who have learning difficulties so if a child bursts out with something, a normal child, not a normal
280   child, a, well I'm going to use the word normal because I can't think of the politically correct one,
281   erm, no children are normal by the way *(laughs)* erm, you know erm they would get a set of lines,
282   whereas some child who has ASD who really struggles with you know bursting out, it would be okay
283   well that's not appropriate let's not do that and maybe a third time that's been asked right I've given
284   you your warnings now and it's about you know, we really tailor to, to individual children erm, and
285   we know our kids so we know what works with them, so I think you know giving a blanket this is how
286   everything is done doesn't necessarily work, there will be some children like we said didn't feel
287   comfortable changing in front of others and that's not from being non-binary or LGBT, that's just
288   because they are uncomfortable and they might have had a situation previously that led to that, but
289   we know about that so we help with that so *I: yeah* there's no policy on non-binary but I feel like
290   the, if that presented itself and there was some erm uncomfortableness around it for a student then
291   we would support them in any other way we would support another child.
292   I: Yeah, it's almost like a case-by-case basis based on their individual needs *Frankie: hmm* rather
293   than like you say having that blanket rule *Frankie: yeah* across the board, yeah.
294   Frankie: Is what I gather from it, maybe our policy writer would feel different.

295   (*Both laugh*).
296   I: Yeah. And do you feel in terms of erm, I guess in terms of sort of like wider policies as well like
297   obviously I got the extract from Northern Ireland, the other one was created by a parent group who I
298   guess I would say have quite different views, erm I guess in terms of the sort of wider er input for
299   schools, do you think there's a lot of support there in terms of guiding them?
300   Frankie: Not that I have seen, erm but like I said because I haven't had erm a child come to me I've
301   never had to deal with so I don't know if, you know if I then looked into it further would there be
302   some support there that at the minute I've not seen anything or heard anything *I: yeah* being like
303   if it was to present itself, here's how to deal with it so I would say probably not.
304   I: Yeah no that makes sense.
305   Frankie: Yeah so I'm not very useful there am I sorry (*laughs*).
306   I: No it's fine (*laughs*) like honestly there's no useful or un-useful, it's all useful to be fair so yeah it's
307   all good. Erm so then I guess in terms of erm, I guess thinking about community influences, so erm
308   you've already touched upon the fact that in (*location name*) it's quite different to I guess (*location*
309   *name*) and so on, how do you think kind of the community would erm influence discussing gender
310   identity and stuff within schools?
311   Frankie: Erm, I don't really know because like I said I've got quite a few students who are really open
312   about it and erm, but I suppose then the other day I had it where there was two girls about to kiss in
313   my lesson and I was like no girls and that were like what why and I was like, COVID *I: (*laughs*)* like
314   COVID and you're in school like no, and they were like what it's not because we're gay I was like I
315   couldn't care less if you're gay or straight, it doesn't matter it's 2020, it's COVID (*laughs*) like that
316   other bit doesn't matter and they were like oh miss that's really nice and I was there like, it actually
317   shocked me they were surprised or even thought it was because they were two girls kissing *I: yeah*
318   so maybe it's not as inclusive as I imagine because in my head I'm like, I don't care who kisses you
319   know, I don't care if there's an age gap or if you are gay or a lesbian or straight like it doesn't matter,
320   erm but then maybe you know, now you've said it, maybe their surprise to my not caring about erm
321   that side of things *I: yeah* I'm still angry with them like I can't believe you tried to do that with
322   COVID, in my lesson (*both laugh*) like, so maybe it's not as inclusive the community is as I thought
323   and maybe the children I see because they're all close together at the time maybe they are really
324   comfortable but then if you put them in the wider community would they be as comfortable, erm so
325   that, I don't know.
326   I: Yeah.
327   Frankie: And I can't say would they be as you know, accepting as (location name) probably not.
328   I: Yeah.
329   Frankie: Erm, we are a little further back in time here.
330   I: (*Laughs*).
331   Frankie: That might be my own experiences you know tinting what it actually is.
332   I: No it's great it's good to hear them as well, it's erm, I guess I also wondered as well whether what
333   your thoughts were say if you were to for instance say to parents you know we're going to be talking
334   about gender identity with the whole class and we're going to be doing this particular piece of topic
335   work *Frankie: hmm* do you think there would be any kind of parental reaction to that at all and if
336   so what would it look like?
337   Frankie: Hmm to be honest I don't, there might be but I don't know if the school would care because
338   we are very much a case of you know this is how we run and you know we do RE days like full days
339   about it and PSHE and you know we had one the other day about the criminal justice system so I do
340   think as a school we are quite do you know what I mean forthcoming about we're going to talk
341   about these issues because they need to be spoken about. Yeah and so I don't know if the parents
342   would necessarily be happy but I don't think there would be much push back because they know
343   what we're like anyway *I: yeah* and if you don't like it then don't send your child, if that *I: yeah,
344   yeah* like we want our children to know about the outside world out of (*location name*) *I: yeah,
345   yeah that makes sense* I like that stance because I think they should, they should be learning about

346   hard issues and you know the world isn't rosy all the time and it's nice that the kids get a, and they
347   get a taste of so like we had it where we learnt about Hinduism one day and we've had Buddhists
348   come in and erm, so I think you know the kids do get a good view of *I: yeah yeah* the rest of the
349   world shall we say.
350   I: Yeah. It sounds like your school have quite a strong stance so this is what we're teaching, this is
351   our ethos, and then kind of erm *Frankie: yeah* a polite way of dealing with it *(laughs)* *Frankie:
352   yeah*
353   Frankie: I mean obviously we're not insensitive if there was you know we were very much warned
354   that obviously there might be some children who have parents who are erm, who are incarcerated
355   erm so you know maybe if those children are upset or don't want to speak about it that day that's
356   fine we'll give them something else to do, you know we're like, as in religious views we know erm it's
357   gone out my head, Jehovah's Witnesses don't learn about other views and so they went to a
358   separate area and did you know more about their religious stuff because it's against their religion to
359   learn so we're not like that like you must do it *(laughs)* *I: yeah, yeah*
360   I: Again it goes back to what you said earlier about not having that blanket rule *Frankie: hmm*
361   you've sort of got the framework but look at the individual as well.
362   Frankie: Yeah I reckon if you know a parent said I don't want my children learning about erm gay
363   people, we'd be like well soz that's just homophobic like I think there would probably be maybe
364   some pushback on that one, but like you said a religious stance we'd you know, fair enough on that.
365   I: Yeah. Cool.
366   Frankie: Interesting. There's a lot of things I've just realised I don't know *(laughs)*
367   I: No it's fine you're not supposed to it's fine *(laughs)* just getting your views and your thoughts it's
368   all interesting, yeah cool. Is there anything, anything else we haven't touched upon, anything that's
369   popped into your mind or any additional comments you'd like to make at all?
370   Frankie: Maybe just to comment that probably that is something that I think you know, teachers
371   should learn more about because even as somebody who you know has been exposed erm to a very
372   diverse area, it's not necessarily an area I still learn a great deal about, erm so no I do think some
373   more diversity training would probably be good, even for myself who is you know, not, not that long
374   out of school, I'm going to say not that long *(laughs)* but yeah I definitely for potentially, and I could
375   be stereotyping myself here about older generations but as a general stereotype it probably is
376   something that maybe there's a lack of knowledge.
377   I: Yeah, yeah and again going back to what you said about kind of creating that level playing field I
378   guess *Frankie: yeah* in terms of what teachers know, yeah.
379   Frankie: It would be good
380   I: Awesome. Cool well it's been really helpful thank you so much
381   Frankie: No worries, thank you for- I'm sorry about the timing *I: no it's fine* I didn't want it to be
382   rushed for you that was all.
383   I: Yeah yeah no honestly it was fine don't worry about it, the thing about nowadays is we can sort of
384   stay home anyway so *(both laugh)* it's fine. Yeah that's great no yeah if there's nothing else then er
385   yeah obviously this has been really helpful erm it's really good to get lots of different views and stuff
386   and it was nice yesterday with your colleagues and then obviously having, I'm glad that you were
387   able to join, I know you couldn't come yesterday so I'm glad you could do an individual interview as
388   well erm *Frankie: yeah* I will be coming back to your school, well, I don't know whether I'll be
389   there in person or if it will be virtual at the moment, to do some gender training for your school's
390   participation in this research so yeah I'm looking forward to that *Frankie: great* so yeah.
391   Frankie: No thank you for that, I hope it all goes well with everything else for you.
392   I: Brilliant. Thanks very much. Enjoy the rest of your day.
393   Frankie: You too, thank you, bye.
394   I: Bye.

G.4   Transcript 3: Tennant School focus group

School name pseudonym: Tennant School

Interview details
Date, time, location: 02.12.20, 2.25 -3.25, TEAMS
Running time: Approximately 55 minutes

Interviewer: I
Interviewees (pseudonyms)
Mason
Winslow
Avery

Interview Transcript
1   I: Okay the lights on, it's definitely going. That's good. So I forwarded some articles to you previously
2   and like I said there wasn't any requirement to read those beforehand unless of course you wanted
3   to erm, does everybody have access to those articles at the moment?
4   Mason: Yep
5   Winslow: I'll just get them up
6   Avery: I read them. I'm scared if I go back to look for them I'll lose this screen.
7   I: No that's fine.
8   Avery: I did scan them and kind of memorised them a bit, like the key principles. So erm if I really
9   need to go and get them up on the screen I will but you might not see me for a while (*laughs*).
10 I: (*Laughs*) no that's fine, if you've already read them and skimmed them that's fine so long as you
11 feel comfortable that you have a general idea of what they were about, you don't have to memorise
12 the specifics and so on. Erm, and Mason and Winslow did you have a chance to read them at all, it
13 doesn't matter if you didn't.
14 Mason: Yep.
15 Winslow: I've read them I'm just going to get them on the screen now so I've got them.
16 Mason: I've read them and I'm very old-fashioned I've gone with them on paper *(laughs)*.
17 I: Yeah I do that as well (*laughs*). Brilliant okay cool. It's handy that you've skimmed them that's
18 really helpful. Erm, so I guess thinking about that first article then, so the first one was about erm, it
19 was about an all girls' school and it's entitled 'top London girls school allows pupils to identify as
20 male or gender neutral', erm and there were obviously a few things that they talked about in there.
21 Erm, so I guess as a bit of an open question, what were your kind of initial thoughts when reading
22 that article.
23 Avery: Erm, I thought it was quite progressive of them, I wondered if they were worried about
24 litigation being a private school, well all schools are and number three it raised a question in my
25 mind, why do we have to have labels. The reason I say that, because I – I openly admit I do, I know I
26 present as a woman, I was born as a woman, I just know I'm me but I can't really say I feel female
27 you know because we've got the big mix of hormones anyway, but I wouldn't say I was particularly
28 feminine or masculine or in the middle, I'm in loads of things that are stereotyped boys things, erm
29 so for me as erm, my background is biology, erm I'm fascinated by what is it that makes people feel
30 that they're not one or the other, I don't, I think stereotypes are wrong and I don't believe any two
31 people feel the same thing so that's why I'm interested in exploring it because I've got to keep an
32 open mind about it and I think labels go into an awful mess but then again you've got the legislation
33 and everything so it's so complicated and it does my head in quite honestly *I: okay* so it's great
34 you're doing this research because I've never seen anything on people looking at this and when I er,

35 a young woman, a young student in year 8 said to me non-binary I could see the teacher was
36 shocked and was worried that they'd said the wrong thing, might be in trouble and asked for my
37 advice I said she's fine no, it's fine, but it made me realise that I need to understand this so that I can
38 be respectful if people feel that strongly about it and try and be as neutral as possible and accept
39 them as an individual rather than stereotyping and it's hard because we've got mixed, you know we
40 can't have mixed, you know there's all sorts of problems that present and you know how do you get
41 your head round this. Sorry I've said enough, over to you guys (*laughs*).
42 I: Thank you for that.
43 Winslow: I think, I think the school have been amazing and I don't know what they've done since
44 2017 whether other schools, whether you can tell us if other schools are seeking advice on how to
45 approach these situations you know where someone is exploring their erm gender identity and what
46 I liked about it is they support students right up until the point when then obviously they make the
47 decision to erm change gender and therefore legally they- they can't admit someone to the school
48 who changes erm you know at that, but I liked the fact they were very very supportive right up to
49 that stage and were very clear in what they were setting out to do so I think for a school, being a
50 private school as well erm you know hopefully that's going to maybe set- set a certain standard and
51 you know support the LGBT erm community erm because I think it's erm something that's badly
52 needed, and I don't know I mean I really felt very encouraged when I read the article erm, I mean I
53 didn't see the article so I think more and more exposure is needed, erm, erm, yep, I thought it was a
54 great article and I would be keen to know what's been happening since 2017.
55 I: Yeah. Brilliant.
56 Mason: I- I was a bit erm sceptical really erm the very fact that it was a high fee paying girls school
57 obviously the issues of erm girls deciding to change and wanting to be known as a different gender
58 was an issue that the school couldn't ignore, fine, I think the school is starting to get it, but in
59 between the lines I also read these girls are going to be from extremely affluent families who could
60 theoretically sue the school and I wondered how much of this was a reaction to fear of, and I'm not
61 saying it's not progressive, I think it is, and I'm not saying that's not a good thing because I think it is,
62 but I think it's telling the fact that it has been, it started in a high fee paying school because I think
63 the background of the girls means there are going to be lawyers and people able to pay to sue and I
64 think the school are aware of that and I think possibly their progressiveness is slightly pushed with
65 that I'm sorry if that sounds cynical (*laughs*)
66 Avery: No that was the thing I got – I felt that.
67 Mason: Okay (*laughs*)
68 I: It's an interesting point because obviously the parents, it's a very specific context isn't it, it's an all
69 girls' school and it's a private all girls' school so there's obviously other considerations they would
70 have in that as well *Mason: yeah* erm and it sounds like you're sort of wondering whether there's
71 sort of erm *Avery: a political agenda* considerations around sort of I guess the parental reactions
72 and what that might look like and how they accommodate in response to that.
73 Mason: Yeah. Yes, yes, and I'm not saying if it hadn't happened in a- in a mixed sex school they
74 wouldn't have gone that way, I think they probably would but probably at a slower pace, so I don't
75 want to take anything away from them because I don't think that's fair.
76 I: Yeah. No that's an interesting point. Thank you. And then so I guess they talk a lot about ages in it
77 as well and the ages at which they'll sort of talk with young people and stuff, what are your views
78 generally about erm, the appropriateness of discussing gender identity with certain age groups?
79 Avery: Well I think it should be from when you know they're ready to talk about sex education and
80 when they're ready to talk about key concepts in religion which is about tolerance in you know all
81 religions and you know we talk about anti-bullying things and everything so I think, my big concern
82 from a teaching and a parental standpoint is that if people don't feel that- if people present slightly
83 different which could be if they say they are non-binary or whatever, erm bisexual or er whatever
84 phrase they use I don't even know what the proper terms are and they are bullied, this is a massive
85 problem you know because I, sorry I'm jumping ahead to your other erm piece of er information

86   which is all about erm, and I'm deeply concerned about young people's mental health and obviously

87   people who present as slightly outside I mean – this is not my words but society judging, outside the

88   norm whatever the norm is, erm, get picked on because people are so afraid of difference and I

89   think the teachers, they're scared because they don't understand it and they're worried about

90   saying the wrong thing and getting in trouble you know, with parents and just it's upsetting a child

91   so yeah erm, that's my perspective.

92   I: Yeah. It sounds like there's sort of erm, a lot of concerns that sort of might run through erm a

93   teacher's mind then about things to consider, so you said about them, did you say about the

94   teachers being worried about saying the wrong thing?

95   Avery: Yeah so you know we had one teacher, I won't say their name, so it was an RE teacher and

96   they were talking about Christianity and of course we know about certain faiths, we know about the

97   Catholic kind of thing, and all those sorts or things, so when you're teaching a subject and saying

98   something because it's part of the course content you can get yourself in very deep water and I

99   observed this and the teacher came to me for advice but I'm not a specialist, I just know that child

100   and I said no she won't be offended, I'll have a little word with her and just say look, you know it's

101   about tolerance and at the end of the day it doesn't matter, we're all individuals and if you're

102   Christian you know, and she was absolutely fine, that teacher was really worried she might go, the

103   student might go home, complain to the parent and we might have a backlash, and it made me

104   realise how well, what a mess we're in because we don't know what to say, we don't have a

105   common language, I – I invigilated for a young person who was er, well I don't know what stage she

106   was in, but she – she wanted to go to be called a he and of course it's so hard to do that by the time

107   you already knew someone so in an exam situation where you're trying to get them all in, I had to

108   say don't use her name just say oh hi you know because then I did make a mistake, she was really

109   really quite cross with me and I just said you know I'm really sorry I wasn't even looking I was just

110   trying to get you guys in there, so you know the students can be very very upset because of what

111   maybe you know *I: yeah* and I felt really bad by that you know I wasn't more aware to know what

112   to say.

113   Winslow: Just like what Avery says you know it's just of course knowing what to say and being scared

114   about putting your foot in it, erm using common sense sometimes isn't even the right way and we

115   definitely need training *Avery: yeah* and we need you know, we need things to open up so that we

116   can you know, support our students better and you know what Avery described there you would feel

117   you've let that student down and we'd walk away and think I didn't mean to but you know I need to

118   be able to get some training and help to manage those situations, erm and back to your point about

119   the age the thing about being 15 I mean you're growing up and finding out about your sexuality,

120   looking at gender, it is a tricky stage and I can understand why you know, you might talk to students

121   about exploring their identity and giving them the time to wait until they're a little bit older, a little

122   bit sure about themselves and where they want to be, waiting to have those other discussions post

123   15 I would have thought that quite a sensible thing but every child is different so I guess it would

124   have to be on an individual basis where you would make those kind of decisions.

125   I: Hmm

126   Mason: I- I think you're right it is an individual thing and I think thinking about the age for me gender

127   identity isn't connected with the sexual education that we give so we're not sort of I don't think

128   when we're talking about gender identity, we're not connecting it with the sex we are connecting it

129   with identity which for me means that if a er, if a 5 or 6 year old says is that a he or a she and that he

130   or she says that they're non-binary, when a child asks the question, that's when it's time to answer

131   it, now I'm not saying I could answer that question but I – I think for me it's important that we don't

132   look at gender identity in the same group as sex education because a young child, well a young child

133   knows what sex they are put into and they can often say whether another person is male or female

134   and I'm just choosing those two, so if they do ask the question I think they deserve an answer but I

135   don't think we need to wait with educating to bundle it together with sex education because it, I do

136   think it's slightly different.

137   Avery: Yeah I didn't mean, I just meant once they're mature enough to have sensible discussions
138   about things like this, when they're too young they giggle and get all silly.
139   Mason: Yeah
140   Avery: But you're right I think you have schools where there are children there who you know were
141   born with a label that they're a girl but they dress like boys and sometimes I have to sort of like
142   really think carefully because I'm not quite sure because young children don't partic- you know
143   unless the parents, they choose to dress in a particular way you know, erm sometimes it isn't
144   obvious because some schools they are all allowed to wear- my kids could always wear trousers,
145   they didn't have a uniform, and when we did have a uniform there wasn't this rule about girls wear,
146   like here you can wear both so there were kids that you weren't quite sure so you were just really
147   careful because you knew that if you did get it wrong they would probably be deeply upset, you
148   know, because it wasn't always obvious.
149   I: It sounds like there's kind of, there's kind of like two things here so the element of sort of
150   separating out sex and gender and not treating them as one thing together *Mason: yes* and also
151   thinking about like children's maturity there's an element of kind of following their lead and so if
152   they do ask questions *Mason: yeah* kind of being open to that curiosity, erm, *Mason: yeah, yeah*
153   rather than having a blanket rule about saying certain ages it's this that and the other.
154   Avery: I mean I think – I think we sometimes sort of talk in science when we talk about reproduction,
155   we talk about (*unintelligible speech*) and those sort of things but it you know it I think it touches on
156   the subject of treating people as individuals, it touches the things that we do in what we call PSHE
157   now but it used to be a separate subject, I can't remember what it was called, but we would talk
158   about all sorts of things about you know respect and anti-bullying, it's almost like a subject on it's
159   own and I think that we've got a massive challenge ahead of us, not because of schools I think
160   teachers are probably you know, they really on the side of the kids you know I think they'd be the
161   first to you know promote inclusion, it's the media the stereotyping, just look now at all the
162   stereotyping you know Barbies for girls and then you know Lego for boys well know sorry that's
163   wrong, let them have what they want, I hate that stereotyping in the media and it makes it when
164   you are slightly different, when I say different I don't mean, I mean it in a slightly different way that
165   you know most of the population are that so they're the norm whatever that is whatever, but you
166   know if you feel that you're different from say your friends, you shouldn't be made to feel that
167   you're a lesser person, I mean when you're older like me it's cooler to be eccentric and different but
168   when you're a secondary school kid, different means you can get bullied.
169   I: Yeah, definitely, that probably brings us on quite nicely actually to the second article erm thinking
170   about the sort of reactions and erm bullying from others and so on erm, so if you have that in front
171   of you now erm obviously feel free to take some time to skim it again if you need to but thinking
172   about the bullying article it was the one that says 'I know what it's like to be a trans teen at school,
173   here's how to deal with the bullying'. It's written by Aimee Challenor who's trans herself and she's in
174   the Green party, I can't quite remember what her position is but she talks a lot about gender identity
175   and various other things, so what do people think about, what were your sort of initial thoughts and
176   responses to this.
177   Avery: Oh that one I don't remember so well – oh yes she's talking about, the person was talking
178   about the experiences weren't they yeah.
179   Winslow: Seeing this one now from a student's point of view, I mean I have had experience of having
180   a pupil who was going through a difficult time and erm had changed gender to female, from male to
181   female and there was a lot of bullying going on, and I did my best to help her but I really felt that the
182   person was not getting adequate support from school, who were naive, and where it talks about lack
183   of support that's absolutely true and it's about not changing erm views within the school context but
184   about changing views within society as a whole, erm I think that's, that's where the issue is isn't it?
185   Erm, tackling these issues erm on a bigger scale and I don't know the details but like Kamala Harris,
186   incoming deputy of erm the president of the United States, I think recently she's had some pretty
187   dodgy views on trans erm in prisons, I'm not really sure of the complete context but like, higher up

188 in society we've got a lot of issues erm, with very negative attitudes towards trans people so I think
189 we have a big task on our hands to change erm people's views and erm to start in schools yes but I
190 think it needs to start like in other places erm in higher places as well.
191 I: Yeah so I guess those much like wider, bigger kind of societal issues are quite a barrier I guess to
192 sort of what do we then do in schools because they're so much bigger than them.
193 Winslow: Yeah, yeah. But we can start doing stuff in schools regardless can't we erm if we, I don't
194 know at *(school name)* what we're doing but perhaps Avery and Mason know more than me from
195 the teams that they're on?
196 Avery: No - I don't know of anything and I raise that question because of, we are a church school I'm
197 sort of really interested, because I'm struggling with the idea of you know we're mixed, we're a
198 mixed Catholic and Protestant school, you know I feel, because I'm actually not tolerant of, I don't
199 believe you should box things, the bible to me is to be interpreted, you know, it's a long time ago,
200 and so you know I do worry about our construct of being a faith school and how is this going to go
201 and so I think it's got to start at home as well because a lot of the prejudice I hear in school they're
202 coming from par- you can tell it's from parents, you know so we have to do something at home, in
203 school, in society, in the media, erm, because we've got this awful stereotyping you know and it's
204 ridiculous and it is I think the basis for a lot of self-harming and mental health issues, you know
205 promoting this idea of that perfect person or whatever and you know it's not like that and that isn't
206 a real person, everybody is an individual but the way we're going in society that doesn't seem to be
207 celebrated.
208 I: Oh okay.
209 Mason: I also think in schools, to me, bullying often starts because somebody is different or they're
210 perceived as being different from the norm, and it's, we've got in school the basis for pupils being
211 bullied for other reasons, either colour or race, religion and I think that's a good keystone from
212 which we could start looking at LGBT issues because of the bullying, but like every other bully for
213 whatever reason it's often to do with ignorance, fear and you know it's that lack of knowledge that I
214 think if we're able to get that knowledge out there, we aren't going to change parents, we aren't
215 going to change people high up in office and in a way I do think you almost have to wait for opinions
216 to die out erm so we are talking generation, generation before acceptance but I don't think there's
217 any harm in bringing up the issue so that we can educate each other, I mean when I was at school a
218 lot of the issues were around erm colour and different religions and although there isn't the
219 tolerance in the world that we would hope I think there is more tolerance because there's more
220 knowledge and I think that that's where we start with LGBT and I think that we've got the bullying
221 erm, keystone in school, I think we can use that and go from there.
222 I: Yeah
223 Avery: Yeah I agree. I think we're missing that language, that definition because in my mind, because
224 I am so recent with this and I must admit I didn't know really where to look, we need a trusted
225 source – what is the definition of that because in my head I am confused between autism and
226 identity confusion which I've experienced a lot of in my background and also in education, people
227 who say I'm non-binary I don't feel I'm one or the other just don't put a label on me and then you've
228 got the cross-dressing which I'm told doesn't necessarily mean someone wants to change it but they
229 like those personas and you know you could say that's why you have some of the actors like David
230 Walliams who have a life and I think you know he's got a kid and he's been in relationships with the
231 opposite sex but that he loves dressing up and being er doing that erm so there's a comedy act and
232 then you've got erm people that truly say I feel I've been born in the wrong body you know I was
233 born a woman but I feel totally male because that's what they feel and they do want to go through
234 transitioning which to me as a parent is scary and I hope one day it will be less scary erm because it
235 is, to me it is scary because I don't understand it and my way and I know that comes onto your third
236 part of this but like the group is lobbying to say hey wait a minute slow down, because if you, you
237 know, if someone does transition you believe it but actually they regret it after, because it wasn't
238 about that it was about something else or they're just confused about what it is or they felt instead

239 of being one sex than the other because they have more rights, and they've made that mistake, so I
240 do worry about like, have they made a decision that they're not really- because I think young people
241 in terms of going back to sexuality, I don't think they fully really know until they're probably older
242 and you get loads of people who do change later in life erm so I think it's terribly complex and I do
243 think we need safeguards so that people that think they are but then regret it or go through things
244 like surgery that end up in complications and it does affect their life-
245 Mason: There was that case wasn't there, there was the young erm, she was a female, transitioned
246 to male at a very young age, she's just won a court case hasn't she is it Keira Bell or somebody?
247 Avery: I don't know
248 I: Yeah Keira Bell
249 Mason: Tavistock people have now stopped er any starting of transitions for anyone under 16
250 *Avery: oh right* and they ruled that that person wasn't capable of or old enough to know the
251 consequences to make that decision but, wasn't capable, just wasn't mature enough to actually-
252 *Avery: yeah yeah*
253 Avery: Yeah because I know of a case where they have autism and they have identity issues and they
254 have mental health issues, but they're adults so if they went into the Tavistock to say you know, and
255 they were encouraged to but they didn't have the right mental health capacity because it actually
256 wasn't that then that's devastating, that individual will be totally traumatised and also everyone
257 surrounding that because that person, whatever they change to if they're family aren't on board and
258 if they haven't got that support it can be devastating, not just from a medical standpoint if it goes
259 wrong you know, surgical errors and lifelong chronic pain, erm, but erm, it's emotionally because I
260 think this is something that most people if they do transition they will need that psychological
261 support and society needs to move on hugely otherwise they might not be able to get that job, they
262 get chucked out of a job that was seen as very male, it used to be in some professions you weren't
263 allowed to be in professions as a woman for example in the navy and it has massive ramifications
264 and I am very worried about those, because yeah you're right, when is the right age to be, have
265 capacity as they say in mental health terms to make that decision, it's so complex.
266 Mason: It is.
267 I: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. That probably moves us on quite nicely to the final article, I say the final –
268 there's two articles that we're going to look at in tandem really so it's item 3a and 3b, so 3b is
269 guidance for schools from Northern Ireland's education authority erm and then alongside that we've
270 got item 3a which, it didn't come from an education authority, but there's a parent group who have
271 kind of come together called Transgender Trend who erm, so they've got concerns around erm how
272 gender identity is being perceived in society at the moment that are maybe quite, I suppose their
273 views are quite different from that suggested by the Northern Ireland guidance which is why I
274 thought it might be helpful to look at these two things together. Erm, what are people's kind of
275 initial views on this I know Avery you've already sort of touched on this a little bit, I wonder whether
276 Winslow and Mason what your sort of initial thoughts might be.
277 Winslow: Well I mean I came away from reading this still wanting to know how do the school
278 actually, how do we explain to people that a child has changed sex and is now a boy rather than a
279 girl, that for me is the question needs help and you know erm we all need the same standards and
280 we all need to be saying the same thing for it to be you know supported in the community, in our
281 school community. Erm, I've never had that discussion with anyone erm but it is important as we all
282 come at it from different angles, some are experienced, some have more empathy than others so it's
283 very important that we get that question answered in a very you know erm in the right way and that
284 we all know exactly what we're saying, beyond year 7 pupils yeah I would probably be quite stuck
285 really with this and would worry about my response so I don't know if the articles you've given us
286 now address those big questions *I: yeah* it just seems tricky.
287 I: Yeah.

288   Winslow: Someone with a lot more background a lot more knowledge coming into the school and
289   teaching us or you know doing a workshop with us on how to explore answers to these tough
290   questions will probably be what will have to happen.
291   I: Hmm. So there's almost an element of sort of wanting more like clear practical guidance of what
292   to actually do in certain situations so it feels, it feels like it kind of sounds a bit grey at the moment
293   and a bit wooly.
294   Winslow: Yeah.
295   Avery: And I must admit I haven't been presented, I only think because we are sheltered, I don't
296   know what it is across England, I certainly I lived most my life in (*location name)* which is where my
297   kids grew up, I don't remember ever coming across this so I definitely think there's a trend but I'm
298   not saying it's trendy what I'm saying is there's a trend to be open and talk about this because I think
299   we've got more and more role models in the media who are saying what they are, you know we've
300   got lots of film stars, probably an old-fashioned word but celebrities in films and musicians who
301   actually say oh I'm non-binary, I still don't have a definition, I just have this sort of general definition
302   I don't know what it means but maybe it's different for every individual and that would be good to
303   know I just don't understand you know, so that would be really good, that's changing and people are
304   much more open about it outside of school but within school I think people shy away from that topic
305   because fear of saying the wrong thing and litigation.
306   I: Yeah, yeah.
307   Mason: I think erm, as a school or in the sort of erm education earlier erm it's a subject that yes will
308   come into the individual classroom when you've got a child that identifies as something other than
309   male or female and in that instance as somebody taking a class if that came into such a conversation
310   erm, trying to elicit from that person what being erm, whatever they call themselves – non-binary
311   you said – what does that mean to them can be useful but if we're looking at tackling the subject
312   head on I think almost like the PSHE that's taught here, which is new to me I've only been here for a
313   term and erm it's not a lesson that's delivered necessarily, the facts can be delivered but I think it
314   needs a discussion generally with everyone and not with a class of 30, I think we're talking about
315   smaller groups, I think people are going to feel more comfortable in smaller groups, possibly erm, I
316   don't know whether you would mix the age groups or keep them the same, mix the traditional
317   genders or keep them the same but erm, I think it needs to be as an open discussion because as
318   people who take the class, we're probably just as knowledgeable or just as ignorant as our pupils
319   and I think it's somewhere where we can all be on a level playing field and have an open discussion
320   as to where we feel we are if that's something that, that's all I've got to say (*laughs*).
321   I: Yeah there's an element of almost the teacher and the students almost learning from each other
322   and leaning together *Mason: yeah* rather than it having to be directed one way *Avery: yeah
323   yeah- I'm thinking* in more formal learning experiences.
324   Avery: Well I'm thinking that kids that are young children, and I'm thinking in those really formative
325   years where it's primary and early secondary, probably it really, I mean I'm hoping I think they're
326   probably I don't know, open-minded, it's more the older ones that you know have had a whole life
327   to say on, might have more problems with it so we might yeah so that was really interesting to know
328   what their views are and not make any assumptions and so my question on the third bit about this
329   group, the group of parents, are they people that erm understand what it is or that present as non-
330   binary or whatever because I think it would be terrible if you get a group of ignorant people like
331   (*laughs*) I count myself like that, like making rules that would be wrong and I understand your
332   research is to find out what the best way forward is because we need to seek guidance from people
333   that truly understand it and feel they live it to know what needs to change, because the thing that I
334   might think bothers them might not so we're wasting our time and it's really important to know
335   what would be help- make them feel er like they're not marginalised, that they have open
336   opportunities and I guess it's like any discussion I mean you've got the nine protected
337   characteristics, is it on there, the human rights?
338   I: It is on there I think yeah.

339   Avery: Oh it is okay – I thought it was, I should know this (*laughs*) I did it quite recently, so yeah
340   we've already got this legislation, but like with any legislation you've got it but it's not implemented
341   and that's the problem whether that be the autism act or whether it's you know er equal
342   opportunities for men and women well if that was true we'd all be paid the same no matter what we
343   were you know what we're born as on our birth certificate, so yeah it's all about that
344   implementation, and making the school really inclusive because my worry is it's got less inclusive
345   lately because the fear factor's gone up because of coronavirus and it all just seems very suspicious
346   and fearful and I think that has taken us a step back from, from being progressive because we're
347   very worried about what's going on.
348   I: Oh okay. So it sounds like there's definitely erm, there's definitely a question of having clarity
349   *Avery: yeah* around it and also you sort of touched upon erm I suppose having guidance from
350   people who have that experience as well *Avery: yeah* sort of speaking from a place of
351   understanding themselves to maybe people who want to understand but are finding it difficult to
352   understand.
353   Avery: Yeah and it's really, you sort of get it from the horse's mouth and I think it's probably much
354   more than we're thinking, you know there might be three ways of describing it but we need to
355   recognise that there are those differences, and that it's all about you know looking at an individual,
356   and I think that's a big thing, a link with the autism is that they do not feel they follow social norms
357   or rules, and so they might not understand because of the challenges with their social
358   communication and trying to put themselves in other people's shoes you know being like, they find
359   it hard to imagine what it is like and I know there's a lot of confusion around and erm, so yeah there
360   might be a separate category you know and all these things and I just think you need to be much
361   more open, it shouldn't be taboo, why is it so taboo but I'm afraid that anything people don't
362   understand they seem fearful and they'd rather not talk about it.
363   I: Yeah. Yeah. Thinking about that kind of fear factor, what do you feel the sort of parental response
364   or community response would be to your school, erm if this, if for instance you were to sort of start
365   talking about gender identity within schools or it was to be explicitly brought into a certain topic?
366   Mason: If it was put in the PSHE curriculum, erm I think it would hold the same weight and be in the
367   same perspective as any of the other of the sort of growing up conversations that it's deemed
368   appropriate that needs to come through the education system in case parents don't cover it, erm
369   and I think it could be done in such a way that it holds that same weight and same importance, I'm
370   not saying it is as important or not but I think that would reduce the fear for parents about them
371   covering some sensitive topics.
372   I: Yeah.
373   Winslow: I think you're right Mason, but I think also a parent seminar wouldn't hurt, I think it
374   probably needs to be much more than just the PSHE programme, erm I don't know much about at
375   the moment parents are quite, you know, haven't got huge experience but I do think that much
376   more needs to be done erm, so you know moving forward but going back to that last thing from the
377   person who was a trans person, it seemed really hopeful that in the last 5 years things have changed
378   and, is that right (*Interviewer name)*, is it true that there's quite a decrease in bullying so schools are
379   beginning to do something, do you know anything about it?
380   I: Erm, I think it probably varies from context to context I think there's definitely, I think from my
381   perspective it feels like young people are probably encountering it as was raised earlier about like
382   through social media and stuff like that and kind of in their own experiences, erm, so I suppose in
383   terms of sort of how it might be received by young people might be different to how it used to be,
384   erm, yeah which is again goes a little bit back to what Mason was saying about almost using sort of
385   the place that young people are coming from and kind of learning together *Winslow: yeah* rather
386   than having to always sort of acquire all this knowledge and then retrospectively go back to them.
387   Avery: Yeah and I was sort of thinking because it is so, imagining it is very complex just thinking and
388   looking at all the materials but maybe the way forward is around you know about promoting it and
389   allowing the individual to express themselves, erm because it's only here that the people I've seen in

390 society that are comfortable about expressing themselves, saying you know I'm non-binary or
391 whatever you know, is when they're usually quite successful and well-off and can afford to because
392 they make their own money, it doesn't matter about a record label or what, so they have that but, a
393 lot of people will live a life you know sort of hiding it, whether that means like going into a marriage
394 and having kids although they, that isn't what they want, that could be devastating, just thinking
395 about that personality, does that mean he lived a life for 30 years or does that mean they found
396 everything, you know, it's so, it's terrible that people have to live a life and feel stuck with that and
397 then the fallout on other people erm, so yeah it's really good that's happening that people feel they
398 can be themselves whatever that is *I: yeah* It's just in general I don't think they're ever going to
399 erm, be able to define it exactly precisely because the only way at the moment they're saying is you
400 know male or female, they do it based on whether, how a baby is born you know, that place that but
401 then what do you say when you're born and you're hermaphrodite, what does that mean? There's
402 so many ramifications erm but we have to find a way that we manage the symptoms, meaning the
403 sufferance, but not try and overbox it and describe it but allow people to be who they want to be
404 and to be open-minded, erm because they're individuals *I: yeah, yeah* that's what we're going for
405 because otherwise we might (*inaudible speech*) yeah it used to be in society that men were allowed
406 to wear you know, and now if they wore it down the street and they looked, yeah people sometimes
407 go oh you know, it's the society we live in *I: yeah yeah* it's about tolerance and acceptance and
408 not judging erm yeah not judging people about things without talking to them and you know
409 celebrating that actually we're all different and we all like different things and I think in a school
410 young people because of the media presenting a stereotypical image of what it is, you know like,
411 that's the problem that a lot of young people think that oh the perfect person is like that but that's
412 not reality and I think we've got this problem that if you're not within that sort of box presented by
413 the media in a glossy magazine or on social media, you're not you know okay and that's probably
414 why there's so many mental health problems, I think the media has a lot to answer for.
415 I: Yeah. It sounds like there's a, you're almost touching on the idea that there's this sort of broader
416 thing we need to work on of every individual has to be comfortable being the way that they are and
417 representing themselves rather than having to fit into certain categories regardless of gender
418 identity but something much bigger than that.
419 Avery: Yeah because if you look at like biologically erm *Mason: sorry can I-* you know there's some
420 people – you look at sport and when they're tested and have more testosterone than what's
421 supposed to be normal for a woman erm, you know they're judged and you know there was that
422 case wasn't there, that they, they're actual hormone levels were so high they couldn't compete in
423 the women's sport or something-
424 I: Just going to interject quickly, Mason are you-?
425 Mason: I'm ever so sorry erm I have got my daughter to pick up from school (*laughs*)
426 I: Yeah no that's-
427 Mason: I'm quite happy to come on again you know if you get the others erm, if you need me to I'll
428 email you my phone number if that's easier.
429 I: No that's fine, you know what we can- I think we're sort of tailing toward the end anyway so we
430 can probably start rounding down *Mason: okay* if that's alright, no that's fine (*laughs*) we also had
431 a few like technical hitches as we were kind of getting started so yeah, that's absolutely fine if you
432 need to rush off, that's fine.
433 Mason: Okay (*interviewer name*) I'll email you – sorry to have to rush off *I: no that's okay*
434 *(Everyone says goodbye to Mason)*
435 Avery: You just have to be grown up, see (*laughs*) yeah so I think it's really complex, erm yeah it's a
436 big, it's, probably what you're doing is the start of something and erm yeah I just hope that yeah
437 there's more clarity *I: yeah* and the support because yeah the marker of this stuff is the mental
438 health that we're seeing and self-harm and I saw the figures, so much higher in groups that identify
439 as erm, as non-binary and er or, see I don't even know the right words to use, because my kids
440 always used to say certain words and I'd say no you don't say that in English you, that's you know,

441   you can't say it like that because then they start you know, and so sometimes, you know sometimes
442   kids use certain words they don't really mean that *I: hmm* and they change so you yeah I'm out of
443   touch see, so I try and avoid getting into trouble by saying the wrong thing, you know it is hard, it's
444   hard because I don't want to live like that where I'm scared, I just want to be natural but *I: yeah*
445   I: I think like language is an evolving thing which is why at the beginning I was, I really wanted to
446   stress if you need to say something clumsily do, because language changes, the way that we, you
447   know the way that language has changed even from like 5 years ago has shifted quite a lot and it's
448   okay to get it wrong, there's just an element of being open to then being corrected but it is-
449   Avery: Oh we're scared as adults and teachers, and you know you are scared of not offending that
450   child and yeah you are scared that you're going to get it in the ear or you know (*inaudible speech*) so
451   you know I just, treat every child as an individual.
452   I: Yeah, yeah.
453   Avery: So there's no two kids that are alike in a classroom of 30.
454   Winslow: I think it's important that you as a teacher as a role model as well to be able to call out any
455   kind of bullying that's going on or even at a low level, whether it's to do with somebody having you
456   know a gender difference or any kind of form of bullying whether it's about weight, I tend to be that
457   kind of teacher who will always challenge a child if they're being unkind erm to another pupil so
458   carrying on doing that but also having more knowledge of you know erm the kind of issues erm that
459   people who are trans or are thinking about changing gender you know it is important to be able to
460   you know erm have that language to support them erm so I think yeah I think we've all got the right
461   intentions and I think it's an important thing that we do want to make people who are, feel you
462   know, different that that's okay and I think the big thing in school is changing that culture that you
463   don't have to be like everybody else but that actually being different is great and let's celebrate that
464   and, so that would be how I would operate in school and not everybody's the same but that, yeah,
465   and Avery touched on the tolerance you know issue that's very important erm being tolerant of
466   everyone and trying to pass in school you know, it's not easy, definitely not easy.
467   I: No definitely not.
468   Winslow: And I think a lot of the time as well some children are, it is actually the parents attitudes
469   that are you know really it's the parents really who need the education more so than the children
470   because my teenagers are really with it, they know way more than I know erm, about erm being
471   trans and having spoken to them briefly last night so you know again, we need to look at the kind of
472   groups in society that we need to erm target to try and make change and erm create tolerance.
473   I: Yeah, yeah-
474   Avery: Yeah because, well it reminded me of lockdown where we had the first big lockdown, this
475   second lockdown hasn't really been like one because we've all had the schools and universities being
476   open, but it's the amount of sufferance of people, who've have to go back to their families because
477   the uni is closed or they had to or whatever, went back home to homophobia – is homophobia a
478   general word? Would that be the right use you know homophobic meaning they can't accept that a
479   child that was born wasn't what they were called on their birth certificate if that's the proper way to
480   say it, and that they felt persecuted and they had nowhere almost to go like if you're a victim of erm,
481   coer- you know in a relationship if you're thinking domestic violence and use of coercion you have
482   somewhere to go and services, I don't know if there is that for these young people, often young
483   people went back to families who you know, erm, I mean I speak from experience in my family, most
484   of my family are, are you know, the ones that feel threatened if one of the grandchildren is er
485   homosexual and going back to the fact their attitudes, and it's not because they don't you know, it's
486   because they're scared, they don't understand it, and they don't accept that it is actually okay you
487   know why can't you be you know, there's no such thing, you know you can be more masculine or
488   you could be more effeminate and it isn't, it's that stereotyping I hate that whole idea that men are,
489   are not, are hard and tough and don't have any feelings and you know it's just ridiculous so yeah, I
490   really worry about without that protection for those people *I: Yeah* because their families
491   obviously want to try and convert them and you hear cases where, what, they almost think that their

492 erm mentally ill because they feel they're different and they try and normalise – normalise is not my
493 word but you know, they try and make them how they feel they should be and that is awful because
494 they, *I: yeah* it's awful, must feel so on their own *I: yeah* to deal with that and question whether
495 they're, is it right, and almost feel like they're being persecuted like it used to be with the Jews in the
496 second world war you know, they must feel that they're wrong for feeling the way they do but they
497 can't, you know they feel the way they do because that's the way they feel as a per-, you know *I:
498 yeah it's-* but I really, I sort of yeah, sort of feel that if you are born, you're born and you feel
499 different to how your parents assigned you to be, it must be a terrible sufferance but I haven't lived
500 through *I: yeah* but like as I said, say to my kids, I was born a woman, but I don't know what it is,
501 I'm just, I'm just me, I don't know about the way I'm, I mean probably not I was (*inaudible speech*)
502 but I you know and I would love, I would love it if I could go into the shoes of what it is to be, you
503 know, and non-binary, you know, so that I could put myself in those shoes because, I can't do that
504 because there are no models in, you don't have films of it, I mean, you know it's hard enough
505 understanding autism but there's been things you know, the boy that – what was it – the boy that,
506 the dog or something, so you don't have any sort of like models and theatre productions, nothing
507 out there that I could listen to and say oh I think I'm starting to understand the emotions of what it
508 feels *I: yeah* and when I, I think this is really strange that we're in 2020 and this is not a new thing
509 or like suddenly it's a trend but I think it is becoming more, more popular to discuss it and people
510 becoming more open, but it's always been that you know it won't be that, you know it's like it used
511 to be that it used to be illegal to, if you were homosexual because you used to go to prison if you
512 were *I: yeah* and now you know, so it was always there, but it was hidden it wasn't talked about
513 and you were penalised so yeah but why haven't we got production about it in theatre and books.
514 I: Yeah, I *Winslow: I-* guess we haven't really caught up in the representation yet – sorry Winslow I
515 think I cut you up there.
516 Winslow: No no I was going to say I'm going to have to go in a minute.
517 I: No that's fine – that's fine, I was just about to start wrapping up anyway that's perfect. This has
518 been really helpful, it's been really helpful getting your views. Erm, so obviously as part of the
519 participation in the research I will be providing gender identity training to your school, erm need to
520 work out dates and stuff and the format of that and how that's, what that's going to look like, but
521 yeah it's really helpful gathering your views now and it's going to be really useful to the research,
522 erm I guess the next step would be as I said at the beginning, er once I've done all my focus groups in
523 the schools I'll collate those themes, do a kind of, an early summary erm, those will be shared with
524 you and if there was any further comment you wanted to make, erm by emailing me you can, you
525 don't have to, erm, because there might be other things that come up and so on, but yeah, no this
526 has been really helpful so thank you so much, I hope you enjoyed it as well.
527 Winslow: Yeah it's been really enlightening, thank you so much and I'm actually going to go and do
528 some more work now and research myself so thank you.
529 I: Oh brilliant, thank you so much, enjoy the rest of your evenings it's been really helpful
530 Avery: Thank you – take care, good luck with it.
531 *(Everyone says goodbye)*

G.5   Transcript 4: Capaldi School focus group

School name pseudonym: Capaldi School

Interview details
Date, time, location: 08.12.20, 3.30, group phone call
Running time: Approximately 52 minutes

Interviewer: I
Interviewees (pseudonyms)
Cameron
Rowan
Tristan

Interview Transcript
1   I: Cool so it might just be helpful for me just because obviously I've only got the voice recording now,
2   if you're able just to kind of like say hi my name is then that will just help me later when I'm doing
3   my transcribing to differentiate different voices if that's okay.
4   Cameron: Yep okay my name is Cameron [pseudonym]
5   I: Hi Cameron
6   Cameron: I'm the (*role at school given*) erm I don't know did you want roles at all?
7   I: Erm you can give them if you like but it's up to you.
8   Tristan: Erm I'm Tristan [pseudonym], I'm (*role at school given*).
9   I: Lovely nice to meet you.
10   Rowan: And I'm Rowan [pseudonym], I'm (*role at school given*).
11   I: Brilliant, cool, thanks very much. Cool, so yeah to get started then erm, you may not have had a
12   chance to look at the articles as I obviously only sent them round recently, erm but if you just want
13   to take say a few minutes skim reading erm, the first article so the 'top London girls school allows
14   pupils to identify as male of gender neutral', and if you just sort of give me a yep or ready to go
15   when you sort of feel that you've read that erm and yeah it will be interesting just to sort of go from
16   there really and gain your views.
17   *(Participants read for approximately 1 minute)*
18   Cameron: Yep okay I think we're all ready now.
19   I: Cool, brilliant. So yeah what are your initial thoughts or kind of wonders or first impressions or
20   ideas that might spring to mind?
21   Rowan: Well we were just saying that erm the kind of process is pretty much similar to what we kind
22   of do, I know that we've got a student, er students who are identifying as you know as trans, the, the
23   process is kind of the same, for example there's a student in my year 10 that has come back this
24   year, looking quite different, wants to be called by a different name and we had a little chat and
25   obviously just made her aware that because her parents are not quite okay with it just yet and
26   obviously on any legal documents like exams etcetera etcetera like we'd still need to use her kind of
27   legal name erm but in class and around you know it's fine.
28   I: Okay, yeah. Yeah
29   Rowan: The name they've chosen and the, sort of, yeah.
30   I: Yeah, okay. So it sounds like there's a bit of erm, it sounds like there's a bit of a sticking point with
31   er parental feelings around it as well would you say?
32   Rowan: Erm yeah but I think that's sort of similar in this article isn't it you know they say in the
33   article that erm original names as stated on the birth certificate must still be used in exams and on

34 letters etcetera so, it's not that they really publicise that but there's a process for each student that
35 would-
36 Cameron: They would have to have their legal names *Rowan: yeah* on information to parents and
37 all that, you know if they changed it by deed poll or whatever then that's their legal name erm but
38 equally, the number of, so I've been here doing this role for the last *(number)* years now and I think
39 I've had three transgender erm students coming through *I: yeah* surprisingly all female to male.
40 I: Okay
41 *(Inaudible conversation between participants in background)*
42 Cameron: Oh yeah we have sorry yeah no I have got it the other way round, erm, but it's,
43 sometimes, especially the last two, couldn't stick on a name, so they were changing their name, it
44 then changed again, then it changed again, which isn't a problem, it's only a problem if you're
45 putting different names on legal documents.
46 I: Yeah.
47 Cameron: So, if they were to have an exam in one name and then another, erm that could be a
48 nightmare for them in later life proving that that's me when there's no hard sort of legal back up.
49 I: Right okay, I see what you mean.
50 Cameron: So when we call them you know, whatever they decide which is fair enough erm we can't
51 put that then on their sort of exam papers and registration, because they're legal documents.
52 I: Yeah, yeah no that makes sense, so you've kind of got the balance of respecting what they want to
53 be called but also the practical considerations of when and where that name can be used.
54 Cameron: Hmm.
55 I: Yeah.
56 Cameron: We're also bound by *(academy chain name)* rules as well so when they want to be known
57 by a different gender or name, erm, we can do that so long as the parents agree or are aware that
58 that is happening.
59 I: Oh okay, okay.
60 Cameron: So between friends they can obviously use their new names and stuff but if it's something
61 that they want to change on the register and you know sports team lists going out, drama groups
62 you know, erm, it can only go out with the parents' knowledge.
63 I: Yeah okay, no that makes sense.
64 Tristan: I think there's also a pattern as well that we tend to have students who don't necessarily
65 stick to the first name issues, they tend to *Cameron: hmm* go through more of a process.
66 Cameron: a process yeah, yeah
67 I: Yeah, yeah so there's kind of a formal process that has to be gone through and you want to make
68 sure that parents are kind of invited into that as well.
69 Cameron: It definitely I think from experience works better when parents are involved and on board.
70 I: Yeah.
71 Cameron: It makes, it makes the student more open, it makes it less of er, erm a burden really,
72 something that they need to hide or something they need to carry, it makes it a lot simpler, school
73 and home are on the same page, the child's you know, well looked after you know at school and at
74 home to make sure they're managing well and getting the support they need. It's really difficult
75 when parents aren't.
76 I: Yeah.
77 Cameron: We have a year 7 girl who erm identifies as a boy but parents, well family are *(religion
78 given)* and *(nationality given)*, so that's not something they're going to be supportive of, erm, we
79 also have access to a LGBTQ+ support worker through, is it *(service name)* that *(person's name)*
80 works for, I think it's *(service name)* or *(service name)* but I think he can only work with students
81 aged 13 and over, but 12 and under, and of course our year 7s are 12 and even actually some of
82 them in year 8 don't turn 13 until towards the end, so if we have students identifying in other years
83 but we don't have parents' support, that's very difficult, we're very limited in what we can do, I
84 mean for me, I speak to *(name given),* he's our support worker in school, well I would, I've had

85 conversations with him as to erm ask what would you suggest is the best way that we can support
86 this child in school until she's old enough to access this specialist support without parents support,
87 does that make sense?
88 I: Yeah, yeah. It can be quite a difficult gate-keeping factor then can't it *Cameron: yeah* if the
89 parents have a view different to how the child feels then that can be quite challenging.
90 Cameron: Yeah.
91 I: Okay.
92 Cameron: Also making sure that she still feels supported and that their decision, that decision is their
93 decision and just because parents disagree doesn't mean that everybody else does.
94 I: Yeah.
95 Cameron: And can be confident kind of expressing that and letting them know that really you know,
96 it's not been dismissed, we're not saying no we're just saying we need to kind of take it slowly and
97 make sure you're meeting with the right people and getting the right support.
98 I: Yeah, no that makes sense and it sounds like you obviously don't want to bulldoze in *Cameron:
99 no* without consideration of the wider factors around the young person and so on.
100 Cameron: No and you don't want to alienate them and make them feel difficult, you know because
101 you can't make them feel guilty for their beliefs either, so it's not that they're in the wrong
102 necessarily, erm or that she's in the right, it's, you know they're both coming from very personal
103 places, neither of them are in the wrong, but just trying to support that family in the best way.
104 I: Yeah definitely, it's not a black and white thing at all and there's multiple factors to-
105 Cameron: If only it was.
106 Rowan: Yeah (*laughs*)
107 Cameron: Why can't it just be a simple yes or no (*laughs*).
108 I: Yeah yeah, if it was I wouldn't need to do this research either, it would make my job a lot easier *(I
109 and Cameron laugh*). And, so in the article as well they talk a lot about erm the age at which they
110 talk about gender identity to young people erm, I suppose particularly they talk about it in terms of
111 the individual young person but I guess more generally than that as well, what are your kind of views
112 about pupils' ages and speaking to them about gender identity?
113 Cameron: I think, for me it's personal. Every single child is different. I couldn't tell you a general age
114 because they are so different. We could have a year 7 come in that say I want to be a boy or that
115 they are gay and they've know that for years you know, they've got the support from their family
116 and there are ones that get to year 11 and question everything, you know there is no right or wrong
117 or definitive age I don't think *Rowan: no* I think you've got to be led by the child.
118 I: Yeah.
119 Cameron: And how confident they are or you know and (*sighs*) if they change their mind that's fine
120 you know do you know what I mean it's part of being a teenager really isn't it, exploring your options
121 I suppose isn't it really, not just sexual orientation or gender but, you know.
122 Tristan: I think the case that pops to my mind is the one who the whole way through wanted to
123 identify as male and then turned up at prom, clearly wanting to identify as female, that shocked all
124 of us because none of us expected them to do that *Cameron: hmm* so it's basically that time,
125 suddenly it gets to a certain age and they change their mind.
126 Cameron: Yeah.
127 I: Yeah. Yeah. No that makes sense. Cool.
128 Cameron: I think as well we've had erm, I'll be honest though and this is a personal thing and it's
129 nothing, that's alright isn't it?
130 I: Yeah.
131 Cameron: A personal thing okay, I do think some of the transgender students that we've had come
132 through might be confused and just be gay or lesbian, I don't necessarily think they're genuinely
133 transgender, I think they're attracted to the opposite sex or the same sex sorry and that's where
134 they kind of think is that, or as well, which is massive again and our two out of the three transgender
135 students that I've had in my house, I would say it's more body dysmorphia than trans. They didn't

136   like their bodies, they weren't happy erm, one was a very large girl who basically spent 4 years
137   indoors you know, wouldn't go out, had been online all night you know, all hours at midnight sort of,
138   through to the early morning, sleeping during the day, has had *(service name)* and everything but
139   she- he was so unhappy within himself that he just didn't want to be that person anymore.
140   I: Okay.
141   Cameron: Not that that's all and I'm not like I say that's one, one student and I don't think you can
142   generalise.
143   Rowan: No.
144   Cameron: Because the stories, the backgrounds and feelings are so individual to each student you
145   cannot put an umbrella over them and say so if you're trans then you must be at this stage or that
146   stage, does that make sense?
147   I: Yeah, yeah so it sounds like you're saying then there's obviously, there might be other things going
148   on for the young person that need to be thought about as well as what they're feeling about their
149   gender identity and whether that might be an influencing factor in how they're conceptualising their
150   gender identity and like you say, it's not going to be the same for every young person.
151   Rowan: I think there's so much more which is great, there's so much more information around that
152   they have access to that you know, in, in my day *(*everyone laughs*)* you know because we didn't
153   have all this information at our fingertips, erm and as someone who's kind of, come out later in life,
154   there are so many things now looking back, the signs were there that I obviously didn't realise at an
155   early age but, it was kind of, there wasn't all that information around you know and, and I think
156   sometimes it can be a bit confusing for them like Cameron said, some of them maybe sort of
157   thinking that they are one thing when actually maybe it is more a sexuality rather than a gender
158   identity or vice versa and, and I think it's giving them the time to just explore *Cameron: yeah* and
159   go on their journey and support them with that until they work out where they're at kind of thing.
160   Cameron: Yeah.
161   Rowan: If that makes sense.
162   I: Yeah no it does.
163   Rowan: And it's confusing you know, even if you're part of that community, there are still things that
164   I sometimes you know, I sort of think oh, oh what's that again *Cameron: (*laughs*)* yeah I'm just
165   being totally honest, I'm, you know there's so much information available to them at their fingertips
166   that, sometimes there is a lot of confusion there as well and they need that sort of support and time
167   *Cameron: yeah* to work it out.
168   Cameron: It's very instant as well now isn't it you know you go on a website and think oh yep that's
169   me or something that kind of, self-diagnose you know what I mean, you go on and think oh yeah
170   that's me I've got that, I've got that and they read there's lots of support out there, I just think with
171   young people, there needs to be a period of erm, exploration, even whether it's themselves doing it
172   or through like, professional support, erm, because you don't, have this, there's quite a bit in the
173   papers at the moment or, I can't remember where I've read it, but you know where erm, young
174   ladies have been supported to tran- er to change you know sorry it's late in the day I can't think-
175   Rowan: Transition.
176   Cameron Thank you, transition and then they've got to like 18, 19 and it was the wrong decision.
177   I: Hmm.
178   Cameron: But I don't know I just think, I mean, did you know what you wanted to be, when you were
179   15, 16, really, you know what I mean you don't.
180   Rowan: I think we also need to allow for them to change their mind *Cameron: yes* over time, and
181   not put a label on it.
182   Cameron: Yes.
183   I: So there's an element of not kind of, not erm allowing children, young people not to feel that
184   there's a pressure or a time limit on how to label themselves or even any pressure to label
185   themselves at all really, just having the time and the space to explore themselves without having to
186   jump on certain labels I suppose.

187   Cameron: Yeah.
188   I: Yeah. Cool.
189   Cameron: And that it's okay to change your mind.
190   I: Yeah.
191   Cameron: You know if you thought something and then thought actually that's not how I feel or I
192   feel different now you know, erm, as teenage experiences will make them feel different you know.
193   I: Yeah.
194   Cameron: Erm and it's to explore that without saying oh you've kissed a girl you must be a lesbian
195   hmm not necessarily you know kids are very quick to label each other with things or if something
196   happens and it's erm taking the pressure off isn't it saying that's okay you know if that's how you
197   feel, that's fine.
198   I: Yeah no definitely. Cool. Thank you for that. I'm just going to direct us to the second article if that's
199   okay, item 2 'I know what it's like to be a trans teen, here's how to deal with the bullying', which was
200   written by Aimee Challenor who's a member of the Green party, erm, and trans herself and
201   obviously talks a lot about it and various other things. So as we did with the other one if you want to
202   take a bit of time skim reading it then just give me the okay when you've got there.
203   *(Participants read for approximately 1 minute)*
204   Cameron: Yep, yep all there.
205   I: Cool. So yeah what are, what kind of thoughts or things might spring to mind through reading
206   that?
207   Cameron: Erm for me, I think we've got a really nice LGBT community within the school erm, we
208   don't have much homophobic comments I mean, we are more likely to get two straight friends
209   saying ooh you're gay than actually turning around and abusing a person that is gay.
210   Rowan: Yeah.
211   Cameron: And it's more people that throw that kind of language around that we deal with as
212   opposed to somebody bullying someone that's come out or erm.
213   Rowan: We started just before lockdown like a diversity group erm, for mainly for people of erm you
214   know the LGBTQ+ family or anyone who is an ally, but also, to you know dealing with sort of race
215   issues and everything else so we got the diversity group going, there was, it was started at the
216   request of some of the older students and there was a mix of year groups and you know erm and
217   everything it was just a kind of safe space in the drama studio erm, we've got a few you know quite a
218   few members of staff that are part of the LGBTQ+ family so obviously they sort of became aware
219   that there were staff and that they could talk to and that, and it was going quite nicely, we were
220   looking into creating a display board and all sorts of things, and then obviously lockdown hit and
221   obviously we can't do anything that mixes year groups so, erm, I'm looking at creating a little group
222   on something called *(platform name)* which is similar to Facebook but purely for education so
223   there's no safeguarding issues and it's all very secure, just so they've got somewhere they can kind
224   of you know sort of post things, but yeah I think in general, like Cameron said I think it's just all of
225   the staff are very good at kind of calling people out if they do say oh that's so gay or whatever
226   because it's pretty clear in our policies that that language is not going to be tolerated.
227   Cameron: I would say homophobic comments are dealt with as harshly as racial comments in the
228   school you know they're dealt with equally.
229   I: Yeah. Okay cool.
230   Rowan: I don't think necessarily that it doesn't happen because I think that's, you know it could
231   possibly, but erm, it's the, it's definitely dealt with er and you know there are things in place to
232   support students er and like Cameron said I think it's more sometimes like you said you know-
233   Cameron: It's usually two straight people going oh you know.
234   Rowan: Yeah saying whatever, but even just educating them that that language is not acceptable
235   that's something that we're all quite hot on.

236   Cameron: We even say you know if the boys say oh stop being a girl *Rowan: yeah* you know we
237   challenge that as much as we would you know, if there were comments that were derogatory about
238   people you know.
239   I: Yeah, so it's quite, it sounds like then there's quite a strong ethos in the school and you know what
240   you do and don't want young people to say and that's reinforced then quite a lot with them.
241   Cameron: Yeah I would say that's true, yep.
242   I: And Tristan I just wondered if you had any erm further comments either based on this article or
243   things that have come up at all?
244   Tristan: No I agree with what these guys are saying really, just that they sort of use it as slang
245   language and the kids are saying it out of habit rather than actually targeted bullying towards a
246   single group or person.
247   I: Yeah.
248   Tristan: And I guess we treat it like erm racism and erm disability and things like that, so erm, so
249   yeah.
250   I: Yeah, yeah no that makes sense, so like it's a habitual thing that you want to break as opposed to
251   erm being specific homophobia targeted at an individual.
252   Rowan: Yeah.
253   I: Cool. Erm, and then I'm going to move us on then, so the final two articles, items 3a and 3b, I
254   thought it would be kind of helpful to look at these side by side just because they're quite different
255   in terms of what they say and they come from quite different sources erm, er so one of them is from
256   a group called Transgender Trend who are er, a group of people who, they're all parents, who, erm I
257   suppose their view ultimately is er, they're maybe not quite as comfortable with the way gender
258   identity is being constructed nowadays and maybe have questions about them, so they came
259   together and put together a resource pack about that, and then alongside that we've got erm
260   guidance from Northern Ireland's education authority that was made specifically to be given to
261   schools. So yeah again if you just take your time having a skim through those and give me the okay
262   when you're ready.
263   (*Participants read for approximately 3 minutes*)
264   Cameron: Yep, done.
265   I: Ready?
266   Cameron: Yep.
267   I: Brilliant. Cool. Erm yeah so having skimmed through those, any kind of thoughts or wonders or
268   anything that kind of pops into mind?
269   Tristan: I think for me it's the part in the first one about 'teachers should be aware of the risks of
270   social contagion from celebrity trans internet vloggers', I wouldn't even have a clue where to start
271   there (*Rowan and Cameron laugh)* I have no idea about that, there's a gap in my knowledge.
272   Cameron: [They're] the young teacher, only (*age given*) (*everyone laughs*)
273   I: Yeah.
274   Cameron: I don't think we see many kids that are influenced along those lines, do you? I mean, you
275   may see more everyday, because Rowan would work with a lot more children day to day on a larger
276   scale whereas I, where I'm (*role given*), I would only probably be called in if, if say Rowan identified a
277   student was having an issue, you would then probably pass it up.
278   Rowan: Yeah.
279   Cameron: Whereas the day to day, you would see more, so I, I haven't seen the, kind of social
280   influence, whereas, do you?
281   Rowan: I don't know that I would necessarily know that they were influenced, and that's where you
282   have, yeah if a child came to me to talk about stuff, which some have, erm, then obviously if they
283   sort of turn around and say oh this person or that person-
284   Tristan: (*inaudible speech*)

285 Rowan: Well you're the (*subject stated*) teacher, you should know these people *(everyone laughs)*
286 but I think someone on Youtube or a vlog or you know, who have that kind of performance element,
287 erm, which, you know, it's not something that I'd put together erm-
288 Cameron: I would say, that's, that's not sustainable is it.
289 I: Hmm.
290 Cameron: You know if you're influenced by somebody online to dress a certain way, say certain
291 things, to think that you feel a certain way, that's not sustainable.
292 I: Yeah.
293 Cameron: That's usually quite a short-lived experience if it's not for you, you know if you don't feel
294 the same way or you know and that, that's I'm not just talking gender and sexual orientation you
295 know, I mean extremism that, we, young people get quite sucked into the different social sites erm
296 but I think they also very quickly dismiss it if it's not interesting or if it's not-
297 Rowan: It doesn't sit right.
298 Cameron: Yeah if it doesn't sit right with them
299 I: Yeah.
300 Cameron: I think that was possibly you know sort of covered in a couple of articles ago, when we
301 said you know they need that time to explore.
302 Tristan: Yeah.
303 Cameron: And you know not to come in one day in year 8 and say actually I think I'm trans and you
304 know I want to identify as a boy and be called that and then that's set in stone for 4 years you know,
305 it can't be like that.
306 I: Yeah, yeah. So again they've got that opportunity to explore and think about things and that
307 exposure isn't necessarily going to set them onto a set in stone path but it might be something they
308 think about but then, it sounds like what you're saying is they're able to then make an informed
309 choice and actually think more realistically about themselves rather than erm, jumping on a trend so
310 to speak.
311 Cameron: Yeah, and there's no problem with changing your mind or thinking or feeling a different
312 way in 6 months' time or 6 weeks' time or 6 days' time, it doesn't matter *I: Yeah* it's providing, I
313 think for us that secure environment where the young people feel confident to do that without
314 being judged, without being erm made to feel guilty or made to feel shame or you know there's
315 none of that and, I think we're all quite strong in this building as a staff team of making sure no child
316 is made to feel like that regardless like of, of being you know of their belief or, or how they feel.
317 I: Yeah definitely. And so I guess erm my next question then is about, I guess about policies and
318 processes in place generally and also about er parental responses to that so I guess we spoke earlier
319 about how it's not a very black and white thing and it can be a bit murky and we have two very
320 different articles, so one that was a government initiated document, not from this country but from
321 Northern Ireland and one that came from a parent group, erm, so I guess I just wondered what your
322 thoughts were about policies in place to guide your practice in schools.
323 Cameron: I think there's nothing wrong with either of those if it suits the child.
324 Tristan: Yeah
325 Cameron: And, and, you know we are a school, we have, we have to consider 800 students as
326 individuals and I'll be honest, they are each allowed to be as individual as they want to a point. They
327 all must wear the same uniform, they are all here at the same time, they must all adhere to the
328 same behaviour policies, respect policies, regardless of who you are, who you think you are (*laughs*)
329 erm all of the students have to follow those same rules, so you know if there are students like you
330 say with disabilities you know we would make allowances for them, if there were students with
331 different beliefs and religions when they require either additional support or time out or erm, you
332 know something that means they can't follow the general rules that everyone else does, then again
333 it's an individual…
334 Rowan: Case.

335   Cameron: Case, every single, if the student needed to bend the rules for whatever reason then we
336   would do that in the child's best interest.
337   I: So it's very much a case-by-case basis then.
338   Cameron: Very, very.
339   Rowan: I mean and you know there is total flexibility on you know whether they wear trousers or
340   skirt *Cameron: yep* or whatever so you know there isn't really that issue of girls have to wear a
341   skirt or dress or whatever, they've got the option.
342   Cameron: Yeah.
343   I: Yeah.
344   Cameron: What we haven't had, what we haven't had are any boys wearing skirts.
345   I: Hmm.
346   Cameron: I mean to be fair even the girls don't wear the skirts. Nobody likes them, they're horrible.
347   Rowan: (*laughs)*
348   Cameron: They're bright (*colour given)* and erm yeah it's like a kilt so yeah majority don't, yeah.
349   I: Yeah that makes sense. Cool. And then, I suppose in terms of erm, I suppose in terms of how
350   guided you feel as teachers in terms of policy and things available to you, how do you feel about
351   that?
352   Cameron: I mean to be fair I would check with (*staff member name)* you know if I was unsure, the
353   golden rule is if you're unsure, you know we ask (*staff member name)*, I've kind of supported a
354   number of students who are gay or trans that are I think, so long as you go in with an open mind and
355   speak to the parents and the student and say tell me what you want, I'll tell you what you can have,
356   you know within the working of a school, you know obviously toilets and changing rooms are
357   obviously our biggest issue with transgender students erm, we're lucky that the school when it was
358   built was erm, built to accommodate disabled children so we've got quite a number of disabled
359   toilets around that have been renamed as, er what was it called sorry, it's late in the day erm,
360   gender neutral toilets, yeah so it you know as much as we can do with what we've got to work with,
361   we try and make all students feel accepted and comfortable within the building.
362   I: Yeah, yeah.
363   Cameron: There are some things you know you just can't do (*laughs).*
364   I: Yeah.
365   Cameron: You know, but I think so long as you're clear with the students and you explain why you
366   can and why you can't do that, I've not had any problems with students that haven't been able to do
367   anything, I think the only one at the moment that we're probably borderline on is boy transitioning
368   to girl but joined us with very feminine looking, acting, but there was, you wouldn't have guessed as
369   such, whereas some of the girls that are transitioning to boys-
370   Rowan: You can tell.
371   Cameron: Yeah it's a bit more, but for instance this, this boy transitioning to a girl, the voice is
372   starting to crack, there are signs we as adults are noticing erm, and also you know this student has to
373   use the disabled toilets, but I think has been in the girl's toilets.
374   I: Right.
375   Cameron: So they don't feel left out of the group, because how would you answer that when the
376   girls are going in and you're going, I'm not allowed in.
377   I: Yeah.
378   Rowan: It's very difficult.
379   Cameron: So not that that student is being picked up on it, because they've not done anything
380   wrong as such if you get what I mean but there is an issue that's going to get harder as time goes on,
381   and also we actually have to have a duty of care to all those other students, and if there were
382   vulnerable young girls in there and parents found out that there was a trans boy using the same
383   toilets, so because there's year 7 vulnerable student girls and we've got this year 10, year 10
384   transitioning and they're on a very different path, and to kind of keep them all safe and you know all
385   supported we have to make sure that there are alternative arrangements for some students.

386   Rowan: Yeah, yeah.
387   Cameron: And you know as a secondary school at the moment I think we're doing really well you
388   know, because all our students seem quite happy, they're accepting of each other, if they're not sure
389   about what's going on or they need extra support they know where to ask Rowan or me or (*staff*
390   *member name given*) or you know, it's erm, yeah I think as a school we do very well, I don't mean to
391   sound big headed but we've worked hard to make sure that all the students are inclusive.
392   Rowan: Yeah.
393   I: Yeah, cool. And thank you for that. And erm, Tristan or Rowan did you have anything else you
394   wanted to say on top of that as well, I could hear lots of yeahs in the background I just wondered if
395   you had any comments to add as well.
396   Tristan: I think Cameron took the words out of my mouth to be honest.
397   Cameron: (*laughs*) sorry.
398   Rowan: Yeah no not really, no I think yeah the students know who they can go to or sometimes it's
399   just a case of who they feel comfortable with and if it's you as a member of staff then obviously you
400   go the next kind of level up as it were, who've got more access to the support network that we
401   might not always necessarily be aware of
402   I: Yeah.
403   Rowan: But we know, where to go with it you know.
404   I: Yeah.
405   Cameron: I mean there was a year 11 boy who's had a bit of a tough time in the last couple of
406   months and although he had stopped working with the LGBTQ+ support worker, recognised that
407   he's feeling you know, down and things weren't, because he'd been hospitalised as well I believe, so
408   I contacted (*name*) and said look have you got time, can we just kind of put in just a like a check in
409   session erm, just so he can see if he needed any support, check that he was okay and signpost to any
410   services that could have been beneficial for the student, so even if they don't ask us for support but
411   we recognise they might need it *I: hmm* we act on that.
412   I: Yeah.
413   Cameron: Because he can always turn around and then say no actually thanks you know, but to
414   yeah, kind of put support in, recognising that they need it but maybe they don't recognise that they
415   need it.
416   I: Yeah, so it's about stepping in and taking a very proactive role *Cameron: yeah* beforehand, cool.
417   Yeah it sounds good. Cool, well we're coming to the end, before I round off is there any, are there
418   any other comments or things you'd like to share in relation to gender identity in the school
419   environment that you haven't been able to say yet?
420   Cameron: Erm, not from me, I've said a lot *(everyone laughs)* sorry
421   I: No that's alright, it's fine.
422   Rowan: No I think it's like Cameron said, each individual, it's about as a whole school community just
423   making people aware of what is and is not acceptable you know in regard to language use and
424   everything else and we're not making it seem like a really big deal.
425   Cameron: Yeah.
426   Rowan: And I don't know if that sounds right but it is almost kind of like, this is just the way it is.
427   Cameron: And being fashionable if you get what I mean.
428   Rowan: Yeah. And also just that thing of you know they've all got that thing about oh it's so gay or
429   whatever and just kind of putting across to them that's not acceptable but without, yeah.
430   I: Yeah. So taking a much more integrated inclusive approach and, and ultimately normalising it I
431   guess for all of the students *Rowan: yeah* rather than singling it out, yeah, I know what you mean.
432   Cool. Cool.
433   Cameron: No I would agree with that actually you know of, they're all, we kind of make sure that no
434   students stand out.
435   I: Yeah. Yeah.
436   Cameron: Yeah.

437   I: Cool. Yeah no that's great thank you for that. And er yeah Tristan, obviously no, not to put you on
438   the spot but did you have any further comments at all, there's no pressure for you to have if you
439   don't, I just wanted to make sure.
440   Tristan: No I'd say the same point I think, as where there's policy it's difficult to generalise so it's very
441   much situational day by day what's going to be required and what support we can put in place on an
442   individual basis rather than all of these issues being you know, it's based on more than one.
443   I: Yeah, yeah no definitely, sort of going back to that case by case basis and not just having arbitrary
444   rules and so on. Cool, yeah that's been really helpful gathering your views I hope it was okay for you
445   as well.
446   Cameron: Yep yep no it was fine. Me gobbing off a bit wasn't it (*laughs*)
447   *(Everyone laughs)*
448   I: No not at all.
449   Rowan: We, so we have a few transgender students and we've got quite a lot in our, quite you know
450   open about whether they're you know, they're fluid in their sexuality or whether they feel they're a
451   certain sexuality or whatever and they seem to be confident enough to just be open with us and if
452   there is an issue I feel they know who to go to and know they'll be supported if there is an issue,
453   which no place is perfect and no work place no school no whatever is in society and we're never
454   going to get it one hundred percent right all the time, but you know where there are issues, they
455   kind of know who to go to and that it will be dealt with and taken seriously and not just brushed off
456   and that sort of thing.
457   I: Yeah.
458   Rowan: And I think we, you know, so in our PSHE lessons with our tutor groups, so there's a lot of
459   then opportunity for discussion around things and stuff like that to sort of allow people to have
460   those conversations and others to go actually I don't know what that means and that whole
461   educating people and stuff about all of it, you know and race as well we've got a very big
462   multicultural community as well and we've got obviously pupils with disabilities and things so I think
463   we are already quite inclusive in that way anyway.
464   I: Yeah.
465   Rowan: Generally across, not just with LGBT stuff.
466   I: Yeah.
467   Rowan: Yeah so I think that kind of embeds that anyway in the school.
468   Cameron: Yeah there's definitely an ethos I think that's already embedded across the year groups.
469   Last year's year 7s, in the first 6 months because obviously we went into lockdown in March, one
470   said oh I'm gay and we said right okay and she said I think I want to tell my friends and I'm not sure
471   how to do that, so we had discussions around how to do that in a safe environment. She was going
472   to think about what friends she wanted, I was going to sit in with them, so that it was erm, just the
473   right wording was used and that it was done in a supportive way and that she had the opportunity to
474   say what she wanted to say without or, or just feeling supported really and you know mum was
475   really supportive as well erm, so we phoned mum and I said look you know you've got (*name*) that
476   comes in and I think while she's going through this how do I tell, how do I do this, it might be really
477   useful for them to have a session erm, and again it was amazing and it was just kind of that
478   acknowledgment that I am telling people, I want people to know, and then just kind of carrying on as
479   normal if you get what I mean because it's not a big deal in a sense that we're not going to treat her
480   differently because she's gay and I think she got a weight off her mind that she could still be her and
481   not like she was holding a secret or lying by pretending she fancies boys when she doesn't you know.
482   I: Yeah it sounds like she needed a bit of assurance that people were with her and it maybe
483   grounded the experience a bit more for her. Yeah it sounds really positive. Cool. Brilliant, that's been
484   really helpful. Thank you for your time again and thank you for bearing with me with the technology
485   hitch up as well.
486   Cameron: No that's fine (*laughs*).
487   I: It's been a bit mad but no it's been brilliant thank you so much for that.

488   Cameron: That's okay no problem.
489   I: Brilliant. Well I think, obviously the next steps for this, I've been doing a few focus groups so my
490   aim is to create a summary of themes and once I've got an early summary I'll send this by email to
491   everyone that's been involved so if at that point you did want to make any further comments, you'd
492   have that opportunity at that point if you want to. And then once it's all finished I'll share the final
493   summary and I'll be doing some gender identity training in your school at some point which I need to
494   organise with (*name*) but yeah.
495   Cameron: Marvellous. That's really good, thank you. Did you, are you doing other schools?
496   I: Er a few other schools yeah.
497   Cameron: How did we come out?
498   *(Everyone laughs)*
499   I: What was that sorry?
500   Cameron: Are they doing anything better than us?
501   I: (*Laughs)* To be honest it varies so much from school to school and it sounds, I think the main thing
502   is it sounds like your school have a very inclusive ethos and are in a place where you want to make
503   sure that you're doing the right things as well, so yeah already being in that headspace is a really
504   positive thing I think so, yeah I don't think there's a way to compare really and it wouldn't be fair for
505   me to (*laughs).*
506   Cameron: (*Laughs)* When you've had a drink I'll ask you again.
507   (*Everyone laughs*)
508   Cameron: No thanks ever so much for that, if there's anything else you need just get in touch with
509   (*name*) or email us and we'll get back to you.
510   I: I will do, thank you so much.
511   (*Everyone says goodbye)*

G.6   Transcript 5: Whitaker School focus group

School name pseudonym: Whittaker School

Interview details
Date, time, location: 07.12.20, 3.30, TEAMS
Running time: Approximately 49 minutes

Interviewer: I
Interviewees (pseudonyms)
Emmett
Rayne
Laurel
Darby

Interview Transcript

1   I: So we've got four articles erm it would be helpful if we start with the first one, so it's just labelled
2   number one, erm and funnily enough it's about an all girls' school erm so it's a newspaper article
3   called 'top London girls' school allows pupils to identify as male or gender neutral', erm if you just
4   want to take a few minutes for skim reading it erm it's not a memory game it's more just sort of for
5   discussion and so on, so if you maybe just take three, four minutes or so erm and then I'll come back
6   and we'll, I'll start asking some questions and getting your views and initial wonders and so on, is
7   that alright?
8   Emmett: Yep sounds good
9   I: Brilliant
10   (*Participants read for approximately 3 minutes*)
11   I: So has everyone had a chance to skim read?
12   Laurel: Yep
13   Emmett: Yep
14   I: Okay cool right we've got lift off. Cool so yeah, what are your kind of initial thoughts?
15   Emmett: I mean it's kind of stuff that we'd sort of discussed this, especially the, in terms of the
16   difficulty of if you're a girls' school to then sort of transition where, where's the line between erm
17   you know admitting pupils to a girls' school who are yeah, wanting to define themselves as erm,
18   male, we have discussed those things *Rayne: yeah* beforehand haven't we and being quite unsure
19   of where (*Darby loses signal connection*) we would slash should fall I suppose with that.
20   I: Yeah. Is it about a boundaried kind of cross then that *Emmett: hmm* knowing whether it's
21   appropriate and so on.
22   Laurel: I think the other thing for me is with also, it's not necessarily just about-
23   Darby: (*rings back in again*) I'm so sorry it keeps cutting off.
24   I: That's alright, Laurel no worries, we've got you again.
25   Darby: I think I'm going to have to give it a miss and just catch up with everybody tomorrow I do
26   apologise, I feel like I'm being more of a nuisance than a help so.
27   I: That's, it's up to you, if you want to, if it does cut out I can just keep adding you back in again erm
28   *Darby: okay* is it easier on the phone or on Teams do you think?
29   Darby: Yeah yeah no it's fine on the phone it's just that the network keeps cutting in and out and I'm
30   hearing you like it's on a mic so it tends to go wah wah wah in and out you know *I: okay* but I'll
31   carry on, I'll carry on

32   I: Okay no worries, if you cut out I'll just keep letting you back in again. *Darby: okay* so as long as
33   you can hear us we'll know you're there
34   Darby: Yep, excellent.
35   I: Sorry Laurel, I didn't mean to cut you off.
36   Laurel: No that's fine, yeah so I was just saying for us, it's not necessarily about us accepting what
37   people want to do erm with regard to erm their, the recognition that they want, it's more about how
38   we can do that erm for instance, we've got a young lady just recently who wants to be known as
39   binary and wants to erm change her name erm and then wants all staff to use that but doesn't want
40   her parents to know and she's only 13 and so for us we've said look it's really important that your
41   parents are included in that erm and we can support you with that but in order to do that she
42   doesn't want to do that, she's not ready for that yet but she does want full recognition in school *I:
43   okay* and so that, that line is really difficult and it's just knowing how far, and without coming
44   across to that young person as being dismissive of it erm *Rayne: hmm* because you know we are I
45   think, as a team we are very open about it erm in our mindset but it's how far we can go and what is
46   right and what is wrong and you know and what is accepted and making sure that young person is
47   also, is feeling like they've been heard.
48   I: Yeah, it's quite difficult, it sounds like there's quite a difficult boundary there between obviously
49   wanting to er respect that young person's identity but also you've got the issue of parents not being
50   included in that and I guess you having a duty of sharing information with home and sort of knowing
51   where that boundary sits.
52   Laurel: Absolutely but we've tried to explain the scenario of at parents evening where a teacher has
53   got the name, I mean she wants to be known as (*name*) so to be called *(name)* in school and to be
54   addressed as that, in a parent's evening we could speak to the parent with that name and they'd be
55   like who's that, what's going on you know we haven't been informed, so we've tried to talk that
56   through with the young person but they're just totally not ready to do that, and that's fine but their
57   expectation of us is quite big then because you know they're feeling like we're then the ones putting
58   the barriers in place in a way.
59   I: Yeah. What do other people think?
60   Rayne: I think, from the article, was it that, let me read, where it says one names are us-, new names
61   are used, I've been reading all damn day sorry *(everyone laughs),* 'while new names are used on
62   sports team lists, with families abroad on exchange visits, in assemblies and lessons, the charter
63   makes clear that pupils' original names as stated on their birth certificate must still be used in public
64   exams, on the school website and in letters to parents and school reports.' So clearly they haven't
65   accepted it fully if that's the case and I guess the question would be whether or not those
66   conversations have been had or held with parents in the same way we're saying that needs to be
67   done, because everything isn't, there isn't that transition hasn't fully taken place then.
68   I: Yeah
69   Rayne: For them as a school.
70   I: Yeah, it seems like they've got obviously erm, I think they talk a lot about legal names and this that
71   and the other and sort of official names and things being used don't they whereas you're right
72   there's a bit of a mismatch between the acceptance that they're showing versus some of the
73   practical elements of that as well.
74   Rayne: Yeah. Because I know in terms of the examinations I know obviously it has to be whatever is
75   on their birth certificate, and if that name change hasn't even changed in communications with
76   parents then it just seems a bit tokenistic.
77   I: Yeah, yeah, so it sounds then, it sounds like you're quite, you want to be able to have those
78   conversations in school but it's the parental barrier and knowing how to kind of juggle those two
79   things side by side is a bit of an issue, yeah, that makes sense. I guess then in terms of discussing
80   gender identity generally, what are your kind of views on erm I guess the age appropriateness of
81   that, so the article talks a lot about different ages at which they have certain conversations, what's
82   your response to that? And Darby on the phone do feel free to chip in.

83   Darby: Yeah I mean from my perspective I think that due to the internet girls are quite you know, if
84   they feel that they're transgender or pansexual or all those things they look it up on the internet and
85   they're quite erm you know au fait with stuff that's going on and we've got quite a, a group of girls
86   that are erm are quite aware of transgender and have been for quite a long time, we've got a
87   transgender student in year (*year group given*) who's been on the cusp of change for quite a while
88   *I: okay* and they're supporting those students, and giving them the right information I think that's
89   the main thing.
90   I: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Thank you. Are there any other final thoughts on that article? Anything that
91   came up or wonders. No? Cool. Shall we have a move on then and look at number 2 so that was the
92   one about bullying erm, 'I know what it's like to be a trans teen at school, here's how to deal with
93   the bullying'. So this was written by erm Aimee Challenor who's openly trans and she's in the Green
94   party, I can't remember what her title is, but yeah she does a lot of work around the area. So yeah
95   just take a couple of minutes and when you're happy to start talking about it just give me a thumbs
96   up so I know not to leave you waiting too long.
97   Emmett: Okie doke.
98   (Participants read for approximately 1 minute)
99   Emmett: Okay I think we're pretty much there.
100   I: Great. So yeah, so reading that then what are your kind of initial, initial thoughts, anything that
101   kind of springs to mind.
102   Emmett: Erm, yeah I mean I was a couple of years ago, a few years ago actually had to teach PSHE
103   erm and obviously as part of that teach about LGBTQ+ or I can't remember exactly what it was titled
104   erm and yeah I mean I thought that was great, it was wonderful to have it in the curriculum erm, but
105   I must say it was actually, it was still quite daunting I suppose erm, so even as an LGBTQ, I was going
106   to say member then (*laughs*) but that's very formal (*others laugh*) like I have a membership with
107   them.
108   I: You have a loyalty card and everything.
109   *(Participants laugh)*
110   Emmett: Exactly, exactly yeah I have my own loyalty card you know (*laughs*) but no, it still felt like
111   something that almost, I need that education to then be able to educate the younger people but
112   also I feel like it was, I mean I was quite encouraged that we were doing it and I think it probably did
113   help to be able to kind of immediately quash, I mean this was 13, 14 year old boys, so like
114   immediately quash some of those erm, comments or their clear, I don't know derogatory feelings
115   surrounding it, it was good to have that opportunity really yet I still felt quite uncomfortable with it
116   *I: yeah* definitely.
117   I: Yeah, it's almost like you had your knowledge but there's still the sort of issue of knowing what to
118   say and how to say it to this bunch of students *Emmett: yeah*
119   Emmett: Yep, yeah and just feel the pressure to kind of get it, like oh God I've got to get this right.
120   I: Yeah, yeah.
121   Laurel: I think another thing for our school would be we're quite a diverse school in so far as cultures
122   are concerned *I: hmm* erm and I think we would have massive barriers from some of the cultures
123   that attend our school around that subject area *I: okay* erm so that I think that would be another
124   hurdle that we would need to be able to face and overcome because yeah they are, they are quite
125   niche in their views, *I: yeah* even more so than say white British people are I would say, you know
126   there are some cultures that are really really closed on accepting gay people or, or anybody of any
127   other form of gender or anything you know they don't tolerate it as well as some I think, and I think
128   for us as a school, not only being a single-sex school, but also having that cultural diversity we'd have
129   to hit the nail right on the head with all of that so it's quite a big scary job actually *I: yeah* to make
130   sure that you're getting it somewhere near right and just making young people, I think you, the girls
131   themselves in our school are quite accepting *Emmett: yeah* of lots of different you know, they are
132   so it's quite endearing actually to watch how accepting they are of each other so even some of the
133   young people I've spoken about maybe wanting to be known as a certain name or a certain gender

134   or however they want to be er seen, the girls have all, they're already accepted within their
135   friendship groups and their year groups, it's about tackling that recognition with the adults in their
136   world *I: yeah* so I think the girls themselves are not such a barrier but it's more about how it gets
137   delivered, how it's supported and how, I think about the parents as well.
138   Rayne: Yeah I think, I think the peer group acceptance is a lot better with it being a Girls' school. I
139   think in mixed schools it's, there'd probably be a bit more bullying in terms of accepting the change
140   really.
141   I: Hmm. Yeah. So that's kind of like a strength in your school then that kind of acceptance that they
142   have amongst the students already *Rayne: yeah* but obviously the parental concerns are still kind
143   of the big shadow at the moment.
144   Rayne: Yeah.
145   I: What do you think some of those hurdles would look like so if you were to for instance take an
146   LGBTQ topic, specifically gender identity and say we're going to be exploring this, what would your
147   concerns be about some of those reactions and what would those hurdles *Rayne: opt-out* look
148   like? Pardon?
149   Rayne: They would opt out of it.
150   I: Okay.
151   Rayne: Yeah. Because a lot of them already opt out of anything around sex education.
152   I: Yeah. Okay. What about everybody else, what are your thoughts? And again Darby on the phone-
153   Darby: Yeah, yeah I actually had a student that was a couple of years ago now that was a
154   transgender student but she was erm, she was transgender and I wasn't quite sure what her religion
155   was but she said that her parents just didn't understand but you know it's making, not making but
156   trying to get the child to understand that even though they feel that, if they just dump that on their
157   parents, the parents need educating as much as they do to understand there needs to be a certain
158   amount of acceptance but when you've been bringing up a child a certain way it's very difficult for
159   er, an adult, a parent to change their mindset *I: Hmm* I think that you know that is the hurdle and
160   it's baby steps really isn't it I think with anything to do with that, and education, I think that's huge,
161   it's an understanding isn't it, and I think that this particular parent came round in the end but just to
162   go home and say you know I want to be one thing or I want to be that is massive *I: yeah* and I
163   think it's you know it's equally as difficult for the child as it is for the parent.
164   I: Yeah, yeah you're right so there's almost an element of sort of understanding the parent's point of
165   view as well and understanding what they would need on that journey as well *Darby: yes* yeah.
166   Darby: Yeah, so you know when they're in school they're in a safe environment aren't they and they
167   open up, they discuss it with their peers and they feel quite safe, and they get the you know the
168   bravado to go up to parents and say look this is how I want to be and then the parent goes where
169   did this come from, you know there's not a journey that the child's been on with the parent
170   sometimes you know, some parents are great, some parents get it, but some parents don't, like
171   where's that come from you know.
172   I: Yeah. Yeah I guess if it comes more out of the blue maybe it seems sort of slightly scarier for them
173   to accommodate *Darby: yes, yeah* and if you *Darby: yeah* like you say it's not already their
174   world view or their narrative *Darby: yeah* it's maybe harder for them to change their way of
175   thinking, whereas young people are perhaps more malleable *Darby: yeah and-* in their thinking.
176   Darby: Yeah and this student she was devastated it was like the end of the world but if you think
177   now, it, it's something that you know becomes understanding if people will talk, I said you need to
178   be, to talk about it, not just go this is how it's going to be, let's discuss it *I: hmm* and things did
179   change but it is a bit of a shock for some of the parents I think.
180   I: Yeah, yeah. And I guess there's also an element of kind of knowing your roles in that as well and
181   *Darby: yes* you know knowing what you can do *Darby: absolutely* and what you should do and
182   so on in terms of navigating that and at what point your role finishes and starts and so on I suppose.
183   Darby: Yeah, because we're there to support the children but also support the parents in a way, they
184   need a certain amount of understanding and, as much as the children you know *I: yeah* as well.

185 I: Yeah. Cool. Er and then is there any thoughts around erm, because I guess it sounds like at the
186 moment there's quite a culture of acceptance amongst the students, what are your thoughts
187 generally around gender-identity related bullying and so on, either in your school or I suppose from
188 the article.
189 Darby: I think from my perspective in our school I don't see that, we're such a diverse school
190 anyway, people tend to take people on face value and are really easy-going, I don't know about the
191 rest of you ladies but do you think that? I don't think there's ever been an incident where, like I said
192 we have odd students that tend to go down that route and everybody accepts them.
193 Laurel: I don't, yeah I don't see, I definitely don't see them having erm any animosity shown to them
194 erm but I do think that there is a link between those students in different year groups who are
195 looking at all those different things they want to consider or who have made that choice to do that
196 they tend to stick together, they know each other *I: hmm* *Darby: yeah* like they've sought each
197 other out and they you know, and they do have a dialogue between them where they feel, I
198 wouldn't say they feel they need to protect each other-
199 Rayne: They feel victimised.
200 Laurel: Yeah they do, they do feel-
201 Rayne: Even though there's nothing there.
202 Laurel: Yeah they do feel there's a, not an acceptance of them but we don't ever see any, and they
203 don't ever come to us with any like specific incidents towards them where anything's said to them or
204 done to them or they're ostracised, that doesn't happen, but I do feel that they feel very vulnerable.
205 Rayne: I think it's because we don't do enough forward work around it.
206 I: Okay.
207 Laurel: I do think if that was done, there would be that cultural divide *Rayne: hmm* I do feel that
208 that would, if it was highlighted more and accepted more openly by the school, erm there would be
209 that outcry from some cultures, is what that would look like.
210 I: Yeah. Yeah that's interesting, thank you. And then I guess, moving onto the final articles, I kind of
211 had the view it would be helpful to look at these kind of side by side because they're quite different,
212 erm so you've got item 3a which is extracts from the Transgender Trend group's web page and
213 resource pack and item 3b, Northern Ireland's education authority guidance for schools. The reason I
214 wanted to have them side by side is that erm, the first one probably taps in a lot to some of the
215 things you were already talking about around I suppose parental reactions, so Transgender Trend
216 are, they're a group comprised of parents who were worried about erm I suppose sort of how we're
217 viewing gender identity and so on and maybe have quite different views than I suppose, to my own
218 and to I suppose the education authority one and so on, and it's interesting obviously seeing what
219 kind of angle they're coming from particularly thinking about maybe your own parental communities
220 and so on. And then the second one is Northerm Ireland's education authority which is obviously
221 more formal guidance, erm but I suppose they're quite different in terms of what they're saying and
222 there's obviously different viewpoints and potentially some conflicting viewpoints so it would be
223 interesting if you just take a bit of time, have a skim through those and then yeah just give me a
224 thumbs up again when you're ready to go.
225 Emmett: Great, will do.
226 (*Participants read for approximately 3 and a half minutes*)
227 I: Ready?
228 Emmett: Yeah I think so.
229 I: Cool. You still with us Darby?
230 Darby: Yes sorry I am, I am here *I: no worries just checking in* I've moved out the area where my
231 family are and I've hidden in my bedroom so there we go (*laughs*).
232 I: Lovely, okay. Cool so yeah initial thoughts then so having skimmed through those, initial things
233 that sort of spring to mind or wonders or so on?

234   Emmett: Erm I think it was, I just found it quite interesting in the first one that they termed it a
235   couple of times erm a diagnosis, I just thought that was interesting terminology to use *I: yeah* I'd
236   personally never use that around this, so it, just that yeah, came across as quite I don't know, yeah.
237   Rayne: Does gender come under the body dysmorphia?
238   I: Erm, no, so you have something called gender dysphoria, erm so often a lot of transgender people,
239   not all, but some of them will experience gender dysphoria and it's erm, a feeling, it's ultimately the
240   feeling that you're not the gender that you've been assigned with at birth or a discomfort with your
241   assigned gender, erm so yeah, you, the, gender dysphoria, I suppose that is something that would be
242   categorised as something we can support young people with but having a transgender identity, you
243   are right Emmett it wouldn't be considered a diagnosis, erm but it is interesting like you say that
244   they use that word, erm, *Emmett: yeah* it possibly comes from-
245   Rayne: Yeah I was thinking that might be why it's a thing but it's not.
246   I: Yeah, but it's yeah, I think they probably have a different perspective or a different erm
247   conceptualisation I suppose.
248   (*Silence for a few seconds*)
249   Anything else? What would your kind of wonders be about erm I suppose just thinking about policies
250   in general around gender identity, what are your kind of thoughts on that around either er, is there
251   any guidance you've seen, are there particular policies at your school, er do you feel that there's any
252   issues with clarity or so on, what are your general sort of feelings around that?
253   Emmett: I mean we don't have specific policies do we, (*sighs*) I think that's a really tough thing to
254   erm initiate and put in place would be my personal opinion erm, in terms of knowing, yeah or
255   wanting to know what the ramifications of that would be for you know, individuals, the wider group,
256   the parents and yeah I think yeah it would be really tough to come up with a policy that works for all
257   of those groups of people.
258   I: Yeah. It's having a one blanket approach sort of brings its own challenges because there are so
259   many different perspectives and reactions across different groups in the school community, yeah.
260   Darby: And I think also because we're in a girls' school it you know, parents of Muslim cultures and
261   so on have sent girls to our school to be away from boys haven't they so it would, it's a big picture
262   isn't it *I: hmm* to kind of look at.
263   I: Yeah. Yeah it's definitely an interesting point.
264   Darby: Hmm.
265   I: What about others in the group, what are your thoughts?
266   Rayne: I don't know.
267   I: That's alright. Do you think, do you think erm I suppose in terms of erm, because you've kind of
268   got school policy haven't you, what about I suppose kind of wider governmental advice and so on,
269   what are your kind of thoughts and understanding on that or wonders or concerns I suppose.
270   Rayne: Er I don't think, and this could be terribly wrong, I don't think there is much specific advice
271   for schools in how to manage it and I guess from a government policy level, then feeding down
272   because obviously you've got the child protection and safeguarding policy, you've got the SEN policy
273   and there are other recommended policies but there's no specific guidance I feel in terms of I guess
274   for us as a Girl's school, how to then manage situations that arise when we have girls who want to
275   be identified as male, and I think that's where things become quite difficult for us *I: yeah*from
276   there, and I guess it's the constant need and desire to make sure that we aren't doing anything or
277   saying anything that would be deemed as discriminatory.
278   I: Hmm yeah, so I guess it's kind of hard working at a school policy level when there isn't a kind of
279   wider framework to build from *Rayne: yeah* that's accessible, yeah and I don't think you're wrong
280   in saying that there's not much of that, it's why I was interested to know your views.
281   Rayne: (*Laughs*)
282   I: And then I guess then so these two articles, they're quite different and you've obviously got one
283   that's from a very specific group of parents and then one that's sort of education authority guidance
284   in Northern Ireland, so I guess thinking more about community influences, you've touched on a few

285 already erm, but what do think are the, your biggest concerns I guess around kind of community
286 influences and what those might be.
287 Darby: I think for us it's probably difficult because we are such a diverse school you know around
288 culture, different religions, it raises lots of different questions to acceptance doesn't it, in different
289 cultures and religions *I: yeah* and because we are a predominantly girls' school, I know we keep
290 going back to that but I think that that, that's where you know, I think if we were a mixed school I
291 think it would be a different, a whole different conversation *I: yeah* I think because we are all girls
292 all those religions all come into play don't they.
293 I: Yeah, yeah, and I think that you touched upon it already but obviously you're saying you know
294 parents might choose their children to go to that school specifically because it's an all girls' school.
295 Darby: Yeah absolutely.
296 I: Which brings its own challenges as well. Yeah.
297 Darby: Absolutely.
298 I: What about everybody else-
299 Darby: And I think for some parents it would raise eyebrows whereas other parents are really
300 accepting, but I think that that would be the same in most schools though I think *I: yeah* you
301 know.
302 I: Yeah it would be a mix of parental reactions I guess *Darby: yeah* but also kind of paying
303 attention to the fact that you are a girl's school and there is an element of erm *Darby: hmm* you,
304 yeah, it does make it more complicated.
305 Emmett: I also don't think, you know in terms of the community, as far as I'm aware, I might be
306 wrong, erm but in terms of our community here, I don't think we have the parental role models as it
307 were in terms of the, I'm not, I don't think we have any parents who are you know, or identify as
308 non-binary or transgender or you know possibly partly because of cultural differences but we just
309 don't have any of that so there's no sort of adult *I: hmm* I don't think that, unless they're getting
310 stuff off the internet or whatever there's no adult influence actually in our school, they've got a lot
311 of er, probably not a lot, but a couple of adult lesbian role models and teachers erm, but we don't
312 have that in, and actually some of our parents as well, but we don't have non-binary, transgender in
313 terms of teachers or parents which I think could potentially make a huge difference in terms of you
314 know normalising *Darby: I actually-* you know
315 I: Yeah.
316 Darby: I also think as well we learn a lot from the students *I: hmm* because there's lots of things
317 that have come up over the years, to do with pansexual and gender you know fluid and all sorts of,
318 and I'm like, you know I've had to look on the internet because I wasn't aware of that so they're
319 educating us by letting us know what is actually going on because I don't think we're all aware.
320 I: Yeah. And I guess it's an evolving thing as well *Darby: yes, yes* where there's obviously more
321 being spoken about it in society as a whole, young people can kind of be a bit of a train for that really
322 can't they and kind of *Darby: yep* yeah they can learn from you as much as you can learn from
323 them.
324 Darby: Yeah absolutely.
325 I: And it's interesting what you said Emmett as well about kind of I suppose a familiarity of sort of
326 knowing people and knowing erm others with those identities might kind of normalise it and make it
327 more a part of their everyday society and understanding rather than I suppose seeing it as
328 something new or unusual or something erm, to be fearful of I suppose, erm which it could be if it's
329 not something erm you're aware of in your own lifestyle already.
330 Emmett: Hmm.
331 Darby: But I do think, and I would hope the other ladies would agree with this, but we do tend to roll
332 with the punches when it comes our way, we all tend to do our best to put support in place for
333 whatever *I: yeah* comes our way.
334 Rayne: Hmm.
335 Emmett: Yeah.

336   I: Yeah. Would you say as a staff team, the team is quite er, has quite a cohesive viewpoint or would
337   there be kind of differences of opinion and so on, or it might be difficult to say if it's not something
338   that's-
339   Darby: Yeah I don't know-
340   Rayne: Yeah we've never really broached it in that way in order to get general opinions but the
341   conversations are just in passing or at a departmental level if they have a conversation just as a
342   department.
343   I: Yeah. Cool. Cool.
344   Darby: And I think as well with a different cohort of girls you sometimes find that it's in like different
345   year groups and of course they move on, and teachers move on, so it's never something that's,
346   we're the kind of stable people that you know don't tend to move on whereas teachers do don't
347   they so you know support that they get maybe from teachers, and I think that we've seen that
348   before that you'll get a teacher that really understands and can support a student with those issues
349   and then you'll find another teacher that doesn't get it at all, so.
350   I: Yeah, and I guess, I guess it will come down to as well in terms of teachers we well, you would
351   have all had your own kind of different life experiences and exposure to different things as well so I
352   suppose it's not something that's been erm, you've been specifically, that's been specifically
353   facilitated within your teaching role then obviously all you can really bring is your outside
354   experiences, so inevitably there will be different experiences.
355   Darby: Absolutely.
356   I: Cool. And is there anything else, either from those articles or previous ones or just general kind of
357   wonders of things that have popped in mind.
358   Emmett: Well I do think the practical erm ramifications are quite tough in terms of, some of the
359   articles we were talking about like what you do with toilets and things like that, I do think as a
360   school, yeah creating policies around those practical things erm is a huge challenge, or I view it as a
361   huge challenge anyway *I: yeah* definitely.
362   I: Yeah.
363   Emmett: And something I wouldn't ever know what's the right answer, what's the wrong answer.
364   I: Yeah. Is it, so it's more than just having the policy it's knowing what to put in there *Emmett:
365   yeah* because it would be once you started doing it, it sounds like it might be a bit of a minefield.
366   Emmett: Definitely yeah, practically what's best for those you know, young people erm and the rest
367   around them you know *I: yeah* like how you should follow, yeah what procedure you should then
368   follow to make sure that kind of policy would be smooth, as smooth as possible.
369   I: Yeah, yeah, so I guess on a practical level it's knowing what you would do as well from incident to
370   incident, like the young person that you spoke about at the beginning for instance who obviously
371   asked for certain things and it's knowing what you do within your role erm, that that's okay. Yeah.
372   What about everybody else? Any wonders, comments?
373   Rayne: Not really no, no pearls, no gems
374   (*Everyone laughs*)
375   Laurel: I'm just pausing to think, because we're a girls' school, and I notice in that first document
376   from the school in London, they made it clear at the bottom of it that they, if someone actually
377   wanted to fully transition to a boy, they would have to move school.
378   I: Hmm.
379   Laurel: Erm, I suppose for me it's, it's where do you as a school if you are a single-sex school sit with
380   those that don't want to be identified as either male or female.
381   I: Hmm.
382   Laurel: And yeah I suppose how does that, I don't know where my head is with it, as in would you,
383   should you, surely you'd have to address that as well in all these policies.
384   I: Yeah I guess then there's an element of, because I guess you're an all girls' school and you might
385   have obviously young people who say actually I'm a guy and I want to be known as this, you've also
386   got young students who might say they're non-binary. But I guess there's also the question of if you

387   had a trans girl who transitioned at a much younger age, and they wanted to come to the school,
388   there's also that element as well *Laurel: yeah*, so how do you start teasing out what that really
389   looks like and what that means and yeah.
390   Laurel: What you include, what you don't include and yeah it's a minefield isn't it in the sense that
391   we'd have to be really clear on all aspects of, and be fair.
392   I: Yeah.
393   Laurel: You know fair to all.
394   I: Yeah, being fair to everyone, I guess it's, the take home point seems to be this wanting to have
395   clarity but understanding that clarity is really hard to have.
396   (*Everyone laughs*)
397   I: With all of these things it's not a clear thing at all, it's murky but yeah. Cool. Are there any other
398   final comments at all? No pressure to have any final comments just want to make sure I've asked.
399   Rayne: Not from me.
400   Emmett: Nope.
401   Laurel: I mean are there bodies that schools can tap into to you know get that advice and make sure
402   that you know where you do go with it is, is PC I suppose is the word, and making sure you're going
403   down that right track and not making those mistakes and that your actually ostracising them more.
404   I: Yeah, there's kind of, there's kind of increasing, slowly increasing guidance at the moment, there's
405   not as much as there should be out there, again that's kind of pushing me into this research as well
406   because I know that it's a gap erm, and I know that there's more that we can do to support teachers.
407   Erm, obviously there's that Northern Ireland guidance, there's, I think the UK government are
408   possibly a bit slower, I don't think that's too unfair to say, and there's, I suppose there's, you'd be
409   looking more further afield I guess to specific transgender and gender based charities like Mermaids,
410   they're quite a good one, particularly if you're wondering about how to support individual young
411   people and so on. They'd probably be one of the first places I'd suggest going. And there's also a
412   place called (*organisation name*), although I think they're (*location name*) based, I think, and I
413   suspect there would be more places in the (*location name*) area as well but I wouldn't know
414   specifically myself unfortunately, but yeah there's kind of little bits and gems here and there but as
415   of yet not a very cohesive document for schools. But hopefully that's something that we're working
416   towards at the moment. But yeah, this has been really helpful erm and obviously later I'll be coming
417   back to do some gender identity training but yeah like I said it's really good for the research but it's
418   also good to know what some of your concenrs and questions are to sort of think what would be
419   most helpful and how to kind of pull that together so, yeah, a lot of food for thought but yeah. So
420   thank you all for your time.
421   *Multiple overlapping speech (unclear of speakers)*
422   I: No thank you, it's been really really helpful so enjoy the rest of the day, enjoy the rest of the week.
423   Laurel: You too
424   Emmett: I hope the research goes well yeah we'll look forward to that training definitely.
425   I: Great, also once I've done an early summary of themes, I'll send that round and if there's any
426   comments you want to make at that point you can, there's no obligation to but it just it kind of gives
427   me a sense of making sure that I've captured it in the right way and so on, erm yeah and because I'm
428   doing focus groups in a few other schools there might be things that come up from those schools
429   that you might then say oh actually yeah that's relevant to us or actually no that's not and so on so,
430   yeah. Cool, yeah. Thank you for your time.
431   *(Everyone says thank yous and goodbyes)*

Appendix H Early theme summary and feedback form shared with participants for member checking

H.1 Theme summary for participants

Many thanks for taking part in my research project which aims to understand teachers' beliefs around gender identity and how this influences the support offered to transgender and gender-diverse young people (YP). I have enjoyed my discussions with you and have gained helpful insights from the process. I worked with four different schools across the South-East of England with 15 participants altogether. I am in the process of synthesising and interpreting the information I gained from you all during our focus groups and have provided a summary of the initial themes and sub-themes below. These are a working progress and are not set in stone. I would like to hear your thoughts on the theme summary as your feedback will help to inform my ongoing analysis.

At the end of this summary, I have included a participant feedback form to help guide your thinking and responses. I would be grateful if you could aim to return these to me by Friday the 2nd of April. Thank you again for supporting this research. I look forward to your feedback!

Themes and sub-themes	Theme Summary
Navigating the wider school community • Navigating diversity in the community • Working with parents	Teachers shared how the community context of their school influences practice. Some teachers felt that the lack of diversity in general in their school's local area created challenge, as diversity and celebrating difference was not an integral aspect of the community's lived experience. It was felt that bringing conversations of gender diversity into schools explicitly could lead to parental resistance, as parents have had limited exposure to these types of conversations and may be concerned about what this entails. Equally, teachers from schools in multi-cultural and multi-faith communities felt that a high level of diversity was a barrier, as different families have different viewpoints around what they do and do not want their children to be exposed to. Teachers from all schools, regardless of community diversity, felt that there could be resistance from parents who might perceive schools as encouraging their children to adopt non-normative identities. Teachers also felt that schools' specific characteristics, such as being a single-sex or faith school, created obstacles; there were uncertainties around how to implement practices that satisfied such characteristics as well as being inclusive to gender-diverse YP.

	Teachers shared that practices to integrate gender-identity related content is typically through PSHE lessons, in which mentions of LGBTQ+ identities are interwoven into broader units. It was generally felt that this was the best way to integrate gender-related conversations in order to minimise parental backlash. However, teachers also felt that more could be done to support parents, helping them to understand more about gender-diverse identities and how schools engage YP with these topics. It was felt that parents are often at a disadvantage, having not had these types of conversations before, and support from school could help to alleviate fears and concerns. It was generally felt that there was a gap between the community and school that needed to be bridged.
Teacher's believe YP need time and space to explore their identities • Taking a case by case approach • Acceptance of fluidity and change in YP's identities • Wonders around identity confusion and influences	Teachers felt that YP grow into their identities in their own time and in their own way. Because of this, the actions we carry out to support gender-diverse YP should be led by the individual's needs, taking a case-by-case approach. Teachers also felt that age should not be a barrier for YP wanting to explore and discuss their gender identity as this should be needs-led. However, they felt that this should be a supported process, involving relevant parties, such as parents where possible, and ensuring the proper conversations are being had. Teachers felt that YP need space and time to explore their identities and should be able to do this in a supportive school environment. YP are still developing and how they feel might not be stable over time. They need to be reassured that it is okay if they change their mind about their gender identity or what name they want to be known by. Time for identity exploration was felt to be especially important in the context of multiple influences that surround YP. For example, it was felt by some that YP might be confusing their gender identity with their sexuality. There were also wonders raised around whether YP's feelings about their gender were being influenced by additional factors, such as issues of mental health and body dysmorphia. Teachers also shared wonders around the influence of social media and accessibility of information. Although teachers felt it was positive that YP have this information at their disposal, they wondered whether this could influence how YP construct their own identities. However, it was generally agreed that media and other external influences are unlikely to be sustainable over time and YP will be able to work out what is true for them and what is not. YP should be allowed to explore their identities over time, without feeling pressured to adopt or keep a particular identity label.
Teachers feel a sense of responsibility to demonstrate gender-diverse inclusive practices	Teachers felt that open discussion with YP around gender identity is important, not just with gender-diverse YP but with all pupils. They felt that talking openly would help reduce stigma and teach acceptance, and felt that they have a responsibility in school to ensure children are encountering diversity. Teachers also felt that YP bring their own knowledge and experience which teachers can learn from through reciprocal conversations and following their pupils' lead.

• Open discussion about gender identity with pupils • Reactive vs proactive practices • Desire to be ready and responsive educators	Despite this, the general consensus was that these conversations do not happen enough in schools. It was felt that limited conversations in this area could have unseen negative connotations for gender-diverse YP, who might not feel accepted in the school community. Additionally, it was shared that YP often use homophobic and transphobic language as generic insults to one another, not understanding the full meaning of what they are saying or why it is harmful. Teachers shared that this kind of language is dealt with through a zero-tolerance approach. Although YP are reprimanded for using this type of language, it was felt that it would be more effective if YP were engaged with broader conversations around gender identity and language choices. Teachers shared a strong desire to be well equipped to support gender-diverse YP and to facilitate conversations around gender identity within their classes. There was a strong belief amongst the teachers that they have a responsibility to effectively support YP in this area. It was felt that teachers' personal beliefs or experiences should not be a barrier and they need to be willing to step into the unknown and learn.
Confidence putting intention and practice • Fear of getting it wrong • Desire for training and equity in knowledge amongst teachers • Systemic and environmental concerns	Although teachers shared a strong desire to be responsive educators, there were several barriers discussed that influenced their confidence in this area. One of the key concerns raised was a fear of getting it wrong and inadvertently making a young person feel worse. A recurring fear shared was that of a young person opening up about their gender identity, not receiving the response they were looking for, and subsequently 'going back into themselves'. However, it was also considered that being a good listener might be enough in the first instance, so long as teachers are honest with the young person and do not claim to have expertise. Another barrier related to knowledge and training. Teachers felt that more CPD is needed to ensure they are able to support YP individually and better implement inclusive practices in class. They felt that teachers will have their own knowledge, beliefs and experiences, with variation from teacher to teacher. As such, they feel it is important that teachers are supported to have a common language and equity in knowledge so that everyone is in a position to deliver best practice. Teachers also felt that guidance around supporting gender-diverse YP is currently limited. It was also felt that formalising guidance to be effective for all pupils is not straight forward. There were practical concerns raised around what bathrooms or changing rooms pupils should use. These wonders were largely underpinned by concerns of how parents of other children would respond, as well as teachers' own uncertainties about what they should and should not permit.

H.2   Member checking feedback form

Please tick the box that applies for each statement:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The theme summaries reflect the discussions in the focus group or interview I was involved in					
The theme summaries resonate well with my views					

1. **Which themes or subthemes resonate most strongly with you and why?**

2. **Are there any themes or subthemes that do not resonate with you? Why not?**

3. **Were there any themes or sub-themes you expected to see that were not there?**

4. **Were there any themes or sub-themes that surprised you or that you did not expect?**

5. **What could I do to better capture the theme and subtheme titles better?**

6. **Are there any other comments or reflections you would like to share?**

Appendix I   Participant member checking feedback

I.1   Member checking feedback form 1 from Emmett, Whitaker School

Participant feedback form:

Please tick the box that applies for each statement:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The theme summaries reflect the discussions in the focus group or interview I was involved in					✓
The theme summaries resonate well with my views				✓	

1. Which themes or subthemes resonate most strongly with you and why?

   The final theme on confidence resonates the most strongly with me. I think this is because I have never experienced any CPD or training on how to handle the topic of gender and so would greatly benefit from training to make me feel more confident. This is turn would stop me feeling scared to approach this topic should it arise in the school environment.

2. Are there any themes or subthemes that do not resonate with you? Why not?

   N/A

3. Were there any themes or sub-themes you expected to see that were not there?

   N/A

4. Were there any themes or sub-themes that surprised you or that you did not expect?

   N/A

5. What could I do to better capture the theme and subtheme titles better?

   N/A

6. Are there any other comments or reflections you would like to share?

   In the third theme about practices I would also add the element of huge uncertainly surrounding how we implement practices and even how conversations should run. Yes there is definitely a feeling that it is our responsibility to implement best practice but I would say I feel unsure of exactly the best way to do this,

I.2   Member checking feedback form 2 from Avery, Capaldi School

Participant feedback form:

Please tick the box that applies for each statement:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The theme summaries reflect the discussions in the focus group or interview I was involved in				X	
The theme summaries resonate well with my views				X	

1. **Which themes or subthemes resonate most strongly with you and why?**

   Confusion around what non binary means and how to integrate it into the school curriculum and behavioural standards linking this to the Equality Act as well as promoting respect, open mindedness and acceptance of difference. I don't understand what the difference is between body dysphoria, gender identity, non binary … so maybe just accepting difference should be the main theme.

2. **Are there any themes or subthemes that do not resonate with you? Why not?**

   How faith schools will integrate it doesn't resonate as the driver is the Equality law surely or maybe I don't understand.

   The Equality Act and how this links to gender is not clearly understood in its broader context and confuses me as for example girls are allowed to wear trousers and a tie I guess in school but boys aren't told they can wear skirts to school for example in England. I have not come across boys asking to wear skirts and have not seen boys moving away from the stereotypical dress. Girls within school who say they are non binary appear to dress in a more neutral way wearing trousers and a shirt which both genders wear in school.

3. **Were there any themes or sub-themes you expected to see that were not there?**

   The legal aspects were not discussed and usually this is the main driver for change as institutions and among teachers are afraid of getting it wrong legally and causing harm to the wellbeing of the student.

4. **Were there any themes or sub-themes that surprised you or that you did not expect?**

   Parental backlash was not really discussed in my group as far as I remember and I am surprised that parents would question a topic which is part of diversity law - Equality Act - however I do understand the fear factor as when young people talk about being non binary or gender fluid people jump to the conclusion that they will be thinking about gender reassignment and this is a very frightening concept for a parent and the whole topic is poorly understood.

5. **What could I do to better capture the theme and subtheme titles better?**

Maybe more on data of how many young people present as being non binary, having identity confusion, ...

Who should take the lead? Parents, school, psychologists as often the confusion in a young person can lead to suffering and mental ill health. Our non diverse population on the Island in terms of nationalities, cultures, and a rather conservative vs liberal culture means that difference can easily be stigmatised and the person be subject to peer bullying and social media trolling.

Autism presents identity issues as an understanding of self is hard for some so how does this relate to being non binary or having body dysphoria? Is there a continuum or are they different categories?

My philosophy is that everyone is an individual and experiences things differently so they need to accept who they are and others should do that if we are to be in an inclusive, respectful society where name calling and shunning is actively discouraged via education at an early age at home and at school. If we try to label and stereotype people this will make things worse.

6. **Are there any other comments or reflections you would like to share?**

I am very ignorant and confused about the whole topic of non binary, gender identity, body dysphoria and what the drivers might be so that I can understand the topic. I am a biologist so understand some of the science in terms of hormonal factors but I don't know what all the labels mean from the perspective of a young person experiencing what it is to be non binary. How does a non binary person want to treated vs how things are today for example?

I.3 Member checking feedback form 3 from Blair, Eccleston School

Participant feedback form:

Please tick the box that applies for each statement:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The theme summaries reflect the discussions in the focus group or interview I was involved in					Yes
The theme summaries resonate well with my views					Yes

1. **Which themes or subthemes resonate most strongly with you and why?**

   The confidence putting intention and practice section. I really feel that as a school we would benefit from training in this area so that we are all able to support pupils as effectively as possible. I don't feel it is an issue which is embedded enough in the training we do. I still think time constraints are an issue but this is definitely something that we should dedicate more time to.

2. **Are there any themes or subthemes that do not resonate with you? Why not?**

   No I think all the subthemes raise some very valid points and give some real food for thought.

3. **Were there any themes or sub-themes you expected to see that were not there?**

   No, I think the conversation covered the most important aspects relevant to a school context.

4. **Were there any themes or sub-themes that surprised you or that you did not expect?**

   No

5. **What could I do to better capture the theme and subtheme titles better?**

   I think it was very well covered. I really enjoyed taking part in the experience and think it provided a great platform for conversation

6. **Are there any other comments or reflections you would like to share?**

   I'm hopeful that experiences like this will open up discussions in schools and lead to further training and support for young people. I think this is really important and something which should definitely be factored into staff training programmes and PSHE lessons.

Appendix J Braun and Clarke's (2020) tool for evaluating thematic analysis

Table 1. A tool for evaluating thematic analysis (TA) manuscripts for publication: Twenty questions to guide assessment of TA research quality.

These questions are designed to be used either independently, or alongside our methodological writing on TA, and especially the current paper, if further clarification is needed.

Adequate choice and explanation of methods and methodology

1. Do the authors explain why they are using TA, even if only briefly?
2. Do the authors clearly specify and justify which *type* of TA they are using?
3. Is the use and justification of the specific type of TA consistent with the research questions or aims?
4. Is there a good 'fit' between the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the research and the specific type of TA (i.e. is there conceptual coherence)?
5. Is there a good 'fit' between the methods of data collection and the specific type of TA?
6. Is the specified type of TA consistently enacted throughout the paper?
7. Is there evidence of problematic assumptions about, and practices around, TA? These commonly include:
   - Treating TA as one, homogenous, entity, with one set of – widely agreed on – procedures.
   - Combining philosophically and procedurally incompatible approaches to TA without any acknowledgement or explanation.
   - Confusing summaries of data topics with thematic patterns of shared meaning, underpinned by a core concept.
   - Assuming grounded theory concepts and procedures (e.g. saturation, constant comparative analysis, line-by-line coding) apply to TA without any explanation or justification.
   - Assuming TA is essentialist or realist, or atheoretical.
   - Assuming TA is only a data reduction or descriptive approach and therefore must be supplemented with other methods and procedures to achieve other ends.
8. Are any supplementary procedures or methods justified, and necessary, or could the same results have been achieved simply by using TA more effectively?
9. Are the theoretical underpinnings of the use of TA clearly specified (e.g. ontological, epistemological assumptions, guiding theoretical framework(s)), even when using TA inductively (inductive TA does not equate to analysis in a theoretical vacuum)?
10. Do the researchers strive to 'own their perspectives' (even if only very briefly), their personal and social standpoint and positioning? (This is especially important when the researchers are engaged in social justice-oriented research and when representing the 'voices' of marginal and vulnerable groups, and groups to which the researcher does not belong.)
11. Are the analytic procedures used clearly outlined, and described in terms of what the authors actually did, rather than generic procedures?
12. Is there evidence of conceptual and procedural confusion? For example, reflexive TA (e.g. Braun and Clarke 2006) is the claimed approach but different procedures are outlined such as the use of a codebook or coding frame, multiple independent coders and consensus coding, inter-rater reliability measures, and/or themes are conceptualised as analytic inputs rather than outputs and therefore the analysis progresses from theme identification to coding (rather than coding to theme development).
13. Do the authors demonstrate full and coherent understanding of their claimed approach to TA?

A well-developed and justified analysis

14. Is it clear what and where the themes are in the report? Would the manuscript benefit from some kind of overview of the analysis: listing of themes, narrative overview, table of themes, thematic map?
15. Are the reported themes topic summaries, rather than 'fully realised themes' – patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept?
    - If so, are topic summaries appropriate to the purpose of the research?
      - If the authors are using reflexive TA, is this modification in the conceptualisation of themes explained and justified?
    - Have the data collection questions been used as themes?
    - Would the manuscript benefit from further analysis being undertaken, with the reporting of fully realised themes?
    - Or, if the authors are claiming to use reflexive TA, would the manuscript benefit from claiming to use a different type of TA (e.g. coding reliability or codebook)?
16. Is non-thematic contextualising information presented as a theme? (e.g. the first 'theme' is a topic summary providing contextualising information, but the rest of the themes reported are fully realised themes). If so, would the manuscript benefit from this being presented as non-thematic contextualising information?
17. In applied research, do the reported themes have the potential to give rise to actionable outcomes?
18. Are there conceptual clashes and confusion in the paper? (e.g. claiming a social constructionist approach while also expressing concern for positivist notions of coding reliability, or claiming a constructionist approach while treating participants' language as a transparent reflection of their experiences and behaviours)
19. Is there evidence of weak or unconvincing analysis, such as:
    - Too many or two few themes?

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

- Too many theme levels?
- Confusion between codes and themes?
- Mismatch between data extracts and analytic claims?
- Too few or too many data extracts?
- Overlap between themes?

20. Do authors make problematic statements about the lack of generalisability of their results, and or implicitly conceptualise generalisability as statistical probabilistic generalisability (see Smith 2017)?

Glossary of terms

Axiology.................................The examination of the values held by a researcher and their influence on the research enquiry.

Cisgender .... A descriptive word for those whose gender identity aligns with their gender assigned at birth (non-transgender).

Constructivism ....An interpretivist epistemological position in which knowledge is considered to be constructed through a person's interactions with and interpretations of the world around them.

Epistemology.......................The philosophical study of knowledge, how it is gathered or constructed and from which sources.

Gender essentialism.............The belief that people are born with distinctively different natures that are biologically determined.

Heteronormativity ....A discourse that situates heterosexual orientation and binary models of gender as the norm.

Interpretivism ....An epistemological position holding that knowledge is formed through interpretations, social interactions, and shared consciousness.

LGBTQ+ ....Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexual and gender diverse identities.

Non-binary ....A collective term for gender identities that are neither male or female, e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid etc.

Ontology..............................The philosophical study of the nature of being, with questions about what things can exist or be known.

PSHE ....Physical Social Health and Economic education. This is a curriculum area taught in English schools, usually encompassing relationship, sex and health education, and discussions of citizenship and social justice issues.

Queer ....A collective term for LGBTQ+ identified persons.

Reflexivity ....The examination of one's own beliefs, judgments and practices during the research process and how these may influence the research.

Social constructionism ....An interpretivist epistemological position in which knowledge is considered to be created through social interactions.

Transgender ....A descriptive word for those whose gender identity differs from their gender assigned at birth.

Trans-spectrum ....A collective term for transgender individuals whose gender differs from their gender assigned at birth, including trans-binary and trans-non-binary identities.

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