Research paper

Teachers' beliefs: How they shape the support offered to *trans*-spectrum young people.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Teachers have concerns about school community and parental responses to transinclusive practices in school.
- Teachers fear making mistakes and not having the knowledge they need to support rans-spectrum pupils.
- Teachers feel uncertain about how to put trans-spectrum inclusive practice into action.
- Teachers would like training to better understand and be prepared to support transspectrum pupils.
- Trans-inclusive practices can be developed through teacher reflection and engagement with the wider school community.

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Focus groups and an individual interview were carried out with 15 secondary school teachers in South East England, exploring their beliefs regarding gender identity and how this influences the support offered to *trans*-spectrum young people. Through a process of reflexive thematic analysis, six themes were developed, indicating that lack of confidence, fears of community resistance and implicitly held views of gender identity underscored a hesitancy in teachers' practice. 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 be inclusive in their work.

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 are at the greatest risk, experiencing a higher level of hostility, 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 faced by *trans*-spectrum young people at school are well documented. Indeed, a Stonewall survey detailing the experiences of LGBTQ + young people in British schools found that 65% of *trans*-spectrum pupils have been bullied for being LGBTQ+, with one in 10 subjected to death threats (Stonewall, 2017). Regarding wider school support and practices, 33% reported not being permitted to be referred to by their chosen name at school and 58% reported not being allowed to use the toilet facilities of

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their choice. Similarly, the 2019 school climate survey from GLSEN, detailing the school experiences of LGBTQ + youth in the USA, found that 27.2% of LGBTQ + pupils were prevented from using locker rooms aligned with their gender identity (GLSEN, 2019). Persistent negative school experiences are known to have adverse consequences for *trans*-spectrum young people, including increased risks of self-harm, suicidal ideation, and attempts (Veale et al., 2017), increased substance abuse and absenteeism, (Day et al., 2018), and poorer academic outcomes (Kosciw et al., 2013).

The challenges experienced by *trans*-spectrum young people in school and the consequences of these necessitates increased support. Teachers may have a key 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.

Discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practice may also be underpinned by underdeveloped policy and guidance. This has been a concern raised by educators in the UK, where the current study was carried out. Indeed, the UK's governmental Department for Education (DfE) introduced compulsory Relationships Education for primary aged pupils (4—11 years) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for secondary aged pupils (11—16 years) to be implemented from September 2020 (Department for Education (DfE), 2019), and within this included the need for schools to include mentions of LGBT identities. The guidance provided for schools included the following:

> 36. In teaching Relationships Education and RSE, schools should ensure that the needs of all pupils are appropriately met, and that all pupils understand the importance of equality and respect. Schools must ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010 … under which sexual orientation and gender reassignment are amongst the protected characteristics.

> 37. Schools should ensure that all of their teaching is sensitive and age appropriate in approach and content. At the point at which schools consider it appropriate to teach their pupils about LGBT, they should ensure that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study for this area of the curriculum rather than delivered as a standalone unit or lesson. Schools are free to determine how they do this, and we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum. (Department for Education (DfE), 2019, p.15).

Following the introduction of this guidance, research exploring school practice highlighted that many educators felt it was not specific enough, sharing uncertainties around what should be taught and at what age, concerns that primary schools could opt not to teach LGBTQ + issues if they deemed it not to be age-appropriate, and concerns around the lack of a detailed central curriculum to draw upon (Ofsted, 2021). Since the introduction of the new RSE guidance, no further policy work has been carried out at the governmental level to support LGBTQ + inclusion in schools which has created a gap and little scope for a coordinated approach.

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.

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

1. Methodology

1.1. Design

The research was conducted by a doctoral student, referred to henceforth as the researcher, under the supervision of two tutors from the same University. Ethical approval was obtained from the University'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 one 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.

1.2. Participants

Participants were 15 secondary school teachers from four schools in the South East of England (see Table 1), 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. Indeed, it was felt that caution should be exercised in providing information that might lead to readership bias. The rationale and potential limitations of this choice are discussed in more detail in the discussion.

In consideration of transferability, the extent to which the interpretations of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1982), information regarding school context was gathered (see Table 1). All four schools were state schools (schools funded by the local authority or directly from the government). They varied 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 multicultural and multi-faith community. Pupil population across the schools ranged from 400 to 1500 pupils.

1.3. 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 47−55 min and the individual interview lasted 39 min. Data were audio or video-recorded using Microsoft Teams or a Dictaphone. Focus group and individual interviews were transcribed, 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

Table 1
School, participant and focus group details.

School pseudonym	School contextual information	Participant details	Focus group and Interview details
Eccleston School	Secondary comprehensive state school, 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 state school, 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 state school, 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 state 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.

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.

Focus group and interview discussions were structured around four articles, with topic guide prompts and questions that the researcher used flexibly to guide discussion (see Appendix A for topic guide and article titles). It was felt that using these articles would provoke discussion, ease participants into the conversation and allow discussions to develop more organically, with participants commenting on what was pertinent to them from their reading. The articles were obtained by the researcher through online searching, 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. 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.

1.4. Supplementary data

1.4.1. Adapted Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale

Information around participating schools' existing practices was gathered using an adapted version of the Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale (TIBS) (Kattari et al., 2018). The TIBS is a published and validated measure that provides a baseline measurement of an individual's transgender-inclusive behaviour. The questions on the TIBS were adapted to better reflect the educational context. The adapted-TIBS was completed in a 15—20 min conversation between the researcher and a staff member, self-selected by the school as someone who could provide comment on the school context. 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. Information gained from the adapted-TIBS was integrated within the analytic process to facilitate triangulation and reflection. The adapted-TIBS and ratings for each school are detailed in Appendix B.

1.4.2. Member checking

Following initial data analysis, participants were sent an early summary of themes (Appendix C) 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 (Appendix D). Member checking using synthesised analysed data resonated with the researcher's 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. 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.

1.5. Process of analysis

A process of reflexive thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2019), was undertaken by the researcher 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 researcher's 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 the researcher reading and re-reading transcripts and noting down initial ideas, followed by the development of initial codes across all transcripts, using the software program NVivo. 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.

2. Analysis

Six themes were developed, as depicted in Fig. 1. 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.

Note. Lines indicate where themes are connected.

2.1. Narrative overview

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
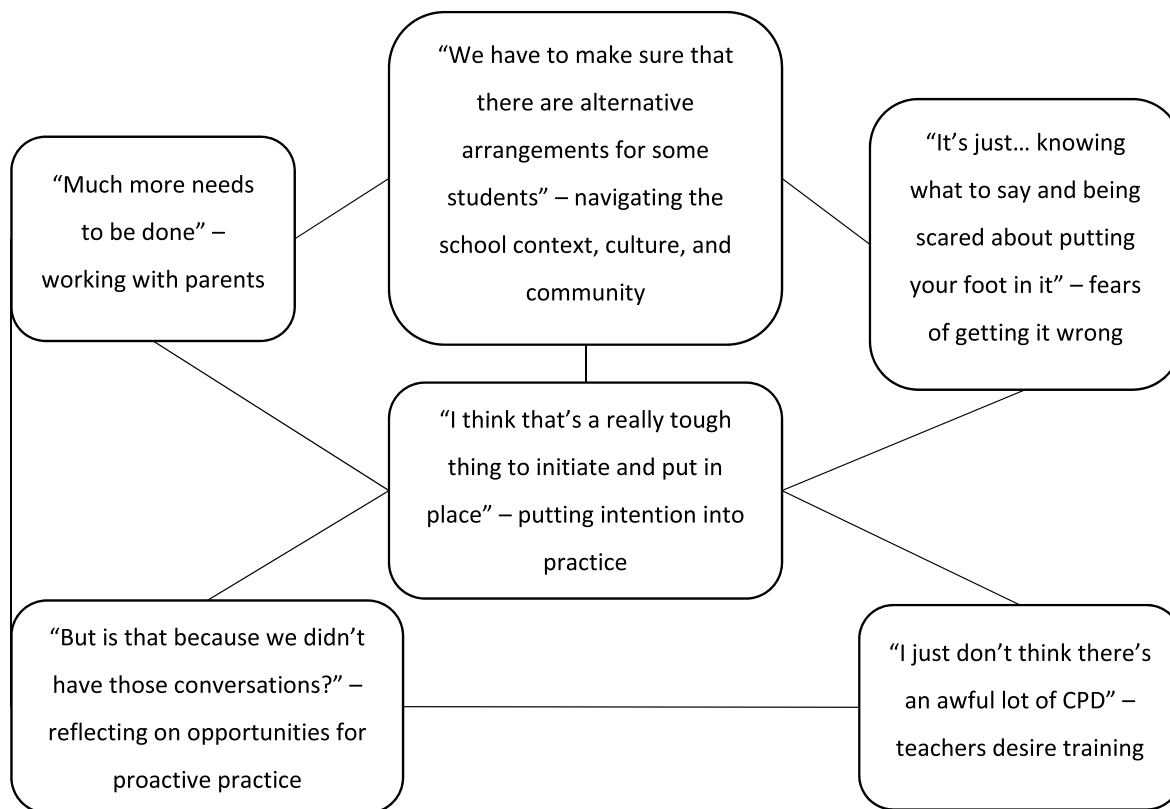
Fig. 1. Thematic map.

opportunities to develop their skills and confidence, and a desire to work with their school communities to facilitate this change over time.

2.2. Themes

2.2.1. "We have to make sure that there are alternative arrangements for some students" − navigating the school context, culture, 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).

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). 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). 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).

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. 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. For example, when discussing use of school facilities, teachers' concerns around parental resistance were centred 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).

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' 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.

2.2.2. "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). Resonating with previous literature, fears of parental resistance hindered teachers' approach towards *trans*-spectrum-inclusion (Smith-Millman et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2016), making them cautions in their practice. It was felt that parents might perceive schools as "encouraging our children to be this way" (Blair, Eccleston School) 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). 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) 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).

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) 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) 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). 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).

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).

2.2.3. "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 practice, they held fears around enacting this successfully. 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 and more specifically, that their limited knowledge would negatively impact *trans*-spectrum young people looking to them for support. 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), and through not being able to guide them "where to go next or who to talk to … or their next steps" (Nolan, Eccleston School). 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).

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

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).

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).

2.2.4. "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). 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).

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).

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 in turn would stop me feeling scared to approach this topic should it arise in the school environment (Emmett, Whitaker School, member checking feedback).

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

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). Indeed, 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).

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, member checking feedback).

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). 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) 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):

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).

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).

2.2.6. "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). 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). 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).

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. This may be indicative of teachers having broadly defined conceptualisations of inclusion, as identified in previous research (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. 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).

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 language is not going to be tolerated" (Rowan, Capaldi School). 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).

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) 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).

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).

3. 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 (Government Equalities Office, 2018; Jones & Hillier, 2013; Ullman, 2017).

A tension emerged, with teachers expressing a desire to support *trans*-spectrum pupils yet feeling unconfident in implementing this in practice. Fears of community resistance and implicitly held views of gender identity underscored their hesitancy as well as uncertainties regarding school policy and what constitutes appropriate practice. Despite this, teachers expressed a motivation to engage in professional development opportunities to further their knowledge and skills. Further still, through reflective conversations within their focus group or interview, teachers began to construct their own ideas for changing school practices.

3.1. 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 their own practice, empowering them in generating and implementing their own ideas.

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.

The systemic issues highlighted by teachers regarding *trans*-spectrum inclusive practice cannot be ignored. For teachers to feel confident re-shaping their individual practice, they will need to be supported by more explicit and informative school policy. This has implications for schools to re-design more comprehensive anti-bullying and inclusion policies, specifically addressing practice regarding *trans*-spectrum young people. This will support teachers in knowing what they are allowed and expected to do, giving them a securer foundation to work from. In turn, this will enable *trans*-spectrum young people to experience greater, more consistent support from staff and a more supportive school climate.

Teachers in this study expressed their hesitancy to discuss *trans*-spectrum identities explicitly within teaching, only doing so within broader conversations of social justice issues within PSHE. This was influenced by their fears of parental objection and uncertainty around how to address this more overtly. To mitigate these concerns, teachers would benefit from clearer curricular guidance that encourages and supports LGBTQ + representation. This will allow teachers to feel more confident in their curricular choices and may provide a sense of security that they will be supported by their school in the event there is objection to their teaching. Again, ongoing communication with the wider school community and liaising with parents will be important here, with schools being transparent about their curricular practices, and working with parents to develop this.

3.2. 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.

As a further comment on school context, it is noteworthy that all four schools were based in the South East of England and the demographic make-up of three of the four schools was predominantly White British, which could be perceived as a limitation in terms of representation and implication applicability. In consideration of

transferability, information regarding school context was detailed within this paper's method section.

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 researcher's 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 researcher's 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.

A decision was made not to collect specific demographic information from the participants. While a person's identity and personal characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexuality, age etc.) cannot be disentangled from their views and experiences, it was felt that caution should be exercised in providing information that might lead to readership bias. Indeed, unless shared by participants themselves as relevant to their views, it cannot be assumed that a person's viewpoint is related to a limited set of demographic information, particularly when such demographic information has been pre-decided as relevant by the researcher. However, it is recognised that excluding all demographic information for the participant group as a whole may be a limitation for readers in knowing whose voices have been represented within this study.

4. 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. Exploration of the barriers and uncertainties experienced by teachers has created a pathway toward understanding the support they need to implement *trans*-inclusive practices. Supporting teachers through

training, reflective opportunities, and improved school policies and guidance will better position them to work in ways that help *trans*-spectrum young people feel safe, supported and valued within their school community, in turn leading to improved educational and life outcomes.

Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

Appendix A. Topic guide and associated articles

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 from The Guardian entitled 'Top London Girls' school allows pupils to identify as male or gender neutral' dated 2017.
   - 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 from 'The Guardian' entitled 'I know what it's like to be a trans teen - here's how to deal with the bullying' dated 2017.
- 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 a written resource by a group called Transgender Trend, dated 2018.

Item 4: Extracts from Northern Ireland education authority entitled 'Guidance for Schools, EOTAS Centres and Youth Service on Supporting Transgender Young People' dated 2019.

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 B

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

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Staff members ask for pronouns when meeting new pupils or co-workers.	W T	E C			
2. Staff members share their own pronouns when meeting someone new.	C W	T E			
3. Staff use gender neutral language to refer to people whose pronouns are not known.	W		C E	T	
4. 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	
5. Staff are aware of acceptable language to use when referring to transgender individuals.			W	C T E	
6. There are gender neutral toilet facilities in school.					C W E T
7. There are gender neutral changing facilities in school.		E	C	W T	
8. The school is well informed about transgender communities.		T	C W E		
9. Staff facilitate discussions with pupils in class around issues of gender-based discrimination and non-transgender privilege.			T	C W E	
10. Staff are aware of policies and procedures for supporting transgender pupils in school.			T C	W E	
11. Staff are aware of local resources and services that offer support to transgender young people.			W T E	C	
12. 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 C

Early summary of themes shared with participants for member checking

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

Appendix C (*continued*)

Themes and sub-themes	Theme Summary
	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 ●Open discussion about gender identity with pupils ●Reactive vs proactive practices ●Desire to be ready and responsive educators	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.
	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.

Appendix D
Member checking response 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?

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